

Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church
THE WEEKLY CHURCH BULLETIN

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SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2018

Κυριακή 25η Μαρτίου 2018
ΤΟΥ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΥ
Αποστ: Εβρ. 2:11-18
Ευαγγ: Λουκα 1:24-38

Feastday of the Annunciation
Today's Readings
Epistle: Hebrews 2:11-18
Gospel: Luke 1:24-38



THE ANNUNCIATION – THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE INCARNATION

It is the Annunciation, the *Euaggelismos*, the Announcing of the Good News to Mary that she will bear the Christ child whom she will name Jesus; the day of the Incarnation, the day God became human in the form of a man. We celebrate this story on March 25th.

Our Orthodox tradition very much affirms that on this day God became human, that Jesus who was conceived on this day is paradoxically God and man. This belief in the incarnation of God in the man Jesus—as it says in the creed, “incarnate by the Holy Spirit,” that is by the power of the Holy Spirit—is not an easy one to affirm. In fact, I would say that over the past few centuries, it has fallen into disfavor. One reason is that a scientific standard of truth has prevailed since the 17th century and the idea that God can become human is something that has never been observed before, nor is it something that is scientifically verifiable. In an age where trust is given to that which can be verified, that for which we can provide proof or evidence, the belief in God becoming human in a particular individual is something which simply cannot meet that standard of truth. Even before the Scientific Revolution, it wasn't something easy to believe. A study of early Christian writings reveals that the Greek philosophers did not find such a belief very reasonable.

Yet much is at stake in its affirmation or its denial. What I wish to suggest is that what is at stake is the very essence of Christianity itself. In the Incarnation we don't simply see a God who became man, we see a God who emptied Godself for us, as St. Paul says in his letter to the Philippians (2: 6-11); we see the love of a God who came to be with us, to be with paralytics, the blind, the tax collectors and the prostitutes, who were considered then the lowest segment of society, and showed them love; we see a God who, as St. Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews, that sympathizes with our weaknesses and knows our human suffering, because God himself suffered (4:15); we see a God resurrected and who in this resurrection opened the way toward an unbreakable relationship of communion with God. Through the incarnation we see a God full of love and compassion for his creation, one who taught us how to love and be compassionate to others; one who unites Godself with us so that humans can go beyond what we are capable of; in the Incarnation we have a God who came to lead us to God, to an intimate union with God. Without the incarnation we don't have any of this; we have a Christianity stripped of its essence, of love and compassion, of the capability of being united with God. This is why St. Athanasius, who lived in the 4th century, affirmed the reality of the Incarnation; because if it were not true, then there is no Christianity, and humankind is not saved from the great annihilator, which is death; without union with God, with the eternal source of life, we are beings unto death.

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To the challenge that the idea of an Incarnation is simply a myth, then, I propose the counter-challenge to offer a better alternative. If the response is that there is no God, then that leaves us with very little hope, since humanity itself has shown itself capable of both great achievement and great barbarism. As the great Jewish philosopher of this century, Walter Benjamin, reminds us, behind every great work of civilization is a great act of barbarism. And if the answer is that there is a God but that God and humanity are two distinct realities that can never be brought together, then that also is not good enough. What good does it do us that God is simply out there with no way for us to be with God? We want, or at least I want, a God who is with us, a God whose power it is and whose freedom it is to be what is not God for the sake of uniting us with Godself. It is this God that we see in Jesus Christ, who *is* Jesus Christ.

And we don't affirm this about Jesus simply because of what we desire, although this is part of it. We affirm it based on the witness of his earliest followers, recorded in the Bible, that in this Jesus they witnessed a man whose actions were truly human but which went beyond any human capacity in their power to bring us into an intimate union with God. We affirm it based on the lives of the true saints in our tradition, who based on the belief of Jesus as God and man, structured their lives in such a way that the divine presence became progressively more manifest in and through their very bodies.

After all this abstract consideration of the Incarnation, the obvious question would be, how does one get there, how can one be united with God, how do Lenten practices unite us more with God? There are answers to those questions, though they are not easy, but before one even considers those questions, before one embarks on a lifelong struggle of learning about this way of life, one first has to believe that such a union is possible, that it is worth it, and that it is possible through Jesus Christ, the God-man. Why the effort? Because there is nothing better, more stable, more secure, more joyful, more peaceful, simply nothing better than being with God. It's simply what we were created to be, but the only way we can know this is if we heed the recommendation in the Book of Psalms to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34).

-Dr. Aristotle Papanikolaou

MESSAGE FROM FATHER TOM...



Please join us today for our Koraes Day School Greek Independence Day and Annunciation program. Let us celebrate our motherland and our faith and may these events inspire us to sing praises to God for all that we are blessed with.

To those who have not done so already, I would ask all of us to search our hearts to renew our commitment to our Parish for our Stewardship 2018 campaign. Let us do our best for Our Home.

Please remember that whatever your pastoral need - **I am at your service** - please contact me in the Church Office at (708) 974-3400 or email at Tomdemed@aol.com

Scholarship Available

Peter J. Economos Memorial Scholarship

For Information and Application Form

Go to: petereconomos scholarship.com

Application Deadline Date: May 7, 2018

For more information contact: Nicholas Bobis
at bobisnp@sbcglobal.net or 708-444-8462

Let us do our best for Our Home



Stewardship 2018

Sign up for monthly giving at
www.ssch.us

"Rejoice, highly favored *one*,
the Lord *is* with you;
blessed *are* you among women!"

"Χαίρε, κεχαριτωμένη,
ο Κύριος μετά σου,
ευλογημένη συ εν γυναιξίν"

Πεμπτη 29η Μαρτίου

Ωρα 4:00 π.μ.

Θά γίνει προετοιμασία
Σταυρών και Κλάδων Βαΐων



Σαββατο 31η Μαρτίου
ΤΟΥ ΛΑΖΑΡΟΥ

Ωρα 8:00 π.μ.

Ήρθος και Θεία Λειτουργία



Ήμερα ή εκκλησία μας γιορτάζει την εκ νεκρών ανάσταση του φίλου του Χριστου, Λαζάρου. Όταν έκοιμήθη, οι αδελφές του Μάρθα και Μαρία κάλεσαν τον Χριστό, όμως ο Κύριος δεν ανταποκρίθηκε άμέσως στο κάλεσμά τους. Ήταν μία σιωπή, που άσφλως βαθιά έλύπησε τις πονεμένες αδελφές του Λαζάρου. Όμως ο Διδάσκαλός τους δεν καθυστέρησε από αδιαφορία, αλλά για να τις καταστήσει, μαζί με τους μαθητές του, μάρτυρες ενός θαύματος. Της έπιβολής Του επί του θανάτου.

Και ανταμείβοντας την πίστι των δύο αδελφών, ανέστησε τον τεταρταίο ήδη Λάζαρο. Για να διδάξη έτσι και σ' έμας, να μην απογοητευομαστε, ακόμα κι όταν ο ουρανός φαίνεται κλειστός.

ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ ΜΗΝΥΜΑΤΑ

Κυριακή 1η Απριλίου
ΤΩΝ ΒΑΙΩΝ

Ωρα 7:00 π.μ. - Ήρθος

Ωρα 8:15 π.μ. - 1η Θεία Λειτουργία

Ωρα 10:30 π.μ - 2η Θεία Λειτουργία
7:00 μ.μ. - Ακολουθία του Νυμφίου

**Ο ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ
ΤΗΣ ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑΣ
ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ**

Ήγγειεν Υιόν Άγγελος
τῆ Παρθένω,
Πατρός μεγίστης Βουλῆς
μέγαν.

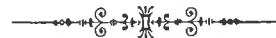
Γήθεο τῆ Μαρίῃ ἔφατ'
Άγγελος εικάδι πέμπτη.



Σήμερα η εκκλησία μας γιορτάζει το χαρμόσυνο μήνυμα της θείας ενσάρκωσης, που με τόσο σαφή τρόπο μας το παρουσιάζει ο ευαγγελιστής Λουκάς στο Ευαγγέλιο του (κεφ. Α' στίχ. 26-38).

Την ήμερα αυτή, ο θεόσταλτος αρχάγγελος Γαβριήλ παρουσιάζεται στην Παρθένο Μαρία, στη Ναζαρέτ και της ανήγγειλε ότι θα γεννήσει το Σωτήρα του κόσμου, τον Ιησού Χριστό. Και Όταν η Παρθένος αναρωτήθηκε πώς ήταν δυνατό να συλλάβει χωρίς άνδρα, ο αρχάγγελος της απάντησε ότι «το Άγιο Πνεύμα θα έλθει σε σένα και η δύναμη του Υψίστου θα σε επισκιάσει»

Τότε η σεμνή κόρη, η Παρθένος Μαρία, του απάντησε ταπεινά. «Ίδού λοιπόν, η δούλη του Κυρίου. Ας γίνει το θέλημα Εκείνου». και καθώς ο Γαβριήλ εξαφανίστηκε από μπροστά της, συντελέστηκε το μεγαλύτερο μυστήριο της ανθρωπότητας, με τρόπο υπερφυσικό, η Παρθένος συνέλαβε στην άχραντη κοιλιά της, τον Υιό και Λόγο του Θεού. Εκείνον που με την εκούσια θυσία του επάνω στο Σταυρό, έσωσε το ανθρώπινο γένος από τον αιώνιο θάνατο και την καταστροφή στην οποία είχε οδηγηθεί μετά την πτώση των πρωτοπλάστων από τον παράδεισο και την εμφάνιση της αμαρτίας στον κόσμο.



ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Today, following the Divine Liturgy

Koraes School Program in celebration of Greek Independence Day

KORAES DAY SCHOOL HOLY CONFESSIONS WEEK

Monday, March 26:

7:30 p.m. GOYA

Tuesday, March 27:

9:00 a.m. Philoptochos Baking

5:00 p.m. Adult Bible Class – Greek

5:30 p.m. Adult Bible Class – English

7:00 p.m. Senior Choir Practice

Wednesday, March 28:

3:30 p.m. Youth Choir

Thursday, March 29:

Palm Preparation – See details below

Saturday, March 31: Saturday of Lazarus

8:00 a.m. Orthros / Divine Liturgy

Sunday, April 1: Palm Sunday

7:00 a.m. Orthros

8:00 a.m. 1st Divine Liturgy

10:30 a.m. 2nd Divine Liturgy

7:00 p.m. Nymphios (Bridegroom) Service



JOIN US FOR:

FAMILY NIGHT PALM PREPARATION

Thursday, March 29, starting at 4:00 pm

Learn how to make the Crosses and help make the Palm Crosses that are distributed on Palm Sunday!!!

The entire community is invited to attend and participate as ONE BIG PARISH FAMILY!!!

For more info or to help please contact Fr. Tom at (708) 974-3400

† MEMORIALS †

Memorials are not allowed on the following days:

Today, Feastday of the Annunciation

Palm Sunday – April 1

Easter Sunday – April 8

Sunday of St. Thomas – April 15

BAKE SALE

Today's Bake Sale Is hosted by our KPTA

Please support them!

SACRAMENT

BAPTISM

We welcome the following into the Orthodox Faith and we pray that God grant him many, many years!

Saturday, March 24th at 11:00 a.m.

Pavlos, son of

Demetri and Natasha Hiotis

Sponsors: Constantine Hiotis & Syliva Castaldo



Easter Lambathes

Our GOYA will be selling Lambathes every Sunday, through Palm Sunday, following the Divine Liturgy. Please support them!

See you...



...Next SUNDAY!