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CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MARCH 20, 2011

Please Remember in Prayer

Charles Hilton (newly-departed), Helen Taylor (newly-departed), Ed Tucker, Michael, Martha, Karen Nichols, Walter & Michelle Wilson, Irene Clenney, Denise Royal, Gabriela Jones, Scott & Maryann, Roman Szvec, Mat. Dunia, Patti Lease, Garrett Cuppels, Frs Michael & Andrew, Monk Christian, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Nina Gordon, Mirela & Chris, Jaroslav, Troy, Frank & Mary Miranda, Kathy T., Bruce, Julia Plisko & family, Stella.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20TH

St. Gregory Palamas

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour

FRIDAY, MARCH 25TH

Annunciation

One of the Twelve Great Feasts

9:00a.m. Vespers & Div. Liturgy

SATURDAY, MARCH 26TH

Memorial Saturday

5:00p.m. Memorial Service
6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 27TH

Sunday of the Holy Cross

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour

When through self-control we have purified our body, and when through divine love we have fixed our desire on virtue, and when we offer to God our intellect cleansed by prayer, then we will possess and see within ourselves the grace promised to the pure in heart.

St. Gregory Palamas (+1359)

"READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Mar. 27th

Bruce Eckerd

Sunday, April 3rd

Gabriela Jones



Lenten Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's – Last Call!

On March 21-23, a lenten pilgrimage is being offered to St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary, South Canaan, PA. We also hope to visit a Greek Orthodox Women's Monastery in White Haven, PA. The group will leave on Monday morning and return on Wednesday night. Should you have any questions or interest in going, please stay for a quick meeting following the Divine Liturgy. Everyone is welcome!

Memorial Saturdays

On Saturdays during the Great Fast we remember those who have departed this life before us in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life. Memorial services are being offered during which the names of our departed family members and friends are commemorated. If you have not yet submitted a list for commemoration, please see Fr. John.



Annunciation – Friday, March 25th

On this day, we celebrate the visit to the Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel, who announced to her the good news that, if she so willed, God Himself would take up His abode within her womb. Annunciation is one of the

Twelve Great Feasts, for which we seek to be present at the services. In celebration of this great event, we are permitted to eat fish.

Special Choir Practice

There will be a special choir practice, following the coffee hour, on Sunday, March 27th. We will be going over music for Holy Week and Pascha. Fr. John's mother, Daria, who will direct the choir for us again this Pascha, is making a special trip to be here for this choir practice. All choir members are asked to please make an effort to be present. Thank you!



Church Readers Sought

If you are interested in reading the Hours and Epistle, please let Fr. John know. If you do not know how, don't worry, it is easy to learn.

Many Thanks

to those who helped clean the church this week (and in the past)! May the Lord reward you for your zealous care for His House!

A HOMILY ON THE ANNUNCIATION

By Fr. John Parsells

On this day we recall that great of event of the Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, in which he tells her of God's will to become man, to make His abode within her womb by the overshadowing grace of the Holy Spirit. And we sing in the Troparion of the feast, "Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery, the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace!"

In this dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary, we see much more than a mere conversation between an angel and one of the Hebrews – rather, we see what is perhaps, the most important dialogue in all of salvation history, what is perhaps, the most important conversation between God and mankind, the Archangel Gabriel being God's messenger and the Virgin Mary being as the one, as Scriptures say, who is both highly favored by God and called blessed by all generations of men.

Now what is so special about this conversation? Just that without it, our salvation would not have come to pass: the Son of God, the One who was to be called "Jesus" because He would save His people from their sins, would not have been born, and would not have been able to accomplish as a man our victory over sin, death, and the devil; and we would all therefore still be dead in our sins.

But in this conversation, we see not only the beginning of our salvation as the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, but we also see a reversal or an undoing of what had gone wrong in

the beginning; that is we see a reversal, and undoing, of what had gone wrong in Paradise.

We recall that in the Garden of Eden, our ancient Fall began with a conversation between an angel and a woman, with a dialogue between Satan, the first among the fallen angels, and Eve, the first among the woman of the human race.

Whereas of old that dialogue between the devil and Eve had disastrous consequences for the human race, here the dialogue between the Archangel Gabriel and the New Eve, the Virgin Mary, had tremendously positive consequences for all of man-

kind; for this dialogue led not to sin, corruption and death, but to the birth of the One Who would destroy such things. This dialogue did not lead to man's expulsion from Paradise, but rather to his entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Whereas in Paradise, we see the pride of man, who sought to become God without the Lord's cooperation, in Nazareth, we see the humility of God, Who sought to become man but only by first asking the cooperation of the Holy Virgin. Where of old the Fall was preceded by man's pride and defiance, in the Annunciation, restoration

is preceded by God's humility and meekness.

Whereas in Paradise, God used Adam in the creation of Eve, causing a deep sleep to come upon him so that He could form Eve from his rib. In Nazareth, God asks the New Eve, the Virgin Mary, to participate in the welcoming of the New Adam, Jesus Christ, asking her to offer not a rib but her own flesh and asking her to accept not a deep sleep but the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

And so, today we celebrate the beginning of a new creation, the flowering of a new garden, not in



Eden but in the city of Nazareth, a city whose name bears witness to its high calling for Nazareth means the city of a new sprout or a new shoot.

This new sprout is of course, Jesus Christ, the One who would later call Himself the True Vine, Whose heavenly Father is the Vinedresser, Whose earthly Mother is the root from which He sprang into this world, and Whose branches are all those who would later be grafted into His life, bringing forth the fruits of His Holy Spirit.

Now, while the imagery is striking and very beautiful, and the events of this day, miraculous and very wonderful, we mustn't lose sight of the primary message of today's events.

The primary message is that though our God is powerful and wise enough to do all things necessary for our salvation, He will not force Himself upon us for He is meek and lowly of heart. God has created us in His image and likeness as free beings, each able to determine his or her own destiny, each able to accept or reject His invitation to the heavenly kingdom, and each able to choose whether or not he or she wants to participate in his or her own redemption and salvation.

Just as the Lord did not force the Virgin to accept His invitation to become the Mother of God, so too does the Lord not force us to accept His invitation to become sons and daughters of His Heavenly Father.

The Lord does not force us to pray, to study His word, or to walk in His commandments; He does not force us to repent and receive forgiveness of sins in Confession, to turn to Him for the healing of soul and body in Holy Unction, or even to draw near to Him and receive His most precious Body and Blood with fear, faith, and love in Holy Communion.

All of these things the Lord wills for us because He knows that through them we can be saved,

through them we can overcome the temptations of our lives and we can walk with Him in newness of life; through them we can be incorporated into His victory over sin, death, and the devil.

But, brothers and sisters, all these things are offered as an invitation, an invitation which we can either accept, reject, or choose to ignore.

Two thousand years ago, the Virgin humbly accepted the Lord's will with the words, "Let it be to me according to your word." This simple response, allowed the Lord, Who once walked with Adam and Eve in the coolness of Paradise, to once again walk among us His beloved people; this time not simply as their Creator, but now also as their Redeemer, as the One Who would accomplish all things necessary for their salvation.

And through our own personal response to God's invitation to walk with Him each day in newness of life, He will likewise accomplish all things necessary for our own salvation. All we have to do is accept the invitation to follow Him, as His disciples, as His co-travelers, as His friends, and even as His brothers and sisters for through adoption by grace we have become sons and daughters of His heavenly Father.

Let each of us today, and every day, listen to the humble voice of the Lord and accept His invitation. The Lord wills to do great and marvelous things for us, let us do our part, and welcome Him into our minds, hearts, and lives, so that we might walk with Him as new creatures of God, new men and women in Christ, as the first fruits of a redeemed and sanctified creation.

Through the prayers of our Most Blessed Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.



JAPANESE ORTHODOX CHURCH ASSESSES SURVIVORS' NEEDS, SEARCHES FOR MISSING PRIEST

From OCA.org

BALTIMORE, MD [IOCC] -- International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) has been in contact with the Autonomous Orthodox Church in Japan and its ACT Alliance partners to assess the emerging needs following the massive earthquake and tsunami which devastated northeastern Japan on March 11, 2011. IOCC is also reaching out to the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Metropolis of Korea. As the Orthodox Church in Japan works to assess the needs of survivors, it reports that one priest in Tohoku, Japan is missing.

"Most of the church buildings in Tohoku parish along the Pacific coast are severely damaged and one priest is missing," reports Father Demitrios Tanaka of the Orthodox Church in Japan. "However, we confirmed that the clergy of Sendai Orthodox Church, including Bishop Seraphim, are safe."

Given that most of the communications infrastructure was damaged, the Japanese Church is still assessing the safety and exact needs of parishioners in the affected areas.

The Holy Resurrection Cathedral of Tokyo and the building of the Metropolitan Council were spared damage, according to Father Demitrios.

"The outpouring of support from Orthodox Christians who have expressed their desire to help through IOCC has been moving," said IOCC Executive Director Constantine Triantafilou. "This is a complex disaster – two almost simultaneous catastrophic events – and the scope of the need is just beginning to emerge. IOCC will continue to work with its Orthodox Christian and ecumenical partners to determine the most effective aid that can be rendered to Japan in the days and weeks to come."

The human toll and damage to homes and infrastructure following the 8.9-magnitude earthquake are only beginning to be calculated. More than 10,000 people are now feared dead after the earthquake-triggered tsunami washed away several coastal cities, including Sendai, the Episcopal See of the East Japan Diocese of the Autonomous Orthodox Church in Japan (photo of Sendai Cathedral shown above).

The overwhelming scale of the twin disasters has prompted the Japanese government to request international assistance. IOCC will coordinate its response with local Orthodox and ecumenical partners in Japan to identify unmet needs that will complement the assistance being rendered by the Japanese and other governments.

IOCC has received numerous calls from individuals and groups offering to assemble health and baby kits. "The kits have been in great demand recently and are always welcome," said Jamie Helfer, IOCC emergency response coordinator. "Kits that are received to the warehouse facility in western Maryland will be staged for shipment as they are requested by partners in response to disasters around the world and may also be shipped to Japan, if they are requested by our partners there."

Directions on how to assemble the kits, which are to be sent to a central warehouse in western Maryland, may be found on IOCC's website at www.iocc.org/kits.

Donations to IOCC may be made on-line at www.iocc.org, by calling toll free at 877-803-4622, or sending a check or money order payable to IOCC to PO Box 630225, Baltimore, MD 21263-0225.

