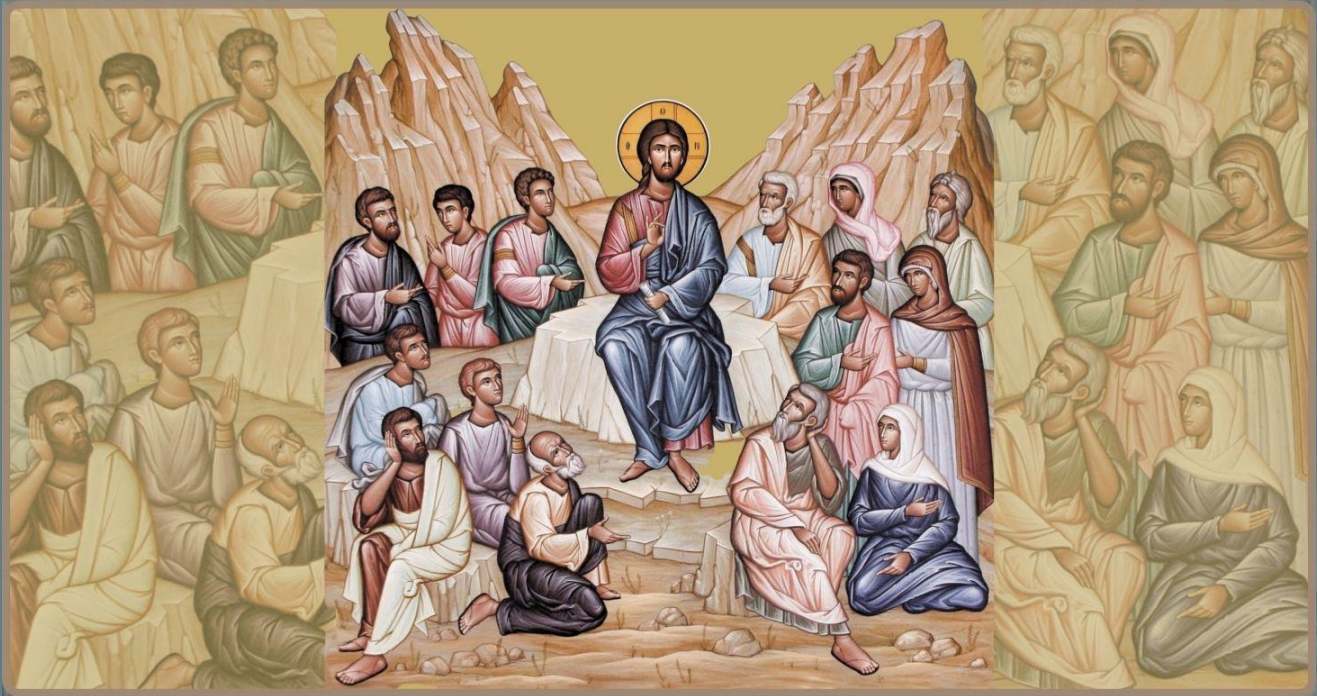


**St Ignatios of Antioch  
Melkite Greek Catholic Church  
1003 Merry Street  
Augusta, Georgia 30904  
706 364-6219**



**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
18 June 2023**

## THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



### THE LAMP OF THE BODY

WHENEVER WE WANT TO DISTRACT an infant or a pet, we place bright colors or movement before their eyes. Their eyes focus on what they see before them and distract them from whatever potential disaster we envision.

We aren't much different; we, too, can be easily distracted from our more burdensome responsibilities by activities or objects we enjoy. Even the memory of past events, pleasant or painful, can intrude on us and deflect our focus from the task at hand. When these distractions take us away from our family obligations or our relationship with God, we have lost our way. At first, we may not feel lost, but over time the consequences of our choices will become clear.

Many people shook their heads in disbelief at the woman who expressed amazement when her daughter in college stopped going to church. "But we always took her to church," she reasoned, "if her soccer game was cancelled." This mother had let the "bright colors" of a good time distract her entire family from making a meaningful connection to God and the Church the focus of their lives.

We don't have to wonder what the Lord Jesus might have thought about such a situation; He tells us in the Gospel: the alluring distractions that attract us can so cloud our vision that the lamp of our eye goes dark. *"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"* (Mt 6:22, 23)



## What Clouds Our Spiritual Vision?

We may attribute an inability to focus on our spiritual life on a number of causes. Some of them are completely beyond our control; others can be curbed by our free choice, once we recognize their effect on us. Among these influences are:

- **The Fall:** We are told that Adam and Eve, for example, were distracted from God's way when they became convinced that "*the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise*" (Gen 3:6). They accepted the logic of the tempter and lost their previous intimacy with God. We inherit their naiveté and are easily tempted by similar false promises, making us spiritually weak.

- **The Passions:** As a result of the Fall, we are at the mercy of certain impulses within us which dispose us to sin. Some passions involve normal needs which, out of control, can dominate our soul – a disordered appetite for food or drink (gluttony), for sexual activity (unchastity), or for money and what it can buy (avarice). Provided that they are kept within the proper bounds, desire for these things is normal.

More spiritual passions include the need to dominate others (anger), to expect happiness as our right (*dejection, listlessness*), and to be egocentric (*vanity, pride and vainglory*). A person who values his or her feelings above all else will be subject to many if not all, of these passions. As St Maximos the Confessor noted, "[A person] errs when the irrationality of feeling is the only form of discernment. He is captured by pleasure and avoidance of pain."

- **The Culture Around Us:** We accept as normal the ways of the society in which we live. We do things because everyone else does them. Thus, we expect to shake hands, rather than bow to one another as they do in the Far East. Because we live in a secular society, inclusive of all religions or philosophies, there are many ideas, viewpoints, and values freely expressed around us; some of them we as Christians should not accept, whether legal or not.

One facet of our society, for example, which is not only legal but promoted, is consumerism. Americans are both enabled and encouraged to build their lives around acquiring the latest and best of whatever pleases them. This is in stark contrast to the Lord's ideal expressed in the Gospel: "*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon...But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*" (Mt 6:24, 33). American consumerism has seduced our population in ways that make all sorts of addictions inevitable. Consumer goods, for example, are regularly marketed by sexual images; can pornography and lust be far behind?

The most serious departures from a godly lifestyle in our society are those which ignore the Ten Commandments – refusing recognition of God in the public arena, denying a special place to the Lord's Day, accepting murder (abortion, euthanasia) and adultery – or which seek to redefine reality based on one's individual wishes. Because some disorder is not against the law

or because “everybody does it” does not mean it is in accordance with God’s way. Christians should be committed to discerning His way for us.

## Dealing with the Passions

Christians seeking to foster a relationship with Christ dwelling in them will want to overcome the power of the passions. The most important weapons which can help in this spiritual struggle are **vigilance** and **discernment**. The vigilant Christian is one who, regularly examining his world and his own reactions to it, seeks to ascertain whether his responses are determined by one of the passions listed above. Since all the passions are expressions of our ego, we must remain watchful to determine how much our desires (“I want,” “I need,” or “I have the right to”) reflect a hidden egotism. The discerning Christian is one who is able to determine this and frame a response to the enticements of the world in line with Christ’s way for us set forth in the Scriptures.

## Dealing with the Culture

St Paul counseled new believers in the culture of his day, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may test what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Rom 12:2) and also, “*Test all things: hold fast to what is good and abstain from every form of evil*” (1 Thess 5:21, 22). Christians today need to distinguish what is good in our secular world from what is not.

Modern society is built on the idea that the freedom of the individual is the greatest good. The individual should be free to choose his or her own political leaders, values or religion and publicly promote that choice. Extreme expressions of this concept are the conviction that the individual determines his or her own “truth,” becoming the ultimate judge of his or her actions and identity, determining whether one is male or female, who or how many to marry, when and how to die, etc. irrespective of law or custom.

Are we, first of all, individuals or members of a community (and therefore unable to determine our own truth)? Do obligations to our family, Church or country outweigh our individual preferences?

We also are faced with competing Christian visions, all claiming to be based on the Bible, as well as Buddhist, Islamic or atheist perspectives. Is this advice, given to the Christians in multicultural Ephesus, good for us as well: “*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (1 Jn 4:1). All of these counsels apply to us today.

This week prayerfully read the entire Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) and reflect on what it says to you. Has your spiritual life lost its savor (v.13)? Is your life a light which can bring glory to God (v.14)? Think about your life and how Christ’s teachings on the Commandments (5:17-48) concern it.

## Sunday Collections

Attendance	Date	Collection
30	23 April 2023	
30	30 April 2023	1,041.00
31	7 May 2023	552.00
	14 May 2023	680.00
	21 May 2023	
31	28 May 2023	431.00
23	4 June 2023	363.00
24	11 June 2023	715.00

## Divine Liturgy Intentions:

For all of our Father, Grandfathers, Godfathers, Step-fathers and beloved Uncles, living and deceased.

### For the Living:

Bishop Francois, Fr. John Azar, Fr. James Graham, David Mangelsdorf, Brian Frank, Maria Barklage, Nookid Graham, Ali de la Vega, Dn. Kent & Diana Plowman, A Special Parish Intention, Mandie, Nick Baiad, Debi Hull, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Richie Damici, Medical Personnel and First Responders

### For the Dead:

Lou Toscano, Rev. Romanos Russo

Next Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, is the baptism for Mark Cafeo. The family is inviting the entire parish out to a catered lunch at the Savannah River Brewing Company (813 5<sup>th</sup> St., Augusta). There will be no coffee hour in the Hall after Liturgy.

# Announcements

We are live-streaming on our Facebook page at the following days & times:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00AM, The Third Hour

Friday – 6:00 PM Weekday Vespers

Saturday – 6:00PM Great Vespers

Sunday – 9:00AM Orthros & 10:00AM Divine Liturgy

**WE'VE BEGUN PRAYING** the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8am. This is a short prayer service from our version of the Liturgy of the Hours. It lasts less than 20 minutes or so. Come join us!

**PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES AROUND TOWN** – Most Holy Trinity parish will be hosting a Men's Holy Hour every Friday morning from 6-7am. There will also be a coffee hour and reflection time afterwards – Men from all parishes are invited to attend for whatever portion of the time they are available. For the Ladies – St. Joseph's will be hosting a Women's Holy Hour on the first Monday of each month at 7pm.

## **MELKITE MUSIC 101**

There is nothing like Melkite music. For beginners, the task of learning Byzantine chant can be daunting, however. This three-week series will cover some of the basics of Melkite music and give participants the tools to continue learning in their own communities. Each session will last two hours with a ten-minute break in the middle. Participants will be able to practice music, ask questions and learn where to find essential materials and resources.

Each session will run from 6-8pm (**CDT**) on Thursday July 20, 27 and August 3. Abouna Justin will open the Zoom link at 5:30 pm (CDT) so that those who wish to virtually 'attend' Vespers may do so.

July 20...Session 1: Introduction and Definitions, How to learn Melkite Music.

Divine Liturgy Music,

Learning the Eight Tones (part 1: Tones 7, 8, 1 and 2)

July 27...Session 2: Learning the Eight Tones (part 2: Tones 3, 4, 5 and 6), Praying Vespers

August 3...Session 3: Praying Orthros, Feast Day Music

Those interested should email Abouna Justin at [protosouth@stgeorgebham.com](mailto:protosouth@stgeorgebham.com) with "MELKITE MUSIC" in the subject line of the email. He will send out a Zoom link and any further details.

# Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 2)



When you des - cend - ed to Death, O Im - mor - tal



Life, You put Ha-des to death by the splen - dor of



Your Di - vin - i - ty, and when You raised the dead



from be - low the earth, all the Hea - ven - ly Po - wers



cried out to You: O Gi - ver of Life, Christ our God,



glo - ry to You!

## Prokimenon

**Reader:** My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my Savior.

**All:** My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my Savior.

**Reader:** The Lord has chastised me through his teaching, yet he has not delivered me to death.

**All:** My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my Savior.

**Reader:** My strength and my courage is the Lord,

**All:** And he has been my Savior.

### Readings for the Week:

Monday:	Rom 9:18-33	Matt 11:2-15
Tuesday:	Rom 10:11-11:2	Matt 11:16-20
Wednesday:	Rom 11:2-12	Matt 11:20-27
Thursday:	Rom 11:13-24	Matt 11:27-30
Friday:	Rom 11:25-36	Matt 12:1-8
Saturday:	Rom 6:11-17	Matt 8:14-23

### Saints of the Week:

<b>June 18:</b> Holy Martyr Leontios
<b>June 19:</b> Holy Apostle Jude
<b>June 20:</b> Holy Hieromartyr Methodios of Patara, Bishop of Olympos and Tyre
<b>June 21:</b> Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsus
<b>June 22:</b> Holy Hieromartyr Eusebios, Bishop of Samosata
<b>June 23:</b> Holy Woman Martyr Agrippina
<b>June 24:</b> Nativity of the Prophet and Forerunner, John the Baptizer
<b>June 25:</b> Holy Woman Martyr Febronia



## Word Search

N	O	M	M	A	M	H	Q	S	N	R	A	B	G	C	V	E
W	E	A	T	V	X	N	W	T	S	C	D	X	R	W	B	T
Y	Q	Q	V	B	T	W	F	S	O	L	O	M	O	N	K	I
C	G	G	E	U	L	Y	R	O	L	G	M	P	W	A	G	I
R	O	L	A	K	P	I	J	M	E	N	P	S	I	J	N	O
J	D	S	R	E	Q	Z	L	C	K	F	M	R	J	S	B	W
R	T	O	I	L	P	G	M	I	S	U	A	E	C	W	O	S
U	E	P	J	A	H	C	N	S	E	R	L	T	S	T	D	Y
J	R	W	Q	U	F	M	E	I	D	S	Q	S	M	G	Y	G
X	V	Q	O	I	S	N	E	N	H	X	J	A	P	K	Y	J
D	R	D	E	L	K	T	I	L	L	T	E	M	E	S	D	E
F	S	L	N	R	F	P	I	V	I	S	O	T	S	F	Y	A
C	D	R	A	U	S	S	G	C	X	G	E	L	A	E	I	C
X	Q	D	X	A	O	S	J	J	E	Y	H	V	C	H	E	L
N	V	N	W	X	J	S	G	A	Z	G	M	T	O	M	H	K
A	Q	P	S	D	R	I	B	P	D	R	I	N	K	L	L	J
G	T	P	A	E	R	D	A	A	M	H	M	H	N	T	X	U

Barns  
Birds  
Body  
Clothing  
Darkness  
Drink  
Eat  
Eye  
Field

Flower  
Glory  
God  
Hate  
Justice  
Lamp  
Life  
Light  
Lilies

Love  
Mammon  
Masters  
Reap  
Solomon  
Sound  
Sow  
Spin  
Toil

# **Parish Information:**

**Rt. Rev. Michael Skrocki, JCD**  
**Pastor**

**[abounamike@aol.com](mailto:abounamike@aol.com)**

**Knights of Columbus**  
**JFK Council**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7pm  
Most Holy Trinity

**4<sup>th</sup> Degree Assembly**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7pm  
St. Ignatios

**Publicans Prayer Group**  
Postponed until Further Notice

**New Parishioners:**  
Please register with Fr. Michael.

**Mystery of Holy Confession**  
Please contact Fr. Michael to set up a convenient time.

**Mystery of Christian Initiation**  
Expectant parents should notify Fr. Michael prior to the birth of the child. Adult converts should contact Fr. Michael so arrangements may be made for any necessary instruction and sacraments.

**Mystery of Holy Crowning**  
Those planning to marry should notify the Fr. Michael  
at least six months prior to the desired Wedding date.

**Mystery of Holy Anointing**  
Please notify Fr. Michael when you or a family member is in need of anointing.

To report sexual abuse by clergy, parish personnel or volunteers of the Eparchy of Newton, please call the **Victim Assistance Coordinator** at 1-800-479-5910.

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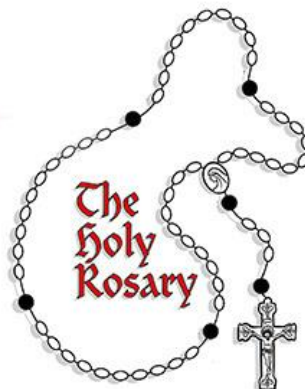
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