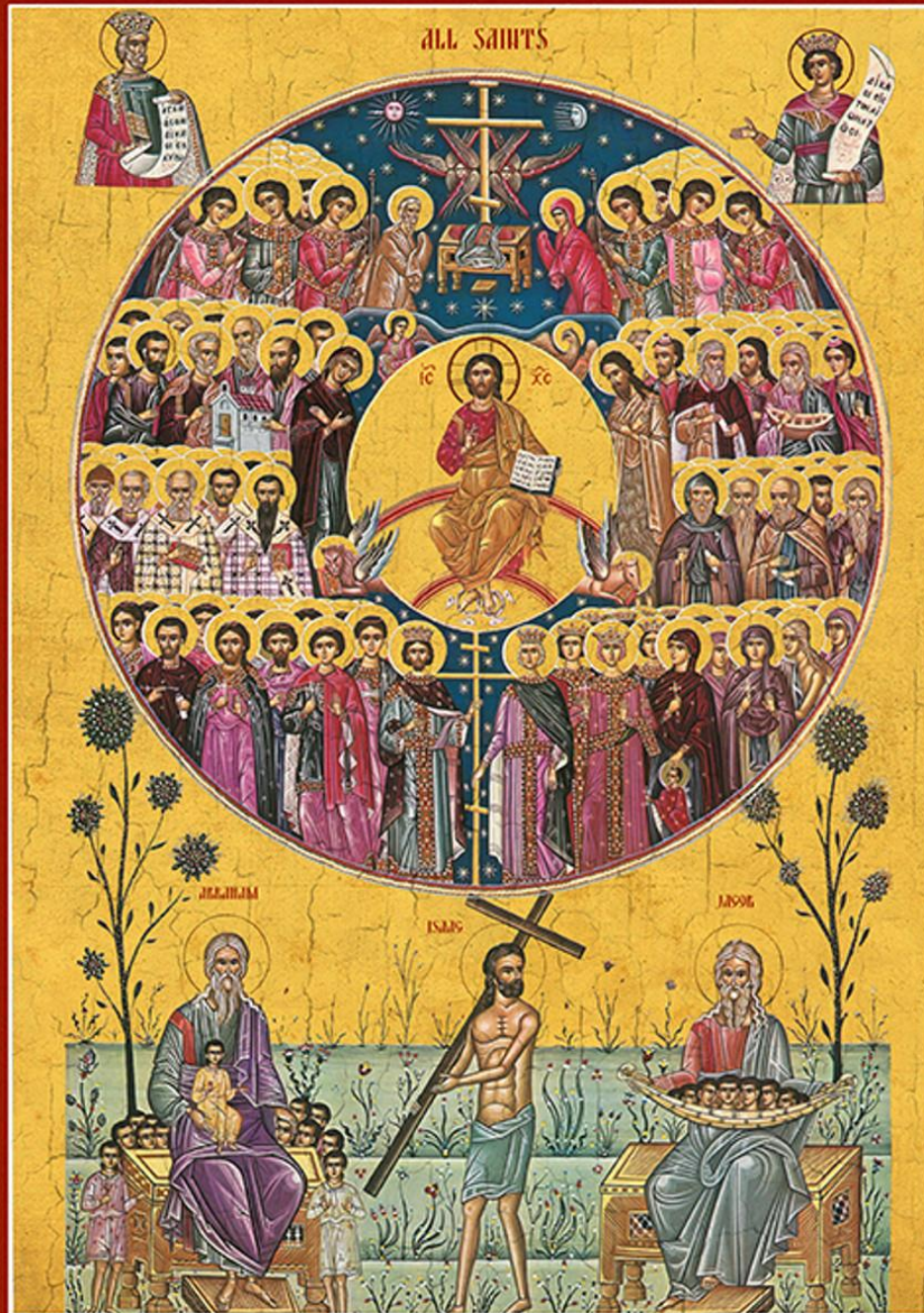


**St Ignatios of Antioch
Melkite Greek Catholic Church
1003 Merry Street
Augusta, Georgia 30904
706 364-6219**



**Sunday of All Saints
4 June 2023**

ALL SAINTS DAY



THE FACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Matthew 10:32-38; 19:27-30)

WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT LOOK LIKE? We know from the Scriptures that the Father cannot be seen but has manifested Himself to us in His Son. “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (Jn 1:18). And we know that the Son, incarnate, became visible in His humanity. He looks like one of us. This is why we are able to have icons of Him. As St. John of Damascus wrote in *On the Divine Images*, “It is impossible to make an image of the immeasurable, uncircumscribed, invisible God. ... But it is obvious that when you contemplate God becoming man, then you may depict Him clothed in human form. When the Invisible One becomes visible to flesh, then you may draw His likeness” (1: 7,8). But what about the Holy Spirit? Has He become visible to flesh? Can we see the face of the Holy Spirit?

In a sense we can. The “face” of the Holy Spirit is the face of the saints. The very existence of the saints testifies to the presence of holiness in the Church, for no one can become a saint except by the Holy Spirit. The “face” of the Holy Spirit is not in the monuments which have been erected by Christians over the centuries, impressive as they are. Rather it is in those who have lived the way they did because the Spirit of God dwelt within them.

The priest of the French village of Ars, St. Jean Vianney knew the Holy Spirit firsthand, we might say. He wrote, “If the damned were asked: ‘Why are you in Hell?’ they would answer: ‘For having resisted the Holy Spirit.’ And if the saints were asked, ‘Why are you in Heaven?’ they would answer: ‘For having listened to the Holy Spirit.’ When good thoughts come into our minds, it is the Holy Spirit who is visiting us. The Holy Spirit is a power. The Holy Spirit supported St. Simeon on his column; He sustained the martyrs. Without the Holy

Spirit, the martyrs would have fallen like the leaves from the trees.” (Catechesis on the Holy Spirit).

This intimate connection between the Holy Spirit and the saints is proclaimed in the Byzantine Churches which celebrate the Feast of All Saints in connection with the Feast of Pentecost. On Pentecost we say that the Holy Spirit has come upon the Church. On the next Sunday, we demonstrate the truth of this claim by pointing to the saints.

The Spirit is certainly present in any saint but it is in the totality of all saints that we find the “face” of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are many and varied; no one person can encompass them all. The Church describes the particular gifts of the saints by designating categories for us to understand and revere them. There are prophets and apostles, martyrs, hierarchs, ascetics, unmercenaries, fools for Christ and more. There are saints whose names we know and those we do not. There are saints whose lives are documented and others whose name is their only memorial. All together they reveal to us the “face” of the Holy Spirit. It is noteworthy that what the West calls “the communion of saints” is referred to in the East as “the communion of the Holy Spirit.”

In fully appointed Byzantine churches we find ourselves surrounded by icons of the saints. Frescoes of the saints cover the walls, panel icons in shrines or on icon stands are displayed for veneration. These are not distractions from the altar or pulpit but a wordless demonstration that we are one body with the saints in Christ by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not simply the assembly of those physically present; it is the gathering of all who are in Christ.

The Gospel on the Saints

The Gospel passage read at the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of All Saints is not a continuous episode. Rather it is an assemblage of three teachings concerning what it means to aspire to holiness. The first step is that we are called to **bear witness** to Christ in the world. *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven”* (Mt 10:32). Our faith is not meant to be practiced privately, for our personal consolation. Rather we are to be witnesses to Him before others.

In today’s world “bearing witness” often means “pointing the finger at” some atrocity or injustice. We are called to “point the finger at” Christ, much as John the Baptist did: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). The simplest way to point the figure at the person of Christ is to wear a cross or display an icon in public. Often Evangelical Protestants who do not display icons will erect a plaque in their home or on their door with this verse “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

Recently the British government has prohibited Christians from wearing a cross in the workplace. The policy has been challenged in court by two women who were disciplined for wearing a cross at work. A Foreign Office statement defending the policy said, “In neither case is there any suggestion that the wearing of a visible cross or crucifix was a generally recognized form of practicing the Christian faith, still less one that is regarded (including by the applicants themselves) as a requirement of the faith.” In response the former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey commented, “The irony is that when governments and courts dictate to Christians that the cross is a matter of insignificance, it becomes an even more important symbol and expression of our faith.”

Witnessing to Christ – even in the Church – may make one unpopular and oppressed. “And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me” Mt 10:30). The witness to Christ is thus called to not only wear a cross but to **bear the cross** as Christ did.

The saint is one who has heard the Gospel call **to put God first** in their lives. We may be proud that we go to church, pray, or fast. So did the Pharisee in Christ’s parable. The saint, however, is a person who is ready to put everything else aside to focus on God and His love for us. *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me”* (Mt 10:37).

The spiritual son of St Simeon the New Theologian, Nicetas Stethatos, says that there are three kinds of people in the world: “the carnal man, who wants to live for his own pleasure, even if it harms others; the natural man, who wants to please both himself and others, and the spiritual man who wants to please only God, even if it harms himself” (cited in Tito Colliander’s *Way of the Ascetics*, 5). The ascetic in a monastic setting or in the world strives to be that spiritual man: to love nothing or no one more than God.

The final section in this Gospel pastiche is Christ’s promise that those who have left home and family for His sake will receive a hundred times more in this life and eternal life in the age to come (see Mt 19:29). This promise is often interpreted to mean that those who go off to serve Christ will prosper materially, it may be the opposite: that those who place Christ first in their lives will find that He is worth a hundred times more than what the world has to offer and that they will find contentment in what they do have, a place in the kingdom of God.

Glorified in His Saints

CATHOLICS AND ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS are sometimes criticized by people because of the reverence we show to the saints. Critics may feel that we ignore the Lord, preferring to pay homage to favorite saints. Seeing how some believers act, we may understand why some Protestants and others may feel as they do. Some devotees of the saints lavish more praise on the saints than on Christ.

While such behavior may be misguided, an appropriate devotion to the Theotokos and other saints is not. For us, the saints are the “proof” that the Holy Spirit truly came upon the Church at Pentecost. The holiness of their lives points to the grace of the Holy Spirit powerfully working in our world. The saints reveal to us the “face” of the Holy Spirit manifest in the Church. For this reason Byzantine Churches celebrate the Feast of All Saints on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we read of a number of Old Testament figures renowned in Israelite history for their righteous lives or powerful deeds. The selection read at today’s Divine Liturgy does not mention any of the individuals named in the Epistle (some of whom are not the most praiseworthy by modern standards). Rather it begins with the point made in conclusion: that some were powerful and defeated their enemies while others were tortured and put to death. Still others lived righteous lives in hiding and *“wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground”* (Heb 11:38). In either case nothing they could do could bring them eternal life. That would only become possible through Jesus Christ and His Church. As the biblical author explains, *“These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would then be made perfect”* (Heb 11:39-40). We can conclude that the gift of

the Holy Spirit dwelling in the believer far exceeds the glory won by the rulers, soldiers and prophets of Israelite history. We can also strive to draw close to the One who is everywhere present, filling all things.

New Testament Saints

There is no one more filled with the Holy Spirit than she who is “full of grace,” the most holy Theotokos. Like her the holy prophet, forerunner and baptist John has a unique place among Christians as, in Christ’s own words, “among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist” (Mt 11:11). In addition to them, there are countless figures from every age in Christian history honored as saints by the various local Churches. In the Byzantine Churches, it has become customary to consider the saints as belonging to one or another of the following categories:

Prophets – God’s Old Testament spokesmen such as Elias or Isaiah who called the Jews back to the true God and His ways whenever they strayed.

Apostles – The Twelve closest followers of Christ as well as the Seventy who were their companions: eye-witnesses to the presence of Christ on earth.

Evangelists – The Gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Hierarchs – Sainly bishops like Nicholas of Myra, Spyridon of Cyprus, or Basil the Great.

Righteous Ascetics – Giants in the monastic life, both men and women, including elders (guides in the spiritual life) and solitaries, living in forest or wilderness.

Martyrs – Those who gave their lives witnessing to Christ, from the Great Martyrs of the Roman persecutions, such as St. Barbara and St. George, to the new martyrs who died under modern dictators or religious extremists.

Hieromartyrs – Hierarchs and priests who sacrificed their own lives as well as offered the Divine Sacrifice of Christ.

Confessors - Those who survived torture or imprisonment for the Lord but escaped with their lives, like St. Maximos the Confessor.

Unmercenaries – Those who gave of their talents freely to help the poor and the sick, such as Ss. Cosmas and Damian.

Fools for Christ – Those who pretended to be mentally incompetent so that their spiritual gifts would not be noticed and praised, like St. Xenia of Petersburg.

Passionbearers – Those who accepted suffering, even death, rather than to repay violence with more violence.

On this First Sunday after Pentecost, the Byzantine Churches celebrate all the saints, whether their names are known or not. On the following Sundays various local Churches celebrate their own regional saints (All Saints of Russia, or North America, or the British Isles, etc.). Wherever the Holy Spirit has been at work in the Church, saints have been raised up to the glory of God.

Who “Makes” Saints?

Ultimately, of course, it is God who makes people holy by giving them the gift of the Holy Spirit. When people make this gift their own and live an heroic life in Christ, others recognize it. When a local Church recognizes that one of its sons or daughters has lived an

exceptional Christian life and gives evidence that they are now in glory, it publicly proclaims him or her to be a saint.

In the Eastern Orthodox Churches it is the local Church (such as the Patriarchate of Constantinople or the Church of Greece) which declares saints. In the East this process is called glorification. In the West recognition of saints is called canonization (inclusion on the canon or list of saints) and is proclaimed by the Pope of Rome.

What Do We Do with the Saints?

God has placed certain saints in our lives and we would be remiss if we ignored them. We have our patron saints (those whose names we bear) and those whose icons may be found in our home.

Most of our parishes have patron saints as well. We do well to venerate their icons regularly, asking their intercession with prayers like these:

Pray for me, St. *N.*, for with fervor I come to you, speedy helper and intercessor for my soul. Holy Father/Mother *N.*, pray to God for us.

Observe their feast days according to the Church calendar. If there is no Liturgy scheduled, ask for one to be served in their honor. Why not?

From the *Synaxarion*

Our most godlike Fathers decreed that we should celebrate the present feast after the descent of the All-holy Spirit as showing in a certain way that the coming of the All-holy Spirit acted through the Apostles like this: sanctifying and making wise human beings taken from our mortal clay and, to replace that fallen angelic order [the demons], restoring them through Christ and sending them to God – some by the witness of blood-martyrdom, others by their virtuous conduct and way of life. Thus things beyond nature are achieved.... This is one reason why we celebrate the feast of All Saints.

A second reason is because, though so many people have been well-pleasing to God, they were unknown to humanity by name or...because it was not easy to honor them all properly because of their vast numbers. And therefore, so that we may attract the help of them all... the Godly Fathers ordained that we should celebrate this feast -all those in whom the Holy Spirit has dwelt He has made holy.

A third reason is this. It was necessary for the saints who are celebrated individually day by day to be gathered together on one day in order to demonstrate that, as they struggled for the one Christ and all ran the race in the same stadium of virtue, so they were all fittingly crowned as servants of one God and sustain the Church, having filled the world on high. They stir us also to accomplish the same struggle in its different and many forms, to the degree of power that each of us has, and to press onward with all eagerness.

Sunday Collections

| Attendance | Date | Collection |
|------------|---------------|------------|
| 40 | 9 April 2023 | 580.00 |
| 28 | 16 April 2023 | 10.00 |
| 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 |

Divine Liturgy Intentions: 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, Stephanie, Nick Baiad, Debi Hull, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Medical Personnel and First Responders

For the Dead:

Lou Toscano



Announcements

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

Friday – 6:00 PM Weekday Vespers

Saturday – 6:00PM Great Vespers

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

BEGINNING THIS COMING WEEK we will be praying the 3rd Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8am. This is a short prayer service from our version of the Liturgy of the Hours. It should last about 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.

National Association of Melkite Youth

NAMY Conference 2023

Our Melkite Mission: Becoming Disciples, Making Disciples

Who: Melkite Youth throughout the US, ages 13-18

When: Monday July 10th- Friday July 14th, 2023

Where: St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire

Why: Faith, Fellowship, Fun

For more information:

Please contact Fr. Thomas & Pres. Rebekah Moses at namy@melkite.org

Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 8)



You de-scen-ded from on high, O Com-pas - sion - ate



One; and con-sen - ted to bu - ri - al for three days



that You might free us from suf - fer - ing.



O Lord, our life and our re-sur - rec-tion, glo - ry



to You.

Troparion of All Saints

(Tone 4)



O Christ God, Your Church clothed with the blood of



Your Mar-tyrs all o - ver the world, as with pur-ple



and fine li-nen, cries out to You: send Your mer-



- cy up-on Your peo - ple, grant peace to Your fold and



ex-tend Your great com-pas-sion up-on our souls.

Prokimenon

Reader: Awesome in his saints is God, the God of Israel!

All: Awesome in his saints is God, the God of Israel!

Reader: In the churches, bless God, the Lord out of Israel's wellspring.

All: Awesome in his saints is God, the God of Israel!

Reader: Awesome in his saints is God,

All: The God of Israel!

Readings for the Week:

| | | |
|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Monday: | Rom 2:28-3:9 | Matt 6:31-7:9 |
| Tuesday: | Rom 4:4-12 | Matt 7:15-21 |
| Wednesday: | Rom 4:13-25 | Matt 7:21-23 |
| Thursday: | Rom 5:10-16 | Matt 8:23-27 |
| Friday: | Rom 5:17-6:2 | Matt 9:14-17 |
| Saturday: | Rom 3:19-26 | Matt 7:1-8 |

Saints of the Week:

| |
|---|
| June 4: All Saints Day; Holy Father Metrophanes, Bishop of Constantinople |
| June 5: Holy Hieromartyr Dorotheos, Bishop of Tyre |
| June 6: Holy Fathers, Bessarion the Wonder-worker; and Hilarion the Younger, Hegumen of the Dalmatos Monastery |
| June 7: Holy Hieromartyr Theodotos, Bishop of Ancyra |
| June 8: Transfer of the remains of the Holy Great-martyr Theodore, General of the Armies |
| June 9: Holy Father Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria |
| June 10: Holy Martyrs Alexander & Antonia; Holy Hieromartyr Timothy, Bishop of Prussa |
| June 11: Holy Apostles Bartholomew & Barnabas |

Word Search

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| L | F | I | R | S | T | T | I | R | X | W | L | S | F | S | E | Q | W |

Acknowledges

Amen

Cross

Disciples

Disowns

Everlasting

Father

First

Follow

Glory

Heaven

Hundredfold

Israel

Last

Left

Life

Possess

Regeneration

Throne

Tribes

Twelve

Worthy

Parish Information:

Rt. Rev. Michael Skrocki, JCD
Pastor

abounamike@aol.com

Knights of Columbus **JFK Council**

1st Wednesday of the month, 7pm.

Odd-numbered months at St. Ignatios

Even-numbered months here at Most Holy Trinity

4th Degree Assembly

2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm

Odd-numbered months at Most Holy Trinity

Even-numbered months here at 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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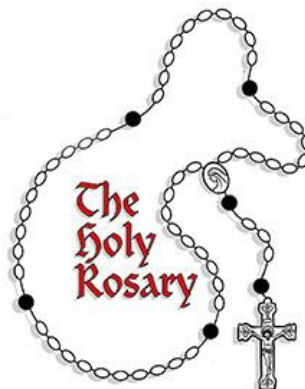
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