

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



**28<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
10 December 2023**

## 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost



### The Challenge of the Sabbath

MODERN MEDICINE HAS FOUND treatments for a number of diseases that had plagued mankind for centuries. Some have even been eradicated, at least in the developed world. This is not the case with scoliosis (curvature of the spine), such as afflicted the woman in St Luke's Gospel. To this day no one knows the cause of this affliction in most cases.

The Gospel says she had been afflicted with this condition for eighteen years, but since scoliosis often manifested at puberty, she was probably not old by our standards. Treatments available in our day such as wearing braces, surgery, physical therapy and pain medication, were unknown in the first century AD. They must have been eighteen long years indeed.

The Gospel tells us that the ruler of the synagogue was indignant *"because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, 'There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day'"* (Luke 13:15).

### The Sabbath in Judaism

One of the hallmark Jewish practices for millennia has been the observance of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, as a day set apart for God. We read in the Book of Exodus, *"And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people'"* (Exodus 31:14).

According to Exodus, a person profanes the Sabbath by doing any work on it. In traditional Jewish practice, maintained by observant Orthodox Jews in our own day, work is defined as "constructive labor" – whatever is done to benefit our life in this world. The Talmud – the traditional compendium of Jewish interpretation – lists

39 activities prohibited on the Sabbath, including all kinds of farm or household labor including lighting or extinguishing a fire and moving things about from one place to another. The only exception to these rules would be activity which helps save a life, which is why Jewish health care workers may be employed on the Sabbath.

Later commentators have understood these 39 prohibitions as categories, thereby expanding the list of prohibitions. Thus some rabbis teach that, since chaff cannot be picked from wheat on the Sabbath, it follows that one cannot pick the bones from fish as well. Gefilte fish (pre-ground boned fish) became a popular Sabbath food as a result.

In their zeal to preserve the Sabbath some rabbis have gone to what even many Jews perceive as extremes. Thus in some Jewish communities it is forbidden to ride a bicycle on the Sabbath because, if the chain breaks, you might be tempted to fix it. In a similar case a man was forbidden to drive his handicapped mother to the synagogue as it violated the Sabbath; the rabbi suggested that she move within walking distance. Then she would be welcome. The ruler of the synagogue in Luke seems to have been of like mind.

## Christ on the Sabbath

Christ was frequently in conflict with more observant Jews over Sabbath-related issues. He was not opposed to the Sabbath itself – He is depicted in the Gospel as a regular worshipper in the synagogue on the Sabbath (cf., [Luke 4:16](#)). Rather He was opposed to the elaboration of prohibitions favored by the Pharisees. Instead, He favored expanding the traditional exemption. In addition to work involved with saving a life, Christ saw doing good as an appropriate Sabbath activity: *“There was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked [Jesus], saying, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’—that they might accuse Him. Then He said to them, ‘What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath’”* (Matthew 12:10-12).

The Gospels record several incidents of healings which caused controversy because they were done on the Sabbath. St Luke tells how Christ asked some lawyers and Pharisees if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. When they would not answer, He proceeded to heal a man with dropsy (cf., [Luke 14:1-6](#)). And it was a Sabbath when the Lord Jesus healed the man born blind (cf., [John 9:1-41](#)).

We also read in John how Christ healed a paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda saying, *“Take up your bed and walk”* (John 5:8). The Pharisees did not challenge Jesus; rather they confronted the ex-paralytic: *“It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed”* (v. 10). The man replied that his healer had told him to do so and, we might add, that was enough for him.

## Legalism Is Dangerous

The Sabbath prohibitions were intended to free the Jews from a life which knew nothing but toil. Since they were in the form of bans, some Jews came to feel that extending these exclusions enhanced or honored the Sabbath. The Lord Jesus put forth a different approach, insisting that the Sabbath is honored when we do good on it.

The lawyers and Pharisees whom Jesus challenged were not the first or the last to turn positive precepts into restrictive commands. They turned the joy which should have accompanied the Sabbath into fear of transgressing a prohibition as a particular school of rabbis understood it.

Something similar happens in the Church when we lose sight of the presence of Christ which alone gives meaning to any precept or rubric. When this happens our traditions may become as fruitlessly restrictive as those Christ confronted. Conversely, when we cast them off we may be left, not with renewal but with license.

# The Sabbath Today

*“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made”* (Genesis 2:3). This verse is read at the start of Jewish Sabbath eve services to remind worshippers that the Sabbath is a remembrance of God’s rest after the work of creation.

In the Church the Sabbath has given way to Sunday with its memory of the Lord’s resurrection and the resulting new creation. Nevertheless, the Sabbath still has a place on Eastern Church calendars. In some parishes the Liturgy is offered on Saturday as well as on Sunday.

In our Church remembering the original creation is still a focus for our Saturday prayers. The kondakion sung on most Saturdays reflects the connection of the Sabbath with creation: “To You, O Lord, Ordainer and Creator of the world, the universe offers the God-bearing martyrs as the first fruits of nature. Wherefore through their prayers and through the intercession of the Theotokos preserve Your Church and our country in safety and peace: You who alone are most merciful.”

The Sabbath as a day of rest is expressed on Holy Saturday in recalling the great Sabbath rest of Christ in the tomb. Throughout the year, and especially on the Saturdays of the Dead, the peaceful repose of those who die in Christ is highlighted.

**WE HAVE RECEIVED A VERY GENEROUS OFFER** – during the season of the Christmas Fast (beginning 15 November) an anonymous parishioner has offered to match any donations we receive two to one. This is a wonderful opportunity to make your generosity to the parish count even more!

**CONTRIBUTE TO OUR NON-PERISHABLE FOOD DRIVE** by placing your donations in the designated area in the Parish Hall (green cardboard box) or coordinate with Ms. Barbara (bzmijewski@yahoo.com), ensuring your generous contributions make a meaningful impact to those in need.

## Sunday Collections

Attendance	Date	Collection
40	15 October 2023	\$451.00
38	22 October 2023	
37	29 October 2023	
37	5 November 2023	\$459.00
39	12 November 2023	\$375.00
35	19 November 2023	\$35.00
25	26 November 2023	\$3,360.00
49	3 December 2023	

## Divine Liturgy Intentions:

### For the Living:

Bishop Francois, Fr. John Azar, Fr. James Graham, Fr. Michael Copenhagen, David Mangelsdorf, Brian Frank, Nookid Graham, Ali de la Vega, Dn. Kent & Diana Plowman, Mandie, Nick Baiad, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Alfonso de la Vega, Michael A Skrocki, Medical Personnel and First Responders

### For the Dead:

## 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

**JOIN US IN 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 OPPORTUNITES 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.

# Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 3)



Let all in Hea - ven re - joice and all on earth



be glad, for the Lord has ex-er-ted po-wer with His



arm, by death He has tram-pled up-on Death, and



has be-come the first-born from the dead. He has de-



- li - ver'd us from the bo-som of Ha - des and has



gran-ted to the world great mer - cy.

# Pre-Christmas Kondakion

(Nov. 26 - Dec. 24)

(Tone 2)

To - day the Vir - gin is on her way to the cave where she  
will give birth to the E - ter - nal Word of God in an  
in - ef - fa - ble man - ner. Re - joice there - fore,  
O U - ni - verse when you hear this news, and  
glo - ri - fy with the an - gels and the shep - herds,  
Him who shall ap - pear as a new Child be - ing God from  
all e - ter - ni - ty.

## Prokimenon

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King sing praise!

**All:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King sing praise!

**Reader:** All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!

**All:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King sing praise!

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, Sing praise!

**All:** Sing praise to our King sing praise!

### Readings for the Week:

Monday:	Hebrews 3:5-18	Mark 9:41-10:1
Tuesday:	Hebrews 4:1-13	Mark 10:2-12
Wednesday:	Hebrews 5:11-6:8	Mark 10:11-16
Thursday:	Hebrews 7:1-6	Mark 10:17-27
Friday:	Hebrews 7:18-25	Mark 10:24-32
Saturday:	Ephesians 2:11-13	Luke 16:10-16

### Saints of the Week:

<b>Dec. 10:</b> Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes & Euegraphus
<b>Dec. 11:</b> Holy Father Daniel the Stylite
<b>Dec. 12:</b> Holy Father Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Trimythonthis in Cyprus
<b>Dec. 13:</b> Holy Martyrs Eustrates, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarios, Orestes and the Virgin Lucia
<b>Dec. 14:</b> Holy Marytrs Thyrces, Leucios, Callinicos, Philemon and Apollonios
<b>Dec. 15:</b> Holy Hieromartyr Eleutherios; Paul of Latra; and Stephen the Confessor, Archbishop of Surozh
<b>Dec. 16:</b> Holy Prophet Haggai
<b>Dec. 17:</b> Holy Prophet Daniel; the three Holy Youths Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael

## Word Search

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

Adversaries

Bent

Crowd

Daughter

Eighteen

Hands

Hypocrites

Infirmity

Look

Manger

Ox

Ruler

Sabbath

Satan

Six

Spirit

Straight

Synagogue

Teaching

Water

Woman

# **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.