



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

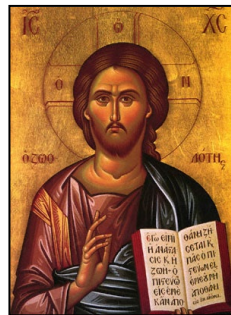
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, March 8, 2020

ON THIS DAY, THE **FIRST** SUNDAY OF GREAT AND HOLY LENT WHICH WE REFER TO AS ***THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY***, WE CALL TO MIND THE RESTORATION OF THE BLESSED AND VENERABLE ICONS BY THE BLESSED EMPEROR OF CONSTANTINOPLE, MICHAEL, AND HIS MOTHER THEODORA, DURING THE REIGN OF THE PATRIARCH, ST. METHODIOS, THE CONFESSOR (***SEE TRIODION INSERT ON NEXT PAGE***). WE ALSO COMMEMORATE Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia; Hermas the Apostle of the 70; Paul the Confessor; Dometios the Righteous; and Felix of Burgundy, Enlightener of East Anglia. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. ***You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!***

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

TODAY's Spiritual Theme From the Triodion:

On the **first Sunday of Great and Holy Lent** we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy by commemorating the end of the iconoclastic controversy and the restoration of the icons to our Church by the Empress Theodora in 843, on the first Sunday of Lent that year. It is also the celebration in honor of the martyrs and confessors who struggled for the faith, appropriate for Lent when we are striving to imitate the martyrs by means of our self-denial through fasting.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./3. Hymn Commemorating the Sunday of Orthodoxy – (Hymnal-pp.128-131):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance. Before Your most pure image we bow down, O Good One, entreating You to forgive our sins, Christ our God. For You willingly ascended the cross in the flesh to deliver from the enemy those whom You had made. For this we thank You and we cry to You, O Savior: By coming to save the world, You have filled all things with joy.

2. Resurrectional Hymn (Plagal of the First Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.114-117):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance: To the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation, let us, the faithful, give praise and worship. For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death and raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

4. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

5. Kontakion sung for Sunday of Orthodoxy – (Hymnal-pp. 268-271):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Victorious Lady, mighty champion, defending us, we your servants now inscribe to you this hymn of thanks, for you rescued us from suffering and tribulation. Theotokos, with your power that can never fail, keep us safe from every danger our whole life long that we may cry to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

6. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301)::

On the first five Sundays of Great Lent when we use the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, a different hymn is sung instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Luke 24:12-35)

But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened. Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. And He said to

them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be condemned to death and crucified Him. But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find His body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Him." Then He said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them the things about Himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, He walked ahead as if He were going on. But they urged Him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. When He was at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road, while He was opening the Scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and He has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40)

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the

mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (John 1:43-51)

The next day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him about Whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.” When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, He said of him, “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!” Nathanael asked Him, “Where did you get to know me?” Jesus answered, “I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.” Nathanael replied, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

Liturgy of St. Basil Used Every Sunday during Great and Holy Lent:

The Liturgy of St. Basil was, until the twelfth century, the chief Liturgy of Constantinople. Its ‘Prayer of Consecration’ or *Anaphora* is probably the most eloquent of all liturgies, east and west. Powerful in its unity of thought, theological depth and rich biblical imagery, it was celebrated every Sunday and Great Feast Days. Now it is used only ten times during the year: on the five Sundays of Great and Holy Lent; on the Vigils of Pascha, Christmas and Epiphany; on Holy Thursday and on the Feast of St. Basil, January 1.



Icons Distributed for TODAY'S Celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy:

In commemoration of today's celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the restoration of the use of icons in our worship services, *Fr. George* will distribute to every parishioner present pocket-sized laminated icons at the end of church services. *May the strength of the Holy Spirit guide us in all that we do, and may these icons serve to remind us to reflect the image and likeness of God in which we were created to everyone we encounter.*

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"... follow Me."

(John 1:43)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

During Great Lent, we are encouraged to seek to grow closer to God. During this period, there are many opportunities to do so, albeit they involve making personal sacrifices that makes a difference. When we focus on the Cross of our Lord and remind ourselves of His victory and what our Savior gave up for us, how might we in turn, respond? Perhaps, we could consider voluntarily "giving up" a few things in anticipation of the joy of His Kingdom. *Let us consider . . . :*

GIVING UP grumbling! Instead, "In everything give thanks." Constructive criticism is OK, but "moaning, groaning, and complaining" are not Christian disciplines.

GIVING UP 10 to 15 minutes in bed each morning! Instead, use that time in prayer, Bible study and personal devotion. A few minutes in prayer WILL keep you focused.

GIVING UP looking at other people's worst attributes. Instead concentrate on their best points. We all have faults. It is a lot easier to have people overlook our shortcomings when we overlook theirs first.

GIVING UP speaking unkindly. Instead, let your speech be generous and understanding. It costs so little to say something kind and uplifting or to offer a smile. Why not check that sharp tongue at the door?

GIVING UP your hatred of anyone or anything! Instead, learn the discipline of love. "Love covers a multitude of sins."

GIVING UP your worries and anxieties! They're too heavy for you to carry anyway. Instead, trust God with them. Anxiety is spending emotional energy on something we can do nothing about: like tomorrow! Live today and let God's grace be sufficient.

GIVING UP TV one evening a week! Instead, visit someone who's lonely or sick. There are those who are isolated by illness or age. Why isolate yourself in front of the "tube?" Give someone a precious gift: your time!

GIVING UP buying anything but essentials for yourself! Instead, give the money to God. The money you would spend on the luxuries could help someone meet basic needs. We're called to be stewards of God's riches, not consumers.

GIVING UP judging others by appearances and by the standard of the world! Instead, learn to give up yourself to God. There is only one Who has the right to judge, and it is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



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GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

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March 6, 2020

To the Right Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The appearance of the Covid-19 Pandemic (Coronavirus) throughout the world and in the United States has created fear, anxiety, and genuine concern. All of these need to be taken seriously and no one's fears should be dismissed out of hand. Already, religious bodies are responding in similar ways, but ways that are not necessarily consistent. In order to assist the Faithful in their own response, this statement is meant to guide and inform us all.

As Orthodox Christians, we know that God uses material means to communicate His blessings and presence to us. The grace-filled presence of Icons, Relics, Holy Water, blessing crosses, objects (such as flowers), and even the blessing hand of a priest, convey to the believer God's grace and energy.

The same material elements that can convey the blessings of God are also subject to the broken nature of our fallen world. Science and our God-given reason demand that we employ every means available to protect ourselves and our families against the spread of Covid-19 and any other disease. In a crisis such as this, we need to exercise vigilance as a community, lest our churches become points of transmission of the disease.

The sacrament of sacraments, the Holy Eucharist, is not simply a material element but the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we counsel those feeling unwell physically to refrain from liturgical assemblies until they are certain of their diagnosis. Taking the basic steps of wellness as recommended by the health authorities is not only sensible, but wise and considerate of others. In truth, it is an act of love.

Clergy and Laity alike should employ best practices like thorough and meticulous hand-washing and frequent cleaning of the liturgical space and objects (e.g., hand cross, icons, etc.). Those belonging to vulnerable groups (the at-risk elderly, those with suppressed auto-immune systems, and those who suffer from chronic illnesses) should protect themselves by refraining from attending church services during the crisis. Also, everyone traveling internationally, please refrain from coming to church services for a period of fourteen days (the timeframe of incubation). Thanks to the marvels of technology, anyone can take full advantage of following services on the TV or the internet, and the clergy can visit them at home to administer the Sacraments.

In addition, no one should be criticized for making the choice to refrain for a time from their participation in the traditional liturgical practices of our Holy Church. These measures do not change the traditions of the Church but are rather temporary precautions during this time of crisis. We should strengthen one another, as the Apostle Paul says:

For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, so that whether we wake or sleep we might live with Him. Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. (I Thessalonians 5:9-11)

As we encourage and strengthen each other, let us also offer our prayers to the Lord our God, that this pandemic might end quickly, and that, through the prayers of His Holy Mother and Ever-Virgin Mary, He will, as we pray in our litanies of fervent supplication:

«... τοῦ διαφυλαχθῆναι τὴν ἁγίαν Ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τὴν πόλιν ταύτην, καὶ πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ χώραν ἀπὸ λοιμοῦ....»

“... protect our Holy Church and our city and every city and land from pestilence....”

With paternal prayers and blessing in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Archbishop Elpidophoros of America". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A'.

Archbishop Elpidophoros of America

For the latest Information in English see:

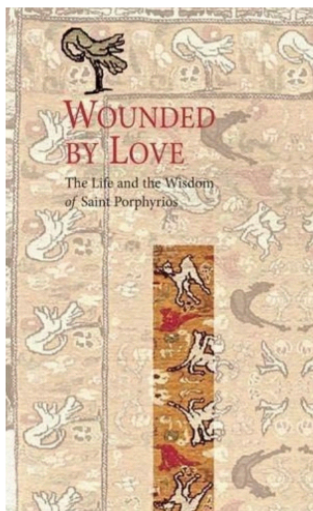
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>

For the Latest Information in Greek see:

<https://eody.gov.gr/neos-koronaivos-covid-19/>

Lenten Study Book Announced by Fr. George

To assist our efforts during Great & Holy Lent, I encourage you to consult our website to learn of special worship and study opportunities throughout the lenten period. Visit www.saintchristopherhoc.org.



Likewise, I hope you will acquire a copy of *Wounded by Love: The Life and the Wisdom of Saint Porphyrios* from our Bookstore. Read whatever looks interesting for our first session on Wednesday, March 4th when Fr. George will distribute the readings for the other weeks.

This is the study text I have selected for us to read and discuss together after the Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies and Community Dinners. His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios has challenged us to read and study the life and teachings of St. Porphyrios. He was born in 1906, fell asleep in the Lord in 1991, and canonized a saint in 2013.

The following quote is from St. Porphyrios and reflects on how best to raise our children: *"The life of the parents is the only thing that makes good children. Parents should be very patient and 'saintlike' to their children. They should truly love their children. And the children will share this love! For the bad attitude of the children, says Father Porphyrios, the ones who are usually responsible for it are their parents themselves. The parents don't help their children by lecturing them and repeating to them 'advices', or by making them obeying strict rules in order to impose discipline. If the parents do not become 'saints' and truly love their children and if they don't struggle for it, then they make a huge mistake. With their wrong and/or negative attitude the parents convey to their children their negative feelings. Then their children become reactive and insecure not only to their home, but to the society as well."*



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

MARCH 8, 2020

VESPERS AT 6:00 PM

ICONS AS IMAGES OF GOD

ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL

2500 CLAIRMONT ROAD, N.E., ATLANTA, GA

GUEST SPEAKER

HIS GRACE BISHOP SEVASTIANOS
OF ZELON

ELEVATED TO THE EPISCOPACY IN 2011 HIS GRACE
SERVED AS THE CHIEF SECRETARY OF THE EPARCHIAL
SYNOD BEFORE BEING ASSIGNED TO ASSIST IN THE
METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA.



RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

On this the 796th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community,
we continue to thank each of you
for your presence and support.
Although it may seem like we are
just a handful of men, women and
children, if we commit ourselves to
serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus
Christ, we will experience the
miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit
brings others into His service to
help us build His new church in the
Peachtree City, Georgia area for
the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE *(CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)*

Sunday, March 8 (1st Sunday of Great Lent – Sunday of Orthodoxy):

- 7:30 am Orthros Service
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy, followed by Procession of Holy Icons & March Commemorations
- 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship/Philoptochos Membership Drive
- 11:15 am Religious Education Classes (for all ages)
- 12:00 pm Parish Council Meeting/St. Christopher Outreach Ministry Meeting
- 6:00 pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers/Reception (at Annunciation Cathedral)

***Your continued support and mutual encouragement
are essential and appreciated!***