

**St. Ephraim the Syrian**

*(Feast Day is Saturday, January 28 with Divine Liturgy at 9:00 a.m.)*

**Sunday, January 22, 2023**



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

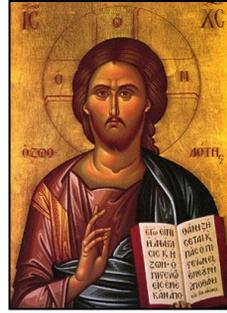
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: [www.patriarchate.org](http://www.patriarchate.org)

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## St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210  
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

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

### **Liturgical Guide for Sunday, January 22, 2022**

**ON THIS DAY, THE 15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ST. LUKE, WE COMMEMORATE** Timothy the Apostle of the 70, Disciple of the Holy Apostle Paul (+96); Anastasios, the Persian Righteous Monk-Martyr (+628); Holy Martyrs Manuel, George, Peter, Leon, Sion, Gabriel, John, Leon, Parados, and the remainder 377; and Righteous Joseph the Blessed. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

### **Thank You for Your Understanding**

We welcome our parishioners who are attending services in person today and we also welcome those who are viewing our online video streaming at home. Let us comply with the guidelines we have provided everyone. We appreciate your kind understanding in following them. Fr. George is

deeply appreciative to you and all who are assisting during worship services.

Parishioners and visitors who are sick are asked to remain at home to recover and rest. We strongly encourage all parishioners who visit to resume wearing masks to slow the spread of the Delta variant in response to [His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios' request to our Clergy and Parish Councils](#) to do so.

*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.*

### **SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE**

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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#### **1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (Grave Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.122-125):**

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: By Your Cross, O Lord, You destroyed death; to the thief You opened paradise. The myrrhbearers' sorrow You transformed into joy, and You sent Your apostles forth to proclaim that You had risen from the dead, Christ our God, bestowing on all the world Your great mercy.

#### **3. Hymn of Holy Apostle Timothy – (not in Hymnal):**

This hymn is sung *after* the Small Entrance: Having learned kindness, and being always steady and sober, vested with a good conscience as befits a priest, you drew out from the Chosen Vessel the secrets of God. And having kept the faith, you have finished the fair race, O Hieromartyr Timothy. Intercede with Christ our God, entreating Him to save our souls.

#### **4. Hymn of Holy Martyr Anastasios the Persian – (not in Hymnal):**

This hymn is sung *after* the Small Entrance: Your Martyr, O Lord, was worthily awarded by You the crown of incorruption, in that he contested for You our immortal God. Since he possessed Your power, he defeated the tyrants, dashing the demons' powerless displays of defiance. O Christ God, at his fervent entreaties, save our souls.

#### **5. 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.

#### **6. Kontakion of the Presentation of the Lord – (Hymnal-pp.250-253):**

*It is sung after the Small Entrance:* For our salvation You took flesh and You sanctified the Virgin's womb; You blessed the aged Simeon as You lay resting in his arms; and having come to save us all, O Christ our God, to these troubled times, bring Your lasting peace. Give strong and undaunted faith to all Your people, O only lover of mankind.

### **SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S 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

#### **Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (1 Timothy 4:9-15)**

<sup>9</sup>*The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance.* <sup>10</sup>*For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.* <sup>11</sup>*These are the things you must insist on and teach.* <sup>12</sup>*Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.* <sup>13</sup>*Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching.* <sup>14</sup>*Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was*

given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. <sup>15</sup>Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

### **Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Luke 19:1-10)**

*19*He entered Jericho and was passing through it. *2*A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. *3*He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. *4*So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Him, because He was going to pass that way. *5*When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” *6*So he hurried down and was happy to welcome Him. *7*All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” *8*Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” *9*Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. *10*For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

### **PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:**

When I visit shopping malls or walk along a crowded street in downtown Atlanta, I often see people wearing large silver and gold crosses around their necks. When I ask them what their significance is, they appear confused or surprised. Some actually admit it is just a nice piece of jewelry. Setting that aside, I believe the cross is a sacred symbol, and as Christians, we should be known less for *wearing* crosses than *bearing* crosses. I don't know about you, but I'm increasingly concerned about our preference for the cross as a decoration, rather than as a means of devotion and a discipline.

When Jesus called His first Disciples, Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, He didn't call them to a life of thoughtful contemplation only. Jesus called them into "live action" missionary service leading up to His Cross and beyond. The Apostles had been making their living by catching fish. Now they would make a new life by catching people, by evangelizing a Gospel (the Good News of our Lord) that is more caught than taught.

That's what it means to lift up or bear one's cross. The cross is not about *death*. The cross is about *life*. The cross is *deliverance* from what is preventing us from being alive, from being a human being *fully alive*.

How can the Kingdom of God "come near" for this twenty-first century? How do we incarnate Christ in this broken, battered world? Waving the cross of Christ before the near-sighted, self-centered eyes of the world just won't cut it. As Disciples, we have to be willing to bear the *sacrificial* cross we have been given, rather than finding ourselves just wearing a cross and assuming that simple behavior defines who we are. No, Jesus called His disciples to *service, to sacrifice, to being the last, the least, and the lowliest*. When Jesus promised to make His first Disciples "fishers of people," it was a mission that came with fishhooks in thumbs, raw and ripped hands, long days of hard work and the possibility of empty nets.

Jesus said, "*If any want to become My followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will find it.*" (Matthew 16:24-25). Life's "crosses" are not barricades blocking our path to the future, but rather *bridges* that take us across. The hard things of life make it easier, not harder, for us to be the human beings that God made us to be.

I close with a story about the sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), who is most famous for his sculpture "The Thinker." It seems that one day

Rodin noticed a large crucifix that had been discarded in a pile of trash. Although it was terribly marred and defaced, Rodin perceived that it could be restored to its original beauty. Consequently, he and some companions carried it to his home.

But the cross was too big for the house. What to do? Rather than return it to the trash heap, Rodin decided to knock out some walls and raise the roof of his house to make room for the cross.

Has the cross of Christ made you knock out some walls and raise the roof of your life? If no, examine your heart, your priorities, and your commitment to Him. It might just change the way you view and live your life! Amen!

## **“St. Ephraim the Syrian as a Model for Our Lives”**

*(continued from back cover)*

Whoever defeats these passions, keeps their nous clear of thoughts. And the purified nous is illumined by the grace of God and acquires remembrance of God and uninterrupted prayer.

3. “Patience is not one but is found within many other virtues. Because patience is associated with all the virtues. Rejoice then in your troubles, and progress in your sufferings; rejoice in your temptations... in long-suffering it is mature, in love it is perfect, insults it turns to blessings... in fasting it is willing, in prayer it is enduring, in service to others it is polite, in meetings it is pleasant. He who has gained patience, has gained hope, because such a man is adorned with every good work.”

Nothing can be done without patience, either physically or spiritually. Patience gives birth to trust and love for God and gives birth to hope. It removes stress, this modern scourge, and gives us inner peace. Then a person becomes polite and pleasant.

4. “Speak much to God, and little to men. And if you spread you hand out to work, let your mouth chant and your mind pray. Psalmody is calm of soul, author of peace. Psalmody is convener of friendship, union of the separated, reconciliation of enemies. Psalmody attracts the help of the Angels, is a weapon in night-time fears, repose of the day’s toils,

safety for infants, adornment for the old, consolation for the elderly, most fitting embellishment for women. It makes deserts into homes, marketplaces sober. It is the ABC for beginners, progress for the more advanced, confirmation for the perfect, the voice of the Church. It makes festivals radiant; it creates mourning that is in accordance with God, for psalmody draws tears even from a heart of stone. Psalmody is the work of the Angels, the commonwealth of heaven, spiritual incense. Psalmody is enlightenment of souls, sanctification of bodies.”

We usually do the opposite. We usually say many things to people but speak little or not at all to God. If we want to prosper, we must learn to pray much and speak little. And when we work it would be good to chant, especially if our work is manual. Then our nous will be free of passionate thoughts and our souls will calm.

Source: *Ekklesiastiki Paremvasis*, "Ὁσσιος Ἐφραίμ ὁ Σύρος", January 2017. Translated by John Sanidopoulos.

## Community Brunch after Church Services Today

*Join us for today's community brunch hosted by Presbytera Marinda and Fr. George featuring Taco Soup, Salad, Chips, Salsa, Cornbread, & Italian Cream Cupcakes Fr. George made for Presbytera's Birthday. In place of our Religious Education classes today, Fr. George will distribute a special "take home lesson" for our families to work on at home during Great Lent. Classes resume next Sunday.*





**"Follow" & "Like" our Facebook page.** *Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.*

On this the 939<sup>th</sup> 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, January 22 (15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of St. Luke):**

- 8:45 a.m. 40-Day Blessing Service for Mother & Child
- 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy & Memorial Service for George Tagalos (25 years)
- 10:30 a.m. Community Luncheon hosted by Presbyteria Marinda and Fr. George in Thanksgiving for Presbyteria's Birthday – glory be to God!



Welcome to our new parishioner with her family following her baptism yesterday! Congratulations!

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

The following reflection, “St. Ephraim the Syrian as a Model for Our Lives” by Fr. George Papavarnavas is reprinted from [www.johnsanidopoulos.com](http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com). **+Fr. George Tsahakis**

Saint Ephraim was born in the early fourth century in Nisibis of Syria from parents who were Confessors and Martyrs, as he wrote, “I am from a family of martyrs,” for during the period of harsh persecution under Diocletian they gave their bold confession for the true God and they sealed it with the blood of their martyrdom. For a teacher he had Bishop James, a man of great theological education, who also ordained him a deacon. He received no other ordination. He was a true ascetic, a fiery orator and a famous writer. They called him a prophet of Syrians, a pillar of Orthodoxy, the mouth and lyre of the Spirit, and vessel of compunction. Shortly before his repose he visited Basil the Great in Caesarea of Cappadocia. He reposed in peace.

We will now enter the fragrant meadow of his inspired writings, in order to reap some flowers, which are full of exquisite fragrances, in order to offer them to those who are addicted to heavenly scents. In other words, we will list extracts from the writings of the Saint, which are always timely, instructive and beneficial.

1. “From the land comes the joy of harvest, from the vineyard fruits that give food, and from the Scriptures teaching that gives life. The land has one season for the harvest, and the vineyard has one season for the vintage, but the Scripture when read always overflows with teaching that gives life. The land when it has been harvested lies fallow and the vineyard when the grapes have been picked is unproductive, but when Scripture is harvested the grapes of those who expound it are not lacking in it. It is picked every day and the grape clusters of the hope in it are never exhausted.”

Here the Saint wants to highlight the great value of Holy Scripture and the benefits one gets from studying it. Indeed, Holy Scripture is spiritual food and drink, which nourishes, refreshes and enlivens man, literally “intoxicate” him, and gives wings to hope. But no matter how many fruits one reaps from it, it remains inexhaustible of heavenly meanings and hopeful messages.

2. “Eight are the thoughts that cause sin: gluttony, lust, avarice, anger, despondency, despair, vainglory and pride. Gluttony is healed by temperance and the fear of God; lust by vigil, thirst and the remembrance of death; avarice by indigence and frugality; anger with gentleness, long-suffering, prayer and forgiveness; despondency by not grieving over temporal things, even if we are beaten, mocked, or persecuted, we are not to grieve, but to rejoice, and we should only grieve when we commit a sin. Even then, however, we should grieve within measure, lest we fall into despair and be led to destruction; despair with work, contemplation, prayer and unceasingly standing near God; vainglory by not loving the praises of people, nor leadership, and with self-reproach; and pride with no matter what you do, you should not say you did it by your own effort or bravery, but with God's strength.”

**- continued inside bulletin**