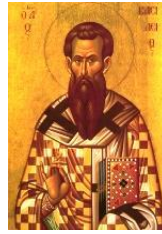


ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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2020 BISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

At this time of year, when we offer thanksgiving for all of God's blessings, Our Lord speaks to us in the Gospel about storing up treasure in Heaven and about being rich in the things of God. Let us give back to the Lord in return for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. Let us give thanks to God for the precious gift of our Melkite Church and pay a tribute of thanksgiving for the labor and sacrifice of our forebears in the faith who have gone before us. Offer your thanks to God by giving a generous gift to the Bishop's Appeal. Extra donation envelopes are available in the narthex. Thank you for your generosity.

SUNDAY 9th AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
Saturday, November 21 & Sunday, November 22, 2020

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday 8:30AM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM
Matins/Orthos: Sunday 9:00AM
Holy Confession: Monday 4-6PM
Vespers: Saturday 3:00PM
Holy Rosary: Sunday 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yany, Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection Nov 14/15: \$ 377.00 Memorial Masses: \$ 00.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By David & Janet George
† **Albert Chanatry**, 14th Memorial Anniversary, By Doris Hutchinson & Family
† **Joseph Ghariba**, 60th Memorial Anniversary, By Doris Hutchinson & Family
† **Lena Tebsherany**, 6th Memorial Anniversary, By Anthony & Sandra Showa
† **Rosemary Baz Neugent**, By Anthony & Sandra Showa
† **Mary Kakaty**, 21st Memorial Anniversary, By her Family

THIS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Robert & Laura Zaloom
† **Alan Rosen**, By Robert Lalli

NEXT SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By David & Janet George

NEXT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

† **Julia Nassimos**, By Peter & S. Ann Murray
† **Theron Warren**, By Robert Lalli
† **Bryan McLoughlin**, By Robert Lalli

THE THEOTOKOS FEAST

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, the Great Feast we celebrate today, rests on such a narrative. The story is found in *The Proto-evangelion of James*, a second century telling of the birth and infancy of the Theotokos. We know that in the first and second centuries AD a number of books were written about Christ and His Mother. Some were accepted by all the local Churches as presenting a true portrait of the Messiah. Others were rejected because the Christ they portrayed was not the one who had been preached by the apostles. In some He was a Gnostic philosopher, in other a magician. We call these "apocryphal gospels" and do not see them as the voice of the Holy Spirit to us. Still other books, *The Proto-evangelion of James* among them, were revered by the Christians of their day but not considered canonical Scriptures because their content was not at the heart of the apostolic proclamation or the early Creeds. Their subject matter treated things like Jesus' physical appearance, or the early periods of Christ's life not covered in the Gospels. They may be true but not central to our faith.

The Source of This Feast: The prayers and icon of this Feast focus on two elements of the Proto-evangelion story. In the first, Mary at the age of three is presented to God in the temple at Jerusalem accompanied, as the text reads, "by the daughters of the Hebrews that are undefiled." There "the priest received her, kissed her and blessed her." The second vignette is shown in the upper right-hand corner of this icon. There Mary sits in the innermost sanctuary of the temple, the Holy of Holies, ministered to by an angel. According to Jewish Law, no one entered the Holy of Holies: "only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance" (Heb 9:8). It is unthinkable that a child would be not only allowed there but actually live there as the *Proto-evangelion* avows. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are given a reason why no one was allowed into the Holy of Holies: "The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning" (Heb 9:9). By placing Mary in the Holy of Holies, the *Proto-evangelion* is saying that the way into the Holy Place – the presence of God – now is disclosed. It is Christ, who would be incarnate in the womb of this same Mary the Theotokos. For this reason, the story and its celebration have been embraced by the Tradition as affirmations of the Gospel. Mary's coming into the temple is portrayed as an "Entrance" on this feast in the Christian East rather than a "Presentation" as in the West. This term puts us in mind of things like the "Great Entrance" at our Divine Liturgy or the Entrance Procession in the Western rites. Her coming is not the blessing of an insignificant child given in a "side chapel," as it were, but a festive "prelude" or "overture" inaugurating the main event, the New Testament itself.

Our celebration of this feast focuses on Mary as the temple of the incarnate God, the one for whom the Jerusalem temple was only a prefiguration. After their entry with Christ into Jerusalem His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to the temple and the buildings in its compound. Jesus replied, "'Do you see all these things?' he asked. 'Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down'" (Mt 24:2). This feast celebrates the fulfillment of His prophecy. God's people will no longer reach heaven via Jerusalem; rather the heavens have been opened to us and God's temple, the Theotokos, is become for us the way to heaven through her childbearing.

(NovLeaflets2020)