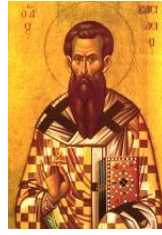


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## PROPHET ELIJAH

Elijah (Elias) the Thisbite lived in the ninth century BC, in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Ahab. Five hundred years had passed since Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. Several generations had come and gone since David and Solomon ruled in God's name. Their kingdom had been divided in two and thereby weakened by rivalries among its leaders. The Israelites had grown lax in their conviction that there was but one God. Proximity to and intermarriage with neighboring Canaanites had made them more accepting of these other gods, such as Baal, favorite of the king's wife, Jezebel. The dramatic story of Elijah's encounter with the prophets of Baal is recorded in *1 Kings* 17-19.

Elijah – whose name means “Yahweh is my God” – personifies the most important characteristic of the Hebrew prophets. He is described repeatedly as consumed by zeal for the LORD, devoted to observing and restoring the worship of the one true God in a spiritually feeble age. The commitment of the Israelites to their God would wax and wane over succeeding generations and other prophets would rise up to do as Elijah had done in his day to exalt the name of the one true God.

**Elijah the Wonderworker:** The Scriptures recount several marvels in the life of Elijah for which he is especially revered. The most dramatic involves the drought brought about by the prophet who warned the king, “*There will be no dew or rain except at my bidding*” (*1 Kgs* 17:1). The three-year long drought was ended at Elijah's prayer, after the prophets of Baal had failed to do so, bringing about the conversion of the people to the LORD. “*When they saw this, all the people flung themselves on their faces and cried out: ‘THE LORD alone is God! THE LORD alone is God!’*” (*1 Kgs* 18:39). A series of wonders took place in Zarephath, a village near Sidon. There Elijah multiplied flour and oil for a poor widow so that “*she and her household had food for a long time*” (*1 Kgs* 17:15). Elijah also restored the widow's son to life after a fatal illness had claimed him by prostrating himself three times over the child and praying, “*O LORD, let this child's life return to his body*” (*1 Kgs* 17:21). St Ephrem the Syrian would see this triple prostration as an image of Christ's triple descent (to becoming man, to death, and to Hades) to bring life to the human race.

**Elijah the Ascetic:** Monastics in the Christian East have long revered Elijah as a kind of proto-monk, a desert-dweller for the Lord. During the drought God sent Elijah east of the Jordan to Wadi Cherith, a secluded ravine out of Ahab's reach where “*ravens brought him bread and meat morning and evening, and he drank from the river*” (*1 Kgs* 17:6). Modern commentators have noted that the original Hebrew text has no vowels and that the same consonants in the word *ravens* can also be read as *Arabs*. Perhaps Bedouin tribesmen brought food to Elijah in his wilderness retreat as their descendants would assist hermits in later centuries.

Monastics also identified with Elijah's forty-day fast on his journey to Mount Horeb (see *1 Kgs* 19:8). At the conclusion of this fast the LORD revealed His presence to Elijah in “*a still, small voice*” (*1 Kgs* 19:12). This they saw as an icon of the monastic life. The monk distances himself from the world through fasting and other ascetic practices to pursue communion with God (*theosis*).

**Elijah and Mount Carmel:** Several events in the life of the prophet Elijah are connected with Mount Carmel, a promontory on the Mediterranean near the city of Haifa. Christians, Druze, Jews and Muslims all revere this place for its connection with Elijah. Early in the spread of monasticism ascetics settled in the area, often living in caves on the outcropping. When Western monks came to the Holy Land during the Crusades, they found Eastern hermits settled on Carmel and stayed among them. The Western monks adopted the Easterners' way of life in the spirit of Elijah. When they returned to Europe, however, these “Carmelites” were obliged to adopt a communal way of life. While living as a hermit was considered the summit of monastic life in the East, it was seen as eccentric in the West.

**Elijah's Return:** Christians believe that the Messiah has come – it is Jesus. Jesus Himself identified John the Baptist as Elijah come again: “*If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come*” (*Mt* 11:14). But Christians also believe that Elijah is “the herald of the Second Coming of Christ” (aposticha): the coming in power at the end of the age.

(July2021Leaflet)

## SUNDAY 9<sup>th</sup> AFTER PENTECOST Saturday, July 24 & Sunday, July 25, 2021

### PARISH SERVICES

Holy Liturgy: Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM

Holy Rosary: Sunday 10:30AM

### HEALING PRAYERS NEEDED

Prayers needed for our friends Nazmie Barahmeh, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Jean Murad, Rose Pawlinga, John Roth, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

### RECENT RECEIPTS

Weekly Collection July 17/18: \$ 00.00    Memorial Services: \$ 70.00    Fuel Contribution: \$ 25.00

### † MEMORIAL MASSES †

#### THIS SATURDAY, JULY 24

† Julia Nassimos, By William Dooley

† John Gazzal, By George & Penny Kunkel

† Elvira Chanatry, 19<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary, By Doris Hutchinson & Family

† Dr. John Kakaty, By Mary Nassimos

† Jeanette Farewege, By Mrs. Martha Sabbagh

#### THIS SUNDAY, JULY 25

† Julia Nassimos, By Tom & Juan Thomas

† John Gazzal, By Michael & Naima Egan

† Dr. John Kakaty, By David & Janet George & family

† Jeanette Farewege, By Fares Sabbagh & children

† Philippe P. Subey, By Robert Lalli

#### NEXT SATURDAY, JULY 31

† Julia Nassimos, By Tom & Juan Thomas

† John Gazzal, By George & Penny Kunkel

† Dr. John Kakaty, By David & Janet George & Family

† Jeanette Farewege, By Merched and Christina Sabbagh & children

† Doris Zalatan, 34<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary, By Michelle Roth

#### NEXT SUNDAY, AUGUST 1

† Julia Nassimos, By Tom & Juan Thomas

† John Gazzal, By Renee Kawam & daughters

† Dr. John Kakaty, By David & Janet George & family

† Jeanette Farewege, By Fadi and Dana Sabbagh & children

† Archbishop Geroge El Murr, By Wael & Olga Barahmeh