



## *Weekly Bulletin*

# **Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**

### ***The of the Wedding Banquet***

#### ***Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 5***

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

#### ***Troparion of Nativity of the Theotokos, Tone 4***

Thy Nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos! By annulling the curse, He bestowed a blessing. By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

#### ***Kontakion of Annunciation Tone 8***

O Victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

### ***The 14th Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 5, September 10th, Matt. 22:1-14***

It is the same warning — the dangers of being unfaithful to the divine summons — that the Gospel for the 14th Sunday after Pentecost brings us (Matt. 22:1-14). A king has prepared a feast for the occasion of his son's marriage; he sends his servants to call those that were bidden, but they excuse themselves under one pretext or another: their business negotiations, their farms, etc.; some of them ill-treat and kill his servants (the analogy with the gospel for the previous Sunday is striking). The King destroys the murderers and, instead of the unworthy guests, sends his servants out into the highways to gather all those they can find. The house is filled. However, the King notices the presence of one guest who has no wedding garment. He has this too presumptuous guest bound and thrown into outer darkness.

The general meaning of this gospel is clear. Jewish tradition frequently compared the messianic kingdom to a feast. Here we are concerned with the great and continual feast which is the union — the marriage — of the Son of God with our human nature. All of us are bidden to take part in this union. Woe betide us if we prefer the things of this world to the "wedding of the Lamb" or if, carried away by a real hatred of God, we kill the messengers of the King! Strangers will take the place of those unworthy guests.

But here begin certain difficulties of interpretation. If the King brings all the people from the street into his house — "as many as they found, both bad and good" — he cannot expect all of them to be equipped with wedding garments (these evidently symbolize the spiritual preparation necessary to enter into the eternal kingdom): consequently, how can he punish someone for this reason? And what exactly is the significance of the last phrase: "For many are called, but few chosen"?

One could assume that there is a certain interval in time between the invitation and the feast. The King sincerely desires that all should come to his feast: "As many as you shall find, bid to the marriage". He can therefore say: "Many are called". But he expects his guests to prepare themselves for the feast, which will be the final outcome, and to fulfill the conditions of admission. A poor person encountered in the street cannot be expected to have a wedding garment; but, once in the house, he can, he must get hold of one. In other words, God does not expect us, sinners, to come to him on our own merits (for we have none); he brings us into the house, his Church, purely through his own grace and mercy, and opens to us opportunities for purification and communion with him; it is for us to make use of these opportunities and to prepare ourselves to take our place, repentant and pardoned, at the table of the Lord.

## **Announcements and Activities**

**Great Vespers for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross**— Wednesday, at 5PM. Sorry to have changed the time for Services a couple of times lately. There may be one more time in October, but that should be the extent of needing to change 6PM for Festal Vespers and 9AM for festal Liturgy. Sorry

**Divine Liturgy for the Feast**— Thursday, at 9AM. This solemn day is a fast day.

**Great Vespers**— Saturday, at 5:30PM

**Divine Liturgy**— Sunday, at 10AM.

**Coffee Hour**— This week's Coffee Hour is bagels and coffee. Next week's coffee hour will be sponsored by the Brandon and Leanna and Alexandra M.

**Church School/Adult Ed**— summer recess until October.

**Parish Council**— will meet today after Liturgy and Coffee Hour.

**Fundraiser Committee**— our first meeting will take place next Sunday, during Coffee Hour (on the 17th.)

**Pray for...** Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy— who are ill. Jonathan**— ill. **Reposed Barbara Ranjo. . Laure**— battling Cancer. **Paul**— ill **Ralph**—ill **Archpriest Lawrence**, from Canada, progressive eye disease. **Tsige Roman**— our beloved Tsige reposed on December 3rd. Please keep praying for her homeland of Ethiopia. **Brian**— ill. **Jonathan**— ill. **Katia**— sister of Shkbarra's **Grace**, Heather's goddaughter. **Reposed Priest, James. Reposed Hierarch Tikhon. Rufin**— soldier in Ukraine. Elise, ill. **Sally**, surgery, **Reposed Patrick, Reposed Jim, Reposed Alex; Christian**, prayers. **Chris**, reposed. **Galina**, reposed. **Patrick**, reposed. **Clint Arsenios**— reposed. **Heather Mary**— uncommon fatigue **Lou Mendez**. Battling ongoing health issues. **George and Steve**, a request from Luci. F. Dr. Joseph—personal needs. **Lance**— special request for prayers. **Christian**— prayers. **Tonya**—husband took his own life. Car robbery of Laura Beth's neighbors.

In this way only can we clothe ourselves in the wedding garment and, having been invited, be chosen. But few men, even from among those whom this King has so generously brought into his house, prepare themselves for the Feast. We have been called: shall we be amongst the chosen?

This same idea of a distinction between the first call and a definite choice is found in another form at the beginning of the epistle for this Sunday (2 Cor. 1:21–2:4). The greater part of the text refers to personal difficulties that Paul experiences with certain members of the Church of Corinth, but the two first verses remind us that God “hath anointed us...hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”. These three metaphors — unction, a seal, and a pledge — express the same idea of a beginning, of a point of departure. Someone who has received these signs of being called is already admitted to the house, but does not yet belong to it definitively. He possesses, if one can so express it, the “first installment” of eternal life. But the climax is still to come, and he must prepare himself for it

(taken from the Year of Grace of the Lord, by an Eastern Monk)

## **From the Lives of the Saints... THE HOLY MARTYRS MENODORA, METRODORA AND NYMPHODORA**

They were sisters by birth and grew up somewhere in Asian Bithynia. Reared in the spirit of Christianity, they withdrew from the city to the wilderness, wishing to elevate their minds to God and to free themselves of everything in this deceitful world, and to live this life in purity and virginity as true brides of Christ. They dedicated themselves to great labor, fasting and prayer, until God adorned them with the gift of miracle-working. When people began to bring the sick to them for healing, they became well known against their will. A certain governor, Fronton, heard of them and brought them to trial. Upon seeing them, the governor was amazed at the beauty of their faces. For, even though they were great fasters and their bodies were withered, their faces were radiant, illumined by inward peace and the grace of God. At first, the governor flattered them and promised to send them to the emperor, who would give them in marriage to his noblemen. But when he was convinced that all of his flattery and promises had no effect on these brides of Christ, he ordered that Menodora be tortured first, and her sisters thrown into prison. After cruel tortures, the governor cried out to Menodora, who was wounded and bloody: "Offer sacrifice to the gods!" To this the holy martyr replied: "Do you not see that I am offering my entire self as a sacrifice to my God?" When St. Menodora was slain by the tortures, the governor then brought out the remaining two sisters, and stood them by the dead body of Menodora. Pointing to the body of their sister, he counseled them to deny Christ. Since they remained steadfast, he slew them by harsh tortures. Just then, a thunderbolt struck from heaven, and killed the soulless Fronton and his servants. Christians honorably buried the bodies of these holy martyrs of God. They suffered between the years of 305 and 311, during the reign of Maximian Galerius, and found rest in the Kingdom of Christ.

Taken from, Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

*“There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives” (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)*