



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor

RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. DEACON PAUL LEONARCZYK

*"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge.
Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)*

May 17, 2015

The Fourth Day of the Feast of the Ascension

THE SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

**KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, LUKE ANDERSON, ROBERT ANDERSON,
ROBIN ANDERSON, MARY CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, MARYLOU LAZOS, TERRI LEONARCZYK,
MATTHEW LOMANNO, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, PAUL ST. GERMAIN,
AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE**

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (6th Tone) Page 53

The Torparion of the Ascension (4th Tone):

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through Your blessing they were confirmed in their belief that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world!

The Troparion of the Fathers of the First Council of Nicaea (8th Tone):

O Christ our God, You are infinitely glorified, for You established our Fathers as radiant stars on earth. You led us to the True Faith through them. O Most Merciful One, glory to You!

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 16

Kondakion of The Ascension (6th Tone)

After fulfilling for us Your Plan of Redemption and joining the things of earth with those of heaven, You gloriously ascended, O Christ our God, without abandoning us, but remained with us forever, and proclaimed to those who love You: "Behold I am with you; no one has power against you!"

THE PROKIMENON:

**BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, GOD OF OUR FATHERS
AND YOUR NAME IS WORTHY OF PRAISE AND GLORIOUS FOREVER!**

*For You are just in all You have done to us,
and all Your works are true and Your ways right!*

Today's Readings: Acts 20: 16-18 & 28-36 and John 17: 1-13

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

**For the repose of Joseph Maroon (42nd), Fred Coriarty (67th), Lamia Solomon (30th),
John Jadda (57th), Joseph Nasser (1st), and Freda George (24th)**

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

**For the repose of our former pastor,
Fr. Dominic Ledbetter (19th Anniversary)**

Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

**For the repose of Peter Abood (35th), Roland Archambault (16th),
and Gertrude Beadle (2nd)**

Next Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the health and salvation of all of the members of our parish



Some sad news: Dcn. Robert Spencer, with concurrence of Bishop Nicholas, has made the decision to leave the parish. He and his family are planning to relocate out of the state due to professional commitments. They wish the parish all the best.

The Saturday of the Dead

The Church has set aside this coming Saturday (the Saturday before Pentecost) as a day to pray for all those who have passed from this life. We will pray for them at a celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning at 10:00 AM. Sign-up sheets will be available in the church that morning for the names of your departed loved who will be remembered at the Liturgy. Come and beseech the Lord to bring all our departed relatives and friends to *“a place of light, a place of happiness, a place of peace, where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing.”*



Mahrajan 2015: We're really cooking now!

On Tuesday May 19, we are making: Kibbeh -and we really need your help!
6:30 PM - church hall - Hope to see you there!

Sunday School ended today!

Today was the last day of Sunday School until next Fall. Congratulations to all the students, and thank you to all the teachers and parents that make our Sunday School possible.

The Sunday School picnic will take place on Sunday May 31, following the Divine Liturgy. Teachers, parents and students are all invited to celebrate the end of the Sunday School year.

Our Sunday Liturgy summer schedule will begin next Sun., June 7.

Throughout the summer, the Sunday Divine Liturgy will be offered at 10:00 AM.

Lamb Shawarma is here!

The parish youth group will be serving up lamb shawarma and French fries after the Sunday Liturgy. The shawarma will be \$5 and the fries will be \$1, and the funds raised will help to support our youth group.

Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 25 11:00 AM: 94

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 806.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$31.⁰⁴

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 297,568.²⁴

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Tues., May 19	8:30 AM	Divine Liturgy: For the health of Anthony Blando
Wed., May 20	No Service	Wednesday evening
Thurs., May 21	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: St. Constantine and Helen For Helena Burkush
Sat. May 23	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Saturday of the Dead
Sat., May 23	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: Feast of Pentecost
Sun., May 24	10:15 AM	Orthros for the Feast of Pentecost
Sun., May 24	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: Feast of Pentecost

An explanation of the icon of the Ascension of the Lord

The Feast of the Ascension of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated each year on the fortieth day after the Great and Holy Pascha, always a Thursday. Since the date of Pascha changes each year, the date of the Feast of the Ascension also changes.

The icon of The Ascension of Our Lord is a joyous icon. It is painted with bright colors. Christ is shown ascending in His glory in a mandorla. A mandorla is a design which is almond-shaped or round. Inside the mandorla is the figure of a holy person. Christ blesses the assembly with His right hand. In His left is a scroll. The scroll is a symbol of teaching. This icon shows that the Lord in heaven is the source of blessing. In addition, Jesus is the source of knowledge. The icon reminds us that Christ continues to be the source of the teaching and message of the Church, blessing and guiding those to whom He has entrusted his work.

The Theotokos occupies a very special place in this icon. She is in the center of the icon, immediately below the ascending Christ. The gesture of her hands is gesture of prayer. She is clearly outlined by the whiteness of the garments of the angels. The Theotokos is depicted in a very calm pose. This is quite different from the appearance of the Disciples. They are moving about, talking to one another and looking and pointing towards heaven. The entire group, the Theotokos and the disciples represent the Church.

The icon of the Ascension includes some who did not witness the Ascension. St. Paul is shown to the left of the Theotokos, but we know that he was not present at the Ascension. At that time, St. Paul did not yet believe in Jesus. But he became a Christian and one of the greatest Apostles and missionaries of Church.

The icon expresses the sovereignty of Christ over His Church; He is its Head, its guide, its source of inspiration and teaching; it receives its commission and ministry from Him, and fulfils it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

-edited from an article found at www.goarch.org



Devoutly Glorifying the Mystery

“HOLY FATHER, KEEP THROUGH YOUR NAME *those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are*” (Jn 17:11). As His earthly life was approaching its end the Lord Jesus offered this prayer for His disciples. The questions it raises have preoccupied the Church for centuries: how are the Father and the Son “one” and how can the followers of Christ be one “as We are”?

The Unity of God

The distinguishing mark of God’s people throughout the Old Testament is expressed in the *Shema*, the invocation which might well be called the Jewish creed: “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength*” (Deut 6:4-5). This passage is recited daily in the morning and evening services of the synagogue and expresses the monotheism which set Jews apart from others peoples in the ancient world. Many devout Jews hope to be able to recite it with their dying breath.

How conflicted must have been those Jews – including Jesus’ own followers – who heard Him say “*The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me...I and the Father are one*” (Jn 10: 25, 30). The Jewish leadership saw His claims as blasphemy and condemned Him to death for it. The followers of Jesus accepted it, particularly after His resurrection, without being able to express it with clarity.

The question of how the Lord Jesus could be one with the Father was raised again in the fourth century in the context of a dispute between a charismatic Libyan priest, Arius, and his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria. Arius challenged Alexander for teaching that the Son was eternally begotten of the Father, before earthly time began. Arius countered that “if the Father begat the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this it is evident, that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows, that he [the Son] had his substance from nothing.”

In a local council of his presbyters Alexander deposed Arius and exiled him. Arius, however, had supporters among other bishops and the controversy threatened to disrupt the unity of the Churches in the Roman Empire which had only recently come to look on Christians with favor. This is where the emperor, Constantine the Great, stepped in.

The First Council of Nicaea (325)

Constantine invited all the bishops of the empire (the “*ecumene*”) to a great council to be held at his summer palace in Nicaea. He provided them and their attendant priests and deacons with travel and lodging at imperial expense with the understanding that this gathering was to help unify



the Churches of the empire. Bishops, traditionally numbered at 318, came from as far east as Nisibis, on the border of the Persian Empire, and from as far west as Spain and Gaul (France).

The Council's chief theological task was to express the Churches' common faith in the relationship between the Father and the Son. The Fathers referred to the Creeds of the various local Churches which were their rule for instruction and baptisms. The bishops ultimately subscribed to a creed based on the baptismal use of the Churches of Palestine. They inserted the term *homoousios* (one in essence) to describe the relationship of the Father and the Son and appended the following anti-Arian censure: "But those who say: 'There was a time when He was not;' and 'He was not before He was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church."

The Nicene Creed would be completed at the Second Ecumenical Council and it is that form – with some minor variations - which is used in the Liturgies of all the historic Churches. The Nicene Council also addressed administrative and disciplinary issues intended to strengthen the unity of the Churches. It made universal the observance of Pascha on a Sunday calculated after the spring equinox, and it also affirmed the practice of not kneeling on Sundays or during the 50 days between Pascha and Pentecost in celebration of the resurrection.

Finally the council recognized an order of precedence among the principal sees in the empire: Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. It also recognized that a special honor be given to the Church of Jerusalem, "the Mother of all the Churches." This order would be amended at the Council of Chalcedon when Constantinople, the "New Rome," was given the second place.

Constantine's Council did not achieve the unity he sought at once. The next two emperors favored Arianism; it would be his third successor, Theodosius I, who affirmed the Nicene decision once and for all in AD 380.

American Protestants seem ambiguous about Arianism according the Protestant group, Ligonier Ministries. According to a recent online survey of 3000 Western Christians which they conducted, almost all evangelicals say they believe in the Trinity (96%) and that Jesus is fully human and fully divine (88%). But nearly a quarter (22%) said God the Father is "more divine" than Jesus, and 9 percent weren't sure. Further, 16 percent say Jesus was the first creature created by God, while 11 percent were unsure.

Nicaea III: 2025?

On May 26, 2014 the Pope of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarch met in Jerusalem to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1964 meeting of their predecessors Paul VI and Athenagoras, the first such encounter in centuries. At that meeting Patriarch Bartholomew proposed that they gather again in 2025 for the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea. The patriarch proposed that they meet at the site of the council, now the Turkish city of Iznik. Should such a commemoration bring together representatives of all the historic Churches which accepted this council, that in itself would be a momentous gesture.

At their historic 1964 meeting the first hierarchs of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches prayed that their brotherly gesture, after "so many centuries of silence...may be the sign and prelude of things to come for the glory of God and the enlightenment of His faithful people." Nicaea in 2025 may outdo them.

May 21: The commemoration of the Holy Great Sovereigns Constantine and Helen, Equal to the Apostles

Constantine, the great and renowned sovereign of the Christians, was born in 272, the son of Constantius Chlorus (the ruler of the westernmost parts of the Roman empire), and of the blessed Helen. In 306, when his father died, he was proclaimed successor to his throne. In 312, on learning that Maxentius and Maximinus had joined forces against him, he marched into Italy, where, while at the head of his troops, he saw in the sky after midday, beneath the sun, a radiant pillar in the form of a cross with the words: "By this shalt thou conquer." The following night, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream and declared to him the power of the Cross and its significance.

When he arose in the morning, he immediately ordered that a labarum be made (which is a banner or standard of victory over the enemy) in the form of a cross, and he inscribed on it the Name of Jesus Christ. On October 28 he attacked and conquered Maxentius, who drowned in the Tiber River while fleeing. The following day, Constantine entered Rome in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor of the West by the Senate, while Licinius, his brother-in-law, ruled in the East. But out of malice, Licinius later persecuted the Christians. Constantine fought him Licinius and utterly destroyed him in 324, and in this manner he became monarch over the West and the East. Under him and because of him all the persecutions against the Church ceased.

In 324, in the ancient city of Byzantium, he laid the foundations of the new capital of his realm, and solemnly inaugurated it on May 11, 330, naming it after himself, Constantinople. Since the throne of the imperial rule was transferred to Constantinople from Rome, it was named New Rome, the inhabitants of its domain were called Romans, and it was considered the continuation of the Roman Empire. Falling ill near Nicomedia, he requested to receive divine Baptism, according to Eusebius (The Life of Constantine. Book IV, 61-62), and also according to Socrates and Sozomen; and when he had been deemed worthy of the Holy Mysteries, he reposed in 337, on May 21 or 22, the day of Pentecost, having lived sixty-five years, of which he ruled for thirty-one years. His remains were transferred to Constantinople and were deposited in the Church of the Holy Apostles, which had been built by him.

As for his holy mother Helen, after her son had made the Faith of Christ triumphant throughout the Roman Empire, she undertook a journey to Jerusalem and found the Holy Cross on which our Lord was crucified. After this, Saint Helen, in her zeal to glorify Christ, erected churches in Jerusalem at the sites of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, in Bethlehem at the cave where our Savior was born, another on the Mount of Olives whence He ascended into Heaven, and many others throughout the Holy Land, Cyprus, and elsewhere. She was proclaimed Augusta, her image was stamped upon golden coins, and two cities were named Helenopolis after her in Bithynia and in Palestine. Having been thus glorified for her piety, she departed to the Lord being about eighty years of age, according to some in the year 330, according to others, in 336.



Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Ernie Ashooh, Louise Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Ted Baroody, Sarah Beadle, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Theresa Cullen, Jamileh Dagher, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Janet Drake, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, Loretto Gauvin, Nick Haddad, Jean Hannoush, Lucille Harper, Howard Jabaley, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Roger Lawrence, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Susan Merrill, Margaret Mitchell, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Helen Baroody Payne, Josephine Paquette, Russell Pond, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Nassim Sleiman, Salwa Sleiman, Tarrant Smith, Mary Stephen, Catherine Waldron, Laura Weingast, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled **“Welcome to this Holy House,”** located on the table in the back of the church.



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