



# 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)*

**July 5, 2015**

**The Commemoration of Our Holy Father Athanasius of Athos,  
of our Holy Father Lampados the Wonderworker,  
and of Holy Martha, the Mother of Simeon the Hermit**

## THE 6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**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 (5<sup>th</sup> Tone) Page 53

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1<sup>st</sup> Tone): Page 16

Kondakion : "O Never Failing Protectress of Christians": Page 17

### THE PROKIMENON:

YOU, O LORD, WILL KEEP US  
AND PRESERVE US ALWAYS FROM THIS GENERATION!

*Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any holy man,  
For truthfulness has vanished from among the children of men.*

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**Today's Readings: Romans 12: 6-14 and Matthew 9: 1-8**

## LITURGY INTENTIONS

### Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Joseph Baroody (44<sup>th</sup>), Anthony Stephen (11<sup>th</sup>),  
Zahia George (42<sup>nd</sup>), Theodora Smit (33<sup>rd</sup>), Martha Khatter (22<sup>nd</sup>),  
Peter Flamant (24<sup>th</sup>), and Elias Solomon (47<sup>th</sup>)

### Sunday, 10:00 AM:

For the repose of the members of our parish  
who have departed from this life,  
and for all of our departed friends, relative, and loved ones

### Next Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Afef Nassif (27<sup>th</sup>), Mary Maloley (32<sup>nd</sup>), Joseph Jadda (32<sup>nd</sup>),  
Rachel Hykil (18<sup>th</sup>), Nabeeha Baroody (26<sup>th</sup>), Milia Elias (55<sup>th</sup>),  
Edmund Bednarowski (14<sup>th</sup>), Rasheedy Ashooh (55<sup>th</sup>),  
and Mark Abu-Haidar (30<sup>th</sup>)

### Next Sunday, 10:00 AM:

For the repose of Elias Boustane (40 Day Memorial),  
by Wissam & Jeanne d'Arc Haidar

**Altar Your Life.**



Paul explained to his readers that his ministry – like that of all the apostles – involved becoming a father to them, and he was willing to do that for love of them that they might attain Christ. In the Gospel, friends brought a paralyzed man to Christ so that he could be made whole. We call our priests “Fathers”, for they are to serve us in this very necessary way. Pray for an increase in vocations to the diaconate and the priesthood for our Church.



**MAHRAJAN 2015: Here it comes!**  
***(and here is how you can you help)***

**We need grape leaves!**

Grape leaves will be needed by July 12, so please wash and pack them in your freezer as they become available. We need about 3,000!

**Add your message to our book!**

Please consider placing your message or memorial in the Mahrajan 2015 souvenir book – only \$100 per page!

**Make a donations for food!**

Help us with our costs is by donating a food or ingredient. There are signup sheets in the hall, along with the cost. Envelopes are also available there, if you would like to use them. We are counting on your generosity. All donors will be recognized in our annual souvenir book.

**Help with food preparation!**

We need help in the kitchen for food preparation on the evenings that follow, 6:30 PM start time for each evening:

**Grape leaves: July 14; Spinach Pies: August 18; Meat Pies: August 19**

**Attendance Last Saturday 4:30 PM: 34      11:00 AM: 58**

**Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 920.<sup>00</sup>      Mortgage: \$640.<sup>00</sup>**

*The average Sunday envelope donation: \$28.<sup>23</sup>*

*The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 294,907.<sup>25</sup>*

**SERVICES FOR THE WEEK**

*(Weekday services will be offered in the basement chapel in the Sunday School area)*

Tues. July 7	8:30 AM	Weekday Orthros
Wed., July 8	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: Offered for the persecuted Christians of the Middle East and throughout the world
Thurs. July 9	8:30 AM	Weekday Orthros
Sat., July 11	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Seventh Sunday After Pentecost
Sun., July 12	9:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., July 12	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

## Wednesday Evening: Divine Liturgy for the persecuted Christians of the Middle East and throughout the world

Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ suffering in the Middle East and throughout the world. The Divine Liturgy will be offered on Wednesday evening at 7:00 PM, for their intention and for the repose of those Christians who have lost their lives particularly for the following incidents in the recent weeks:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>City/State</b>	<b>Killed</b>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Description</b>
6/24/2015	Egypt	Suez	1	0	A Christian is shot twice in the chest after resisting pressure to convert to Islam.
6/22/2015	Syria	Izra	4	3	Four Christians are killed by a Sunni car bomb blast at the entrance to a Christian town.
6/18/2015	Nigeria	Wakama	2	0	Muslims shoot an Anglican pastor and a 9-year-old boy to death.
6/17/2015	Uganda	Nabuli	1	0	A mother of eleven is poisoned by her own family after leaving Islam for Christianity.
5/26/2015	Iraq	Nimrud	1	0	An 80-Year-Old Christian woman is burned alive for failing to comply with Sharia restrictions.
5/24/2015	Nigeria	Benue	96	0	Ninety-six are confirmed dead following a church-burning spree by militant Muslims.
5/19/2015	Nigeria	Barkin Ladi	27	0	Fulani terrorists massacre twenty-seven residents in overnight attacks on two Christian villages.

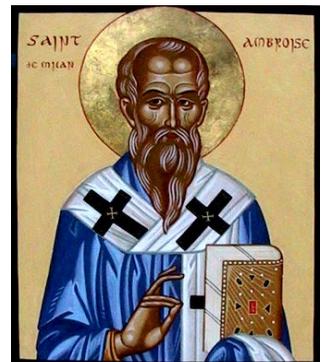
Let us also pray of the conversion of the persecutors, remembering that in the Liturgy of St. Basil we pray: “Remember, O God ... those who love us and those who hate us, and those who have begged us, unworthy though we be, to remember them in our prayers. Remember all Your people, O Lord our God, and upon all pour forth Your rich mercies, granting them everything they need for salvation.”

***Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy! Lord have mercy!***

### On Holy Martyrdom

“By the death of martyrs religion has been defended, faith increased, the Church strengthened; the dead have conquered, the persecutors have been overcome. And so we celebrate the death of those of whose lives we are ignorant. So, too, David rejoiced in prophecy at the departure of his own soul, saying: ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.’ He esteemed death better than life. The death itself of the martyrs is the prize of their life. And again, by the death of those at variance hatred is put an end to.”

-St. Ambrose of Milan, *On Belief in the Resurrection*



# The Son of Man Forgives Sins

WE READ IN MATTHEW 9: 1-8 that, when people brought a paralyzed man to the Lord Jesus, He healed the man's paralysis, but not before telling him, "*Your sins are forgiven*" (Mt 9:2). The bystanders' initial thought that Jesus had blasphemed was replaced by wonder. As Matthew described it, "*they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men*" (Mt 9:8).

The Lord Jesus, of course, was more than just a man. His full humanity was joined without confusion to the divine nature of the Word of God. He forgave sin, then, as the only-begotten Son of the Father. But the onlookers' amazement would be justified in time: God would give men the power to forgive sin, in the Church.

When the glorified Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He told them, "*Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained*" (Jn 20:22, 23). The Church was to extend the presence of Christ in the world both physically and spiritually by imparting the forgiveness of sins to those who came to it in faith.

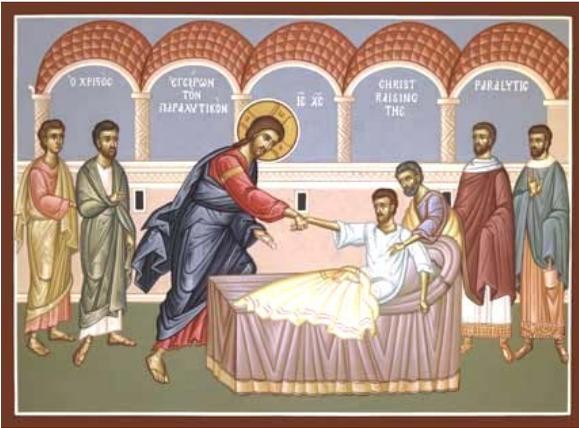
The first place where the Church bestows forgiveness of sins is in the mystery of baptism. When we are buried with Christ in baptism we rise to a newness of life marked by deliverance from the power of sin. Infants, of course, have no sins of which they may be guilty; adults who receive baptism with repentance are freed from their past sins. As the priest announces at the eighth day removal of the baptismal garments, "you have been baptized, enlightened, chrismated, sanctified and cleansed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!"

## The "Second Baptism"

The early Church recognized that believers might fall into serious sin, particularly when threatened with imprisonment and death during the Roman persecution of Christians. It began using its ability to forgive sin in a new way. Those guilty of serious sin would be reconciled to the Church after confessing their sin and undergoing a period of repentance – what came to be called the Mystery of repentance. Today we express repentance and experience the forgiveness of sins through the Church in a number of ways:

**Daily prayer of repentance** – For a member of Christ's Body, the Church, prayer is the most basic way to experience God's forgiveness. As St John of Kronstadt said, "Often during the day I have been a great sinner, and at night, after prayer, I have gone to rest justified and whiter than snow by the grace of the Holy Spirit, with the deepest peace and joy in my heart" (*My Life in Christ*, Part 1).

**Regular Self-Reflection** – Periodic, even daily self-examination helps us to see the direction of our lives. Our entire existence should be lived in the light of the Holy Spirit. We examine our actions, thoughts and feelings, affirming our true selves in Christ who has taught us to



live for God's glory and discerning where we have let sin draw us away from our true goal.

***A Relationship with a Confessor/Spiritual Father*** – Each person is in a different place in his or her journey. We may on occasion find thoughts in the Scriptures or the Fathers that touch our hearts, but finding someone who knows you and knows the ways of Holy Tradition is like taking a giant step in the Christian life. The fullest dimension of spiritual guidance involves sharing our thoughts and yearnings, not just our sins with this spiritual guide.

***Receiving the Eucharist*** – Several times during the Divine Liturgy we are reminded that the Eucharist is given to us “for the remission of sins.” But we must approach “discerning the Body,” as St Paul says: sensing the depth of this Mystery and our unworthiness to take part in it. And so before receiving we say the prayer “I believe, Lord, and profess” specifically asking for the pardon of our offences – the deliberate and the indeliberate, whether committed knowingly or inadvertently – so that we may receive the remission of sins and eternal life in this Mystery.

***Observing the Church's Fasts*** - The Fasts are another liturgical expression of repentance. Rearranging our lives in obedience to the Church's weekly and seasonal fasts is a most practical way of affirming our commitment to life in Christ, a daily reminder that “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*” (Mt 4:4).

***The Mystery of Confession*** – As we have seen, Confession was at first considered a “second baptism,” a starting over in the Christian life, when a person had committed serious sin. Over the centuries it became more widely used and is considered appropriate today whenever a person feels the need for it, particularly: When a serious sin has been committed, when a habitual sin has overwhelmed the Christian, or when a Christian has stopped growing spiritually and needs a reorientation of priorities.

## **No “Cheap Forgiveness”**

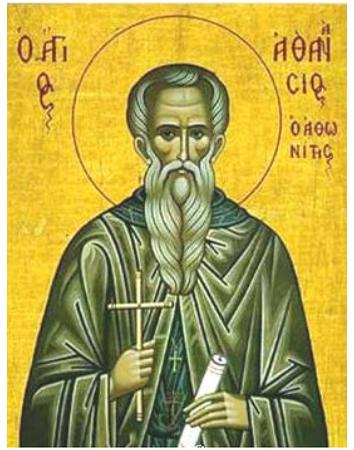
Some people think that for us to obtain forgiveness we simply need to say a prescribed prayer or undergo a stipulated rite without any real connection to one's heart. Obtaining God's forgiveness is not the religious equivalent of paying a traffic ticket. It requires an interior act of repentance--*metanoia*--a change of mind and heart, which must be seen in our actions.

**First, we must extend to those who may have hurt us the same forgiveness we seek from God.** We agree to this each time we say the Lord's Prayer: “forgive us...as we forgive.” Indeed, the Lord cautions us: *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (Mt 6:14, 15).

**Second, we must do something about our sin.** This may mean that we make some kind of restitution: return stolen property, or try to rebuild another's reputation which we have harmed, or the like. And we must take steps to avoid repeating the same kind of sin in the future, particularly if our sin is habitual. As Cosmas the Aetolian remarked: “Even if every spiritual father, patriarch, and hierarch...forgive you, you are unforgiven if you don't repent in action.” Repenting in action means, first of all, turning to God in prayer and asking Him to deliver us from our sin. We are counseled to repeat continually the prayer of the Publican: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner!” Only God, who forgives us when we sin, can prevent us from falling into sin... and only if we continually desire Him to do so. The sincerity of our prayer to be delivered from sin is shown by how often our heart is moved to utter it.

# St. Athanasius of Athos

St. Athanasius was born about the year 920, and was given the name Abraham. He was orphaned at an early age and was raised by a pious nun. After the death of his adoptive mother, Abraham was taken to Constantinople, to the court of the emperor Romanus the Elder. There, he was enrolled as a student under the renowned rhetorician Athanasius. Soon, he attained the mastery of skill of his teacher, and he himself became an instructor of youths. During his time in Constantinople, Abraham met St. Michael Maleinus, igumen of Kyminas Monastery. Abraham told St. Michael about his life and revealed to him his desire to become a monk. Michael recognizing in Abraham the Holy Spirit taught him much in questions of salvation. During their spiritual talks Michael was visited by his nephew, Nicephorus Phocas, a military officer who was to be a future emperor. Nicephorus became impressed with Abraham's spirit, and for all his life Nikephoros regarded Abraham with reverent respect and love.



Consumed with zeal for the monastic life, Abraham left everything behind and went to the Kyminas Monastery. There, he fell down at the feet of Igumen Michael and begged to be received into the monastic life. Fulfilling Abraham's request with joy, the igumen tonsured him with the name Athanasius. Later in 958, having left Kyminas in search of a solitary place, Athanasius came to a place called Melanos, at the very extremity of Mount Athos, where he settled far from the other monastic dwellings. Here, he struggled, intending to leave after a year, when on the last day as he set to pray, a heavenly light suddenly shined upon him, filling him with an indescribable joy. All the thoughts of leaving dissipated and his eyes welled up, graced with tears. From that moment St. Athanasius received the gift of tenderness, and he became as strongly fond of the place of his solitude as he had formerly loathed it.

During this time Nicephorus Phocas, remembering his vow to become a monk, besought Athanasius to build a monastery. At first reluctant, Athanasius set about the building of the monastery. While having to defend the monks from raids by the Muslim Saracens, and incorporating already established sketes in his community, he built what would eventually become known as the Great Lavra. This monastery was dedicated in 963. The monastery is still in use today and is often referred to by people of the area simply as "Lavra", or "The Monastery". Three other monasteries were also founded during the lifetime of Athanasius.

Athanasius established at the monastery a cenobitic monastic Rule on the model of the old Palestinian monasteries. Yet, Athanasius met with considerable opposition from the hermits already at Mount Athos during the construction of his monasteries. They resented his intrusion and attempts to bring order and discipline to their lives.

Upon the death of emperor Nicephorus in 969, the enemies of Athanasius prevailed, and he was forced to leave Athos for Cyprus. There he lived until the new emperor, John Tzimisces, resumed patronage of the Great Lavra and bestowed upon the monastery its first charter in 971. Athanasius died about the year 1000, during an accident. He was killed by falling masonry when the cupola of new construction on his church collapsed. After his death, Athanasius was glorified as a saint.

**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, Dcn. Robert Spencer, 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.



**StateFarm**

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 is coming!**  
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 2015!**

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