



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 15—21 DECEMBER 2024

SUNDAY 15 DECEMBER <i>Martyr St. Eleutherios</i> <i>and his Mother Anthia</i>	11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 14: 16-24 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER <i>St Dionysios of Zakynthos,</i> <i>Prophet Daniel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER <i>Martyrs Boniface and Companions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER <i>Martyr and Apostle Ignatius</i> <i>the God-bearer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SATURDAY 21 DECEMBER <i>Martyr Themistocles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 22 DECEMBER	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 1: 1-25 EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 11: 9-10; 32-40

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim are available
at the Church every
Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

St. Eleutherios the Hieromartyr

Apolytikion

Adorned with flowing priestly vesture and with dripping streams of blood you at once went to your Lord Christ,
O blessed wise Eleftherios, annihilator of Satan.
Wherefore, do not cease to intercede for those who honour your blessed struggles in faith.

St Dionysios of Zakynthos

Apolytikion

The offspring of Zakynthos and president of Aegina, and the protector of the Monastery of Strophades, let all us the faithful honour with one accord Dionysios. And let us cry unto him sincerely: By your Prayers save those who celebrate your Memory and cry unto you: Glory to Christ Who has Glorified you; Glory to Him Who has made you Wondrous; Glory to Him Who has granted you unto us as an unsleeping intercessor.

Saint Ignatius of Antioch "Theophorus" (God-bearer)

Commemorated on December 20 and January 29 (Translation of Relics)

St. Ignatius of Antioch was born in about AD 30. As a young child, he briefly met Christ, being the child that Christ called to him when he proclaimed "*unless you are converted and become as little children you shall by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven*" (Matthew 18:2-5).

Later, he became a disciple of St. John the Apostle alongside St. Polycarp of Smyrna. He became the third Bishop of Antioch after the death of the previous Bishop, St. Evodius. Ignatius was also known as "Theophorus" "which has two meanings, "God-bearer" and "God-borne" because he was known for carrying God in his heart and having the gift of unceasing prayer and because he had been held by Christ as a child (Mk. 9:36). This holy man is called "the God-bearer" because he constantly bore the name of the Living God in his heart and on his lips.

He was martyred during the reign of Emperor Trajan.

During his voyage from Antioch to Rome in AD 107 to be martyred, Ignatius visited with Christian communities at each place he stopped and wrote seven letters, six to various churches and one to his friend St. Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius himself did not fear death. The way he saw and faced his martyrdom made the deepest impression on the believers.

In his Epistle to the Romans (ch. 4), imploring their love not to attempt to deliver him from his longed-for martyrdom, he said, I am writing to all the Churches and I enjoin all, that I am dying willingly for God's sake, if only you do not prevent it. I beg you, do not do me an untimely kindness. Allow me to be eaten by the beasts, which are my way of reaching to God. I am God's wheat, and I am to be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become the pure bread of Christ."

As he was marched to the arena, Ignatius unceasingly repeated the name of Jesus Christ. When he was asked by one of the guard one he did this, he replied that this Name was written on his heart and he confessed with his lips what he carried in his heart



11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, Luke 14: 16-24

Isaiah's Foretelling of the Messiah

A long time before the Messiah was born, in fact almost 750 years before the birth of the Christ, a prophet of God told the nation of Israel that they would be a light to the Nations of the world. This Prophet, named Isaiah, told them that they would be God's salvation to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6).

Now this prophecy that Israel would be a light to the world and the salvation of the nations, came at an unusual time. For while Isaiah was telling the people of their unique role in history, they were in the Process of being conquered by the Assyrians. Isaiah was prophesying that Israel would do something great for the entire world at the same moment that Israel was being defeated by its enemies.

But that seems to be how God often works His plan of salvation. In the midst of what seems total defeat, and humanly impossible to salvage, God works out His plan for the salvation of the world.

And God's plan for salvation does not require that He have on His side the people with the most money, nor the nation with the biggest army, nor the people who think themselves most important, nor most enlightened, nor most progressive. God's plan for the salvation of the world is in no way based upon human merit. God is not controlled by human merit and does not have to respond to it. For God is a sovereign Lord, whose Goodness is not derived from the good behaviour of his subjects. Rather God is good, loving and gracious in His own inner being, and He acts according to His nature, not just in response to our good and bad behaviour.

We learn of God's true loving and grace-filled nature in the story of the Exodus and in the story of the Cross, for in both cases God loves us even when we are not very lovable. He saves us despite ourselves.

Today, our Lord told us a parable about a banquet which he had prepared and for which he had prepared a people. However, those prepared for and invited to the feast, declined to come. These people are all too busy with their own lives, problems, concerns, dreams and prosperity to take time to come to the feast which has been prepared for them. And so others are invited to the feast, and these others are not a very attractive lot, they are outcasts, and handicapped and homeless. They do not deserve an invite to such a great banquet, but they are welcomed into the feast.

Brothers and Sisters, God prepared for Himself a people to come to His feast, but many have turned away from this invitation in order to pursue their own interests in life. You and I are the ones who have chosen to accept the invitation of the Master. We should be forever humbled, grateful and thankful for this invitation, because we are the outcasts and misfits of the parable. We are here only by God's grace, not by our merit.

We are here because somehow we know, somehow we believe, somehow in the depths of our hearts we hope that this invitation, this Eucharistic banquet, this Christian way of life, in fact fulfils all of the hopes and dreams of our hearts. Somehow we understand that it is not pursuing our own private dreams that will give us fulfilment in this world. Those who have tried this in the past ended up outside of the banquet. Our hearts are to be set on the kingdom of God. For this Kingdom is the sole source of happiness for the entire world.

The birth of Jesus Christ brings revelation to us about what is true and what is important and what is worth living for and what we should pursue with all our hearts and minds. And that deep and abiding happiness which can never be taken away cannot be found in a Mall, nor under a tree nor in Santa's sack.

As St. Simeon prayed in Luke's Gospel: (Luke 2:29-32)

"Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Whether we can understand this or not, Christianity is not the abolition of our dreams, but rather their fulfilment. In faith and in love, we can experience that fulfilment with thanksgiving at this altar, at every liturgy, at every feast.

By Fr. Ted Bobosh