



# HOLY TRINITY ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



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## CHURCH BULLETIN

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### Sunday of Orthodoxy

#### Gospel Reading John 1: 43– 51

*At that time,* Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no

deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

#### Apostle Reading Hebrews 11: 24 - 40

*Brethren,* by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Gospel & Apostle Readings	1
Metropolitan Nicolae: Meditation for the Sunday of Orthodoxy	2
Metropolit Anthony of Sourozh: Homily on Sunday of Orthodoxy	3-4
Liturgical Schedule from March 20 to March 28, 2021	4
Fr. Robert Miclean: Homily on Annunciation	5-6

**Synaxarion** Sunday March 21, 2021 (Orthodoxy Sunday - first Sunday of the Great Lent): Holy Hierarch James the Confessor; Holy Venerable Serapion; Thursday March 25: Holy Annunciation

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## Meditation on the Sunday of Orthodoxy

Most Reverend  
Fathers, Beloved  
Brothers and Sisters in  
Christ,

The Orthodox Church has dedicated the first Sunday of the Fast of Holy Pascha to the victory of the Orthodox Faith over heresies. This Sunday is called *The Sunday of Orthodoxy*, and we are all invited to reflect upon and deepen our understanding of this word, *Orthodoxy*.

According to the translation from Greek, the word *orthodoxy* means *right faith* or *right worship* of God. This means that this word speaks of the way we confess our faith about God, but also of the way we glorify God. Orthodoxy means *to believe rightly*, not in something but in Someone, in Christ as the true God revealed to the world; and it means *right worship*, not of something abstract, but of the God Who exists in Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

However, the Orthodox Church does not only possess the true teaching about Christ, but it has Christ Himself as Head of the Church, who gives Himself to all its members, the Faithful. The knowledge of the truth is thus life, and not simply an intellectual act. The Savior Himself says it in His High-Priestly Prayer, “*And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*” (John 17:3). Thus, life as knowledge of the truth is fulfilled in the personal relationship between the believer and the Fountain of Truth, Christ, through prayer. From its beginning the Church has expressed this truth: the law of faith (*lex credendi*) finds its most perfect expression in the law of prayer (*lex orandi*). Orthodoxy is the truth faith which is most fully



expressed in true prayer. Prayer is the voice of the person who seeks God, the voice which comes out of the depths of our being when we seek the One who can reveal to us the purpose of this life. Prayer is a giving of ourselves to God, which is evident in the communal prayer which culminates in the Divine Liturgy. In the Divine Liturgy we bring ourselves and we ask for Christ, who can change our nature in accord-

ance with His image, the true image of God. Through prayer and through communion with the Body and Blood of the Lord, our fractured being receives the power to be put back together and soothed. In prayer, the mind is united with the heart and the entire being finds again its original unity with God and with the world.

There could be no more appropriate thought that I could bring to our priests and believers on this Sunday of Orthodoxy than that we *believe rightly* and verify our faith through *right* prayer. And to this thought I add another: let us go through the Lenten season with this right prayer, which will bring us the peace of Christ during this period of preparation for the Feast of the Lord's Resurrection.

† **Metropolitan Nicolae**



## Homily on Sunday of Orthodoxy

We are keeping today, as every year at the end of the first week of Lent, the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. And every year we must give thought to what is meant, not only as a historical event, but also in our personal lives.

First of all we must remember that the Triumph of Orthodoxy is not the Triumph of the Orthodox over other people. It is the Triumph of the Truth Divine in the hearts of those who belong to the Orthodox Church and who proclaim the Truth revealed by God in its integrity and directness.

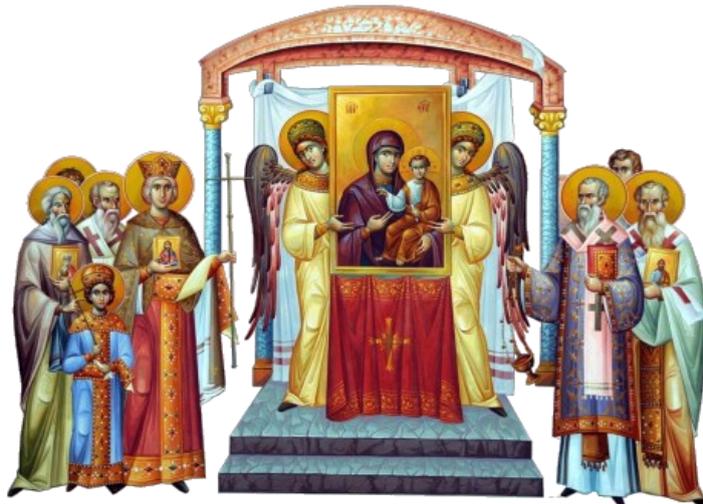
Today we must thank God with all our hearts that He has revealed Himself to us, that He has dispelled darkness in the minds and hearts of thousands and thousands of people, that He who is the Truth has shared the knowledge of the perfect Truth Divine with us.

The occasion of this feast was the recognition of the legitimacy of venerating icons. By doing this we proclaim that God – invisible, ineffable, the God whom we cannot comprehend, has truly become man, that God has taken flesh, that He has lived in our midst full of humility, of simplicity, but of glory also.

And proclaiming this we venerate the icons not as idols, *but as a declaration of the Truth of the Incarnation.*

By doing this we must not forget that it is not the icons of wood and of paint, but God who reveals Himself in the world. Each of us, all men, were created in the image of God. We are all living icons, and this lays upon us a great responsibility because an icon may be defaced, an icon may be turned into a caricature and into a blasphemy. And we must think of ourselves and ask ourselves: are we worthy, are we capable of being called “icons”, images of God?

A western writer has said that meeting a Christian, those who surround him should see him as a vision, a revelation of something they have never perceived before, that the difference between a non-Christian and a Christian is as great, as radical, as striking, as the difference there is between a statue and a living person.



A statue may be beautiful, but it is made of stone or of wood, and it is dead.

A human being may not at first appear as possessed of such a beauty, but those who meet him should be able, as those who venerate an icon – blessed, consecrated by the Church – should see in him the shining of the presence of the Holy Spirit, see God revealing Himself in the humble form of a human being.

As long as we are not capable of being such a vision to those who surround us, we fail in our duty, we do not proclaim the Triumph of Orthodoxy through our life, we give a lie to what we proclaim. And therefore each of us, and all of us collectively, bear every responsibility for the fact that the world meeting Christians by the million is not converted by the vision of God’s presence in their midst, carried indeed in earthen vessels, but glorious, saintly, transfiguring the world.

What is true about us, simply, personally, is as true about our churches. Our churches were called by Christ as a family, a community of Christians to be a body of people who are united with one another by total love, by sacrificial love, a love that is God’s love to us. The Church was called, and is still called, to be a body of people whose characteristic is to be the incarnate love of God. Alas, in all our churches what we see is not the miracle of love divine.

From the very beginning, alas, the Church was built according to the images of the State – hierarchical, strict, formal. In this we have failed – to be truly what the early, first community of Christians were.

Tertullian writing in defence of the Christians said to the Emperor of Rome:

“When people meet us they are arrested and say: ‘How these people love one another!’”

We are not collectively a body of people about whom one could say this. And we must learn to recreate what God has willed for us, what has once existed: to recreate communities, churches, parishes, dioceses, patriarchates, the whole church, in such a way that the whole of life, the reality of life should be that of love. Alas, we have not

And so, when we keep the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy we must remember that God has conquered, that we are proclaiming the truth, God's own Truth, Himself incarnate and revealed, and there is a great responsibility for all of us collectively and singly in this world, that we must not give the lie to what we proclaim by the way in which we live.

A western theologian has said that we may proclaim the whole truth of Orthodoxy and at the same time deface it, give it the lie by the way in which we live, showing with our life that all these were words, but not reality.

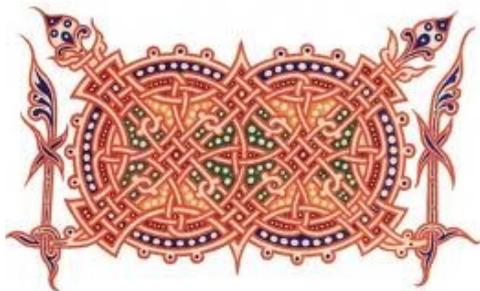
We must repent of this, we must change, we must become such that people meeting us should see God's truth, God's light, God's love in us individually and collectively. As long as we have not done this we have not taken part in the Triumph of Orthodoxy. God has triumphed, but He has put us in charge of making his triumph the triumph of life for the whole world.

Therefore, let us learn to live according to the Gospel which is the Truth and the Life, not only individually but collectively, and build societies of Christians that are a revelation of it, so that the world looking at us may say:

"Let us re-shape our institutions, re-shape our relationships, renew all that has gone or remains old and become a new society in which the Law of God, the Life of God can prosper and triumph. Amen."

**Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)  
of Sourozh**

(Source: <https://preachersinstitute.com/>)



## HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from March 20 to March 28, 2021

### **Saturday March 20 (St. Theodore's Saturday):**

9:00 am - Matins  
9:30 am - Divine Liturgy  
11:00 am - Memorial Service  
12:00 pm - Confessions

### **Sunday March 21 - Orthodoxy Sunday:**

9:00 am - Matins  
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy  
11:00 pm - Sunday School  
12:00 - Coffee hour

### **Wednesday March 24:**

5:00 pm - Akathist

### **Thursday March 25— The Holy Annunciation (fish allowed):**

9:00 am - Matins  
9:30 am - Divine Liturgy  
11:30 pm - Coffee hour

### **Friday March 26:**

5:00 pm - Akathist

### **Saturday March 27 (Soul Saturday):**

9:00 am - Matins  
9:30 am - Divine Liturgy  
11:00 am - Memorial Service  
12:00 pm - Confessions

### **Sunday March 28 (Sunday of St Gregory Palamas - Second Sunday of the Great Lent):**

9:00 am - Matins  
10:00 am - Holy Liturgy  
11:00 pm - Sunday School  
12:00 pm - Coffee hour



# Homily on Annunciation

This is a day of great rejoicing! Today, the Archangel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will miraculously conceive the Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us. And so, today we celebrate the beginning of God's redemption of man by virtue of the conception of the Virgin Mary by the



God has implanted in us, having created us in His image and likeness. The troparion of the Feast proclaims to us that “today is the beginning of our salvation.”

*Today is the beginning of our salvation, / the revelation of the eternal mystery! / The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin / as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. / Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: / Hail, O Full*

Holy Spirit. God announces to us today liberation from the captivity of our sins, our liberation from the endless cycle of sin and death, pride and wanton separateness from God because of our disobedience. Today, God announces to us a better way, that of repentance and humility, the way of healing—for that which Christ has assumed, has been healed.

By taking on human nature, Christ has vivified it, made it alive again, and reversed and undone what we by our sin and disobedience damaged and darkened through our own sins. Christ, the new Adam, has renewed and reversed that separation from God wrought by Adam's pride and Eve's disobedience. The new Eve, the Birth-Giver of God, says instead, “Yes” to God, “May it be done unto me according to Thy word.”

The way of repentance has been announced to us in fulfillment of God's holy promise. The way of returning to God, to our true selves, identity, purpose, and value that

*of Grace, / the Lord is with You!*

The Feast of the Annunciation falls outside of the Lenten cycle, but it's another gift when it comes to us during Lent: a reminder of God's gracious, self-emptying *kenosis*, humility, that His Holy Mother also exhibits in her yes to God and His will—even as it stands against reason, even against the laws of nature, she boldly says, “May it be done to me according to your word.”

The plague we are currently battling has come to us this Lent. For many, it has acted to remind us of what is most important in life, the “One thing needful,” Christ and eternal life in Him. We are reminded of the value and fragility of human life but also of the strength that comes from having that life “hidden in Christ.” Many have been reminded of things they need to repent of and no longer put off repenting of. This is how God works redemption even from the vice-grip of our fallen, sinful world.

Now, having begun the fourth week of the Fast, we ask ourselves where we're at with those ascetical efforts and goals we set for our Lent. What have we learned through our fasting, praying, struggling to trust God and fear Him over the uncertainties and priorities of this world that have so quickly been pulled out from under all of humanity?

This day is a day of rejoicing; it is also a day of power; it is a day when intercession is most possible. For today, on the Feast Day of her Annunciation and yes to God's will, we have a faithful intercessor before the throne of her

Son and our God, our Lord Jesus Christ. I implore you to not let this opportunity pass you by: let us fervently ask the Holy Mother's prayers for us and for our protection, both physical and spiritual, that we may not find ourselves fearing the virus

more than we are prioritizing the things of God and growing in holy fear and awe of Him. Let us pray for protection for us and healing for all who are sin-sick as well as those sick from the virus. Now is the time to make use of the rest of the Great Fast to grow in faith and prioritize or re-prioritize our communion with Christ God and His Kingdom over all that is temporal and can so easily be swept away. It's not yet too late to bring Christ or more of Christ into the midst of your life. He is here. He awaits you. He loves you. He desires the best for us. He desires our eternity with Him, knowing Him, His Light and Life. His Holy Mother, the Theotokos (Birth-Giver of God), stands ready to assist us, to help us learn that same spirit of humility that she exemplified in her consent to God, as she replies to the Archangel Gabriel, "may it be

done unto me according to your word." Ask her this day, especially, for her fervent prayers on your behalf, for what you need to be more faithful and courageous in your

faith. Develop the same spirit in yourself that she exhibits to us by way of example in her humble and courageous "yes" to God and His holy will.

This is the day that we lay hold of the hope set before us, which is God's promise of His desire to save our souls and bring us to the joy of His Kingdom, life with Him. We have only to answer as did the blessed Virgin when God's will was made known to her concerning her miraculous conception, "May it be done unto me according to Thy word" for "He who is mighty has done

great things for me, and holy is His name." Our Holy Mother intercedes for us. Ask her for her prayers for protection, for God to put a swift end to this virus, to redeem this tragedy by teaching us something we need to learn to be furthered in faith, prioritizing our life in Christ and our participation even now in His Heavenly Kingdom. Through her prayers, He will give us the strength to faithfully finish the course of the Fast, to grow in faith and deification, even as we journey with Her Son and our God to His glorious defeat of sin and death on the third day!

**Fr. Robert Miclean**

(Source: <https://www.orthodoxannapolis.org/>)

