

VENERABLE DIONYSIUS OF AEGINA

Saint Dionysius, the Bishop of Aegina, was born in 1547 on the island of Zakynthos. Though born into a noble family, he was determined to flee the world and set his mind upon heavenly things. He entered the monastery of Strophada, and after the prescribed time, he was clothed in the angelic schema by the abbot. Though young in years, he surpassed many of his elders in virtue and was found worthy of ordination to the holy priesthood.

Although he protested his unworthiness, St. Dionysius was consecrated Bishop of Aegina. In that office he never ceased to teach and admonish his flock, and many were drawn to him in order to profit from his wisdom. He feared the praise of men, lest he should fall into the sin of vainglory, so he resigned his See and returned to Zakynthos.

In 1579 the diocese of Zakynthos was widowed (when a bishop dies, his diocese is “widowed”), and Dionysius agreed to care for it until a new bishop could be elected. Then he fled from the worldly life which gave him no peace, and went to the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos Anaphonitria, 20 miles away.

A certain stranger murdered the saint’s brother Constantine, a nobleman, and fearing his victim’s relatives, by chance or by God’s will, sought refuge in St. Dionysius’ monastery. When the saint asked the fugitive why he was so frightened, he confessed his sin and revealed whom he had murdered, asking for protection. St. Dionysius wept for his brother ... then he comforted the murderer and hid him, showing him great compassion and love.

The saint’s relatives came to the monastery with armed men and told him what had happened. He pretended to know nothing about it. After weeping with them and trying to console them, he sent them off in the wrong direction. He then told the murderer who he was, admonished him as a father, and brought him to repentance. After forgiving him, St. Dionysius helped him to escape. Because of his Christ-like virtue, he was granted the gift of working miracles.

St. Dionysius reached a great age and departed to the Lord on Dec. 17, 1624. Not only are the saint’s relic incorrupt, but he is also one of Greece’s “walking saints” (St. Gerasimus and St. Spyridon are the others). He is said to leave his reliquary and walk about performing miracles. The soles of his slippers wear out and must be replaced from time to time. The old slippers are cut up and the pieces are distributed to pilgrims.

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SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
6822 BROADVIEW ROAD
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THE TRINITARIAN

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Divine Liturgy on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Vespers on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.

BULLETIN 7 - VOLUME LXI

TONE 3

DECEMBER 17, 2023

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST ***SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS***

Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths: Ananias, Azarias and Misael
Ven. Dionysius of Aegina;
Ven. Daniel the Confessor, of Spain and Egypt;
New Martyrs Paisius the abbot and Habakkuk the deacon, at Belgrade

By faith You justified the Forefathers, when through them You betrothed Yourself beforehand to the Church of the Gentiles. The saints boast in glory, that from their seed there is a glorious fruit: she who bore You without seed. By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion, Tone II

Cleansed by the Spirit, your pure heart became a vessel of clearest prophecy: you saw things far away as if they were near. When cast into the den, you tamed the lions. Therefore we honor you, O blessed Prophet, glorious Daniel.

Kontakion, Tone III

TODAY'S EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 3:4-11

TODAY'S GOSPEL: LUKE 14:16-24

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Today, December 17	Churching for Tyler Pask
Tuesday, December 19	6:00 p.m. Vespers and Small Compline
Wednesday, December 20	6:00 p.m. Vespers and Small Compline
Friday, December 22	9:00 a.m. Royal Hours
Saturday, December 23	5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

WELCOME GUESTS!

We are very glad you have come to worship the Holy Trinity with us this morning! Please participate in the services at your comfort level. Our greeters will kindly assist you with whatever questions or needs you may have. During each Sunday service we offer Holy Communion. If you are a practicing Orthodox Christian and have come prepared to receive Christ's Body and Blood through fasting and prayer, please come forward to partake. All guests are invited to come forward at the end of the service to greet Fr. Christopher and receive the blessed bread. Please stay after the Divine Liturgy for coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall so we can get to know you better!

Families with children: we encourage children of all ages to be present and participate as they are able during worship. We know sometimes kids need a break, so please take good advantage of our Rest and Refocus Room located on the south side of the lobby/narthex when coming in the main entrance. If you have pre-school and school age children, we invite you to send them to Church School directly after the Divine Liturgy throughout the academic year. May God bless you!

Daily Scripture Readings can be found in the St. Tikhon's Wall Calendar or at www.oca.org/readings.

COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER:

17, TODAY 11:00 a.m. Book Study

JANUARY:

14, Sunday 11:00 a.m. Book Study—conclusion

Second Sunday Food Sale

29, Monday Cooking for St. Herman’s House

31, Wednesday Serving dinner at St. Herman’s House

MEMORY ETERNAL:

Olga Lobas fell asleep in the Lord on Dec. 13, 2023. Panikhida will be at Holy Trinity on Sunday, 7:00 p.m.; the funeral is Monday, 10:00 a.m.

NUT, POPPYSEED AND APRICOT ROLLS:

Rolls are ready for pickup! Orders have been completed and can be picked up at the rear doors of the kitchen. There are EXTRA nut and apricot rolls available! \$15 each.

IN SEARCH OF SEAMSTRESSES:

Some of our altar servers robes are in need of minor mending. If you are able to assist in this project, please see Protodeacon Anthony.

NEEDED FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION:

Please save your plastic grocery bags (all colors). Bring them to church and place them in the plastic bin marked “Plastic Bags for St. Mary of Egypt.” These bags will be used for food distribution to the needy.

HTOC CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE:

Many thanks to all of our parishioners who have generously given gifts for children in Parma elementary schools. All of the ornaments on the tree have been taken. Please place gifts under the tree, and they will be taken to the elementary school on Dec. 18.

BOOK STUDY:

Fr. Christopher will have class today at 11:00 a.m. The final class has been rescheduled for Sunday, Jan. 14, at 11:00 a.m. Discussion will cover Chapter 13-conclusion.

HOME BLESSINGS:

Fr. Christopher will be offering home blessings in 2024, between Theophany and the beginning of Lent, January 7—March 17. There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall; or you can call Janene in the church office Mon. or Thurs. mornings; or email your name address, phone no. to jmhatch8@gmail.com; or leave a message on the machine. 216-524-4859.

OFFERING FOR FLOWERS:

Please remember to use the envelope in your box for flowers to help adorn our church for the Nativity feast.

FLOWERS:

The flowers today are offered in blessed memory of Bill and Helen Chychlyk.

COFFEE HOUR:

Our refreshments today are hosted by Pauline Smolarchuk.

The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen for future dates. We are in need of volunteers for next Sunday, 12/24.

TRINITARIAN COVERS:

The covers today are offered by Diane Hastings.

FR. ANDREW CLEMENTS:

Fr. Andrew, pastor of St. Nicholas Church in Mentor, is celebrating 40 years of service in the Priesthood. He will be honored with a dinner on Sunday, Jan. 28, at 5:30 p.m.; Pine Ridge Country Club in Wickliffe. See details on the bulletin board. Reservations must be made by January 14, 2024.

GIFTS WE OFFER TO THE LORD WE LOVE

REGULAR COLLECTION	12/3	12/10
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUNDS	\$ 2692.00	\$ 4038.00
CANDLES	1550.00	1389.00
LOCAL CHARITIES	263.00	114.00
UGANDA SELF SUFFICIENCY FUND	90.00	25.00
CHRISTMAS FLOWERS	10.00	
COFFEE HOUR, 11/26; 12/3	45.00	235.00
	118.00	148.00

Hymn 25 – Hymns on the Nativity – by St Ephrem the Syrian

Today we celebrate the Sunday of the Forefathers, and these stanzas from St Ephrem (+373AD) help us to reflect on the anticipation of the forefathers of the coming Messiah.

5 Blessed are you, O church, in whom rejoices even Isaiah in his prophecy:
“Behold a virgin will conceive and bring forth a child” whose name is a great mystery.⁵⁵⁵
O for the explanation that was revealed in the church!
Two names were joined together and became one: Emmanuel.⁵⁵⁶ El is with you always,⁵⁵⁷
Who joins you with His members.

Refrain: Glory to the One Who sent Him!

6 Blessed are you, O church, by Micah who cried out
“A shepherd will come out from Ephrata.”⁵⁵⁸
For He came to Bethlehem to take from it the rod of Jesse and to rule the peoples.⁵⁵⁹
Blessed are your lambs sealed with his Seal⁵⁶⁰
and your sheep kept by His word.
You, O church, are the eternal Bethlehem,
since in you is the bread of life.⁵⁶¹

Refrain: Glory to the One Who sent Him!

7 Blessed are you, O church, in whom behold even Daniel, the man beloved, rejoices.⁵⁶²
He declared that the glorious Messiah would be slain and the holy town would be destroyed by His slaying.⁵⁶³
Woe to the People that was rejected and did not repent!
Blessed are the peoples who were called and did not turn away.
Those invited declined and others instead of them enjoyed their marriage feasts.⁵⁶⁴

Refrain: Glory to the One Who sent Him!

8 Blessed are you, O church, by whom David the King sings with his lyre.
By the Spirit he sang about Him, “You are my Son. I”—by the glories of holiness—“have begotten You today.”⁵⁶⁵
Blessed are your ears, cleansed to hear His day as His body.⁵⁶⁶ Keep vigil and honor Him.
Be chastened by Sion who made the festival mournful.
Make joyful Him Who made you joyful.¹

Refrain: Glory to the One Who sent Him!

⁵⁵⁵ Isa. 7:14. ;

⁵⁵⁶ Strictly speaking Emman and El are not two names for God, but the following lines indicate that this is the division Ephrem means. The two parts are joined by what appears to be the conjunction *w* but is actually the enclitic *hw*. Ephrem’s remark is a kind of theological grammarian’s pun.

⁵⁵⁷ In Syriac, as in Hebrew, Emmanuel means “God [El] is with us.”

⁵⁵⁸ Mic. 5:2.

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. Isa. 11:1–16 and Mic. 5:3–7.

⁵⁶⁰ Cf. Rev. 7:1–8.

⁵⁶¹ Ephrem’s meaning is based on a pun in the Syriac, since “Bethlehem” means “house of bread.”

⁵⁶² Dan. 9:23.

⁵⁶³ Dan. 9:26.

⁵⁶⁴ Luke 14:15–24; cf. Matt. 22:2–10.

⁵⁶⁵ Ps. 2:7.

⁵⁶⁶ The meaning is unclear.

¹ Ephrem the Syrian, *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, ed. Bernard McGinn, trans. Kathleen E. McVey, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 201–202.