

Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Plagal First Mode

Let us worship the Word, O ye faithful, praising Him that with the Father and the Spirit is co-beginningless God, Who was born of a pure Virgin that we all be saved; for He was pleased to mount the Cross in the flesh that He assumed, accepting thus to endure death. And by His glorious rising, He also willed to resurrect the dead.

Apolytikion for Sun. after Nativity in the Second Mode

O Joseph, proclaim the wonders to David, the ancestor of God. Thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; thou hast given glory with the shepherds; thou hast worshipped with the Magi; and thou hast been instructed through an Angel. Entreat Christ God to save our souls.

Apolytikion for Protomartyr Steven in the Fourth Mode

The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred Saints; for when thou hadst censured the Jews' madness, thou sawest Christ thy Saviour standing at the right hand of the Father. O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

Apolytikion of the Church in the First Mode

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit; and they were assured by the blessing that Thou are the Son of God and Redeemer of the world.

Ἀνελήφθης ἐν δόξῃ, Χριστέ ὁ Θεός ἡμῶν, χαροποιήσας τοὺς Μαθητάς, τῇ ἐπαγγελίᾳ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος· βεβαιωθέντων αὐτῶν διὰ τῆς εὐλογίας, ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ λυτρωτὴς τοῦ κόσμου.

Seasonal Kontakion in the Third Mode

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in essence; * to the Unapproachable, * the earth doth offer a small cave; * Angels join in choir with shepherds * in giving glory; * with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; * for our sakes is born a young Child, * He that existed * before the ages as God.

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60.

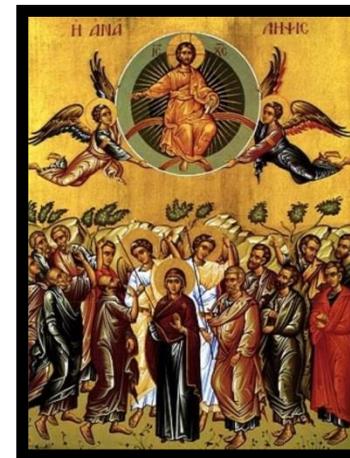
IN THOSE DAYS, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. And the high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. "But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is my throne, and earth my footstool. What house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?' "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth against him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

The Gospel of Matthew 2:13-23

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church



1207 Riverwoods Road – Lincolnshire, Illinois 60069

Fr. Sotirios P. Malamis, Proistamenos

TEL: (847) 482-1200 | FAX: (847) 482-9566 | www.ascensiongoc.com

Office e-mail: reneemaltezos@ascensiongoc.com

WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN

December 27, 2015 – January 3, 2016

Prospora Bakers:

Elaine Stevens & Sophie Beris

FOS Ministry Greeters:

Mary & John Kokinis

Epistle Reader:

Tom Kiriakos

Ushers:

UIC Peter Venetos, Nick Marino, Doug Hugdahl, Mike Sutherland,
Steve Demet, Tom Papastefan

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION – *“In every Liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion, He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, “The blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free.”*

—Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris

Ascension of Our Lord Greek Orthodox Church

Dec 27 – Jan 3, 2016

Sunday 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	December 27 Orthros Divine Liturgy Memorial Service for the souls of the servants of God: Regina Smirles (1.5 yrs) & James Smirles (5 years) Coffee Fellowship hosted by The Smirles Family Senior Synaxis Christmas Party @ Dover Straits	Sunday After the Nativity - St. Stephen, The First Martyr
Monday 5:30 p.m.	December 28 Parish Family Ice Skating Event @ Centennial Ice Arena	
Thursday 7 p.m.	December 31 Great Vespers @ St. Basil, Chicago	
Friday 8:15 a.m. 9:15 a.m.	January 1, 2016 Orthros Divine Liturgy followed by Doxology for the New Year	Circumcision of Our Lord, St. Basil the Great
Saturday 5 p.m.	January 2 Vespers	
Sunday 8:15 a.m. 9:30 a.m.	January 3 Orthros Divine Liturgy	Sunday Before Theophany

WELCOME TO OUR VISITORS

+ **WE ARE BLESSED** to have you at our Church. We hope your visit was memorable and meaningful in every way. Our doors and hearts are always open to you. Please join us for fellowship following the Divine Liturgy and visit with Fr. Sotiri and with members of the Parish Council. They will answer questions and provide you with information regarding the programs and life at the Ascension.

+ **ON BEHALF OF THE ASCENSION PARISH FAMILY**, we wish you a blessed time with your families throughout this spiritual Nativity season. A schedule of Divine services for Christmas and Epiphany can be found on our website. December 25 – January 4 is a fast-free period. Merry Christmas and we wish you many blessings in the New Year.

HOLY COMMUNION ETIQUETTE

+ If you are either baptized and/or confirmed as an Orthodox Christian and have spiritually prepared to receive Holy Communion, please come up with reverence and humility, row by row, and depart as directed by the ushers. Please remain in your rows until an usher indicates your row should proceed forward. If you are standing in the back of the nave, please wait until an usher directs you.

+ In receiving Communion, you should place the cloth under your chin, recite your Christian name, and wipe your mouth after receiving. If you are wearing lipstick please remove it prior to receiving Communion.

+ **OUR PRAYERS THIS MORNING** are for the souls of the servants of God, Regina and James Smirles, beloved parents of Bill (Cheri) Smirles. May their memories be eternal.

+ **OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES** to Lisa (Frank) Karkazis whose father, John Pantos, fell asleep in the Lord this week. His funeral took place at Assumption. May his memory be eternal.

CHURCH NEWS

+ **WE KINDLY ASK YOU TO SUBMIT YOUR 2016 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE CARD AND COMPLETE YOUR 2015 STEWARD OFFERING** either by mail, or by dropping it off at the Church office. Ascension's stewardship theme, which we will cultivate in the coming year, is: ***Open Your Heart: Giving time, talent, treasure for the Glory of God.*** We ask for God's blessings as we prayerfully consider the time, talents and treasures we can share to sustain and enhance the spiritual and bountiful Parish life at Ascension in 2016. If you didn't receive a pledge card by mail, they are available at the Pangari.

+ **STEWARDS: PLEASE TAKE HOME YOUR 2016 CALENDARS AND SCRIPTURE CARDS** on your way out of Church today. They are located on a table near the entrance.

+ **EPIPHANY HOME BLESSINGS** – According to the Greek Orthodox tradition, the month of January is the time for home blessings. If you wish for Fr. Sotiri to bless your home, please complete the form (see insert) and return it to the Church Office by January 14.

+ **NURSING HOME RESIDENTS AND HOME-BOUND PARISHIONERS:** If you know someone who is in a nursing home or is home-bound, and they would like Fr. Sotiri to visit them, please contact the church office at 847.482.1200.

+ **PHILOTOCHOS FOOTBALL MANIA UPDATE:** Week 8 winner is Mia Connolly on 2 of her tickets for \$25 each! Congratulations Mia!

+ **SENIOR SYNAXIS IS HOLDING ITS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY TODAY** following the Divine Liturgy at Dover Straits at 1 p.m.

+ **OUR ANNUAL PARISH ICE-SKATING PARTY** takes place tomorrow, Monday, December 28th at 5:30 at Centennial Ice Arena at Highland Park. Today is the last day to RSVP. Please call Carol Stamas at 847.323.1796.

+ **YOUTH SAVE THE DATES** – *December 30th* New Year's Eve's Eve Party, 7 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. @ St. Demetrios Church in Elmhurst for 6th-12th graders; and, *January 8, 2016:* GOYA Lock-In @ Ascension. Check our website for updated information.

+ **THE MEET AND GREET KOINONIA MEN'S MINISTRY MEETING** will take place at 7 p.m. on January 14, 2016 at Doug Hugdahl's office, Lightsource Unlimited, 980 Corporate Woods Parkway, Vernon Hills. A light dinner will be served. Please RSVP and direct questions to Doug Hugdahl at 847.910.6090.

+ **OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS:** Metropolis of Chicago Women's Retreat: January 15-16, 2016; Annual March for Life Chicago: January 17; Sanctity of Life Pan Orthodox Prayer Service: January 24th; Apokreatiko Glendi: Sunday, March 6th. Stay tuned for more information.

+ **CROSSROAD 2016 FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS** is a summer institute hosted at Hellenic College in Boston that connects students with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Early registration deadline is February 1, 2016. Visit www.CrossRoadInstitute.org for more information.

+ **THE PANELLENIC SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION** is currently accepting applications from eligible undergraduate students of Hellenic descent to support the educational pursuits of exceptional young people. The application deadline is February 1, 2016. Visit the new Orthodox Christian Fellowship Ministry webpage at www.ascensiongoc.com

+ **WE THANK OUR PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE PROVIDED ASSISTANCE FOR AND DURING THE DIVINE LITURGY THIS PAST YEAR** including Prospora bakers, Greeters, Epistle Readers, Ushers, and Coffee Fellowship hosts. Your love for Ascension is truly recognized and appreciated. May God bless you always.

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR HEALTH

+ **PRAYER REQUESTS** – *Please include in your personal prayers* the servants of God: Maita, Georgia, John, Eleni, George, Nicholas, Ethel, Christine, Louise, John, Panagiota, Anastasia, Stella, Athanasia, Mitchell, Joanne, Augustine, Panagiotis, Christina, Georgiane, Helen, James, Joseph, Sophia