



## ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

707 East Lafayette Boulevard ♦ Detroit, Michigan 48226  
Church: (313) 965-2988 ♦ Fax: (313) 965-2988  
Email: [Annunciation@prodigy.net](mailto:Annunciation@prodigy.net)



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My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Αληθώς Ανέστη!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!

I pray this message finds you all well and healthy.

On May 9th we celebrate the feast day of Isaiah the Prophet who lived during the 8th century B.C. and was the son of Prophet Amos. He lived during a very spiritually changeling period of the Israelite nation where sinful pleasures and evil deeds were rampant in their daily lives. At that time many people in the nation of Judah and Israel were apostates and disobeyed God's commandments to the point that they started to worship idols. For this reason, Isaiah was called on by God to sustain and maintain His believers, instruct and rebuke the prodigals and unrepentant, spiritually nourish the youth and advise the kings to be loyal and dedicated to our Trinitarian God. He, also, prophesized Christ's coming and our salvation through Him and wrote about this in the Book of Isaiah. Due to the sinful state of His people, God allowed their land to be faced with wars from different sides of their borders so that they would be repentant and return back to their true faith and holy life. The name 'Isaiah' in Hebrew means 'God saves,' and the names of his two sons were given by God to prophesize the salvation and return of the imprisoned Israelite people from pagan rulers and from sin. Isaiah the Prophet served four Jewish kings during his lifetime and he was condemned to a torturous death by King Manasses for instructing, guiding and advising him in God's teachings and rebuking him in public.

On May 10th we celebrate the feast day of St. Simon the Zealot and Apostle, who was from Cana of Galilee and who, according to some, is also known as Nathanael and Bartholomew. St. Simon was so zealous with his apostolic life spreading the Gospel of Christ to others in far off lands that he was named 'the Zealot.' He was one of the most hard-working missionaries who spread the Gospel to Persia, Africa, and as far as Great Britain. Thousands of people were catechized and baptized by St. Simon in the name of the Holy Trinity and remained loyal and true to our Triune God until the end of their earthly lives. Until the end of his life, St. Simon never stopped working for the Will of God and the spiritual prosperity of his people. His earthly life ended in the same way that Christ's human life ended by being crucified on a cross. His name 'Simon' means 'one who hears.'

On May 12th we celebrate the feast day of St. Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople. St. Germanos was born in Constantinople sometime around 640 A.D. to a wealthy family of the royal court. From his early youth he dedicated himself to the Church by becoming a monk and, then, a priest monk and, at the age of 37, he became Metropolitan of Cyzicus. At the age of 75 he was escalated to Patriarch of Constantinople.

He was a very strong defender of the icons and was against the iconoclasts and for this reason he resigned from his office around 730 A.D. His courage and sacrifice against the iconoclasts was mentioned in the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D. which took place in Nicea of Asia Minor. His name 'Germanos' comes from the Latin word 'Germanus' which means 'the truthful,' and this is what he was throughout his life and in his writings where he confessed and manifested the truth of the Orthodox Christian faith. He reposed in peace in the Lord at the age of 100, in 740 A.D.

On May 13th we celebrate the feast day of St. Glykeria the Virgin-martyr of Heraclia, who was the daughter of the Roman commander Makarios. St. Glykeria was born in the 2nd century in Trajanopolis of Thrace. From her early youth St. Glykeria was catechized and baptized into the Christian faith. In her young adulthood, she was arrested and ordered to deny Christ and sacrifice to the idols. She refused and boldly confessed her faith in Christ. She prayed to our Trinitarian God and immediately the idols were demolished. Pagans who were present at this event turned to Christ and believed in Him. She was, then, subjected to various bodily and psychological tortures, but she remained faithful to Christ until the end of her earthly life when she reposed in the Lord after being thrown to wild beasts. After her death, the local Hierarch Bishop Dometius received her body and buried it with honor and dignity. Despite the fact that she was young in years, St. Glykeria did not hesitate to give up her temporary physical life in order to remain faithful to Christ and save her eternal soul. Her name 'Glykeria' means 'sweet one.'

Let us all allow Isaiah the Prophet to save us through his prophetic words that are found in the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. Let us all admire and imitate in our lives the Christian zeal of St. Simon the Zealot and Apostle and, like him, spread to others the Gospel of Christ through our Christ-like and God-pleasing thoughts, words and deeds. Let us all honor the holy icons, as did St. Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople, and venerate the people depicted on them with love and respect and include them as a part of our daily spiritual life in Christ, helping us communicate with and encouraging us by being reminded of their love and sacrifices for Christ. And let us all not allow our sinful passions and desires to attack us like wild beasts by imitating St. Glykeria's complete dedication to Christ despite Christian persecution, wherein she willingly gave up her young life for the divine love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—the Divine Bridegroom of each of our souls.

Yours in our Risen Christ

Rev. Ekonomos Fr. Georgios Manias

