



ANNUNCIATION GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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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 June 8th we celebrate the feast day of St. Melania the Righteous who was born in Spain in 340 A.D. and reposed in peace in the Lord in 410 A.D at the age of 70. She led a life of almsgiving, showing mercy to anyone who was in need and building philanthropic institutes. Her father Markellinos was a Roman Consultant and therefore St. Melania inherited a great amount of wealth from her parents. With Christ's evangelical discretion, she used all her wealth for the spiritual prosperity, development and progress of His people and for the Glory of God. By God's Providence her parents, her husband and her two children died, so she decided to leave Spain and settled in Egypt where she stayed at a Monastery on Mount Nitria and dedicated herself to God by taking care of the Holy Monks of that Monastery and providing them with their basic necessities, such as food and clothing.

St. Melania was known for her Christian hospitality and almsgiving, as well as her comforting, loving and caring nature. For Christians who suffered from any type of misfortune, including dehumanizing treatment from Imperial Roman authorities, such as exiles, imprisonments or physical abuses, St. Melania was always willing to provide her physical and spiritual assistance. She spent ten years of her life assisting people who were in need in Egypt. St. Melania was a talented manager in terms of establishing and running inns that accommodated guests and visitors. When she travelled to the Holy Land, she stayed in Jerusalem and, using her own funds, she built an inn so that pilgrims from all over the world would find a place to rest, eat and sleep free of charge. She stayed and offered her Christian services in Jerusalem for another 27 years, until she reposed in the Lord after 37 years of living a life of self-denial. It should, also, be mentioned that St. Melania's faithful life to Christ, in both theory and practice, was based on being well-studied in the Holy Scriptures of God. Likewise, we should strive to seek the guidance of the Holy Fathers of the Church so that we may understand the Holy Scriptures as they are intended to be understood.

On June 10th we celebrate the feast day of St. Bartholomew the Holy Apostle. According to St. John's Gospel (John 1:43-51), St. Bartholomew (whose name means 'son of Theodore') was, also, named Nathaniel, which is translated as 'Theodore' in Greek. We can find St. Bartholomew/Nathaniel being mentioned in the Gospels of Luke (6:12-16), Mark (3:13-19) and Mathew (10:1-4). He is the man that Phillip had met in order to announce the Good News and that they had found the Messiah. St. Bartholomew was truly a good Israelite and a faithful apostle of Christ who preached the Good News in Armenia and India. His authentic, unique and honest physical presence and his full-of-God's-grace and enlightened words when he spoke about Christ's Gospel converted hundredths of thousands of Pagans to Christianity. It is interesting to note that he mainly referenced St. Matthew's Gospel in his sermons. Due to his Christ-loving work to catechize and baptized the people in the holy trinity, St. Bartholomew was crucified upside down by the Pagan King of the City of Ouranoupolis, for the Glory of God and the salvation of the souls of His people.

On June 10th we, also, celebrate the feast day of St. Barnabas the Holy Apostle and disciple of Apostle Paul, who imitated his teacher's missionary work until the end of his earthly life. As with St. Bartholomew, St. Barnabas preached by referencing the Gospel of St. Matthew to talk to others about the Holy Life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Matthew's Gospel became for St. Barnabas the Holy Anchor of Christian faith and the main life-giving water of the Heavenly Wisdom and Way of God for the salvation of the souls he approached. St. Barnabas traveled around the earth, as did his teacher Apostle Paul, in order to spread the Good News about Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection granting us eternal life. He became a living image and likeness of Christ, in Rome, Cyprus, Alexandria and Jerusalem. In Cyprus, where he was born and raised by a respected Judaic Levite family, he was stoned and burned alive by his own people for his loyalty to Christ, our God. According to the Orthodoxy tradition, it is believed that St. Mark the Evangelist and Apostle received the remains of St. Barnabas and placed them in a tomb.

On June 10th we also celebrate the feast day of St. Alexander and St. Antonina the Martyrs, who both lived during the end of the 2nd century A.D and the beginning of the 3rd century A.D in the City of Cardamon. St. Antonia was a young Christian woman who dedicated her entire life to philanthropy and caring for the poor, sick and needy. Her life as a Christian was made known to Festus, the Roman governor of her region, and due to her good and holy Christian works, both spiritual and physical, she was arrested, tortured and burned to death. At no point during her martyric trial did she deny her faith, so, alongside St. Alexander (who helped her escape, with her virginity intact, a life of living at a brothel), she martyred and became for other Christians a strong example of Christian faith, wisdom and virtue.

Let us all strive, as did St. Melania the Righteous, to offer Christian hospitality to others and have a comforting, loving and caring nature, no matter what unpleasant circumstances this earthly life may bring us. Let us all honor both St. Bartholomew and St. Barnabas by reading daily the Gospel of St. Matthew so that we may be exposed to Christ's life and teachings who is the Holy Word and Wisdom of God and "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), as well as the one and only human-divine Bridegroom of our souls. And let us all remain loyal to our true Christian faith handed down to us by the Holy Apostles, even in our days of sinful temptations, so that we may imitate the loyalty and dedication to Christ that St. Alexander and St. Antonina the Martyrs displayed until the end of their lives, and may we, through these Saints' intercessions, be granted a steadfast faith and the safeguarding of our souls from all evil, so that we may we become holy citizens of Paradise.

Yours in Christ,

+Rev. Economics Fr. Georgios Manias

