

ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL SUNDAY BULLETIN: DECEMBER 27, 2015

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON, THE FIRST MARTYR

EPISTLE READING OF THE DAY: This morning's Apostolic Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 6, verses 8-15, and chapter 7, verses 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.

Ὁ Ἀπόστολος, Πράξεων τῶν Ἀποστόλων τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα, κεφ. 6, ἐδάφ. 8-15, κεφ. 7, ἐδάφ. 1-5, 47-60.

GOSPEL READING OF THE DAY: This morning's Gospel Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 2, verses 13-23. It is found in our books, pages 317-319.

Ἡ σημερινὴ εὐαγγελικὴ περικοπὴ ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ Ματθαῖον, κεφ. 2, ἐδάφ. 13-23. Εὐρίσκεται εἰς τὰ βιβλία μας, σελ. 316-318.

Introduction to Orthodoxy (*Sundays, 9.a.m., upstairs*). This class is especially intended for those who are thinking about converting to Orthodoxy and for family members and friends who would like to support them on their journey, but it is also open to people who are already Orthodox and who would like to deepen their understanding of their faith. We explore Christian theology and practice through reading selections of Scripture, the Church Fathers, the lives of the Saints, and other texts representative of the Orthodox worldview. These readings are the starting point for our discussions, which aim at clarifying doctrine and worship and helping us to discover (or rediscover), week after week, why we belong in the Church. If you are interested in attending the class, please contact **Alexandros Kozák** at orthodoxy-agkozak@sneakemail.com.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN SPANISH: Padre nuestro, que estás en los cielos, santificado sea tu nombre, venga tu Reino, hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo; danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día; perdona nuestras deudas así como nosotros perdonamos a nuestros deudores; no nos dejes caer en la tentación, y líbranos del Mal.

TODAY'S MNEMOSYNA: Today's memorial services are being offered for the repose of the soul of our brother **Arsenis Tamaras**, who fell asleep in the Lord 34 years ago, and for the repose of the soul of our sister **Anna Tamaras**, who fell asleep in the Lord 20 years ago. *Aionia I Mnimi!* (Eternal Memory!)

40 DAY BLESSING: Today, we welcome 40 day old **Anna**, daughter of **Nicole and Petraki Papageorge**, as she is presented to the Church. *Na mas zisi!* (Long Life!)

PARISH COUNCIL OATH OF OFFICE/ELECTION OF OFFICERS NEXT SUNDAY: Those who were elected to the Parish Council for a two-year term, beginning January 1, 2016, will take their oath/affirmation of office next Sunday, January 3. Immediately following, the Parish Council will convene to elect its officers for the year and also to elect four (4) additional members to the Parish Council, so that the Parish Council has, in addition to the Dean, fifteen (15) elected lay members, as required by the Parish By-Laws.

PARISH VASLILOPITA ON JANUARY 10: Do join us for the Parish Vasilopita, sponsored by the Cathedral Philoptochos, which will take place on Sunday, January 10, following the Divine Liturgy. As is our tradition, champagne brunch will be served, in addition to the St. Basil's breads, prepared by the Ladies Philoptochos. The donation is \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. The proceeds support the various Philoptochos ministries, as St. Basil's Academy.

FIRST WINDOW GOES IN!: If you peer out the gallery doors, you will see that the first window of the 135 windows to be installed in the new Cathedral has been installed. It is located to your right, adjacent the courtyard triple double doors. The windows, all of which are arched, were crafted for us by Pella. The windows have been a donor opportunity for us. For a donation of \$5,000., parishioners and friends of the Cathedral may donate a window. Their names will be listed as donors on the commemorative plaque, which will be installed in the entryway to the new Cathedral. Please see **Tom Nuris** or **Tom Papageorge**, Capital Campaign Chairs, or Father Stephen if you wish to make a donation.

THANK YOU, 2016 STEWARDS: A church is only as vibrant as the faith of the people who make up the community. Annunciation Cathedral is blessed to have dedicated people, who worship regularly and who contribute, making possible the many ministries offered by their parish. Recently, we've had significant changes in the Cathedral's personnel. This does not, however, diminish the service which the parish offers to you, its parishioners, nor the level of support which the parish enjoys from you. If anything, it energizes our parishioners to expect, rightfully, more and better programs, as we engage in articulating a vision for our parish for its second hundred years. On December 6, we observed "Stewardship Sunday" at the Cathedral. Through your stewardship, you declared your support of the Cathedral and its ministries for 2016 and beyond. 94 Stewardship pledges were received on that day. Now, is this good? Yes and no. Yes, because it represents just under a third of the level of support we enjoyed in 2015, and we anticipate we should have 350 or so stewards again in 2016. On the other hand, our community has a potential of having 800 stewards. There are at least that many families with whom we communicate on a regular basis, and who consider the Annunciation Cathedral to be their parish church. So, how do we get everyone on board? By keeping at it, by staying the course. By continuing to extend the invitation, as the Lord himself does. As He says in Scripture, specifically, in the Book of Revelation, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20).

Meanwhile, we pause to acknowledge and thank our stewards. The February 2016 issue of the Herald, which will go to press on January 15, will feature an "honor roll of stewards." In that issue, we will print the names of all those who will have declared their support for 2016. In order to be listed, please forward your 2016 Stewardship pledge card by January 15. If, for some reason, you have misplaced your card, please call the Cathedral office at 415 864-8000, and we will be happy to send you another card. If you prefer, you may pick up a card when you come to the Cathedral for worship, or you may speak with Gus Vouchilas, our Stewardship Committee Chair, or with Father Stephen, fatherstephen@annunciation.org.

FIRST WINDOW IS IN: We are completely done with metal stud framing and exterior Densglass (the yellow panels you see on the outside). Plywood and wood blocking are now complete on all tile roof areas, as well as the domes. Waterproofing is now being done, with lath, and plaster to follow. Meanwhile, the first window is in, and window installation continues, weather permitting.

Excitement mounts as we watch this magnificent structure evolve, as it represents everything we are and everything we believe as Greek Orthodox Christians. It is also a symbol of the faith that our own generation has cultivated, and what we hope to leave behind, to inspire the generations to come.

We've noted on a number of occasions that we have raised \$6 million towards this project, with another \$4.7 to go. And we have explained how much has been spent and on what. Additionally, we have projected a timetable for completion of the project--summer of 2016; this includes the normal functioning of the garage. At that point, we are planning to hold a **Gala event**, to celebrate a great accomplishment, as we turn to Phase two (the completion of the interior). Work on the interior, including appointments and iconography, should take another year or so. Certainly, we hope to be able to plan for its consecration, in 2017, four years before our 100th anniversary. All this, of course, will depend upon your prayers and continued support.

May God bless our undertaking, for God is the one who spoke to Moses, then, and who speaks to us, today, saying: *"Build me a Sanctuary, and I will appear among you."* (Translated from the Septuagint: *Καὶ ποιήσεις μοι ἅγίασμα, καὶ ὀφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν*). (Exodus 25:8). May we prove worthy of the trust God has in us to rebuild His Church.



"The Church shall be a home for Orthodox Christians from every ethnic and national background. It shall be a house of prayer for all humankind, in which the Holy Name of our Triune God shall be extolled and all of creation sanctified."

(Ecumenical Patriarch
Bartholomew, Ground breaking,
November 6, 1997)