

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church
(Dormition of the Mother of God)**

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Sunday March 25, 2018

ANNUNCIATION—ST. MARY OF EGYPT

The **Annunciation** of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary (*one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church*); Martyrs Pelagia, Theodosia, and Dula of Nicomedia, who suffered under Valentinian (361); The Holy Martyr who was formerly an executioner; Venerable Sennouphios the Standard-bearer, of Latomos Monastery in Thessalonica (9th c.); Venerable Timon the Hermit (10th c.); Saint Dismas the Good Thief, crucified next to Christ (1st c.); Holy 262 Martyrs of Rome; Martyr Quirinus of Tegernsee (*Quirinus of Rome*), in Rome under Claudius II (c. 269); Martyr Irenaeus of Sirmium, Bishop in Pannonia (Hungary), under Diocletian (304); Saint Caimin of Inis Cealtra, Bishop-Abbot of Inis Cealtra and possibly the first Bishop of Killaloe (653); Saint Humbert of Maroilles (c. 680); Saint Hermenland, monk at Fontenelle, ordained priest and sent with twelve monks to establish a new monastery on the island of Aindre (Indret) (c. 720); Saints Barontius and Desiderius (c. 725); Saint Kennocha (*Kyle, Enoch*), nun at a convent in Fife, held in great veneration in Scotland, especially around Glasgow (1007); Saint Alfwold (*Ælfwold II of Sherborne*), monk at Winchester who was chosen as Bishop of Sherborne in 1045 (1058); Saint Nicander, hermit, of Pskov (1581) (*see also September 24*); Venerable Parthenius of the Kiev Caves (1855); Venerable Savvas the New of Kalymnos (1947) (*see also March 24; April 7 - Greek; and on fifth Sunday of Great Lent*); Saint Justin (Popovic), Archimandrite of Ćelije Monastery in Serbia and Confessor of Traditional Orthodoxy (1979) (*see also June 1*); New Hieroconfessor Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (1925) (*see also April 7*); **Icons:** Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos the Burning Bush, on Mount Sinai (*Our Lady of the Burning Bush*); Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos Evangelistria, kept at the monastery of Aliartos in Boeotia; Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos of Kypera, kept at the monastery of the Panagia on the island of Cephalonia; "Annunciation" Icon of the Mother of God (16th c.); **Other Commemorations:** Greek Independence Day: Proclamation of Greek independence on March 25, 1821, blessed by Metropolitan Germanos III of Old Patras at the Monastery of Agia Lavra.

Services for the week of March 25

Tuesday, March 27: 7:00 Instructions in Orthodoxy

Wednesday, March 28: 9:00 am Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Friday, March 30: 7:00 pm Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

Saturday, March 31: 9:00 am Divine Liturgy—Lazarus Saturday—6:00 pm Vigil for Palm Sunday

Parish News

WELCOME: to all of our guests today. We are so glad that you have come to enjoy our Orthodox worship. We invite you to come for coffee and sweets in our church hall and to enjoy fellowship with us. May God bless you!

PASCHAL FLOWERS if you would like to donate for them, please see Joyce Peters or Sophia Rantis.

HOLY CONFESSION during the Great Fast is a REQUIREMENT in our diocese. If you wish to be considered an Orthodox Christian "in good standing" of our diocese, you MUST make arrangements to confess at least ONCE during this sacred season.

OFFERINGS: March 18: \$802.76

PLEASE CONTINUE TO REMEMBER Randy (John) Bailey, Janet Mikel and Martha Smith as well as Marin Sandu (Dr. Alina's stepfather) who are suffering from serious illness. Fr. John Zboyovski who serves in North Carolina and is known by many in our parish is still recovering from a stroke. Please remember him as well. May God continue to bless and strengthen them!

THE ANNUNCIATION

When the All-Holy Virgin completed the fourteenth year after her birth and was entering her fifteenth year, after having spent eleven years of living and serving in the Temple of Jerusalem, the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could not remain in the Temple but was required to be betrothed and enter into marriage. What a great surprise to the priests was the answer of the All-Holy Virgin that she had dedicated her life to God and that she desired to remain a Virgin until death, not wanting to enter into marriage with anyone! Then, according to Divine Providence, Zacharias, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, under the inspiration of God, and in agreement with the other priests, gathered twelve unwed men from the Tribe of David to betroth the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and to care for her. She was betrothed to Joseph of Nazareth who was her kinsman. In the house of Joseph, the All-Holy Virgin continued to live as she did in the Temple of Solomon, occupying her time in the reading of Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in Godly-thoughts, in fasting and in handiwork. She rarely went anywhere outside the house nor was she interested in worldly things and events. She spoke very little to anyone, if at all, and never without special need. More frequently she communicated with both of Joseph's daughters. When the fullness of time had come, as prophesied by Daniel the Prophet, and when God was pleased to fulfill His promise to the banished Adam and to the Prophets, the great Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber of the All-Holy Virgin and, as some priestly writers wrote, precisely at that same moment when she held open the book of the Prophet Isaiah and was contemplating his great prophecy: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son!" (*Isaiah 7:13*). Gabriel appeared in all of his angelic brightness and saluted her: "Rejoice, highly favored one! The Lord is with you" (*St. Luke 1:28*), and the rest in order as it is written in the Gospel of the saintly Luke. With this angelic annunciation and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin, the salvation of mankind and restoration of all creation began. The history of the New Testament was opened by the words of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice, highly favored one" This is to imply that the New Testament was to signify joy to mankind and to all created things. It is from this that the Annunciation is considered not only a great feast, but a joyful feast as well.

