

# *Saint Mary's Romanian Orthodox Church*



## **Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (O.C.A.)**

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### **September Bulletin 2021**

### **Services' Schedule / Programul Slujbelor**

**Sunday, September 5th** - Prophet Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth, parents of St. John the Baptizer. 11th Sunday after Pentecost. Epis. 1 Corinthians 9:2-12. Gos. Matthew 18:23-35 (Parable of the unforgiving debtor). Tone 2. Mat. Gos. 11.

9:10 am- Matins/Utrenia

10:00 am- Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie

**Saturday, September 11th- 6:00 p.m.-Vespers**

**Sunday, September 12th** -Hieromartyr Autonomus, Macedonius & Theodulus . **We are going to have the service of the Nativity of the Birthgiver of God.**

9:00 am- Matins/Utrenia

10:00 am- Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie

12: 00 pm - Hram - Lunch

**Sunday, September 19th** - Martyrs Trophimos, Sabbatius & Dorymedon. **Service of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.**

9:00 am-Matins/Utrenia

9: 45 am- Procession with the Holy Cross/Procesiune cu Sfanta Cruce

10:00 am- Holy Liturgy / Sfanta Liturghie.

**Sunday, September 25th** - +) Repose of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John; +) Ruler Neagoie Basarab; Righteous Gideon. 18th Sunday after Pentecost. Epis. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. Gos. Luke 5:1-11 (Miraculous catch of fish). Tone 5. Mat.

9:10 am-Matins/Utrenia

10:00 am-Holy Liturgy/ Sfanta Liturghie

### **Infant Baptism: a family celebration or a lifelong commitment to Christ?**

Holy Baptism is the act of grafting the person into the Body of Christ. The Incarnation of the Son of God brought the restoration of the proper relationship between God and man. The Sacrament of Baptism is the manner by which we are brought to the true knowledge of God and into an intimate communion with Christ and with His entire work of redemption and sanctification.

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). What does it mean to put on Christ like a garment? The metaphor being used by Saint Paul is a very powerful one. It shows that Holy Baptism is not just a symbolic event but an act that confers in us a new identity and a new life. We are grafted into Christ and from that point on we are supposed to live our entire life dependent on Him. We willingly become obedient subjects to Christ and to his teachings. Saint Paul tells us that Holy Baptism is to become one with Christ in His death and resurrection. ”Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:4).

How real is our participation in Christ’s sacrifice through Baptism? Even though our hands and feet were not pierced and our bodies were not literally nailed on the cross nor buried, the sacrifice that we must offer is real. Holy Baptism obliges us to give up our will to the will of God and to imitate Christ as far as humanly possible. “It is no longer I but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). This means that we must put the old self behind and enter into a new relationship with God under His terms. As long as we cling to our old self, we will never make spiritual progress and our baptism will remain a mere past event.

It will simply exist in the records of our parish and have no real and meaningful impact on our present life.

I cannot stress enough that Baptism was never meant to be a one-time act and that Holy Baptism is not a magical act. The condition of its efficacy is a life in subjection to Christ and to His teachings. “If the bath was applied to the body, and the soul did not cleanse itself of the stains of its passions but after the initiation the life corresponds to the uninitiated life, even if it is bold to say it, I will say it and will not turn away from it, in these persons the water is water, since the gift of the Holy Spirit is in no way manifest in what occurred” (Gregory of Nyssa).

Some of the greatest challenges in regards to Holy Baptism are raised by the practice of the infant baptism which is a very prevalent practice in the Orthodox Church. Unfortunately, despite its common practice, infant Baptism is not very well understood nor properly assumed by the Orthodox Christian families. Because infants cannot speak for themselves nor they can assume faith responsibly, the Godparents and the Parents are those responsible for their Christian upbringing and for their spiritual instruction. Before taking this step parents should seriously ask themselves: “Are we going to raise our children in the Church? Are we going to teach them everything that Christ taught?” The commandment that we have received from our Lord regarding Baptism is very clear:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19).

Baptizing and teaching are interdependent actions. There should be no baptism without instruction and teaching in the faith. The problem appears when the parents and the godparents themselves lack faith or spiritual instruction and despite that they insist on baptizing their children. They believe that Holy Baptism bestows some kind of magical power on the child. Other times they simply want to please some close family members who happened to be brought up in the Orthodox Church. Baptism is in many instances just a private family event and is regarded more and more like a secular celebration as opposed to a life-changing event. We must remember that Holy Baptism was not handed down to us by our Lord as a cultural or familial event but as an existential act that implies true conversion and a radical change in our life. Our primary concern should be to please God not our families. Godparents and parents alike must be aware of the heavy responsibility that they have before God when they decide to bring their children to be baptized. Our Lord warned us that God’s holy things must not be regarded lightly nor wasted. “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you” (Matthew 7:6). We must always remember that Holy Baptism was not meant to be a family celebration but a lifelong commitment to Christ.

Article by Fr. Cristian Frunzulica

***Dear fellow Parishioners,***

***-Many thanks for all the volunteers who were last Saturday at church. May God reward you with many blessings!***

*On behalf of the Ladies Auxiliary, we would like to invite you to celebrate our HRAM feast day on September 12th immediately following Divine Liturgy.*

*We are in need of help setting up in the morning as well as cleanup at the end of the Luncheon as we have to keep it clean for Quest School to resume their activities Monday AM.*

*The Ladies have finalized the Menu so we do not need any further Menu contributions but we will gratefully accept donations towards the cost of the Meal.*

*Please contact Anne Lipon(403-880-1799) or Gabriela Chiriac(587-500-2986) at Church if you can help us out.*

***The Liturgical program of the Feast is as follows:***

*Saturday, September 11th: 6:00 p.m. Vespers*

*Sunday, September 12th: 9:10 a.m. Matins Service*

*10:00 a.m. Holy Liturgy*

*12:00 p.m. - Lunch in the basement*

***Everyone is welcomed!***

***God bless you all!***

***Father Lucian***