

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



*Icon of the Parable of the Ten Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)*

# St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese ([antiochian.org](http://antiochian.org)) ... and ...  
The Diocese of Charleston, Oakland & The Mid-Atlantic ([antiochian.org/east](http://antiochian.org/east))  
("...the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch!" [Acts 11:26](#))



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Most Rev. Metropolitan SABA – Archbishop & Primate  
Right Rev. Bishop THOMAS – Auxiliary Bishop  
Very Rev. Fr. Donald E. Shadid, M.Div. & D.Min. – Archpriest & Pastor  
Sub-Deacon Timothy (Cade) Scott, MAT  
Edward Makdad, Jr. – Parish Council Chairperson

*"The World is Evil... Weep for your Sins... Have a Piece of Chocolate!"* (Advice from Staretz in Russia to Fr. T. Hopko+)

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## THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST and THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

(Commemoration of The Hieromartyr BLAISE, Bishop of Sebastia & His Companions)

Sunday, February 11, 2024

*Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory be to Him Forever!*

THEODORA The Empress / New-Martyr GEORGE of Serbia

*We welcome all of you, our Faithful and our Visitors, to St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church! It is a pleasure to have you with us as we glorify and praise the Name of our God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Please sing along with our Choir during the Liturgy.*

*Please note, as has been the practice of the Church since the Feast of Pentecost, that the Sacrament of Holy Communion can only be given to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, regular Confession (at least twice per year ... 7 Yrs. old & up), who attend Liturgy regularly & on time (at least 3 times a month) ... and ... are at peace with all people.*

*When receiving Holy Communion, please fold your arms over your chest, open your mouth wide, tip your head back slightly, and allow the priest to place the elements in your mouth.*

*For our non-Orthodox brethren, we welcome you to sing and pray with us, venerate the Cross, and receive the Blessed Holy Bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy. Please join us again soon. May God Bless You Always!*

**HOLY OBLATION:** Offered by *Ed & Nancy Makdad* for the health of All within The Makdad Family. **God Grant Them Many, Many Years!**

**PASCHAL CANDLES:** Offered in beloved memory of *Elizabeth Spada*, in remembrance of her Earthly Birthday (February 26), by daughter *Barbara Skala*; son-in-law, *Buddy*; grandson, *Andy & his wife, Jill*; granddaughter, *Stephanie & her husband, Dennis*; and great-grandchildren, *Brendan & Erin*.

**PROSKAMEDIA CANDLE:** Offered for the health of *Fr. Christopher, Kh. Sophia, Luke & newborn, Nora* by *Joseph & Laura Slifko*.

**SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLE:** Offered: for the health of *Koumbaro Drew, Simeon, Lauren, Demo, Alicia, RoseEllen, Lacy, Dea & Shane* as they celebrate their Birthdays ... **and** ... in beloved memory of mother, *Rev. Ruth Ann, Charlie, Gail, Despina, Kondula & All Within The Karas & McClatchey Families Who Have Fallen-Asleep in The Lord* by The McClatchey Family.

**PRAYERS OF LITURGICAL REMEMBRANCE:** Offered in beloved memory of *Ernie Abdalah* by *Fr. Don & Kh. Janet, Fr. Christopher & Kh. Sophia, Luke, Nora, and Stephen & Zayna*.

<i>For The Living – “God Grant Them Many Years!”...and... For The Departed – “May Their Memory Be Ever Eternal!”</i>
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**- VARIATIONS & NOTES ON THE LITURGY -**

**THIRD ANTIPHON:** (*Troparion During The Little Entrance – Tone Three*)  
See “Troparion of The Resurrection” Below.

**AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE:**

**TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION:** (*Tone Three*)

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

**TROPARION OF ST. BLAISE:** (*Tone Four*)

By choosing the Apostles’ way of life, thou hast succeeded to their throne. Inspired by God, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation through the practice of virtue. After teaching the Word of Truth without error, thou didst defend the Faith to the very shedding of thy blood, O Holy Martyr among bishops *Blaise*. Entreat the Lord our God to save our souls.

**TROPARION OF THE DORMITION:** *(Patron Feast Day - Tone One)*

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

**KONTAKION OF THE THEOTOKOS:** *(Tone Six)*

O, Undisputed Intercessor of Christians, the Mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although we be sinners. Come to us with aid in time who cry unto thee in Faith, for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions, O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee.

**EPISTLE:** 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 *(Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost)*

**HOLY GOSPEL:** Matthew 25:14-30 & Luke 8:8 *(Sixteenth Sunday of Matthew)*

Concerning the “Kiss of Peace,” prior to the Nicene Creed, we encourage you to greet those around you with a handshake, saying: **“Christ is in Our Midst!”** ... the response being: **He is And Always Shall Be!**” In this way, we express: **(1)** our Joy that God has acted to restore our Communion with Him ... **and ... (2)** our Hope in the Resurrection from the Dead that is offered to us by our Lord’s own “trampling down death by death!” **God is With Us (“Emmanuel”)!**

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**- THIS WEEK’S EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS -**

*(Church Office: Tuesday – Friday ... 9 AM – 2 PM)*

**+ Tuesday, February 13** – BIBLE STUDY & DISCUSSION – @ 6:00 PM – Home of Bill & Eliesha Cacciotti (see Announcement Below for more detailed information) – RSVP if possible, to Fr. Don or Anne in our Office (814-255-2148 ... OR ... [stmaryaocc@outlook.com](mailto:stmaryaocc@outlook.com)).

**+ Saturday, February 17** – GREAT VESPERS – 5 PM.

**+ Sunday, February 18** – SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST & THE SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW (Sunday of The Canaanite Woman) ... MATINS (Morning Prayers) @ 8:30 AM & DIVINE LITURGY @ 9:30 AM ... Followed by Fellowship in the Social Hall.

**THOSE IN SPECIAL NEED OF OUR PRAYERS:** AMBER HILLS @ CAMBRIA CARE CENTER (Ebensburg, PA): *Mary Ann Unis-Asfar (#606); BETHLEN HOME SKILLED NURSING & REHAB. CTR.:* *Anna Marie (Abraham) Rovansek (# 407 - 66 Carey School Rd. / Ligonier, PA 15658); LAURELVIEW VILLAGE:* *George Zdravecky (Health Care #302) & Rhoda (Nasser) Zdravecky (Vista - 913); HILLTOP HEIGHTS CARE CENTER* (formerly “Laurelwood Care Ctr.): *Suzanne George (#37-W) & George Haidar (#30); HERITAGE RIDGE SENIOR LIVING* (formerly “Lutheran Home”): *Elaine Heider*

(#34); QUALITY LIFE SERVICES – WESTMONT WOODS (formerly “Presbyterian Home”): *Emma (Nasser) Audey (#115-W) ... and ... IN TREATMENT, RECOVERING AND / OR “SHUT-IN AT HOME”*: *Becky Azar; Larry Bertino; Carolyn Clark; Renee D’Ettorre; Patty Devich; Joanne George; John & Dalal George; Olga Hodge; Denise Khorey-Harriman; Matthew Makdad; Huda Martin and Sara Shahade.* **May God Be With All of Them & All of Those Who Are Ill and/or in Need!**

**MEMORY ETERNAL!** It is with a “bright sadness” that we announce that our Beloved ***Irena F. (Fulcea) Jaber*** “Fell-Asleep in the Lord” last Sunday, February 4, 2024. We pray that our Lord will grant her Rest in His Heavenly Kingdom where all of His Blessed Saints do Repose, and we ask Him to grant His Mercy & Peace (John 14:27) to the Fulcea & Jaber Families, and us, as we all mourn her Passing with the Hope of Christ in our Hearts (1 Thessalonians 4:13). **May Her Memory Be Ever Eternal ... Christ is Risen!**

**TWO SPECIAL “THANK YOUs!”**: On behalf of our entire Parish Family, Fr. Don would like to offer a special “Thank You!” to: **(1)** one and all who supported yesterday’s “Feast From The East” ... all who bought orders, sold orders, set-up, prepared, cooked, packaged, filled orders, cleaned-up, etc. ... this Fundraiser helps us to meet our expenses each year since our parishioner stewardship is not enough ... **and ... (2)** those who, on behalf of our St. Mary Parish Family, donated food, offered a monetary donation and/or served at “Saturday’s Kitchen” on Saturday, Jan. 27 ... this ministry of love is a powerful witness to our Lord’s teaching that when we serve those in need, we serve our Lord Jesus Christ Himself ... all those who serve in this way always feel that they have received more than they have given ... “Thanks be to God!” for this opportunity and for those who are able & willing to serve in this way. **We thank you one & all ... God Bless You & Your Loved Ones!**

### **BIBLE STUDY / DISCUSSION**

If you have never been to a Bible Study (or even if you have ...) ... Great! You are invited to get acquainted with Jesus through a study/discussion of the Gospel of John. All are welcome to come and learn, discuss, ask, or just listen. We are meeting on Tuesdays at 6 PM, at Bill & Eliesha Cacciotti’s Home. We begin by sharing a simple potluck meal. If you can bring something to share, that will be great. If you aren’t able to bring a food item or beverage, no worries! Just please come & join us! If you would like more information, please see Fr. Don. Also, RSVP to Fr. Don or Anne in the Church Office (814-255-2148 ... OR ... [stmaryaocc@outlook.com](mailto:stmaryaocc@outlook.com)). Thank Youuu ... we hope to see you!

### **101 THINGS GOD CAN’T DO**

*What You Must Know to Win ... by Maisie Sparks (02/04)*

29. God can’t be understood by human understanding. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” (ROMANS 11:33)

# *Epistle*

(For the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost)

*Sing praises to our God, sing praises. Clap your hands, all ye peoples.*

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:1-10)

Brethren, working together with Him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For He says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

# *Gospel*

(For the Sixteenth Sunday of Matthew)

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (25:14-30, + Luke 8:8)

The Lord spoke this parable: A man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying: "Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master." And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying: "Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master." He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying: "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master answered him, "You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming, I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to

everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.” As Jesus said these things He cried out: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” *May God Be With You!*

## *Saint of the Day – February 11, 2024*

### THE HIEROMARTYR [PRIESTLY-MARTYR] BLAISE

Blaise was born in the province of Cappadocia. From his early childhood, he was God-fearing and meek. Because of his great virtues, he was chosen as bishop of the city of Sebaste [in Armenia]. Blaise was a great spiritual and moral beacon in this pagan city. During a grave persecution of Christians, St. Blaise encouraged his flock and visited the martyrs of Christ in prison. Foremost among them was the eminent and glorious Eustratius. When the city of Sebaste was completely emptied of Christians--some were slain and others fled--the elderly Blaise withdrew to Mount Argeos and settled there in a cave. Wild beasts recognized the holy man and gathered around him, and he tenderly caressed them. But the persecutors found the saint in this remote place and brought him to trial. Along the way, Blaise cured a young boy who had a bone caught in his throat. At the plea of a poor widow whose pig had been snatched by a wolf, the saint, by the power of his prayer, made the wolf return it. The sinister judges tortured Blaise severely, flogging him and scrapping him with an iron comb. By his steadfastness in the Christian Faith, Blaise converted many pagans to the Faith. Seven women and two children languished in prison with him. The women were beheaded first, and afterward the wonderful Blaise was beheaded with the two children. He suffered and was glorified in the year 316 A.D. People pray to St. Blaise for the well-being of their domestic livestock and for protection against wild beasts. In the west, he is also invoked against diseases of the throat.

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**IT'S A GIRL!** We are pleased to announce the birth of *Nora Marie Shadid*, daughter of Rev. Fr. Christopher & Khouria Sophia Shadid! Nora was born on Saturday, January 20, 2024 (3 lb. 10 oz. & 15.4 in.) at 11:53 AM. Please keep Nora, her older brother Luke Gabriel, her parents, and grandparents (Very Rev. Fr. Michael & Popadea Susan Kon and Very Rev. Fr. Donald & Khouria Janet Shadid) in your prayers, asking that God watch over them and bless them! ***May God Grant Many Years of Health, Joy, Peace (John 14:27) & Happiness to Nora and all within her Family.***

Our online giving platform provides a secure and user-friendly way to give to our church, and we are confident that it will make giving more convenient for many members of our congregation. **You may set up a recurring donation without having to write a check each week/month!** You can give now at this link: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZKAC/home>  
**The link is available on our website as well as in the weekly email.**

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+++ **ST. MARY PARISH PRAYER CARD PROGRAM** +++

Did you know that we have a "Prayer Card Program" here at our St. Mary Parish? Your Prayer Intentions will be offered during the Saturday Vespers & Sunday Divine Liturgy "for the health of" or "in memory of" a Loved One and a beautiful Icon Card will be sent to the person or Family. All you need to do is call the Church Office or fill out an "Order Form" (on the Table below the Brochure Rack outside of Offices). Then we will take care of the rest! IT IS THAT SIMPLE!

The suggested donation is \$10/card. Larger donations are greatly appreciated.

This is an excellent way to show a loved one that you are: (1) thinking of them and remembering them in prayer on their birthday, during holidays, or any special occasion ... OR ... (2) remembering their departed loved one(s) in prayer. Any questions, please call our Secretary, Anne ... 814-255-2148. Thank You & God Bless!

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*As a teaching for Christians*

The parable of the talents has been seen as an exhortation to Jesus' disciples to use their God-given gifts in the service of God, and to take risks for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

These gifts have been seen to include personal abilities ("talents" in the everyday sense), as well as personal wealth.

- The master is Christ.
- The journey of the master to another place and His return speaks of Christ's going away to Heaven at his ascension and His return as the time when He comes again.
- His entrustment to His servants of His possessions while He is away on His journey should be Christ's gifts and various possessions ("capital") given to the believers in His church in anticipation of them

producing a spiritual "profit" for Him in the Kingdom of God.

- His evaluation of the business they have conducted during His absence takes place on His return and is an account of their activity. This must be the Judgment Seat of Christ, which is only for believers. This pictures the evaluation of stewardship.
- The positive rewards for two the servants is based upon their faithfulness to properly use what Christ entrusted to them. This probably speaks of positive reward for believers who are faithful to serve Christ.
- The negative reward for the unfaithful servant speaks of some negative dealing by Christ with an unfaithful believer.