

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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*** ANNOUNCEMENT ***

The next Parish Pastoral Council meeting will be held on Mon October 7, 6:30 PM, Rectory Meeting Rm

THE GENTILES ENCOUNTER CHRIST

SUNDAY 2ND AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS
Saturday, September 28 & Sunday, September 29, 2019

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday at 8:30AM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM
Matins/ Orthos: Every Sunday at 9:00AM
Holy Confession: Every Monday at 4-6PM
Vespers: Every Saturday at 3:00PM
Holy Rosary: Every Sunday at 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yanni, Jordan Barahmeh, Michael Klockowski, Eugene Hutchinson, Maggy Attalah, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, Jean Benoit and Fouad Marji. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection September 21/22: \$ 509.00
Fuel Offering: \$ 20.00
Bishop Fund: \$ 500.00
Memorial Offering: \$ 00.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

† William Chanatry, By Louis & Julie Shkane

THIS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

NEXT SATURDAY, OCOTBER 5

† William Chanatry, 1st Memorial Anniversary, By his Wife and his Children

NEXT SUNDAY OCTOBER 6

† Mae Raser, 11th Memorial Anniversary, By Robert Lalli

IMPORTANT FINANCIAL RECORDS

July Church Income: \$ 3151.62
July Church Expenses: \$ 5283.23
July Church Loss: \$ 2132.23
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August Church Income: \$ 1304.14
August Church Expenses: \$ 4562.63
August Church Loss: \$ 3258.49

According to Acts 10, St Peter was in Joppa (modern Jaffa), a Mediterranean port city some 30 miles from Jerusalem, when he had the following experience: "... he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' "But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' And a voice spoke to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again" (vv 10-16). Called by the Roman officer to visit him in Caesarea and speak to him of God, Peter replied: "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). St Peter thus saw his vision of the "great sheet" as a decisive reversal of the division between Jews and Gentiles.

There was an even more powerful reversal to follow. While Peter was proclaiming the Gospel to Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit cut him off. "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10: 44-48).

The news of this remarkable event spread quickly and when Peter returned to Jerusalem he was confronted by "those of the circumcision"(Acts 11: 3) among the brethren. After Peter recounted his experiences in Joppa and Caesarea, Acts continues, "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life'" (v.18). This "Gentile Pentecost" forced many Jewish believers in Jesus to reevaluate the idea that the Jews alone were God's people and that Gentiles were by definition unclean.

In Gentile Territory: The next step in the spread of the Gospel is described in Acts 11. "Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch..." (v. 19). Antioch was the provincial capital of Syria while Phoenicia (Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut) and Cyprus were important trading centers on the Mediterranean. There were several Jewish colonies in these regions which had been there since at least the second century BC.

We read in Acts that the believers who had fled persecution in Jerusalem brought the Gospel to these Jewish colonies "preaching the word to no one but the Jews only" (Acts 11: 19). That soon changed as the visitors in Antioch began teaching "the Hellenists" as well, bringing "a great number" to the Lord. The term Hellenists often referred to Hellenized Jews but it seems clear that here the term refers to Hellenized natives of the region. Thus the first non-Jewish believers in Jesus were the ancestors of the Melkites – Orthodox and Catholic – of Antioch! And, as we read in this same chapter of Acts, "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

While the initial opening to the Gentiles was as a result of Peter's experience in Caesarea, it was Sts Paul and Barnabas who were the first explicitly sent to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. As missionaries of the Church at Antioch, these apostles visited Cyprus, and southern Asia Minor (Pamphilia and Pisidia) where they met with success as well as opposition (see Acts 13 and 14). After completing a circuit in Asia Minor, the apostles returned to Antioch. (*SeptLeaflets*2019)