

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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SUNDAY 4th AFTER PENTECOST
Saturday, June 19 & Sunday, June 20, 2021

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**PARISH SERVICES**

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

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HEALING PRAYERS NEEDED

Prayers needed for our friends MaryAnn Astour, Nazmie Barahmeh, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Jean Murad, Rose Pawlinga, John Roth, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**RECENT RECEIPTS**

Weekly Collection June 12/13: \$ 679.00      Memorial Services: \$ 10.00  
Fuel Contribution: \$ 25.00

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SPECIAL INTENTION

Our prayers and intentions go to Father Saba Shofany & Family. May our Lord Jesus Christ grant them many years to come in health, prosperity, happiness, and holyness. Amen

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† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

**THIS SATURDAY, JUNE 19**

† **Julia Nassimos**, By Carol Chanatry  
† **John Gazzal**, By George & Penny Kunkel  
† **Albert Casab**, By daughter Shirley Casab  
† **Salim Ghariba, 68<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family

**THIS SUNDAY, JUNE 20**

† **Julia Nassimos**, By Carol Chanatry  
† **John Gazzal**, By David & Pamela Williams

**NEXT SATURDAY, JUNE 26**

† **Julia Nassimos**, By Carol Chanatry  
† **John Gazzal**, By George & Penny Kunkel

**NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 27**

† **Julia Nassimos**, By Carol Chanatry  
† **John Gazzal**, By David & Pamela Williams  
† **Archdeacon George Yani, & Daughter Angela**, By Wael & Olga Barahmeh  
† **Raymond Chanatry, 66<sup>th</sup> Memorial Anniversary**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family

**THE EARLY CHRISTIANS**

WHO WERE THE ROMAN CHRISTIANS to whom St Paul wrote his epistle? We know that the first believers in Jesus were Jews, even in the foreign cities where they had settled. For hundreds of years there had been Jews living in the commercial centers of the Roman Empire. The Jews in these places spoke Greek and adapted to the civic life of the Empire but retained the worship of the one God. As a result, the Romans knew something about Jewish religion and culture; some, attracted by their monotheism, followed the Torah.

Most of the Churches to which St Paul wrote his epistles were communities which he had founded. The Christians in Rome were different. According to Ambrosiaster, an otherwise unknown fourth-century Latin writer, the Roman Church did not owe its existence to any of the apostles, but to unnamed Jews – perhaps traveling merchants – who had brought word of Jesus to the Jews in Rome and through them to the Gentiles. Ambrosiaster writes, “It is established that there were Jews living in Rome in the times of the Apostles, and that those Jews who had believed [in Christ] passed on to the Romans the tradition that they ought to profess Christ but keep the law [Torah] ... One ought not to condemn the Romans, but to praise their faith, because without seeing any signs or miracles and without seeing any of the apostles, they nevertheless accepted faith in Christ, although according to a Jewish rite” (*Commentary on Romans*, 3).

If Ambrosiaster was right and the earliest Roman Christians were observing Jewish ritual practices, it would explain why St Paul devotes the attention that he does to the matter of the Jews and their covenant with God. The Church upholds his teaching as normative while realizing that it has been invoked to justify some destructive and unchristian practices over the centuries.

**The Teaching of Romans 3: 9-11:** The passage read at this Sunday’s Divine Liturgy is part of a longer section in which St Paul makes the following points concerning the Torah and the Jews themselves:

**God is Faithful** – Although many Jews have not honored God’s covenant with them, His love for them remains. “*What if some were unfaithful? Will their infidelity nullify the fidelity of God?*” (Rom 3:3)

**There Is a New Covenant** – This covenant in Christ was seen from afar in the Jewish Scriptures but “*now...has been manifested apart from the law, though testified to by the law and the prophets: the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe... for God is one and will justify the circumcised and the uncircumcised on the basis of faith*” (Rom 3:21-23).

**Most Jews Did Not Accept It** – The Jews relied on their observance of the Old Covenant practices rather than putting their trust in Christ. “... *they have zeal for God, but it is not discerning. For, in their unawareness of the righteousness that comes from God and their attempt to establish their own [righteousness], they did not submit to the righteousness of God*” (Rom 10: 2, 3).

**God Has Not Rejected the Jews** – The Jews remain the Covenant People of God. The Church is built on the most faithful Jews, the “elect” – those who accepted Christ – to which the believing Gentiles have been added.

**This Does Not Justify Despising the Jews** – “*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place and have come to share in the rich root of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. If you do boast, consider that you do not support the root; the root supports you*” (Rom 11:17, 18).

**Israel Will Ultimately Accept Christ** – When “*the full number of the Gentiles comes in,*” then the entire People of Israel will be saved, “*For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable*” (Rom 11:25, 29).

As Origen noted, “What ‘*all Israel*’ means or what ‘*the fullness of the Gentiles*’ will be only God knows along with His only begotten Son and perhaps a few of His friends, as He said: ‘*I no longer call you servants but friends, for I have made known to you everything which I have heard from my Father*’” (*Commentary on Romans*, 4). Since this passage refers to something which will take place in God’s time, not ours, the Fathers refrained from trying to explain it.