

# ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

**MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

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## PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Joseph Daratony. Michael Abda. Marie Bar-  
ron. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne  
Buckley. Chris Carey. John Coury. Maryann Nappi Donahue.  
Carol Downer. David Fairclough, Sr. Robert Fairclough, Sr.  
Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Sue Sols-  
man. Susan Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey. **MEMORY**  
**ETERNAL:** ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev. Mich. Jolly. ✱Rev. Jos.  
Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk ✱Rev. Frank Milienewicz  
✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charlotte Abda. ✱James  
Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Paul Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus.  
✱Nicholas Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann Coury. ✱Mary  
Sue Betress. ✱Cecilia Davidson ✱Marg.t Dillenburg ✱Eric Jolly.  
✱Jos. King ✱Blakely Landell. ✱Elaine Manuele. ✱Frank  
Milewski, Sr. ✱Frank Milewski, Jr. ✱Mary L. Mooty. ✱Karen  
Murray. ✱Marie Patchoski. ✱Anth. Simon. ✱Bill Simon. ✱Ruth  
Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon

## CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

## DIVINE SERVICES:

Wednesday :

Compline ..... 7:30 P.M

Saturday:

Great Vespers: ..... 3:15 P.M

Sunday:

Orthros ..... 9:00 A.M.

Divine Liturgy: ..... 10:00 A.M.

Holy Days:

Eve: Great Vespers: .... 5:30 P.M.

Day: Divine Liturgy ... 5:30 P.M

## HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION:

Before Vespers at 3:00 P.M.; follow-  
ing any service; or by appointment.

## HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

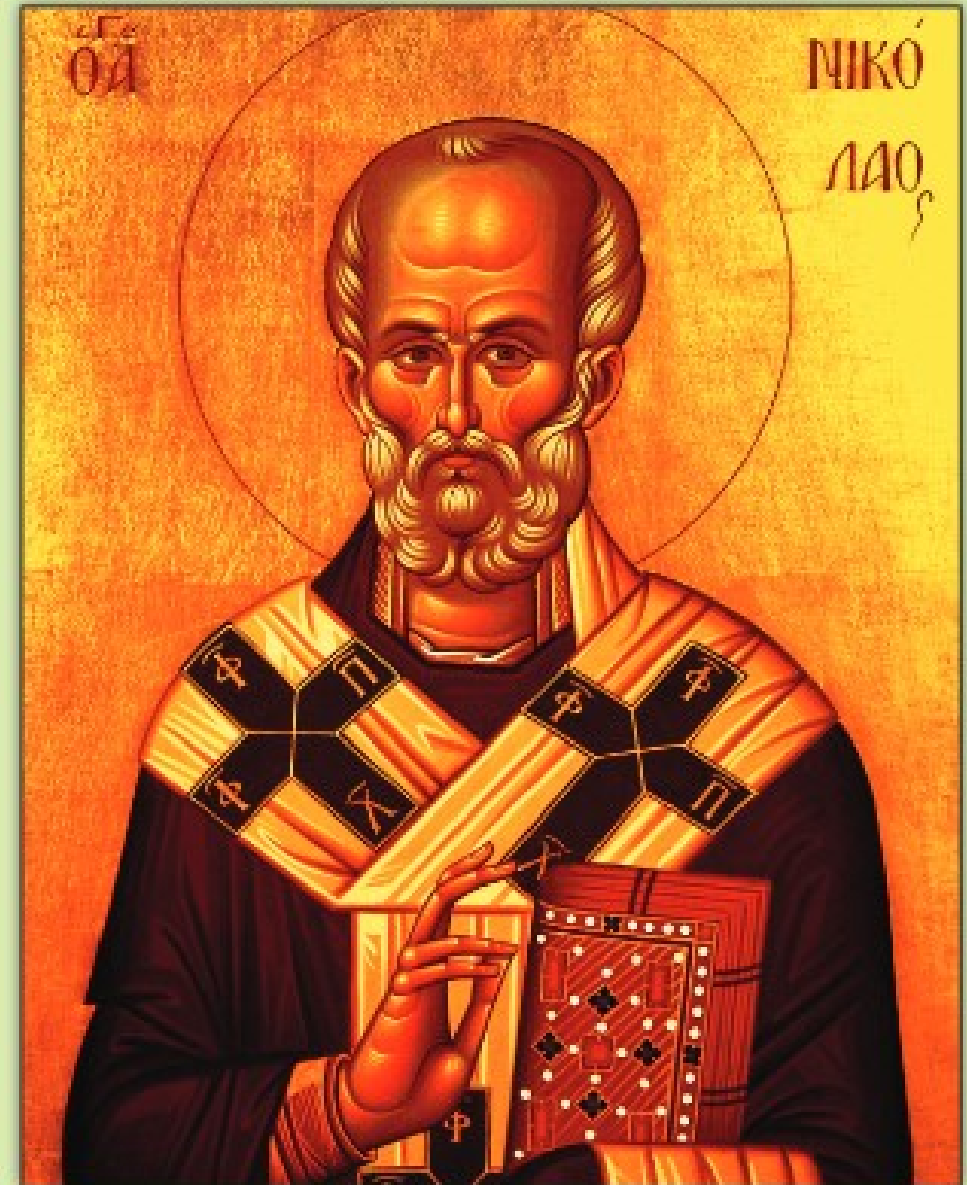
## HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

## PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Meetings as scheduled.

## TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*Icon of Saint Nicholas -- December 6th*

# DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

05 DECEMBER 2021 ♦ TONE 03 EOTHINON 06 † TENTHSUNDAY AFTER HOLY CROSS / CRIPPLED WOMAN

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD: *Beatitudes*

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

*Resurrection (Tone 3)*

*Holy Father Sabbas the Sanctified*

*St. Joseph the Betrothed*

KONDAKION: *Preparation of the Nativity*

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON: *(Tone 3)*

EPISTLE:

*Brethren*, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, justification, faith, modesty, continence. Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit by the Spirit let us also walk; let us not become desirous if success, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, even if a person is caught doing something wrong, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in spirit of meekness, considering yourselves lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.

ALLELUIA:

Happy the man who fears the Lord! He will joyfully agree with his commands.  
His holiness shall endure for ever and ever.

GOSPEL:

*At that time* Jesus was teaching in one of their synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent over and utterly unable to look upwards. When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said to her, “Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity.” And he laid his hands upon her, and instantly she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, addressed the crowd, saying, “There are six days in which one ought to work; on these therefore come and be cured, and not on the Sabbath.” But the Lord answered him and said, “Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or ass from the manger, and lead it forth to water? And this woman, daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound, lo, for eighteen years, ought not she to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame; and the entire crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

HIRMOS:

KINONIKON:

COMMUNION

**THE BISHOP’S APPEAL:** What a wonderful weekend this is for our church. We celebrate the life of St Barbara on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the life of Mar Saba on the 5<sup>th</sup> and especially Blessed Saint Nicholas whose feast we celebrate with joy on Monday the 6<sup>th</sup>. St Nicholas is the Patron Saint of charity and the inspiration for all images of Father Christmas and Santa Claus throughout the world. Let us imitate his loving generosity by making a special gift to the Bishop’s Appeal for the support of our Melkite Church in America and for our suffering and persecuted fellow Christians in the Middle East. **Please give an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church** in America. Please give generously so the vital works of our Church can continue and grow. May God bless you for your generosity.

*Liturgy Book p. 1*

*Liturgy Book p. 29*

*Liturgy Book p. 32*

*Liturgy Book p. 125*

*Liturgy Book p. 38*

*Liturgy Book p. 56*

*Liturgy Book p. 111*

*Liturgy Book p. 47*

*Liturgy Book p. 150*

*Liturgy Book p. 50*

*Liturgy Book p. 56*

*Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5*

*St. Luke 13:10-17*

*Liturgy Book p. 77*

*Liturgy Book p. 83*

*Liturgy Book p. 87*

any personal sin, certainly not one allegedly committed ‘in Adam.’ Nor are we born stained because of the manner in which we are conceived by the sexual union of our parents.”

The Byzantine Churches celebrate the fact of Mary’s conception on December 9, but commemorate her holiness on another feast: that of her Entrance into the Temple (November 21) In the kondakion for that feast we sing “The most pure Temple of our holy Savior, and the most precious and bright bridal chamber, the Virgin, sacred treasury of the glory of God, openly appears today in the Temple of the Lord, bringing with her the grace of the Most Holy Spirit. Wherefore, the angels of God are singing: This is the heavenly Tabernacle!” She did not become holy in the temple – she brought the grace of God with her. When and how did she acquire it? Human reasoning does not help us there. Nevertheless, we ceaselessly proclaim her as our “all-holy, immaculate, most highly blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever virgin Mary.

**Veneration of the Theotokos in the Church**

CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS of many traditions are displaying Nativity scenes this season. All of them will include an image of the Virgin Mary, although there are serious differences in how these Christians view her. The historic Churches, Eastern and Western, reverence her as blessed and ever-virgin and ask her to intercede with God for us. Most Protestants do not, in the view that there is no warrant in the Bible for such activity.

Reverence for the Virgin Mary arose in the early Church in view of its growing belief that her Son, the Lord Jesus, is truly God and Man. The story of the annunciation – which is in the New Testament (Lk 1:26-38) – depicts Him as “Son of the Most High” and “Son of God,” conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit of a woman who has “not known a man.” His conception in Mary’s womb was a sign of His true divinity, and reverence for His mother was a way of proclaiming Him as God.

By the second century thinkers like St Justin the Philosopher were describing Mary as the “new Eve,” in much the same way that St Paul spoke of Christ as the new Adam: “Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary conceived faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Most High would overshadow her” (Dialogue with Trypho, 100). As Eve took part in Adam’s sin, Mary was seen as somehow taking part in Christ’s reversal of Adam’s fall.

**“Theotokos” and “Aeiparthenos”**

During the second- and third-century controversies about the divinity of Christ two terms describing the Virgin Mary came into use to support the position that Christ was fully both God and man by nature. The term Theotokos (she who bore God) had been in use in the Church of Alexandria at least from the time of the Arian controversy. They had concluded that, since Jesus Christ is “true God from true God” as the Council of Nicaea (325) declared, His Mother can rightly be said to have borne God in her womb. Churches in the tradition of Antioch, however, expressed doubts about adopting this title. The ensuing Council of Ephesus (431) affirmed the use of Theotokos and deposed the patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorios, who had banned its use. By identifying Mary as the Mother of God the Word, the council underscored the teaching that Christ was indivisibly God and Man. Devotion to the Virgin Mary and the use of prayer for her intercession spread after this council throughout the Churches.

All the historic Churches, except for the Assyrian Church of the East, refer to Mary as Theotokos while the Assyrian Church uses the title “Mother of Christ our God.” In the 1994 Agreed Statement between their two Churches the Pope of Rome, John Paul II, and the Catholicos of the Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV, affirmed: “We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety.”

The term Aeiparthenos (ever-virgin), widely used in our liturgy, was also popularized at this time, although it did not carry the same weight as Theotokos. The idea that Mary was not only a virgin when she conceived and gave birth but ever after was taught as early as the second century, notably in the Protoevangelium and by St. Irenaeus of Lyons, becoming increasingly popular in the fourth century. St Epiphanius of Salamis in Cyprus attests to its widespread acceptance in the Church at that time, even while minimizing its importance: “Now how could Joseph dare to have relations with the Virgin Mary whose holiness was so great? But even if she had sexual relations – and perish that thought! – what good would it do us to inquire into this? Which is the better choice, to leave the matter to God, or to insist on what is bad? Plainly, Scripture has not told us that we may not have eternal life, but will go to Judgment unless we believe that Mary had relations again” (Sect 780).

St John Chrysostom (347-407) defended the perpetual virginity of Mary on a number of grounds, one of which was the Gospel affirmation that, after the crucifixion, “from that hour that disciple took her to his own home” (Jn 19:27). This was seen to imply that, after the deaths of Joseph and now Jesus, there was no one else to look after Mary and she had to be entrusted to St John.

# DECEMBER 09: FEAST OF MATERNITY OF ST. ANNE

THE CHURCHES OF EAST AND WEST generally commemorate the saints on the day of their death, their “heavenly birthday,” as some describe it. In addition the Church remembers three conceptions: those of Christ (the Annunciation, March 25), of His Mother (December 9), and of St John the Forerunner (September 23). We celebrate these days as festivals recognizing that each was sanctified even before their birth in lieu of the tremendous role they played in salvation history: Christ by virtue of His divine nature and Mary and John by the grace of God given them.

In the Byzantine calendar, as in that of the West, Christ’s conception is celebrated exactly nine months before the festival of His birth. With the Theotokos and the Forerunner the nine months are not exact. Mary’s conception is remembered on December 9 and her nativity on September 8. St John’s conception is remembered on September 23 and his birth of June 24. This is a way of saying that the three conceptions were not identical: Christ’s was unique.

### The Story of Mary’s Conception

The conceptions of Christ and the Forerunner are recorded in chapter 1 of the Gospel of Luke. The story of Mary’s conception is not found in the canonical Scriptures but in the mid-second century Protoevangelium (or Pre-Gospel) of St James. This text tells that, for many years, Mary’s parents, Joachim and Anne, were childless and the couple suffered much reproach as a result. When they were in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice to God, the High Priest, Issachar, upbraided Joachim: “You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands.” Both spouses gave themselves to fervent prayer, and the Archangel Gabriel announced to each of them separately that they would be the parents of a daughter who would bring blessings to the whole human race.

The icon of the feast shows Saints Joachim and Anne embracing after each had run to share the news of their daughter-to-be. The icon also very prominently displays a bed to indicate that this conception took place by the usual physical means, unlike the conception of Christ.

The first record of this feast being celebrated is from fifth-century Palestine. It spread to southern Italy during the eighth century and from there to England, France, Germany, and eventually Rome. In the East this feast has always been called “the Conception (or Maternity) of St. Anne,” stressing Anne’s conceiving of the Theotokos, just as the conception of Christ is revered as “the Annunciation to the Theotokos.” In the West the feast came to be called “the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary” and later “the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

### The Unique Holiness of Mary

All the Churches of East and West have always believed that the Virgin Mary was, from her conception, filled with every grace of the Holy Spirit in view of her calling as the Mother of Christ our God. This belief is even professed in Islam. Muslim lore records a hadith or tradition, which states that the only children born without the “touch of Satan,” were Mary and Jesus for God imposed “a veil” between them and Satan.

In the Middle Ages increasing devotion to the Mother of God in the West saw the rise of opinions on the holiness of Mary. Some came to believe that she was even conceived without human intercourse, as Christ was. Finally, in the 17th century, Pope Benedict XIV formally condemned this opinion.

While it was generally believed that the Theotokos was filled with divine grace from her conception, there was no general understanding on how this happened. The Eastern Church calls Mary *achrantos* (spotless or immaculate), but has never defined exactly what this meant. Following St. Augustine’s thought on original sin, the Western Church gradually came to accept the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854: “The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”

The Orthodox Churches rejected the dogmatic nature of this teaching pronounced by the pope as an act of piety on his own authority. Many also objected to it because it defines Mary’s holiness in terms of a certain understanding of original sin. What does “all stain of original sin” mean? Was the Mother of God exempted from the consequences of the ancestral sin (death, corruption, the effects of sin)? Some Western Catholics still believe that Mary did not (in fact, could not) die, but this has never been taught by their Church.

The “stain of original sin” was described by the sixteenth-century Council of Trent as “the privation of righteousness that each child contracts at its conception.” There is no such understanding in Eastern theology and so to say that Mary was free of it has little meaning in the East. Perhaps this is why many Eastern Catholics, when they hear of “the Immaculate Conception” assume that it refers to the conception of Christ.

East and West agree that, the Theotokos was fully human like the rest of us: what Fr Thomas Hopko calls “mere human,” unlike her Son who is a “real human” but not a mere human because He is the Word of God incarnate. In his book *The Winter Pascha* he writes, “We are all born mortal and tending toward sin. But we are not born guilty of

# SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

## EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Sun. November 15 – Fri. December 24

*Philip’s Fast*

Saturday, December 04

*Confessions: 3:00*

*Great Vespers 3:15 p.m.*

*Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m.*

Sunday, December 05

*Orthros 9:00 a.m.*

*Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.*

*St. Nicholas Children’s Celebration*

*Religious Education*

## 2021 WEEKLY COLLECTION

November 28

Weekly Offering:	\$ 550.00
Monthly:	\$ 25.00
Holy Day :	\$ 10.00
Xtmas Flowers :	\$ 5.00
Divine Liturgy:	\$ 20.00
Candles:	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$ 635.00

*Thank you for your support!*

## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

04 December: Nathan Cheffers✱

05 December: ✱Christine Michaels  
from David & Stephanie Michaels

09 January: Ann T. Radgowski  
from James & Betsy Zaydon

23 January: ✱Genevieve Zatdon  
from Anne Clarice Zaydon

## PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

### *Philip Fast: Advent:*

November 15 through December 24 inclusive:  
*Fasting Guidelines*

The strict fast includes fasting from all meat and meat products, poultry, eggs, dairy products, fish, oil, and wine.

Tuesday and Thursdays: oil and wine are allowed.  
Saturdays and Sundays: fish, wine and oil are allowed.

On certain feast days: fish, and/or wine and oil are per-mitted: St. Spiridon (Dec. 12), St. Ignatius (Dec. 20), etc. While the Nativity Fast is not as severe as the Fast of Great Lent or the Dormition Fast, Christians will refrain from needless entertainment.

The sick, the very young, the elderly, and nursing mothers are exempt from fasting. Individuals should confer with their confessor regarding exemptions from the fasting rules, and should never place themselves in physical danger.

The Paramony of the Nativity (Dec. 24) is a strict fast day. Pious folks often took no solid food until the first star is seen in the evening sky (or until after the Vespereal Divine Liturgy that day).



# THE CHALLENGE OF THE SABBATH

MODERN MEDICINE HAS FOUND treatments for a number of diseases that had plagued mankind for centuries. Some have even been eradicated, at least in the developed world. This is not the case with scoliosis (curvature of the spine), such as afflicted the woman in St Luke's Gospel. To this day no one knows the cause of this affliction in most cases.

The Gospel says she had been afflicted with this condition for eighteen years, but since scoliosis is often manifested at puberty, she was probably not old by our standards. Treatments available in our day such as wearing braces, surgery, physical therapy and pain medication, were unknown in the first century AD. They must have been eighteen long years indeed.

The Gospel tells us that the ruler of the synagogue was indignant "because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, 'There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day'" (Lk 13:15).

## The Sabbath in Judaism

One of the hallmark Jewish practices for millennia has been the observance of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, as a day set apart for God. We read in the Book of Exodus, "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people'" (Ex 31:14).

According to Exodus, a person profanes the Sabbath by doing any work on it. In traditional Jewish practice, maintained by observant Orthodox Jews in our own day, work is defined as "constructive labor" – whatever is done to benefit our life in this world. The Talmud – the traditional compendium of Jewish interpretation – lists 39 activities prohibited on the Sabbath, including all kinds of farm or household labor including lighting or extinguishing a fire and moving things about from one place to another. The only exception to these rules would be activity which helps save a life, which is why Jewish health care workers may be employed on the Sabbath.

Later commentators have understood these 39 prohibitions as categories, thereby expanding the list of prohibitions. Thus some rabbis teach that, since chaff cannot be picked from wheat on the Sabbath, it follows that one cannot pick the bones from fish as well. Gefilte fish (pre-ground boned fish) became a popular Sabbath food as a result.

In their zeal to preserve the Sabbath some rabbis have gone to what even many Jews perceive as extremes. Thus in some Jewish communities it is forbidden to ride a bicycle on the Sabbath because, if the chain breaks, you might be tempted to fix it. In a similar case a man was forbidden to drive his handicapped mother to the synagogue as it violated the Sabbath; the rabbi suggested that she move within walking distance. Then she would be welcome. The ruler of the synagogue in Lk seems to have been of like mind.

## Christ on the Sabbath

Christ was frequently in conflict with more observant Jews over Sabbath-related issues. He was not opposed to the Sabbath itself – He is depicted in the Gospel as a regular worshipper in the synagogue on the Sabbath (see Lk 4:16). Rather He was opposed to the elaboration of prohibitions favored by the Pharisees. Instead, He favored expanding the traditional exemption.

In addition to work involved with saving a life, Christ saw doing good as an appropriate Sabbath activity: "There was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked [Jesus], saying, 'Is it

lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'—that they might accuse Him. Then He said to them, 'What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath'" (Mt 12:10-12).

The Gospels record several incidents of healings which caused controversy because they were done on the Sabbath. St Luke tells how Christ asked some lawyers and Pharisees if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. When they would not answer, He proceeded to heal a man with dropsy (see Lk 14:1-6). And it was a Sabbath when the Lord Jesus healed the man born blind (see Jn 9:1-41).

We also read in John how Christ healed a paralyzed man at the Pool of Bethesda saying, "Take up your bed and walk" (Jn 5:8). The Pharisees did not challenge Jesus; rather they confronted the ex-paralytic: "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed" (v.10). The man replied that his healer had told him to do so and, we might add, that was enough for him.

## Legalism Is Dangerous

The Sabbath prohibitions were intended to free the Jews from a life which knew nothing but toil. Since they were in the form of bans, some Jews came to feel that extending these exclusions enhanced or honored the Sabbath. The Lord Jesus put forth a different approach, insisting that the Sabbath is honored when we do good on it.

The lawyers and Pharisees whom Jesus challenged were not the first or the last to turn positive precepts into restrictive commands. They turned the joy which should have accompanied the Sabbath into fear of transgressing a prohibition as a particular school of rabbis understood it.

Something similar happens in the Church when we lose sight of the presence of Christ which alone gives meaning to any precept or rubric. When this happens our traditions may become as fruitlessly restrictive as those Christ confronted. Conversely, when we cast them off we may be left, not with renewal but with license.

## The Sabbath Today

"Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (Gen 2:3). This verse is read at the start of Jewish Sabbath eve services to remind worshippers that the Sabbath is a remembrance of God's rest after the work of creation.

In the Church the Sabbath has given way to Sunday with its memory of the Lord's resurrection and the resulting new creation. Nevertheless, the Sabbath still has a place on Eastern Church calendars. In some parishes the Liturgy is offered on Saturday as well as on Sunday.

In our Church remembering the original creation is still a focus for our Saturday prayers. The kondakion sung on most Saturdays reflects the connection of the Sabbath with creation: "To You, O Lord, Ordainer and Creator of the world, the universe offers the God-bearing martyrs as the first fruits of nature. Wherefore through their prayers and through the intercession of the Theotokos preserve Your Church and our country in safety and peace: You who alone are most merciful."

The Sabbath as a day of rest is expressed on Holy Saturday in recalling the great Sabbath rest of Christ in the tomb. Throughout the year, and especially on the Saturdays of the Dead, the peaceful repose of those who die in Christ is highlighted.