An Ecumenical Service of Prayer for Christians suffering persecution in the Middle East

Friday, October 10th, 2014

All who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

- 2 Timothy 3:12

St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church
Irvine, CA
Participating Churches and Clergy

The Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church (Anaheim)
Father James Barrand

Holy Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church (Santa Ana)
Father Filemon Mikhail, Father Athanasius Ragheb and Father Mark Hanna

The Armenian Apostolic Church
Father Hrant Yeretzian

St. Cecilia Roman Catholic Church (Tustin)
Father Alfred Baca

Holy Cross Melkite Catholic Church (Placentia)
Father Francois Beyrouti

St. Justin Martyr Roman Catholic Church (Anaheim)
Father John Monestero

St. Mary & St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church (Anaheim)
Father Joseph Boules

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church (Newport Beach)
Father Quan Tran

St. Paul’s Assyrian Church of the East (Anaheim)
Father Ashur El-Khoury

St. Paul’s Coptic Orthodox Church (Tustin)
Father Kyrillos Ibrahim

St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church (Irvine)
Father Steven Tsichlis and Father Theofanis Degaitas

Special Thanks

Emett Loera (Director) and the Choir of St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church
Alina Artemova (Director) and the Choir of St. Cecilia’s Roman Catholic Church
Robert Pipta (Director) and the Choir of the Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church
Eve Tibbs (Director) and the Choir of St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church

The Choir of St. Paul’s Assyrian Church of the East

Dorothea Love, Mona Fahmy and the women of Philoptochos – St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church
Father Alexei Smith (Ecumenical Officer), the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Irma Contreras – St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church
The Entrance of the Clergy with the Cross of Christ

The Litany of the Saints and Martyrs
(Led by Mr. Emmet Loera, music director at St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church)

Chantor: Kyrie eleison Christe eleison Kyrie eleison
Most holy Virgin Mary, Queen of Angels…

Congregation: Pray for us.
St. Peter the Apostle and Martyr…………… Pray for us.
St. Paul the Apostle and Martyr…………… Pray for us.
St. Andrew the Apostle and Martyr…………Pray for us.
St. James the Apostle and Martyr…………..Pray for us.
St. Jude the Apostle and Martyr………….. Pray for us.
St. Thomas the Apostle and Martyr…………Pray for us.
St. Philip the Apostle and Martyr……………Pray for us
St. Luke the Evangelist and Martyr………… Pray for us.
St. Barnabas the Apostle and Martyr……….Pray for us.
St. Timothy the Apostle and Martyr…………Pray for us.
St. Mark the Evangelist and Martyr…………Pray for us.
St. Stephen the Deacon and First Martyr……Pray for us.
St. Ignatius of Antioch………………… Pray for us.
St. Polycarp of Smyrna………………… Pray for us.
St. Blandina the Martyr………………….Pray for us.
St. Justin the Martyr…………………..Pray for us.
Sts. Perpetua and Felicity the Martyrs…Pray for us.
St. Hippolytus, Pope and Martyr….…Pray for us.
St. Cecilia the Martyr…………………..Pray for us.
St. Victor, Pope and Martyr………..…Pray for us.
St. Sophia and her daughters Faith, Hope and Charity…Pray for us.
St. Leonidas the Martyr…………………Pray for us.
St. Panteleimon the Martyr……..Pray for us.
St. Christina the Martyr………….Pray for us.
St. Christopher the Martyr………Pray for us.
St. Demetrios the Martyr………..Pray for us.
St. Marina the Martyr……………Pray for us.
St. George the Martyr……………Pray for us.
St. Katherine the Martyr…………Pray for us.
St. Cyprian of Carthage…………Pray for us.
St. Barbara the Martyr……………Pray for us.
St. Sebastian the Martyr………..Pray for us.
St. Lucy the Martyr………………Pray for us.
St. Theodore the Martyr………..Pray for us.
St. Agnes the Martyr……………..Pray for us.
St. Lawrence the Martyr………..Pray for us.
St. Euthymia the Martyr……….Pray for us.
St. Adrian the Martyr…………….Pray for us.
Holy 40 Martyrs of Sevastea………..Pray for us.
Sts. Julitta and Kyrikos the Martyrs……..Pray for us.
Sts. Sergius and Bacchus the Martyrs……..Pray for us.
Sts. Kosmas and Damian the Martyrs……..Pray for us.

(And to those who have recently been martyred in Egypt, Syria, Iran and Iraq)

Holy Martyrs of the Sudan………Pray for us.
Holy martyrs of Egypt…………..Pray for us.
Holy martyrs of Lebanon………..Pray for us.
Holy martyrs of Syria……………Pray for us.
Holy martyrs of Iraq……………..Pray for us.
Holy martyrs of Iran……………..Pray for us.
All the saints of God……………Pray for us.
The Opening Psalm

(Read aloud, using the above version)

SAVE ME, O GOD for the waters around me have come up to my neck.
I sink into the miry depths, where there is no foothold.
I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched.
My eyes fail, looking for my God.
Those who hate me for no reason outnumber the hairs on my head.
Many are my enemies for no reason; and they seek to destroy me.
For I endure scorn for Your sake; and shame covers my face.
Zeal for Your house consumes me.
Those who sit at the gate mock me and I am the song of drunkards.
But I pray to You, O Lord: in Your great love, O God, answer me with Your sure salvation.
Deliver me from those who hate me.
Do not let the floodwaters engulf me or the depths swallow me up.
Answer me, O Lord, out of the goodness of Your love; in Your great mercy, turn to me.
Do not hide Your face from Your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.
Come near to me and rescue me; deliver me from my enemies.
Scorn has broken my heart and left me helpless.
I looked for sympathy but there was none; I looked for comfort but found no one.
They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar to drink.
As for me, afflicted and in pain, may Your salvation O God protect me.
I will praise God’s Name in song and glorify Him with thanksgiving.
For the Lord hears the needy and does not despise His captive people.
Let the heavens and the earth praise Him, the seas and all that live in them.
O God You are my help and deliverer! Lord, do not delay!
The Raising and Offering of Incense
(Led by the clergy of the Coptic Orthodox Church)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, the Father Almighty! O Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, God of all powers, be with us, for we have no supporter in our difficulties and afflictions but You. Make us worthy to pray thankfully “Our Father...”

Congregation: Our Father who art in heaven; Hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom Come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, for Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, forever and ever, Amen.

Priest: (ESH-LEEL) Let us pray.

Deacon: (E-PI EPROSEVKI ES-TATHEETE) Stand up for prayer.

Priest: (EE-REE-NEE-PASI) Peace be with you all.

People: (KE TO PNEVMATI SOO) And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Gracious and Merciful God, the Father of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, for He has covered us, assisted us, preserved us, accepted us, spared us, supported us and brought us to this hour. Let us ask the Almighty God to keep us in peace this blessed day, and all the days of our life.

Deacon: (EE-EPROSEVKI ES-TATHEETE) Let us pray.

People: (KI-RI-E E-LE-EESON) Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord, Master and Almighty God, the Father of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, we thank You on every occasion, in every condition, and for all things. For You have covered us, assisted us, preserved us, accepted us, spared us, supported us, and brought us till this hour.

Deacon: Let us pray that God may have mercy and compassion upon us, hear us, sustain us and continuously accept the prayers and supplications of His saints on our behalf, and forgive us our sins.
**People:** (KI-RI-E E-LE-EESON) Lord, have mercy.

**Priest:** Therefore, we ask and appeal to Your Goodness, O Lover-of-Mankind that You may grant us to conclude this blessed day, and all the days of our life, in peace and in Your fear. All envy, all temptation, all works of Satan, all intrigues of the wicked, uprising of enemies, seen and unseen, do cast away from us, and from all Your people, and from this Holy Place. Grant us Your endowments and benefactions, as You have given us the power to tread underfoot serpents, scorpions and the whole strength of the Enemy. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**THE VERSES OF THE CYMBALS**

*(Coptic Orthodox Youth Choir)*

Lord, have mercy.

We worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal Holy Trinity.

Hail to the Church, the house of the angels!

Hail to the Virgin who gave birth to our savior!

Hail to you O Mary, the beautiful dove, who gave birth to Emmanuel.

Hail to you, O Mary, a holy saint. Hail to you, O Mary, mother of the Holy One!

Hail to Michael the Archangel. Hail to Gabriel the announcer of the good news!

Hail to the Cherubim, Hail to the Seraphim. And to all the Heavenly powers!

Hail to our masters the Apostles! Hail to the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Hail to the Evangelist! Hail to the Apostle Mark, the Beholder of God!

Hail to Stephen the first martyr. Hail to the blessed archdeacon!

Hail to you, O martyr! Hail to the brave struggler! Hail to the warrior my lord George the king.

Hail to you, O martyr. Hail to the brave struggler! Hail to the warrior Abba Mina of Bayaad.

Hail to our father Anthony the light of monasticism!

Hail to our father Saint Paul, beloved of Christ!

Through the pleadings of St. Mary the Mother of God, O Lord, grant us the forgiveness of our sins, so that we may praise You, with Your gracious Father, and the Holy Spirit, for You have risen and saved us.
The Great Litany

(Prayed by Father James Barrand, pastor of the Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church with responses sung by the choir of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church)

Priest: In peace let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the peace of God and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this parish and city, for every city and country, and for the Christian faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For all those who are persecuted for their faith in Christ in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, the Sudan, Iran, and everywhere in the world, that they may be delivered from violence and strengthened in their witness by the power of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For refugees who are fleeing by land, sea, and air to seek safety, for those who are sick and suffering, for all those in captivity and bitter slavery for their faith, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our bishops, the honorable presbyters, the deacons in the service of Christ and for all Christian leaders, that they may serve the Lord and His churches in the fear of God and care for their flocks with faith, wisdom and love during this time of persecution, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our country, the president, and all those in public service, that they might be strengthened in every good deed to end this violence, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For all those who have been martyred for their faith in Christ, that they may find rest in the bosom of Abraham and be numbered among the saints of His Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.
Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For all the victims of the Islamic State, for Jews, Yazidis and Muslims, for those who are wounded, sick and suffering, for all those who are homeless and refugees, and for their deliverance and safety, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For their deliverance from all affliction, violence, danger, and distress, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Help them, save them, have mercy upon them, and protect them, O God, by Your grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Choir: To You, O Lord.

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ, You are the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the pre-eternal Word of God through Whom everything was created: You emptied Yourself of the glory You had before all ages with the Father and the Holy Spirit and became human for our salvation. Crucified for the forgiveness of our sins, You rose from the dead that we might have eternal life. Lord, we beg You now: in Your tender mercy, grant rest among the saints to Your servants, our brothers and sisters in the faith who have been martyred for their witness to You; bless and comfort all those who mourn their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, children, family and friends by the power of Your Holy Spirit, wiping away every tear from their eyes; and grant safety and deliverance to all those who are suffering from hunger, fatigue and homelessness as refugees.

For You are the Son and Word of the living God and to You do we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.
A Reading from the Old Testament
(Read by the youth of the Archangel Michael Coptic Orthodox Church)

Reader: The reading is from the Second Book of Maccabees.

Priest: Wisdom! Let us listen attentively!

(The witness and martyrdom of a mother and her seven sons for their faith)

Reader: It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king to force them to violate God’s law. One of the brothers, speaking for the others, said: “What do you expect to learn by questioning us? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors.” At that the king, in a fury, gave orders to have pans and caldrons heated. These were quickly heated, and he gave the order to cut out the tongue of the one who had spoken for the others, to scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of his brothers and his mother looked on. When he was completely maimed but still breathing, the king ordered them to carry him to the fire and fry him. As a cloud of smoke spread from the pan, the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, with these words: “The Lord God is looking on and truly has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song, when he openly bore witness, saying, ‘And God will have compassion on his servants.’”

After the first brother had died in this manner, they brought the second to be made sport of. After tearing off the skin and hair of his head, he in turn suffered the same tortures as the first. With his last breath he said: “You are depriving us of this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to live again forever, because we are dying for his laws.”

After him the third suffered their cruel sport. He put forth his tongue at once when told to do so, and bravely stretched out his hands, as he spoke these noble words: “It was from Heaven that I received these; for the sake of His commandments I disregard them; from Him I hope to receive them again.” Even the king and his attendants marvelled at the young man’s spirit, because he regarded his sufferings as nothing.

After he had died, they tortured and maltreated the fourth brother in the same way. When he was near death, he said, “It is my choice to die at the hands of mortals with the hope that God will restore me to life; but for you, there will be no resurrection to life.”

They next brought forward the fifth brother and tortured and murdered him. And after him they brought the sixth brother. But most admirable and worthy of everlasting remembrance was the mother who, seeing her seven sons perish in a single day, bore it courageously because of her hope in the Lord. Filled with a noble spirit, she exhorted each of them in the language of their ancestors with these words: “I do not know how you came to be in my womb; it was not I who gave you breath and life, nor was it I who arranged the elements each
of you are made of. Therefore, since it is the Creator of the universe who shaped the beginning of humankind and brought about the origin of everything, He, in His mercy, will give you back both breath and life, because you now disregard yourselves for the sake of His commandments.”

Antiochus the king, suspecting that he was being insulted by her words, thought he was being ridiculed. As the youngest brother was still alive, the king appealed to him, with promises on oath, to make him rich and happy if he would abandon his ancestral faith. The king would make him his friend and entrust him with high office. When the young man paid no attention to him at all, the king appealed to his mother, urging her to advise her son to save his life. After he had urged her for a long time, she agreed to talk to her son. She leaned over close to him and, in derision of the cruel tyrant, said in their native language: “Son, have pity on me, for I carried you in my womb for nine months, nursed you for three years, brought you up, educated and supported you to your present age. I beg you, child, to look at the heavens and the earth and see all that is in them; then you will know that God did not make them out of existing things. In the same way humankind came into existence. Do not be afraid of this executioner, but be worthy of your brothers and accept death, so that in the time of His mercy I may receive you again with your brothers.”

She had scarcely finished speaking when the youth said: “What is the delay? I will not obey the king’s command. I obey the command of the law given to our ancestors through Moses. Like my brothers, I offer up my body and my life for our ancestral laws, imploring God to show mercy soon to our nation, and by afflictions and blows to make you confess that he alone is God.”

At that, the king became enraged and treated him even worse than the others, since he bitterly resented the boy’s contempt. Thus he too died in integrity, putting all his trust in the Lord. Last of all, after her sons, the mother was put to death.

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A BLESSING
(Given by Father John Monestro, St. Justin the Martyr Roman Catholic Church)

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the face of the Lord shine upon you; may He be gracious to you, turn His face toward you and give you peace!
- (Numbers 6:24-26)
A Hymn honoring the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, our grieving Mother, standing before the Cross  
(Sung by the choir of Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church)

The grieving Mother stood beneath the Cross, weeping in sorrow. Tearfully, she prayed: O Son, my Son, innocent and faultless, why do You now suffer this bitter passion on the Cross?

Bitter tears falling near Your holy Body: O my Child I held You under my protection. Now as I lose You while I weep before You, O my Son, You leave me and Your life I will no longer see.

You have sacrificed to save all the people and for this You died while innocent and blameless. Evil and wickedness in this unjust world has spilled upon You this bloody judgment on the Cross.

The First Reading from the New Testament  
(Read by Claire Pearson, St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church)

Priest: Let us listen attentively!

Reader: I cried out to the Lord for help. I cried out to God to hear me. When I was in distress, I sought the Lord. (Psalm 77:1-2)

Priest: Wisdom!


Priest: Let us listen attentively!

The Nature of true Discipleship

Reader: Brethren, it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ. To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated; we are homeless. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world – right up to this very moment. But thanks be to God who has given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!
Priest: Peace be to you, the reader!

Chanter: And with your spirit.


Chanter: The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and bring me safely to His heavenly Kingdom (2 Timothy 4:18).


Chanter: To Him be glory to the ages of ages. Amen (2 Timothy 4:18).


A BLESSING
(Given by Father Hrant Yeretzian of the Armenian Apostolic Church)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!
- (2 Corinthians 13:13)

Day of Wrath: The Coming Judgment
(Sung by the choir of St. Cecilia’s Roman Catholic Church)

Day of wrath and doom impending; David’s word with Sybil’s blending; Heaven and earth in ashes ending.

O what fear man’s bosom rends, when from Heaven the Judge descends, on whose sentence all depend.

Wondrous sound the trumpet flings; through earth’s tombs it rings; all before the Throne it brings.

Death is struck and nature quaking; all creation is awaking; to its Judge an answer making.

Lo, the book exactly worded wherein all has been recorded; thence shall judgment be awarded.

When the Judge, His seat attains and each hidden deed arraigns; nothing unavenged shall remain.

Through the sinful woman shriven; through the dying thief forgiven; to me a hope have You given.

Worthless are my prayers and sighing; yet good Lord in grace complying; rescue me from fires undying.

With Your sheep, provide a place for me; from the goats, separate me; to Your right hand, guide me.
When the wicked are confounded, doomed to flames of woe unbounded; call me, with Your saints surrounded.

Low I kneel with heart’s submission; see, like ashes, my contrition; help me in my last condition.

O that day of tears and mourning; from the dust of earth returning; man for judgment must prepare him; spare him O God, in Your mercy spare him.

Lord, all-pitying, Jesus blessed: grant them Your eternal rest.

The Second Reading from the New Testament
(Read by Chantel Behnan, Holy Cross Melkite Catholic Church)

**Priest:** Let us listen attentively!

**Reader:** Deliver me, my God, from the hands of the wicked and release me from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel. *(Psalm 71:4)*

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The reading is from the Book of Revelation *(7:9-17).*

**Priest:** Let us listen attentively!

The Great Multitude in White Robes that have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb

**Reader:** After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the Throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the Throne, and to the Lamb.”

All the angels were standing around the Throne and around the presbyters and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the Throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor, power and strength be to our God unto the ages of ages. Amen!”

Then one of the presbyters asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple;
and He who sits on the throne will shelter them with His Presence. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor will any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the Throne will be their shepherd; He will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

**Priest:** Peace be to you, the reader!

**Chanter:** And with your spirit.

**Choir:** Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

**Chanter:** O Lord, rescue me from those who do evil and protect me from those who are violent *(Psalm 140:1).*

**Choir:** Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

**Chanter:** Rescue me, O Lord, from those who devise evil plans in their hearts and stir up war every day *(Psalm 140:2).*

**Choir:** Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

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**A BLESSING**  
*(Given by Father Francois Beyrouti, pastor of Holy Cross Melkite Catholic Church)*

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!  
- *(Ephesians 1:2)*

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**Sweet Mother of the Redeemer**  
*(Sung by the choir of St. Cecilia’s Roman Catholic Church)*

Sweet Mother of the Redeemer, the passage to Heaven, the gate of the spirits of the dead and the star of the sea: aid the falling. O Mother of Him who loves all people: you brought forth your Creator in a wonder of nature. O Virgin before and after, who received the joyful greeting of Gabriel, have pity on us sinners.
The Gospel Reading
(Read by Father Theofanis Degaitas;
Responses sung by the choir of St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church)

Priest: Wisdom! Let us stand! Let us hear the holy Gospel. Peace be with you all!

Choir: And with your spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the holy Gospel according to St. John. (John 14:1; 15:18-21; 17:1, 11, 14-20). Let us listen attentively!

Choir: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You!

The World Hates the Disciples

The Lord Jesus said to His disciples: Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, for I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: “A servant is not greater than his master.” If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. They will treat you this way because of My Name, for they do not know the Father who sent Me. Those who hate Me hate My Father as well. This is to fulfill what is written in the Law: “They hated me for no reason.”

All of this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the hour is coming when those who kill you will think they are offering worship to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or Me. I have told you this so that when that hour comes, you will remember that I warned you about them.

The Lord Jesus Prays for the Disciples

After Jesus said this, He looked up toward Heaven and He prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Holy Father, protect them by the Power of Your Name, the Name You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one. I have given them Your Word and the world has hated them for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that You take them out of the world but that You protect them from the Evil One. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in Your truth. Your Word is truth. For them, I sanctify Myself that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them may be one, O Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You.”

Choir: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You!
The Homily
by Father Steven Tsichlis
(Pastor of St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church)

The 23rd Psalm
(Sung by the choir of St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church)

A musical setting by John Rutter

The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.
He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.
He shall convert my soul and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness,
for His name’s sake, for His name’s sake, for His name’s sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.
Thou shalt prepare a table for me against them that trouble me:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.
But Thy loving kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord, in the house of the Lord, forever, forever.
A Prayer for Enemies

(Led by Father Al Baca, Pastor of St. Cecilia’s Roman Catholic Church)

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, You commanded us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us that we may be truly children of our Father in Heaven. Who causes the sun to rise on those who are evil and those who are good, and rain to fall on both the righteous and the unrighteous: we beg You – fill our minds and hearts with Your Holy Spirit that we may forgive those who persecute and murder our brothers and sisters as You forgave those who crucified You. Help us to repay their evil with goodness that we might not be overcome by evil but conquer evil with good. Deliver us from anger and the desire for vengeance. As Your first martyr Stephen prayed to You for his murderers, so we pray for all those who fight in the name of the Islamic State: enlighten their minds and hearts that they might come to know You, the only true God, and Your love for all humankind made manifest in Your Cross. Lead them to repent of their many sins, having defiled themselves with the blood of their many innocent victims and having handed their own souls over to the darkness of the Evil One. Do not let them perish. Have mercy on them and forgive them, for they do not know You or the Father Who sent You and therefore know not what they do.

For blessed is Your holy Name, O Christ our God, and to You do we offer glory, honor and worship, together with Your eternal Father and Your Holy Spirit, the one true and living God, always now and forever and to the ages of ages.

**Congregation:** Amen.

A Blessing

(Given by Father Ashur El-Khoury, pastor of St. Paul’s Assyrian Church of the East)

May the mercy of our great God and savior Jesus Christ be with you all!

- *Titus 2:13*
The Angels: A Hymn honoring the Eucharist
(Sung by the choir of St. Paul’s Assyrian Church of the East)

Christ in glory, whom the angels fear to look at, through bread and wine, He’s being observed, on the holy Altar.

The angels, dressed in brightness, if they see Him will be consumed by Him; but unworthy earthlings, to whom He revealed His face, will eat Him (in the Eucharist).

The Mystery of the Son, is a flame within the hosts; Isaiah testifies amongst us, that he has seeing them;

These mysteries that were in the thought of the Godhead, on the holy Altar is being offered for the sons of Adam.

O decorated Altar, like the cherubim’s chariot of fire, it is surrounded by the heavenly forces;

On the holy Altar, lies the Body of the Son of God; it is celebrated by the sons of Adam on their hands.

By the majesty of Him, dressed in light, a priest stands, delivering alms of precious jewels (Holy Eucharist) to the needy.

If there was jealousy, there in the heights; the cherubim would be jealous of humans who standby.

Where in Zion, stood up the wood, to crucify the Son (of God); there sprouted the holy tree (Mary the Virgin) that gave birth to the triune Son.

Where the nails that were driven through the hands of the Son; there also was Isaac’s being that stood near.

Come in peace, O holy priest, carrying the pure censer, offering incense and healing people by its scent.

Come in peace, oh holy priest, sublimed (in wisdom) through the Holy Spirit; who in his right hand carries the keys to the house of God.

O come in peace, O holy priest, who absolves humans to the depth; the Lord in Heaven, will absolve him Alleluia.
Announcements and the Passing of a Special Collection Tray

The charities we are asking you to support this evening are:

Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organization

Catholic Relief Services

International Orthodox Christian Charities

Checks may be made out to any of these three charities, all of whom are doing amazing relief work in the region. All cash received tonight will be divided evenly between these charities.

A Coptic Orthodox Blessing with Holy Water

A Reminder of our Dying and Rising with Christ in Baptism
(Led by Father Kyrillos Ibrahim, pastor of St. Paul's Coptic Orthodox Church and the Coptic Orthodox clergy)

Priest:
May God have compassion on us, bless us, manifest His face to shine upon us, and have mercy upon us.

O Lord, save Your people, bless Your inheritance, shepherd them and raise them up forever.

Exalt the horn of the Christians by the power of Your life-giving Cross, and through the supplications and prayers which our Lady, the Lady of us all, the Holy Theotokos, St. Mary, makes for us at all times.
And through the supplications and prayers of the three great holy luminaries, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, the four incorporeal living creatures, the twenty-four presbyters, and all the heavenly orders...

And through the prayers of the martyrs...Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, Jude, Thomas, Philip, Barnabas and Timothy the Apostles; Mark and Luke the Evangelists; Stephen the Deacon and First Martyr; Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Blandina, Justin, Perpetua and Felicity, Cecilia, Hippolytus and Victor of Rome, Leonidas of Athens; Sophia and her daughters Faith, Hope and Charity; Christopher, Demetrios of Thessaloniki, Marina, Christina, Katherine, Barbara, Lucy, Panteleimon, Agnes, Theodore, Lawrence, Adrian, Anastasia, Sebastian, George, Euthymia, Cyprian of Carthage; the holy 40 martyrs of Sevastea; Kosmas and Damian, Sergius and Bacchus; and all the holy martyrs of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Lebanon and the Sudan who have recently given their witness to Christ….

...and the blessing of the Holy Theotokos, first and last.

May their blessing, their grace, their power, their gift, their love, and their help be with us all forever. Amen

O Christ our God!

Congregation: Amen. So it shall be.

Priest: O King of peace, grant us Your peace, establish for us Your peace, and forgive us our sins. For Yours is the power, the glory, the blessing, and the might, forever. Amen.

Make us worthy to all pray with thanksgiving...

Congregation:

OUR FATHER who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Priest: The love of God the Father, the grace of the Only Begotten Son, our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the communion and gift of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Go in peace. The peace of the Lord be with you all. Amen.
A Recessional Hymn from Taize
(Sung by all the choirs and the congregation)

*Congregation:* Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom *(Luke 23:42).*

*(While the above hymn is being chanted reverently, the clergy lead the procession out of the Church)*

Please join us for refreshments and fellowship in the parish hall following the service!
In the Declaration Nostra Aetate of Vatican II we read: “The Church also has a high regard for the Muslims, who worship one God, living and subsistent, merciful and omnipotent, the Creator of heaven and earth” (Nostra Aetate 3).

I remember an event from my youth. In the convent of the Church of St. Mark in Florence, we were looking at the frescoes by Fra Angelico. At a certain point a man joined us who, after sharing his admiration for the work of this great religious artist, immediately added: “But nothing can compare to our magnificent Muslim monotheism.” His statement did not prevent us from continuing the visit and the conversation in a friendly tone. It was on that occasion that I got a kind of first taste of the dialogue between Christianity and Islam.

Whoever knows the Old and New Testaments, and then reads the Koran, clearly sees the process by which it completely reduces Divine Revelation. It is impossible not to note the movement away from what God said about Himself, first in the Old Testament through the Prophets, and then finally in the New Testament through His Son. In Islam all the richness of God’s self-revelation, which constitutes the heritage of the Old and New Testaments, has definitely been set aside. Some of the most beautiful names in the human language are given to the God of the Koran, but He is ultimately a God outside of the world, a God who is only Majesty, never Emmanuel, God-with-us. Islam is not a religion of redemption. There is no room for the Cross and the Resurrection. Jesus is mentioned, but only as a prophet who prepares for the last prophet, Muhammad. There is also mention of Mary, His Virgin Mother, but the tragedy of redemption is completely absent. For this reason not only the theology but also the anthropology of Islam is very distant from Christianity.

Nevertheless, the religiosity of Muslims deserves respect. It is impossible not to admire, for example, their fidelity to prayer. The image of believers in Allah who, without caring about time or place, fall to their knees and immerse themselves in prayer remains a model for all those who invoke the true God – in particular for those Christians who, having deserted their magnificent cathedrals, pray only a little or not at all.

The Council has also called for the Church to have a dialogue with followers of the “Prophet,” and the Church has proceeded to do so. We read in Nostra Aetate: “Even if over the course of centuries Christians and Muslims have had more than a few dissensions and quarrels, this sacred Council now urges all to forget the past and to work toward mutual understanding as well as toward the preservation and promotion of social justice, moral welfare, peace, and freedom for the benefit of all mankind” (Nostra Aetate 3).

Nevertheless, concrete difficulties are not lacking. In countries where fundamentalist movements come to power, human rights and the principle of religious freedom are unfortunately interpreted in a very one-sided way. Religious freedom comes to mean freedom to impose on all citizens the
“true religion.” In these countries the situation of Christians is sometimes terribly disturbing. Fundamentalist attitudes of this nature make reciprocal contacts very difficult. All the same, the Church remains always open to dialogue and cooperation.

The recent wave of violence against innocent families and children in Iraq and Syria has rendered the world shocked and horrified. The targeting of tens of thousands of Christians – including Arameans, Chaldeans and Assyrians – and other religious minorities such as the Yazidis and Kurds, can never be justified in the name of any religious creed or conviction. Such brutal acts are categorically unacceptable and unjustifiable before God and humanity. War in the name of religion is war against religion.

- Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople (August 13, 2014)

Our sufferings today are the prelude of those you - Europeans and Western Christians - will also suffer in the near future. I lost my diocese. The physical setting of my apostolate has been occupied by Islamic radicals who want us converted or dead. But my community is still alive. Please, try to understand us. Your liberal and democratic principles are worth nothing here. You must consider again our reality in the Middle East, because you are welcoming in your countries an ever growing number of Muslims. Also you are in danger. You must take strong and courageous decisions, even at the cost of contradicting your principles. You think all men are equal, but that is not true: Islam does not say that all men are equal. Your values are not their values. If you do not understand this soon enough, you will become the victims of the enemy you have welcomed into your home.

- Archbishop Amel Nona, Chaldean Catholic Archbishop of Mosul, now exiled in Erbil

Corriere della Sera August 9, 2014