

Reflections by Fr. Tom

Dear Friends:

I have been very attentive to the icon we have with us at the altar here at Saint Agnes, and I did a little research about it recently. Some of you already may have taken a closer look, and I encourage you all to do so. Some of you may well have heard this before, but just in case there are those who are wondering about this icon, here is what I learned.

This is a unique and beautiful icon. It is known as Our Lady of the Maronites, and depicts the Virgin Mother supporting on her lap the Child Jesus Christ. It was discovered at the Patriarchal Church of Elige, Lebanon and is dated to around the 10th Century. This original image had been painted over several times. After uncovering several layers, the original icon has been revealed.



The age and authenticity is supported by the blue color of Mary's robe (deep blue) and Christ's (deep purple). These details are faithful to the Syriac tradition dating to the 6th Century. Blue signifies divinity, and purple signifies royalty. The halos of both figures are simple wide gold bands typical of Syriac iconography, without typical Byzantine influence, which usually has a cross in Christ's halo and lettering for the "Mother of God" in the Lady's.

Jesus is imparting a blessing with his right hand. In blessing, you will note that three of his fingers are joined. In the symbolism of icons, this is a profession of faith in the Trinity. Looking closely at the right hand of Mary, you may notice a gesture that declares the two-fold nature of Christ: human and divine. As is typical in Syriac icons, the Virgin Mother's hair is completely concealed and covered by the headband worn in the Semitic culture. The two star-like symbols on Mary's head and shoulder represent her enduring virginity before and after Christ's birth.

Father Tom Boyer



Welcome to

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WEBSITE
naplesmaronite.org

FACEBOOK
Naples Maronite Community

MARONITE DIVINE LITURGY

SUNDAY, 9:15 A.M.
St. Agnes Chapel
7775 Vanderbilt Beach Road
Naples, Florida

WEDNESDAY, 12:00 NOON
Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church
5130 Rattlesnake Hammock Road
Naples, Florida

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

**SIXTEENTH WEEK OF
PENTECOST**

THE FRUIT OF THE WORD: PRAYER

PARABLE OF THE
PHARISEE & TAX COLLECTOR

A REMINDER

*When you are out of town, you can still
donate to the collection by using this link.*

*Thank you all for your faithfulness.
<https://naplesmaronite.org/donate>*

EPISTLE

ROMANS 8:18-27

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance. In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

LECTIO DIVINA

If you are interested in learning more about Lectio Divina, a way of praying with scripture, Bishop Awkar explains how to do it. This talk is in Arabic and you can find it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUdt_Tm87WM

*Do not wait for leaders;
do it alone, person to person.
Be faithful in small things
because it is in them
that your strength lies.*

Mother Teresa

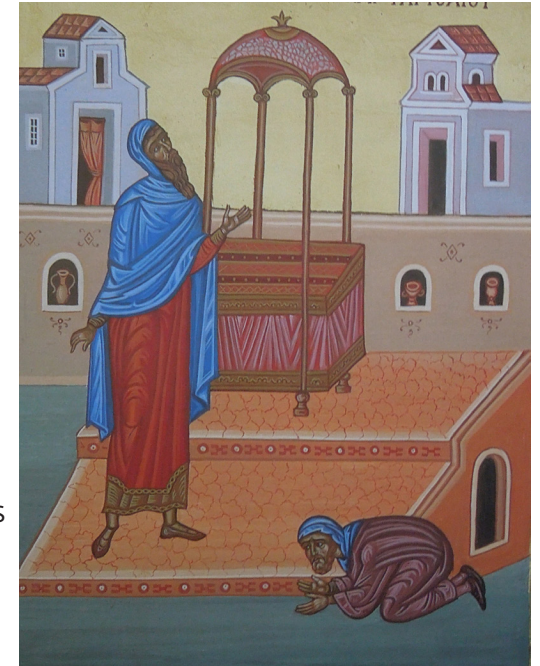


GOSPEL

LUKE 18:9-14



He then addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity--greedy, dishonest, adulterous--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.' But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.



THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

Via Flickr; photographer Ted

PRAYING FOR LEBANON

Let us take time this week to offer prayers for Lebanon and all our families and friends who are struggling there in the current, painful situation. We ask our Lady of Lebanon to give us strength. May this holy land be protected during these uncertain and stressful days



Image by Gordontour via Flickr