

**ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED**

**MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**130 ST. FRANCIS CABRINI 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. William Lass, jr. Niko Mayashairo. Mary  
McNeilly. Sue Solsman. Susan Vieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry  
Yockey. **MEMORY ETERNAL:** ✕Rev. Charles Aboody. ✕  
Rev. Michael Jolly. ✕Rev. Joseph Francavilla. ✕Rev. Frank  
Milienewicz ✕Dn. John Karam. ✕Marie Abda. ✕Charlotte  
Abda. ✕James Abda. ✕Marie Abda. ✕Nancy Abda. ✕A.J. Bo-  
lus. ✕Nicholas Cianci. ✕Patricia Cimakosky. ✕Ann Coury. ✕  
Mary Sue Betress. ✕Margaret Dillenburg ✕Eric Jolly. ✕  
Joseph King ✕Blakely Landell. ✕Elaine Manuele. ✕Frank  
Milewski, Sr. ✕Frank Milewski, Jr. ✕Mary Lou Mooty. ✕Karen  
Murray. ✕Marie Patchoski. ✕Anthony Simon. ✕Bill Simon. ✕  
Ruth Sirgany. ✕Mary Ann Walsh. ✕Genevieve 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: .... 7:00 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.

**SUNDAY AFTER THE**  
**NATIVITY OF OUR LORD**  
**PATRONAL FEAST OF ST JOSEPH**  
**THE BETROTHED**

# DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

27 DECEMBER 2020 ♦ TONE 05 EOTHINON 07 † SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY / ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS: *Nativity of our Lord*

FIRST:

SECOND:

THIRD: *(Tone 5)*

ENTRANCE HYMN: *Resurrection*

APOLYTIKIA:

*Resurrection (Tone 5)*

*Nativity of Christ*

*Saint Joseph*

KONDAKION: *Nativity of our Lord*

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON: *Psalm 44: 17, 10*

You, O Lord will keep us and preserve us always from this generation!  
Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any holy men: for truthfulness has vanquished from among the children of men.

EPISTLE:

In those days Stephen, full of grace and power, was working great wonders and miracles among the people. But some of the members from the synagogue called “of the Freedmen” and from that of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and from that of Cilicia and Asia rose up to challenge Stephen, and they were unable to withstand the wisdom of the Spirit that was speaking. Then they bribed men to say, “We have heard him make blasphemous statements against Moses and God.” And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and throwing themselves upon him, they seized him and brought him before the Sanhedrin. And they produced false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases uttering blasphemous things against this holy place and against the Law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the tradition Moses handed down to us.” And all who were seated in the Sanhedrin stared at him, and saw his face as if it were that of an angel. (7:) And the chief priest asked, “is this true?” Then he said, “Brethren and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, and said to him, ‘Leave your country and your family, and come to the land I will show you.’ (Gn. 12:1) Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father’s death, he [God] moved him to this land where you now live, and he gave him no property in it, nor even a place to set his foot. (7:47) “But Solomon built him a house. Yet, the Most High does not dwell in housed made by hands, according to the prophet’s saying, ‘The heaven is my throne, and what earth a footstool for my feet. What house will you build me, says the Lord, or what shall be the place of my repose? Did not my hand make all this?’ (Is. 66: 1) “Hard-headed and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always oppose the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now become the betrayers and the murderers, you who received the Law as angelic commands — and did not keep it!” On Hearing this, they were cut to the heart and gnashed their teeth at him. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looking up to heaven and had a vision of God’s Glory and Jesus standing at God’s right hand, and he said, “Look, I see the heavens opening and the Son of Man standing at God’s right hand.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed upon him all together, and throwing him out of the city, they stoned him. And the witnesses left their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. And while they were stoning Stephen, he prayed aloud and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” And falling on his knees, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin!” And as he said these words, he fell asleep.

ALLELUIA: *Psalm 131:1, 11*

Give praise to the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights.  
Praise him, all you his angels, praise him, all you his powers.

*Liturgy Book p. 1*

*Liturgy Book p. 11*

*Liturgy Book p. 11*

*Liturgy Book p. 12*

*Liturgy Book p. 14*

*Liturgy Book p. 17*

*Liturgy Book p. 124*

*Liturgy Book p. 20*

*Liturgy Book p. 23*

*(Tone 4)*

*Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15, 7:1-5; 47-60*

*(Tone 2)*

ostom says, "The condescension of God is when God does not appear as He really is, but according to the capacity of the one who seeks to contemplate Him."

In a relationship we can experience the otherness of the person we are relating to. So, we know God only by being united to Jesus Christ, by seeing His face, by experiencing Him in our whole being, person-to-person.

We communicate with and experience others when they reveal themselves to us and in turn we reciprocate with the revelation of ourselves. Experience is cumulative. We know God only by being united to Jesus Christ. The glory of God was revealed and made manifest in a face that invites and reveals. Divinity and humanity were united in the Incarnation, and now they appear without separation in the face of the One Divine Person of Jesus Christ. " Life was made visible. . . and we saw it." (1Jn1:1-2) Heaven and earth are now partners in a unique drama of a sublime movement of relationship. When our humanity meets the humanity of Jesus Christ, the God-made-man, we touch and meet God, Father-Son-Spirit. When His revelation of Himself is so accepted, the receiver becomes richer with all the riches of the Person revealed. God's revelation is regulated with patient love and by the measure of our own spiritual development.

The church invites us and all humanity to rejoice. The liturgy overflows with joyous praise designed to make us aware of the coming of God, who at the moment of His birth radiates goodness and love. All of creation, even mountains and valleys are equally invited "to share in the joy of the feast" because it is a celebration of God's love and care for his creation. We should feel ourselves transformed and alive with new life which we and the whole of creation share.

We, upon hearing these exhortations should be filled with joy and peace because we can "see", "hear", and "touch" the reality and truth of our divinization. We should realize that we are a product of an infinite divine love, that we are immersed in divinity in our present life, that we can experience

**NATIVITY: BIRTH OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST**

The Feast of the Nativity of Christ is a celebration of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, the Son of God and the fact that through this incarnation the world is transfigured and restored. With the appearance of God the world enters upon a new beginning and takes on a new direction. In incarnation, God became real man to identify with His creation, to save His creation and to divinize humanity and the universe.

St. Irenaeus, a Father of the Church in the 3rd century, speaks of the Incarnation as "the necessary means to bring about salvation that we human beings would never have attained by our own power. The Word of God became human in order that we might become God though God's graceful, divine life. He comes to restore the likeness of God in us." He comes to show us the way to the Father and to restore humanity born bankrupt in a "bank world". Humanity started in Paradise - now, with the coming of Christ, Paradise is in humanity. When we accept the person of Jesus Christ and His self-revelation, the whole wealth and beauty of God becomes ours. We have the potential to rise high above our own limitations to the light and life of God.

When we wonder in awe at this event beyond our wildest imaginings, we must marvel at the Divine pedagogy of God, to condescend out of love for our salvation to choose to send His only begotten Son to take on human flesh as the psychological means to educate humanity. Beyond all the seasonal exhortations of loving, giving, and forgiveness, etc., the Nativity of the Son of God means that man can now have a relationship with God. We cannot have a relationship with an abstract entity. When God decided to show us His face, so that we could see Him in person and not be bewildered by perceiving the impossible to perceive, He covered His glory with an appearance we can approach and understand: He became man. St. Paul calls this generous attitude kenosis (emptiness) also "condescension". St. John Chrys-

When the Magi had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and remain there until I tell thee. For Herod will seek the child to destroy him." So he arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod; that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Out of Egypt I called my son." Then Herod, seeing that he had been tricked by the Magi, was exceedingly angry; and he sent and slew all the boys in Bethlehem and all its neighborhood who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had carefully ascertained from the Magi. Then was fulfilled what was spoken through Jeremias the prophet, "A voice was heard in Rama, weeping and loud lamentation; Rachel weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are no more." But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." So he arose and took the child and his mother, and went into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream he withdrew into the region of Galilee. And he went and settled in a town called Nazareth; that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

HIRMOS: *Nativity*  
COMUNION HYMN: *Nativity*

*Liturgy Book p. 126*  
*Liturgy Book p. 127*

**SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**EVENTS IN DECEMBER**  
Saturday, December 26th  
*Synaxis of the Mother of God*  
*Divine Liturgy 9:00 a.m.*  
Saturday, December 26th  
*Great Vespers 3:15 p.m.*  
*Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m.*  
Sunday, December 27th  
**PATRONAL FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH**  
*Missa Maska: 8:30 a.m.*  
*Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.*  
*Parish Potluck after Divine Liturgy*

**EVENTS IN JANUARY**  
Friday, January 1st  
**FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION**  
*New Year's Day*  
*Divine Liturgy 5:30 p.m.*

**DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS**  
26 December ✠Mary Anne  
27 December ✠Francis Benjamin  
27 December ✠Mary Anne

2020 WEEKLY COLLECTION	
December 20	
Weekly Offering	\$ 565.00
Monthly	\$ 25.00
Flowers	\$ 125.00
Holydays	\$ 25.00
Divine Liturgy	\$ 25.00
Candles	\$ 15.00
Total:	\$ 755.00

**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 Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. † Amen.



# The First Martyr for Christ

EVERY YEAR, DEC 27 is observed as the feast of the Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen. This year, Dec 27 falls on the Sunday after the Nativity, the memorial of David, Joseph, and James, relatives of the Lord Jesus. St Stephen has an unusually large portion of the Scriptures devoted to him. Chapters six and seven of the Acts of the Apostles are substantially devoted to the story of this important saint.

## Stephen as “Archdeacon”

In Acts 6:1-7 we read of the selection of seven “*men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom*” (v. 3) to relieve the Apostles of the task of the “*daily distribution*” (v. 1) which was taking them away from their proper ministry of prayer and preaching.

The first believers in Jerusalem had a fund from which they assisted their needy members. In this they were continuing a Jewish practice, based on this precept of the Torah: “*If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the cities in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him...*” (Dt 15:7, 8). Since there was no social service system in the ancient world, the synagogues were the place where needy Jews would go for food and other necessities. Jerusalem’s first believers in Jesus did the same for their members in need, generally the elderly.

The dispute mentioned in Acts 6 was between the native Palestinian Jews and the Hellenized Jews, who had adopted the Greek language and culture dominant in the Roman Empire. The latter believed that their widows were being shortchanged by the natives.

At the request of the Apostles, the community chose seven men to be responsible for this ministry, Stephen being the first among them. The Apostles then prayed and laid hands upon them. This laying-on- of- hands was understood in the Apostolic era as what we call “ordination.” Thus deacons were considered a higher order. In his Epistle to the Philippians, for example, St Paul greets the deacons right after the bishops.

There is no further mention of the “daily distribution” in relation to the ministry of the seven. Stephen and Philip are described as preaching, catechizing and baptizing; the others are not mentioned again in the Scriptures although there are many references to them in the writings of the first century Church.

## Stephen as the First Martyr

The rest of chapter 6 and all of chapter 7 of Acts are concerned with the story of Stephen’s martyrdom at the hands of the leading Jews of Jerusalem. Stephen’s eloquence in preaching Christ attracts the attention of some Jewish leaders and Stephen is brought before the Sanhedrin, “*and all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel*” (Acts 6:15).

Stephen’s defense of his faith in Jesus begins with a classical presentation of God’s work in the history of Israel. But then he adds, “*Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!*”

“*Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him...as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep*” (Acts 7:56-60).

While there had been many Jews martyred for their faith in the one God, Stephen was the first to be slain for his faith in “*the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.*”

## The Church of St Stephen

The Scriptures do not identify the place of St Stephen’s death or the site of his burial. Acts 7:58 simply says, “...*they cast him out of the city and stoned him.*” It was presumed that this happened close to the city wall, because St Stephen’s killers were so enflamed with hatred for him that they would have stoned him at the first possible location.

It was commonly believed that Stephen’s teacher, the distinguished rabbi Gamaliel, had arranged for Stephen’s remains to be buried secretly on his property in the country near Beit Shemesh, where a church was later built. In c. 450 AD, the exiled Empress Eudocia had a large monastic complex built outside the Damascus Gate, where Stephen was reputedly stoned. This was one of several churches which she had caused to be built in the Holy City. The empress arranged for the saint’s relics to be brought from his burial place to her monastery church which would be dedicated to St Stephen.

In the twelfth century, Crusaders defending the city against the troops of Sultan Salah al-Din had the monastery destroyed, as its proximity to the city wall would provide easy access to the invaders.

In the nineteenth century, French Dominican friars purchased several parcels of land adjoining the old city walls, which were strewn here and there with broken columns and other indications that an important structure had once stood there. Excavations unearthed a portion of the church floor, leading the friars to build a new church on the site, substantially on the footprint of Eudocia’s fifth-century church. The modern St Stephen’s Church is currently home to the world-renowned Ecole Biblique, a center for advanced study of the Scriptures.

In 2014, archaeologists from the University of Jerusalem discovered the ruins of an entire church complex in a village near Ramallah, six miles from Jerusalem. An inscription in one of the churches reads that it had been built in honor of St Stephen the Protomartyr, “buried here in AD 35.”