

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH
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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 OF
THE ANCESTORS
THE SUNDAY BEFORE
THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

20 DECEMBER 2020 ♦ TONE 04 EOTHINON 06 † SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY / SUNDAY OF GENEALOGY

GREAT DOXOLOGY: *Liturgy Book p. 1*

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST: *Liturgy Book p. 11*

SECOND: *Liturgy Book p. 11*

THIRD: (Tone 4) *Liturgy Book p. 12*

ENTRANCE HYMN: *Resurrection* *Liturgy Book p. 14*

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 4) *Liturgy Book p. 17*

Ancestors of Christ our God/Preparation for the Nativity *(Tone 4)*

Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all; Ephrata, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb has become a spiritual Paradise wherein the divine Fruit was planted - as if we eat of it, we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.

Saint Joseph *Liturgy Book p. 20*

KONDAKION: *Preparation of the Nativity* *Handout*

TRISAGION: *Liturgy Book p. 23*

PROKIMENON: *Psalms 118:19, 20* *(Tone 3)*

How great are Your works O Lord; in wisdom You have wrought them all..

Stichon: Bless the Lord O my soul. You are very great, O Lord my God.

EPISTLE: *Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40*

Brethren, by faith, Abraham lived in the Land of the Promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the co-heirs of the same promise, for he was looking for the city with fixed foundations, of which city the architect and builder is God. And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barac, Samson, Jephthe, David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained the fulfillment of promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, routed foreign armies. Women had their dead restored to them through resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to yield for their release in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others again suffered mockery and blows, even chains and jailings. They were stoned, cut to pieces, put to the question, killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, distressed, afflicted (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, mountains, caves and holes in the ground. And none of these, despite the positive witnessing of faith, received what was promised, for God has something better in store for us, so that they were not to reach their final perfection without us.

ALLELUIA: *Psalms 43:2; 33:18* *(Tone 4)*

O God, our ears have heard, our fathers have declared to us the deeds You did in their days, in the days of old.

The just cried out, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them from all their trials.

GOSPEL: *St. Matthew 1:1-25*

The book of the origin of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob begot Judah and his brethren. Judah begot Perez and Zarah whose mother was Thamar. Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram. And Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, Nahshon begot Salma. Salma begot Boaz of Rahab. Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, Jesse begot David the King. And David the King begot Solomon of the former wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, Abijah begot Asa. And Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, Joram begot Azariah. And Azariah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, Ahaz begot Ezechiah. And Ezechiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, Amon begot Josiah. And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren at the time of deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. And Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, Eliakim begot Azor. And Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, Achim begot Eliud. And Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of her was born Jesus, Who is called Christ. So, all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations. And from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations. Now the origin of Christ was like this. When Mary His mother had been betrothed

THE MOTHER OF GOD (THEOTOKOS) Attending the newborn One is the Mother of God, the holy and evervirgin Mary, who occupies a central role in the drama of redemption and is larger in scale than the other figures. She is the "renewal of all born on earth", the new Eve, mother of all recreated mankind. She is mankind's great gift to the Incarnation and through her all mankind gives its assent to the wonder of the mystery. She sits, the living throne of the King of all, and by the absence of the usual signs of the suffering of childbearing proclaims the wonder of the virgin birth and the divine nature of the One she bears.

Dumb nature is also given a central position by the presence of the ox and the ass, ever deemed important by the Church despite the fact that the Scriptures do not mention their presence. Yet they always appear in the center, representatives of the whole world of nature recreated by the coming of the Savior.

JOSEPH'S DOUBT: THAT OF ALL MANKIND Joseph is seen strangely dejected outside the central grouping. He is not the father, and this point is emphatically made by separating him from the group. He sits troubled, doubting, and worried against the blackness of the cave which reaches around him in his unbelief. He is struggling to accept the miracle that takes place before him and in that struggle represents not only himself but all mankind who with similar turmoil wrestles with the fact of the Incarnation which seems beyond words or reason. Wistfully he looks back over his shoulder to consider the holy scene. In many icons Satan, disguised as a shepherd, stands before Joseph and tempts him – as he has done to many since – to disbelieve the virgin birth.

The temptation of Joseph is balanced by the faith and belief of the Magi who approach on horseback following the star and in another scene arrive at the foot of the manger to present their gifts and themselves, “the beginning of the nations”, to the Lord.

Angels representing the celestial world carry out their two-fold function of adoring and glorifying the Savior as well as announcing to the unseen shepherds the good tidings of glad joy. The icon is usually completed by a most tender scene transmitted by the apocryphal gospels stressing the humanity of the Christ in His submission to the requirements of nature as He is carefully bathed by two midwives.

The icon of the nativity of Christ is the visual rendition of the song of the Church at this feast:

Today the Virgin gives birth to the One transcendent in essence; and the earth offers a cave to the Uncontainable One. Angels with the shepherds give glory and wise men journey onward following the star; for to us is born a newborn Child who is God from all eternity. *(Kontakion of the Feast)*

The Eastern Christian who venerates this icon proclaims the wondrous event of the birth “of the One transcendent in essence” and the attending recreation of the whole universe which has now been set in motion by the birth of this little Child “who is God from all eternity”. Christ is born: glorify Him!

Beholding him who was in God's image and likeness fallen through transgression, Jesus bowed the heavens and came down. Without changing, He took up His dwelling in a virgin womb so that He might recreate fallen Adam, who cried to Him: “Glory to Your manifestation, O my Deliverer and my God!” *(Sticheron at the Liti)*

Man fell from the divine and better life. Though made in the image of God, he became through transgression wholly subject to corruption and decay. But now the wise Creator fashions him anew: for He

BYZANTINE CHRISTMAS FEAST OF RECREATION

St. Gregory of Nazlanzus sums up the Eastern Christian view of Christmas in his famous statement that the Nativity of Christ "is not a festival of creation but a festival of recreation." The birth of Christ, although a historical event, is not an end but a means to the renewal, sanctification, and recreation of the whole universe. Actually we commemorate, not so much the birth of a child, but the ultimate rebirth and transfiguration of all mankind and with it the whole world of creation. The world, held in bondage by reason of man's perversion, this is the world Christ redeemed. Christ redeemed humanity and by taking humanity to Himself He redeemed the world.

THE UNIVERSE TRANSFORMED BY CHRIST When the word of God became flesh He not only became the head of a new race; He became the Lord of a new creation. Christ in His flesh took the whole of creation to Himself that it might share anew in divinity. In Christ Jesus the universe was radically transformed; in His person the world was consecrated and sacramentalized – clay and stone, plant and animal, word and dance – our earth was redeemed, re-created.

While it is true to say that Christ redeemed humanity and by humanity He redeemed the world, it is equally true to say that Christ redeems humanity and by humanity redeems the world. Objectively, men were redeemed but in another sense that was only the beginning of a new world even until now. By the power of His Holy Spirit working in Christians the world can rise anew. By reason of the love of God made known to it in Christ Jesus our world is alive now, vibrant in our day with life and light. Creation fell by human failure; now it summons us with urgent summons to redeem it. The whole world is one great yearning cry: creation's unceasing call for redemption.

THE NATIVITY ICON AND THE THEOLOGY OF CHRISTMAS Perhaps the best expression of this basic approach of the Eastern Christian to Christmas is the traditional icon of the birth of Christ. The icon of the nativity contains two main lessons. First it teaches the reality of the event: the indisputable reality of the birth of God into human affairs, the incarnation of Christ, underlining by its details both the divinity and the humanity of the word made flesh. Secondly, the image indicates the effect of this wondrous event on the world and its ultimate recreation in the reconciliation of all things on earth and in heaven (cf. Colossians 1:20). The sacred icon brings together all creation to join in the “happening” of Christmas, to render service and thanks, each in its own way:

What shall we bring You, O Christ, for being born on earth for our sake? For each of the creatures who have their being from You brings thanks to You: angels their songs, the heavens a star, the wise men gifts, the shepherds wonder, the earth a cave, the wilderness a manger, but we – the Virgin Mother (*Vespers Sticheron*)

As we examine the icon more carefully we notice that central to it is a swirling darkness, the mouth of the great abyss, the cave of Bethlehem, symbolic of the soul, the body, the world, in awful and inexorable continuity struck by sin and hungering for the light of redemption to pierce the darkness. And light points out the light which shatters the darkness! The star of Bethlehem casts its long rays illuminating the One who broke the bonds of hell, darkness, and death forever and by His self-emptying was born for our sake: the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, prefiguring the very cave-sepulchre and shrouds of His death and burial.

to Joseph, she was found, before they came together, to be with child by the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a just man and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was thinking of putting her away privately. But while he was considering these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins.” Now all this came to pass that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, “*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel;*” which is interpreted, “God with us.” So, Joseph, arising from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took Mary to be his wife. And he did not know her till she brought forth her firstborn son. And he called His name Jesus.

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Thursday, December 24rd

PARAMONY OF NATIVITY

Royal Hours: 9:00 a.m.

Confessions 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 24th

VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY

Great Vespers: 5:30 p.m.

St. Basil Divine Liturgy 6:00 p.m.

Divine Liturgy 12:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 25th

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Missa Maska: 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 27th

PATRONAL FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Parish Potluck after Divine Liturgy

Friday, January 1

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION

New Year's Day

Divine Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

2020 WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 13

Weekly Offering	\$ 1,358.00
Monthly	\$ 10.00
Holydays	\$ 227.00
Candles	\$ 15.00
Total:	\$ 1,610.00

Thank you for your support!

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.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

19 December ✠Mary Anne
20 December ✠Mary Anne
20 December ✠Msgr. Soseman

At the Back of the Church

2021 Calendars
Winter Season Sophia Magazine
2021 Collection Envelops

The Fathers Before Christ

THE LITURGICAL PREPARATION for the feast of Christ’s Nativity intensifies today with the Sunday of the Genealogy, which commemorates those who were Christ’s physical ancestors.

The Sunday of the Genealogy accelerates the countdown to the feast of Christ’s Nativity. During the Nativity Fast we celebrate the memorials of several Old Testament prophets – Obadiah (Nov. 19), Nahum (Dec. 1), Habbakuk (Dec. 2), Zephaniah (Dec. 3), Haggai (Dec. 16), and Daniel (Dec. 17). Today we reflect on how the entire Old Testament period has been a preparation for Christ and how we are called to be ready for His ultimate triumph.

Prophecies of the Messiah

It is appropriate today to reflect on what the Scriptures tells us preceded the Incarnation. The following timeline and reading guide may be helpful in doing so. All the dates older that 1000 BC are approximate.

Before Time – The Word was with God before anything material came to be (John 1:1-4). It is through this eternal Word that our material creation comes into being.

The Pre-History of the Israelites before 4000 BC – The creation of our universe, the human race falls away from communion with God, life on earth as we know it begins (Genesis 1-3). Genesis actually contains two creation stories. The first (Gen 1:1-2:3) is a version of an older Babylonian myth re-edited to teach that creation is by the will of the only true God, not the result of warring gods and demons. It is cast in the form of a single week to promote the character of the Sabbath as a day of rest. Its narrative (creation begins with a burst of light followed by the creation of the planets, etc.) harmonizes with the modern Big Bang theory and subsequent discoveries.

Genesis, continues with the story of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. This tragic story concludes with these words addressed to the serpent: “*I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head while you strike at his heel*” (Gen 3:15). Many Fathers saw this as the first heralding of the Messiah’s victory over sin and death (the “proto-gospel”). Satan’s seeming defeat of Christ on the cross is but a striking of His heel while Christ’s striking at his head is His ultimate defeat of Satan. It would take countless generations – from the beginning of humanity, through the years of both Old and New Testaments and the subsequent history of this age – for this event to be fulfilled.

Before 3000 BC – Sin prevails and increases, illustrated by Cain and Abel and Lamech, Noah and the Great Flood, (Gen 4-9). According to Jewish tradition, God makes a new covenant with Noah after the flood. Man is committed to observe the seven Noahide Laws prohibiting idolatry, murder, theft, sexual immorality, blasphemy, and the eating of meat with its blood (i.e. while the animal is still alive). They are also enjoined to establish courts of law.

The Prophets Read in the Church

At the time of the Hebrew kingdoms (the six or seven hundred years before Christ) prophets were periodically calling the people to trust in God despite the troubles of their nation. Despite conflicts with the Philistines or the Assyrians, and even in the midst of defeat and exile by the Babylonians and occupation by the Romans, the prophets encouraged the people to trust in God who would provide a deliverer.

After the death and resurrection of Christ the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit came to see these prophecies fulfilled in a decisive way by Jesus Christ, who delivers all mankind – not just the Jewish people – from its ultimate enemies, sin and death, not just foreign oppressors. Around the Old Testament prophecies of a deliverer, the apostles built their preaching of the true Messiah (Anointed One) of God, Christ Jesus the Savior. What we call the Old Testament was the Bible for the early Church as well as for Judaism and its prophecies shaped the presentation of the incarnation in the New Testament. As the following quotations show, the apostles considered these prophecies as clearly pointing to the coming of Christ:

- **His Conception** (Isaiah 7:14, cited in Mt 1:23) - “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”
- **The Place of His Birth** (Micah 5:2, cited in Mt 2:6) - “Bethlehem...out of you shall come a ruler...”
- **The Flight into Egypt** (Hosea 11:1, cited in Mt 2:15) - “Out of Egypt I called my son.”
- **The Slaughter of the Infants** (Jeremiah 31:15, cited in Mt 2:18) - “A voice was heard in Ramah...”
- **His home in Nazareth** (possibly Judges 13:5, cited in Mt 2:23) - “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Other prophecies were frequently cited as pointing to Jesus as the Messiah:

- Numbers 24:17 - “a star shall come forth out of Jacob...”
- Isaiah 11:1 - “There shall come forth a shoot from the root of Jesse...”
- Isaiah 60:5-6 “...they shall bring gold and frankincense”

While there are no verbatim quotations of prophecies in Luke’s infancy narratives, there are allusions to Old Testament scriptures throughout. In Luke 1:17, for example, John the Baptist is described by the angel as going “before him in the spirit and power of Elijah.” This alludes to Malachi 4:5-6: “Behold I am sending to you Elijah the Thesbite before the great and notable day of the Lord comes.”

These allusions, and others throughout the Gospels, reflect the early Church’s belief that the entire Old Testament leads us to see Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Our Preparation Continues

From December 20 to 24 we observe a five-day “holy week” during which Christ’s birth seems ever closer. As we sing during those days, “Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth.”

This fore-feast of the Nativity culminates on December 24, the Paramony of the feast. Usually translated as vigil or eve, paramony actually refers to the uninterrupted nature of the Church’s prayer on this day. During the day, the lengthier Great Hours or Royal Hours are chanted, followed by the Typika and a more elaborate than usual Great Vespers, to which is attached the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil.

A special service of Great Compline with a Litia for the feast ends the day. Sometimes this leads directly into the Orthros and Divine Liturgy of December 25. In some countries of Eastern Europe it culminates with a Holy Supper prior to the Liturgy. The same cycle of uninterrupted prayer is also prescribed for the Feast of the Theophany on January 5.