

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. 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.

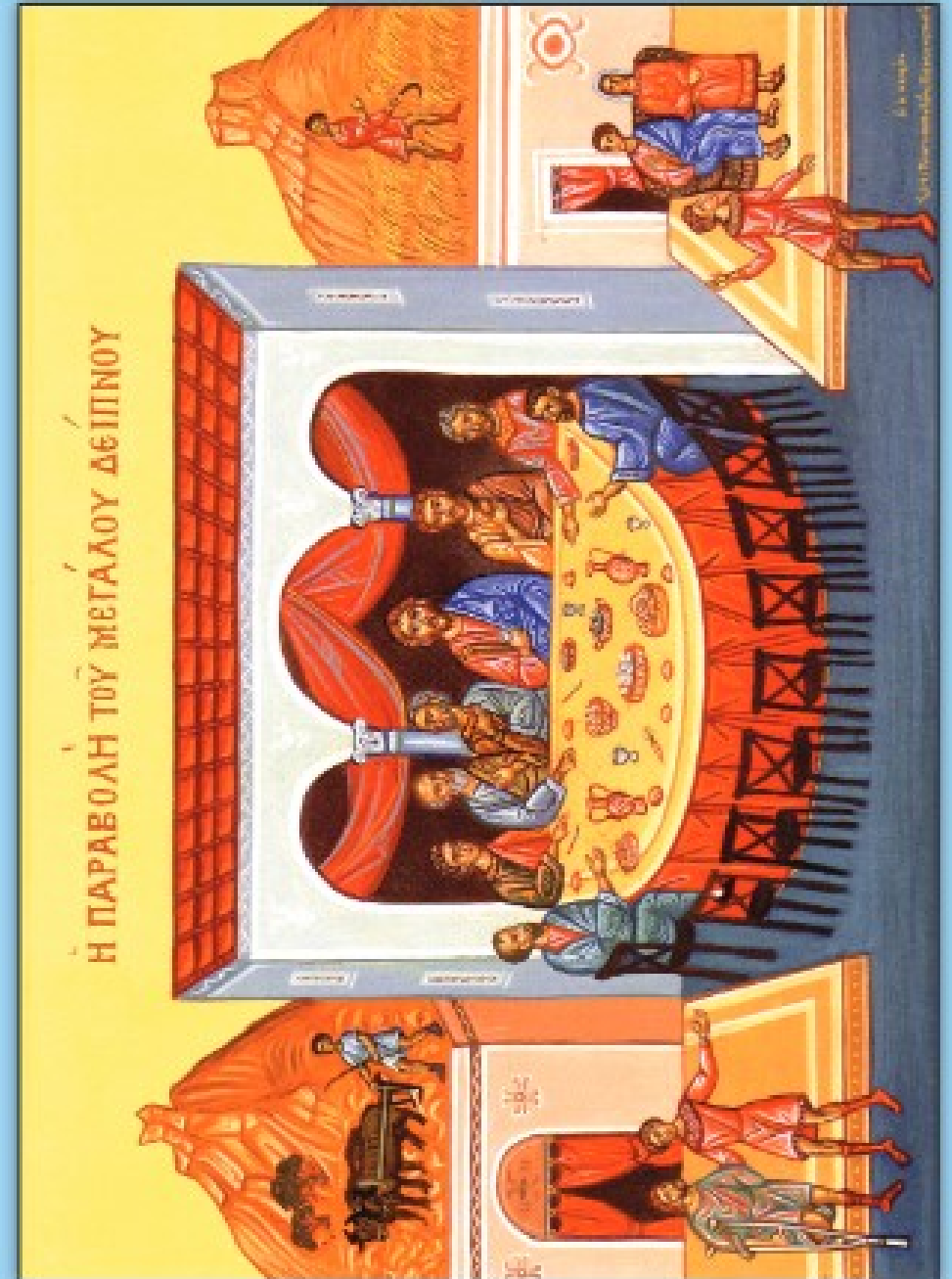
HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Meetings as scheduled.

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS



Icon of the Parable of the Great Feast

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

12 DECEMBER 2021 ♦ TONE 04 EOTHINON 07 † SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS OF JESUS CHRIST

<u>GREAT DOXOLOGY:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 1</i>
<u>ANTIPHONS:</u>	
FIRST:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 29</i>
SECOND:	<i>Liturgy Book p. 32</i>
THIRD: <i>Beatitudes</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 125</i>
<u>ENTRANCE HYMN:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 38</i>
<u>APOLYTIKIA:</u>	
<i>Resurrection (Tone 4)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 42</i>
<i>Holy Forefathers</i>	<i>Tone 2</i>
Through faith, You have justified Your ancestors, O Christ our God; and through them, You have espoused in advance the Church set apart from the Gentiles. The Saints rejoice in glory because, from the seed of these Ancestors, has come forth the glorious fruit, who gave You birth without seed. Through their intercessions, O Christ God, save our souls.	
<i>St. Joseph the Betrothed</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 47</i>
<u>KONDAKION:</u> <i>Preparation of the Nativity</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 150</i>
<u>TRISAGION:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 50</i>
<u>PROKIMENON:</u> <i>(Tone 4)</i>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 57</i>
<u>EPISTLE:</u>	<i>Ephesians 5:8-19</i>
Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light consists in all goodness and justice and truth), make sure of what is well pleasing to God, and have nothing to do with the fruitless works of darkness, but rather expose them; for of the things they do in secret people are ashamed even to speak. But every-thing that is exposed is made manifest by the light: for all that is manifest is light. Hence it is said: “Awake, sleeper, and arise from among the dead, and Christ will enlighten you.” See to it, therefore, brethren, that you walk with care, not as the unwise, but as the wise, redeeming the moment, for the days are evil. Be not imprudent, then, but understand what is the Lord’s will. And be not drunk with wine, for in such is revelry, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord.	
<u>ALLELUIA:</u>	<i>(Tone 4)</i>
Your priests, O Lord, shall be clothed with holiness, and your saintly ones shall shout for joy. For the Lord has elected Sion, he has chosen it for his dwelling.	
<u>GOSPEL:</u>	<i>St. Luke 14:16-24</i>
<i>The Lord told this parable</i> , “A certain man gave a great supper, and he invited many. And he sent his servant at supper time to tell those invited to come, for everything is now ready. And they all with one accord began to excuse themselves. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a farm, and I must go out and see it; I pray you hold me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yokes of oxen, and I am on my way to try them; I pray you hold me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and there-fore I cannot come.’ And the servant returned, and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant. ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the crippled, and the lame, and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Sir, your order has been carried out, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and make them come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you that none of those who were invited shall taste of my supper.’ For many are called but few are chosen.”	
<u>HIRMOS:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 77</i>
<u>KINONIKON:</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 83</i>
<u>COMMUNION</u>	<i>Liturgy Book p. 87</i>

God. Christ is born into the world so that, as was intended from the beginning, humanity could be in communion with God.

To Sin is to Be Alone

The Scriptures describe aloneness as the consequence of sin. In the Genesis story of the fall Adam hides from God after eating from the Tree – a sign that their communion was broken. In its planning and in its effect, sin is about isolating oneself from God and others. It hardens us to see isolation from others as something good. We find the challenge of relationship with others too demanding and may react as did Cain, the mean-spirited son of Adam, “Surely I am not my brother’s keeper!” (Gen 4:19).

Christmas and the Messianic Banquet are about communion because God is communion personified. “God is love” (1 Jn 4:9). God-as-love is what the Church means by calling God the Holy Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in divinity but three persons in a loving relationship. According to the book of Genesis this loving communion was extended to Adam and Eve, created after the image, according to the likeness of this God who is love. By seeking to live apart from God Adam and Eve lost this vital link, getting exactly what they desired.

To Live in God is to be in Communion

By His incarnation the Word of God – the One who was in perfect communion with the Fa-ther and the Holy Spirit – came to restore that communion with humanity. He lived in His per-son what Adam could not, remaining in constant communion with the Father while remaining like us in all things except for sin. His coming was not simply to show that communion with God was possible for man, but to make it possible for us to have such a relationship “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (Jn 1:12-13).

What is Christ’s by nature could become ours through faith, by God’s gracious will. As the Fathers tirelessly repeated, “God became man so that man might become god.”

The Eucharist and Communion

The Divine Liturgy in which we regularly share has been described as a prophetic sign of the Messianic Banquet. Everything we look to experience in heaven is found in the Liturgy by anticipation. We gather with the entire Body of Christ – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the saints as well as people from every race and nation – to share in the priestly gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ. We respond to the lavish hospitality of our Host with the joy and gladness of people who “taste the heavenly bread and the cup of life and see how good the Lord is.”

The great banquet is the final triumph of Christ which we proclaim in the Creed: “He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead...” and the revelation of those who are in Christ as well. “I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.” And

O Christ, we worship You, our eternal King. Being Lord and Master, You rescued the three holy young men from the fire and saved Daniel from the lions. You blessed Abraham, Isaac Your servant, and Jacob his son. You willed to be like one of us by choosing to be born from them, in order that, by accepting crucifixion and burial, You could save our forefathers who had sinned against You. Thus did You crush the powers of Death and raise those who had been long dead.

Vespers Sticheron

THE ULTIMATE COMING OF CHRIST

THE SCRIPTURES DO NOT DEPICT CHRIST'S BIRTH as the ultimate point in the story of God's dealings with us. Instead we are told to look ahead to that final stage in history. In the imagery of Luke's Gospel, there shall be a great banquet – the triumph of the Messiah – and many shall be invited to share in that feast. St Paul is a bit more direct: "Christ shall appear, and when He does, you also will be revealed in glory with him" (Col 3: 4).

Banquet: Sign of the Kingdom

The Gospel passage read at the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of the Forefathers is always St Luke's version of the great banquet to which many are invited. The banquet in Jewish thought of the biblical era was an image of the kingdom of God ushered in by the Messiah. Thus the prophet Isaiah foretold, "On the mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever" (Is 25:6-7). The banquet will be for all peoples, not just Israel, and the cover or veil separating Jew from Gentile would be destroyed. At the feast people would receive the sacrificial food in which the temple priests partook – the feast would have a liturgical character. Most importantly the feast will mark the death of Death: the renewal of life, which the Messiah would accomplish.

Isaiah's image of the Messianic Banquet was taken up by many Old Testament and other Jewish writers. The Lord Jesus Himself used the same image to describe the Kingdom, but warned the Pharisees that they would be cast out, "sons of the kingdom" though they be. "I tell you: many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth" (Mt 8:11-12).

This passage is particularly appropriate as we prepare for the Nativity of Christ because Christ's coming inaugurates the Messianic Kingdom. Christ calls together all peoples ("from east and west") and joins us to God through Himself. He is the annihilation of death and the Source of life for all who believe in Him. Commemorating the Forefathers, we recall Christ's promise that those united to Him will sit at table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom, a sign of our union with the saints of all ages in the Body of Christ.

Banquet: Sign of Communion

The banquet image points to a number of characteristics which speak to us of the Kingdom of God. A banquet is a sign of lavish hospitality, a quality so prized in the Middle East. God displays His hospitality to us by opening His Kingdom to us with the most lavishing gift of all: the grace of His Christ. The banquet is also a sign of the participants' joy and gladness at being at the host's table. To use the Psalmist's words, they delight at taking the chalice of salvation and calling upon the name of the Lord.

The most important dimension to the image of a banquet is that of fellowship. The banquet is a place of communion with others, of sharing together in the hospitality of the Master. As such it is a preeminent sign of the Kingdom of God, our sharing in His divine life through Christ.

The coming of Christ has nothing to do with being alone. If anything, it is the opposite. The Incarnation took place so that we would not be alone, left to ourselves, out of communion with

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Sun. November 15 – Fri. December 24

Philip's Fast

Saturday, December 11

Confessions: 3:00

Great Vespers 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 12

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Religious Education

Sunday, December 19th

Orthros: 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Youth Religious Education

Church Decoration

Friday Morning, December 24th

PARAMONY OF NATIVITY

Royal Hours: 9:00 a.m.

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

Friday Evening, December 24th

VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY

Great Vespers: 5:30 p.m.

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

St. John Chrysostom Divine Liturgy

12:00 a.m. – Midnight

Saturday, December 25th

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

St. John Chrysostom Divine Liturgy

12:00 a.m. – Midnight

Orthros of the Nativity: 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

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.

2021 WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 05

Weekly Offering:	\$ 520.00
Monthly:	\$ 100.00
Holy Day :	\$ 50.00
Xtmas Flowers :	\$ 185.00
Candles:	\$ 25.00
Total:	\$ 880.00

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

11 December: Joseph Viola Family*

12 December: Nathan Cheffers*

THE BISHOP'S APPEAL: As we travel with the Virgin to Bethlehem where she will give birth to the Only-Begotten Son of God—let us not forget our Melkite Catholic Church by which Christ comes to our families and loved ones. **Please give an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church** in America and help our Church in countless ways. Help produce **SOPHIA** magazine, assist in the faith education of our young people, support the training of new priests and deacons, expand our missions and start new ones, and give support to our elderly priests. And remember those in the homelands of our Church. Please give generously so these vital works can continue and grow. May God bless you for your generosity.

2022 NATIVITY PLAY
JANUARY 09 2022

TAKING THE FORM OF A BONDSERVANT

BEGINNING STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM or other disciplines involving research are taught the importance of the “Five Ws” in compiling information. Fact-finders must be able to answer the following questions on any subject they are investigating: Who (was involved)? What (happened)? When (did it take place)? Where (did it take place)? And Why (did that happen)?

In reflecting on the incarnation of the Word of God, we focus on the last question: why did Christ become man? Our answer is that the reason He assumed our human nature – His incarnation – is to change us by making us partakers of the divine nature (theosis). As the Church Fathers never ceased to repeat: God became human so that man might be deified.

But the answer to that question brings us to ask another one: how do we become deified? The Scriptures give us a two-part answer: our deification results initially from being united to Christ at baptism. We maintain this gift of our deification by “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14) in the way we conduct our lives.

We Have Put on Christ in Baptism

The hymn sung repeatedly at baptisms – drawn from St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians – affirms the teaching that we “put on” Christ at our baptism. As the Incarnation began with a concrete, physical act, the conception of the Lord Jesus, so our deification begins with the concrete, physical act of baptism. In this mystery, the earthly humanity of a believer is joined to the divinized humanity of Christ. The believer is organically united to Christ, immersed in Him, just as he is immersed into the water. The believer has clothed himself with Christ, a spiritual reality symbolized by the white baptismal garment.

St Paul frequently reminds his readers how their likeness to God has been restored in baptism through the image of “putting-off” and “putting-on.” He tells the Ephesians, “you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24). He tells the Colossians, “you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col 3:10). Their divinization is a restoration of their likeness to God which was lost in Eden.

According to the Scriptures, that “putting-on Christ” also connects us to the eternal God in a new way. As St Paul says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:26, 27). A person renewed in baptism is, in fact, no longer simply related to God as creature to Creator; the baptized is now an adopted son of God. Because of our baptism it is realistic to call God “Father.”

We Must Put on Christ in Our Actions

In baptism we ontologically put on Christ. We are connected to Him on the level of our deepest nature. We must also put on Christ psychologically, on the level of our actions and perceptions. In other words, we must strive to think and act like Him. To do that, we must study the actions of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and begin to know His mind.

Again, we must turn to St Paul, who gives us an entry into the mind of Christ, particularly in regard to the Incarnation. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even

the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:5-11).

The why of the Incarnation, according to the Apostle Paul is our deification. The how of the Incarnation is what has been called the kenosis (self-emptying) of Christ: His voluntary putting aside of divine glory and putting on “the form of a bondservant” (our humanity). As man He further humbled Himself by submitting to all the circumstances of time, place and state of life which we find described in the Gospels. He put on the condition of a village carpenter who became an itinerant preacher, challenging the religious status quo of the Jewish establishment supported by Rome. Little wonder that His path led to the death of the cross.

When St Paul says that we should “let this mind be in you” as it was in Christ, He is echoing the Lord Jesus, who proposed humility as the hallmark of the Christian. After the Lord had washed His disciples’ feet, He told them, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (Jn 13:14, 15). The Lord was not proposing that His disciples be characterized by actual foot-washing, but by humble service to one another.

As the Word of God exchanged His heavenly glory for the manger in a Bethlehem cave, His followers must learn to exchange their views of their own self-importance for the “form of a bondservant.” In this way, the humility of Christ rather than human “wisdom” will direct our actions.

In addition to humility, the mind of Christ according to the Scriptures is characterized chiefly by dependence on God and compassion toward others. Developing a mindset of humility, dependence and compassion is contrary to the way of thinking most people learn from the society and culture that surrounds us. It requires continual attention and effort to maintain our focus

St Athanasios on the Incarnation

“What, then, was God to do? What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it we might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? We could not have done it, for we are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father, Who could recreate man made after the Image. “The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father’s Son, could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, ... By surrendering to death the body which He had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, He abolished death for His human brethren ... Naturally also, through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by the Word’s indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all”

(On the Incarnation 34, 35).