

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK- CATHOLIC CHURCH
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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron.
Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buck-
ley. Chris Carey. John Coury. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Car-
ol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara
Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Jos. Ed. Bartnicki.
Sue Solsman. SusVieselmeyer. Dean & Sherry Yockey.

MEMORY ETERNAL: ✱Rev. Char. Aboody. ✱Rev. Mich. Jol-
ly. ✱Rev. Jos. Francavilla. ✱Rev. Theo. Leonarczyk ✱Rev. Frank
Milienewicz ✱Dn. John Karam. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Charlotte &
James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Paul
Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Nich. Cianci.
✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann Coury. ✱Mary Sue Betress. ✱
Cecilia Davidson ✱Margt. 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:

Tuesday :

Compline 0:00 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.; following
any service; or by appointment.

HOLY ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Following services /call the Rectory.

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS



DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

11 DECEMBER 2022 ♦ TONE 02 EOTHINON 05 † SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS / ST. DANIEL STYLITE

GREAT DOXOLOGY: *Liturgy Book p. 17*

ANTIPHON:

FIRST: *Liturgy Book p. 29*

SECOND: *Liturgy Book p. 32*

THIRD: *Liturgy Book p. 36/ 40*

ENTRANCE HYMN: *Liturgy Book p. 38*

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 2) *Liturgy Book p. 40*

Forefathers *Tone 2*

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 intercession, O Christ God, save our souls

St. Joseph *Liturgy Book p. 47*

KONTAKION: *Preparation of the Nativity* *Liturgy Book p. 150*

TRISAGION: *Liturgy Book p. 50*

PROKIMENON: *Ps. 75: 12, 2* *(Tone 2)* *Liturgy Book p. 55*

EPISTLE: *Colossians 3:4-11*

Brethren, when Christ, our life, appears, then you too shall appear in glory. Put to death whatever in your members is of the earth: immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, covetousness, which is a form of idol-worship. Because of these passions, God's wrath comes upon the sons of disobedience and you yourselves once walked in them when they were your (way of) life. But now, you too put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, abusive language and foul-mouthed utterances. Do not lie to one another. Strip off the old man with his deeds and put on the new, one that is being renewed toward perfect knowledge *according to his creator's image* (Cf. Gn. 1:26). Here there is no Gentile and Jew, no circumcised and uncircumcised, no Barbarian and Scythian, no slave and freeman, but Christ is all things, and in all.

ALLELUIA: *Psalm 98:6, 33:18* *(Tone 2)*

Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel among those who called upon His name.

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

GOSPEL: *St. Luke 14:16-24*

The Lord told this parable, "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 therefore 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."

Philip Fast: Advent November 15 through December 24 inclusive: Fasting Guidelines

The strict fast includes fasting from all meat and meat products, poultry, eggs, dairy products, fish, oil, and wine.

Tuesday and Thursdays: oil and wine are allowed. Saturdays and Sundays: fish, wine and oil are allowed.

On certain feast days: fish, and/or wine and oil are permitted: St. Spiridon (Dec. 12), St. Ignatius (Dec. 20), etc. While the Nativity Fast is not as severe as the Fast of Great Lent or the Dormition Fast, Christians will refrain from needless entertainment. The sick, the very young, the elderly, and nursing mothers are exempt from fasting. Individuals should confer with their confessor regarding exemptions from the fasting rules, and should never place themselves in physical danger. The Paramony of the Nativity (Dec. 24) is a strict fast day, on which no solid food should be eaten until the first star is seen in the evening sky (or until after the Vespers Divine Liturgy that day).

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.

Let us offer up a hymn to the fathers who shone forth before the Law and under the Law, and who, by their upright will, were pleasing to the Lord and Master Who shone forth from the Virgin, for they now delight in the unfading light.

Let us honor the first Adam who was honored by the hand of the Creator, and who is the forefather of us all and who rests with all the elect in the mansions of heaven.

The Lord and God of all accepted the gifts of Abel, who offered them with a most noble soul; and when he was slain by his brother's murderous hand, He received his soul into light as that of a divine martyr.

Let us hearken to the divine sayings which declare the appearance of Christ; for, lo! He is born in a cave, of a Maiden who knew not man; for the star which appeared to the astrologers proclaims His awesome nativity.

Canon of the Forefathers, Ode 1 Taking the Form of a Bondservant

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

THE LITURGICAL PREPARATION for the feast of Christ's Nativity begins today with the *Sunday of the Forefathers*, which commemorates all those whose lives set the stage for the coming of the Messiah. Next week we observe the *Sunday of the Ancestors* of Christ, when we hear St Matthew's genealogy of those who were Christ's physical ancestors. 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.

Prophecies of the Messiah

THE SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS intensifies 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. It is appropriate today to reflect on what the Scriptures tells us preceded the Incarnation.

Prophecies Written in the Old Testament

Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, begins with the stories of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. Genesis concludes their tragic story 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.

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

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Saturday Evening, December 10th

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 11th

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Religious Education

Saturday Evening, December 17th

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 18th

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Religious Education

Church Decoration

Friday, December 23rd

Royal Hours 10:00 a.m.

Confessions 11:30 am – Noon

Saturday, December 24th

Great Vespers 5:30 p.m.

D. Liturgy: J. Chrysostom: 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 25th

Nativity Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Basil Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

2022 WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 04

Weekly Offering: \$ 790.00

Liturgy Intentions: \$ 70.00

Christmas Flowers: \$415.00

Candles: \$ 25.00

Total: \$ 1,300.00

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

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

10 December: ✠Janice Assaf
from Tony & Kathie Barrett

11 December: ✠Janice Assaf
from James & Karen Kane

17 December: ✠Janice Assaf
from St. Joseph Ladies Society

18 December: ✠Janice Assaf
from Joseph & Jemille Zaydon

2022 ANNUAL BISHOP'S APPEAL

*Letters have already been sent
to each family household.*

*Extra donation cards available
in the back of the church*

CONSUMERISM & NATIVITY FAST

WITH THE FIRST SCENT of cooler weather in the air, merchants begin marketing potential Christmas gifts. As the holiday nears, the shopping frenzy intensifies with music, parties and decorations all telling us “Hurry up and buy something.” Our Church, on the other hand, tells us that it’s time for renewed fasting and almsgiving.

Gift-giving as we know it became popular in the 1860s and grew as mechanical and, later, electrical goods came on the market and Santa began appearing in ads and in stores. For most Americans, handmade goods such as pastries, canned preserves or hand-carved toys were the most common gifts until World War II. With the return to prosperity after the war, people set their sights on more expensive gifts. Today the average American is expected to spend between \$700 and \$800 on Christmas gifts this year.

Anti-Consumerist Protests

Even as the marketing and the spending grew voices were heard denouncing the Christmas shopping experience as an exercise in wasteful consumerism. Environmentalists deplored the focus on acquiring more and more useless “toys.” Christians lamented the practice as fostering materialism rather than celebrating Christ’s birth.

While many people complain about the financial and emotional stresses of Christmas shopping, some people do something about it. Some parents have decided to give only one store-bought toy per child and to focus on shared activities instead. Well-planned Christmas outings with the family provide memories that will last a lifetime, long after plastic toys are forgotten. Others have revived the tradition of homemade gifts. They report that making a gift for and with your child provides an unforgettable and rewarding experience for both parent and offspring. Internet sites are filled with more suggestions for frugal and creative gift ideas than ever.

Our Secret Weapon: the Nativity Fast

Eastern Christians seeking to escape the commerce-driven “spirit of Christmas” have a formidable ally in the Nativity Fast. While the length of the fast varies in the different Churches, the spirit behind it is the same. We best prepare for a Christian festival by intensifying our practice of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We seek to deepen within ourselves the spirit of repentance which these practices foster. We are, as it were, heeding the message of St John the Baptist – “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” – as we anticipate the coming feast as a manifestation of that kingdom.

At first our prayer life during the Nativity Fast does not revolve around the Nativity itself. While some churches serve akathists or a pre-Nativity paraclisis service, the focus of prayer in Byzantine Churches during much of this Fast is simply to deepen our relationship with the living Lord, the basic prayer life of Christians at any time. Our fasting seasons are fundamentally “excuses” giving us a reason to observe a fuller Christian life than we might live otherwise.

In the same way, our fasting and almsgiving are not focused on Christmas as much as they are the basic practices of believers at any time. We intensify them at this time because a heart focused on the ways of Christ in the best preparation for celebrating His coming into the world.

The Fast Intensifies

As the feast draws nearer our liturgical prayer revolves around the time before the coming of Christ. Several Old Testament prophets are remembered individually, enabling us to focus on their role in preparing for the coming of the Messiah. On the two Sundays before the Nativity a general commemoration of the Israelites who came before Christ and a memorial of the actual ancestors of Christ are observed. During the fore-feast of the Nativity, the five days before the actual celebration, our liturgical hymns direct our attention to the mystery of the incarnation.

Unfortunately, the Nativity Fast competes for our attention with the secular season of shopping, Christmas parties and gift exchanges. People seeking to observe the season as Eastern Christians might do well to view the question in light of the adage, “Enjoy the roses, but beware the thorns.” Employ the positive aspects of this season in our culture while avoiding the ones which endanger our Eastern Christian spiritual life.

“Enjoy the Roses” might include singing Christmas carols or watching faith-based films instead of our usual entertainment. Religious Christmas cards and decorations are still acceptable in our society and provide us with a chance to enter into the season in the spirit of the Nativity Fast. Perhaps most importantly, our secular society provides us with many opportunities for sharing with the needy during this season. Participating in such programs enables us to practice almsgiving in solidarity with our neighbors of other faiths.

“Beware the Thorns” takes us to the matter of Christmas parties. In some places, these gatherings more resemble New Year’s Eve or a tailgate party than a Christmas celebration. Eastern Christians would do well to completely avoid participating in this kind of activity. If pressured to take part, especially in the workplace, an Eastern Christian may take the opportunity to explain that this is a fasting season for us and that it would be inappropriate for you to participate. Let them feel guilty for asking!

You may decide to attend a Christmas party which avoids excesses, particularly in the workplace, while still maintaining the fast. We can usually enjoy the conviviality while avoiding those foods from which we are fasting. In any case Eastern Christian church groups should be expected to delay their own Christmas parties to the week after Christmas, when the fast is over and the Church is still celebrating Christ’s Nativity.

Most parishes have a children’s Christmas celebration which includes gift-giving. As a rule, it is St Nicholas rather than Santa who presides at these events in Eastern churches. Still, there are few if any Eastern Christian parishes in the West whose children need to receive gifts from the church. The best gift a parish could give its children might be teaching them to give instead of to receive. Children might be asked to give a gift to St Nicholas instead of expecting to receive one. The toys and games our children no longer enjoy can be re-gifted to the disadvantaged in hospitals, shelters or parishes in poorer neighborhoods. In this way, we teach our children to be “Santa’s Helpers” rather than the victims of materialism disguised as the Christmas spirit.