

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

130 ST. FRANCIS CABBINI AVENUE ✱ SCRANTON, PA 18504

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PRAYER INTENTIONS

P. H. S.: Rev. Dn. Jos. Daratony. Mich. Abda. Marie Barron. Jos. Bartnicki. Nikki Boudreaux. George Bales Sr. Lucille Bales. Jayne Buckley. Chris Carey. Nathan Cheffers. James Kane. Maryann Nappi Donahue. Carol Downer. Dav. Fairclough, Sr. Rob. Fairclough, Sr. Sara Gomez. Niko Mayashairo. Mary McNeilly. Charles Prezzia. Sue Solsman. Sus. 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. ✱Charl. & James Abda. ✱Marie Abda. ✱Nancy Abda. ✱Janice Assaf. ✱Thalia Assaf. ✱Joe Barron. ✱Paul & Mary Ann Bauman. ✱A.J. Bolus. ✱Veronica Bolus. ✱Jos. Bolus. ✱Gary Bolus. ✱Natey Cheffers. ✱Nich. Cianci. ✱Patricia Cimakosky. ✱Ann & John 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. ✱Char. Simon. ✱Ruth Sirgany. ✱Mary A. Walsh. ✱Gen. Zaydon.

CLERGY:

Rev. Christopher Manuele, Presbyter

DIVINE SERVICES:

Tuesday :

Compline0:00 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.

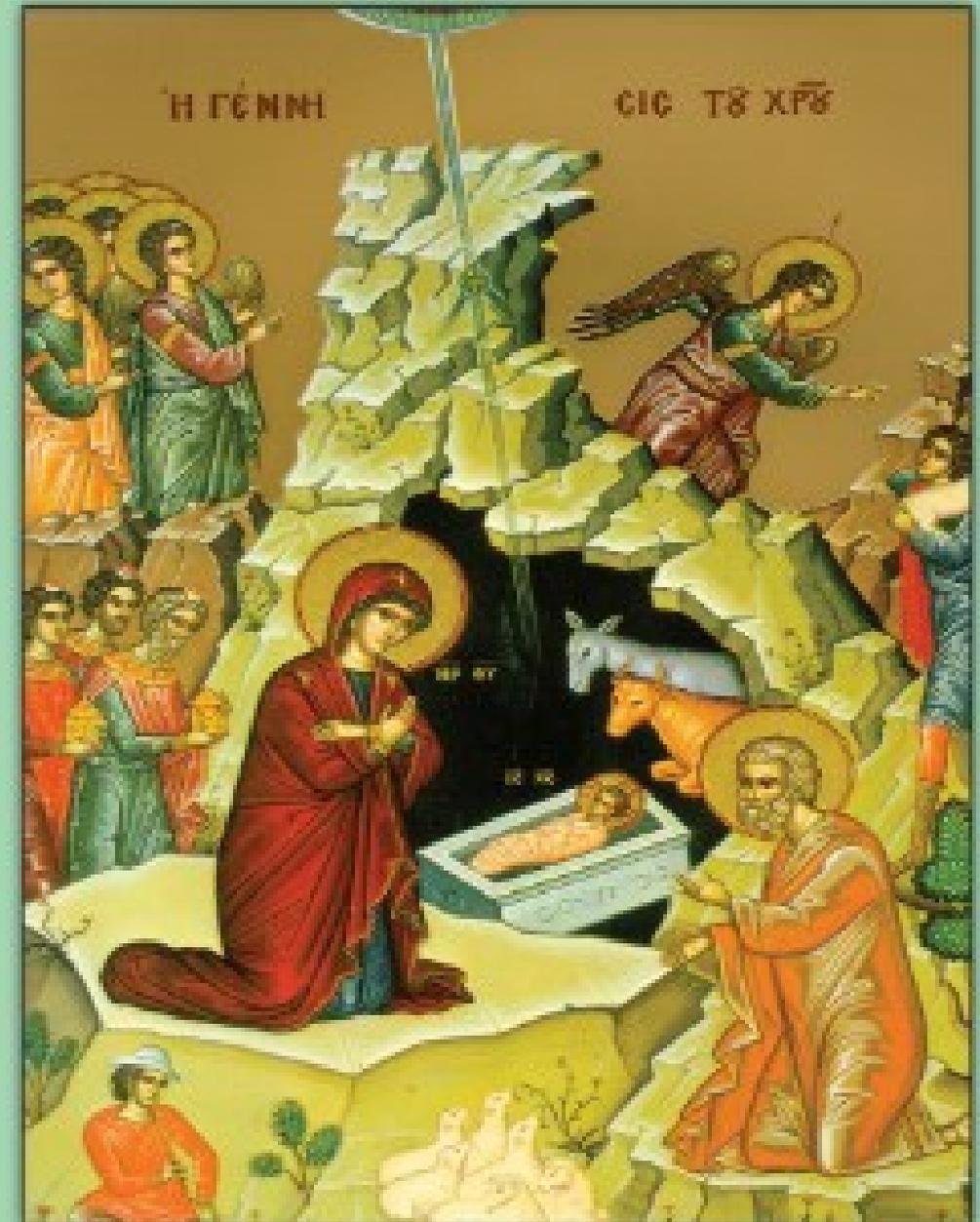
HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING:

Call rectory at earliest convenience.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:

Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SUNDAY OF KING DAVID, JOSEPH AND JAMES



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

29 DECEMBER 2024 ♦ TONE 07 EOTHINON 10 † SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY ♦ THE JUST JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

ANTIPHONS: *Nativity*

FIRST:

SECOND:

BEATITUDES

ENTRANCE HYMN:

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 7)

Nativity

Patron: St. Joseph

Glory to the Father....

KONDAKION: *Nativity*

TRISAGION:

PROKIMENON:

(Tone 7)

EPISTLE:

Brethren, I give you to understand that the Good News that was announced to you by me is not of man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was it taught to me [by man], but I received it by a revelation from Jesus Christ. For you have heard of the way I lived before in Judaism: how I persecuted the Church of God and ravaged it beyond measure. And I advanced in Judaism above many of my contemporaries in my nation, showing much more zeal for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased him who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately, without taking counsel with flesh and blood and without going up to Jerusalem to those who were appointed apostles before me, I retired into Arabia and again returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother.

ALLELUIA: **PSALM 98:6; 33:18**

(Tone 7)

In you, O Lord, I have hoped: Let me never be put to shame. In your justice, save me and deliver me.

Be for me a protecting God, a sheltering house to save me.

GOSPEL:

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 Jeremiah 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:

KINONKON:

COMMUNION HYMN:

POST-COMMUNION HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 17

Liturgy Book p. 29

Liturgy Book p. 32

Liturgy Book p. 125

Liturgy Book p. 38

Liturgy Book p. 45

Liturgy Book p. 152

Liturgy Book p. 47

Liturgy Book p. 153

Liturgy Book p. 50

Liturgy Book p. 60

Galatians 1:11-19

Liturgy Book p. 59

St. Matthew 2:12-23

Liturgy Book p. 154 / Liturgy Book p. 77

Liturgy Book p. 155 / Liturgy Book p. 83

Liturgy Book p. 87

Liturgy Book p. 89 / Liturgy Book p. 90

Some of the early alternative gospels taught that:

- Jesus was the illegitimate son of Mary and Panthera, a Roman soldier (the Talmud);
- Jesus was born as man and later adopted as a "son of God"
- Jesus was not fully man: he had a human body and a divine mind;
- Jesus was created by God the Father and not equal to Him (Arianism);
- Jesus' physical body was only an illusion, therefore He did not die on the cross;
- Jesus' human nature was overwhelmed by His divine nature (Eutychianism);
- Jesus had two natures but only one will, the divine, therefore His humanity was incomplete (monothelism);
- Jesus only seemed to die on the cross; instead God took Him to Himself (Islam)

he first centuries also saw the rise of teachings that denied:

- The value of the Old Testament (Marcionism);
- The value of marriage (Montanism);
- The true brokenness of our human nature (Pelagianism).
- The value of icons (iconoclasm);

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the rise of groups with their own alternative gospels which teach that:

- God is the physical father of Jesus. They are "one God" only in that they are united in spirit, mind and purpose (Mormons);
- Jesus is the incarnation of Michael the Archangel, God's first creation. He became Messiah only at His baptism (Jehovah's Witnesses);
- Jesus was one of the many good spiritual teachers like Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius and others who attained divinity (New Age groups).

All of these tendencies we call heresies, from the Greek word *heteran* (other), as in "another gospel." These heresies spoke about God and Christ but not in ways deemed consistent with the Scriptures. They came from another source than divine revelation and ultimately were rejected by the Church. Bishops, gathered in councils, divided what they saw as true from false teachings and rejected the early heresies. Their summary of the true Gospel, the Nicene Creed, remains the unique statement of our common faith.

Our Dogmatic Hymns

For centuries the Eastern Churches have also used liturgical hymns to assert their teaching in the face of heresies. The following sticheron from the vespers of the Nativity proclaims the Gospel faith of the Church with clarity and thereby refutes many of the heresies mentioned above. St. Paul would have approved.

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us proclaim the present mystery by which the partition has been broken and the flaming sword withheld: now shall the Cherubim let us all come to the Tree of Life. As for me, I am returning to the bliss of Paradise whence I had been driven by the original disobedience. Behold, the Image of the Father and His immutable Eternity has taken the form of a servant! He has come down to us from a Mother all-pure, and yet He has remained unchanged: He has remained true God as He was before, and has taken on Himself what He had not been, becoming Man out of His love for man. Wherefore, let us raise our voices in hymns and sing: "O God who was born of the Virgin, O our God, have mercy on us!"

ARE THERE “OTHER GOSPELS”?

AT EVERY DIVINE LITURGY the celebrant prays for the Church hierarchs in words such as these: “Graciously bestow them to Your holy Churches in peace, honor, safety health, long life, rightly dispensing the word of Your truth.” This last phrase is actually taken from St. Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy: “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (2 Tim 2:15).

When the verse is translated as “dispensing” or “imparting” the word of Your truth, it suggests the act of passing on the Gospel from the bishop to His Church. When the translation “*rightly dividing the word of truth*” is used, something more is suggested. The bishop’s role is to separate the ideas circulating as “Gospel” into true and false, dividing one from the other. Anyone can say that their interpretation is faithful to the Tradition. It is the bishop’s role, St Paul tells Timothy, to make a judgment and separate true from false teaching.

St Paul spent his life proclaiming Christ despite all kinds of hardships. He was indignant that others were proclaiming false teachings and attributing them to Christ and His Church. He wrote to the Galatians, “*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel – which is not another – but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed*” (Gal 1:6-8). These “other gospels,” which were no authentic gospel at all, were generally doctrines or practices from other traditions which some teachers were intermingling with the Gospel of Christ. The one St Paul found himself opposing most vigorously was that believers in Christ were required to be circumcised. People had to physically become Jews, its practitioners, taught, in order to unite to Christ.

St Paul had cleared his teaching with the chief Apostles (see Gal 1:18-19) but his opponents continued in their views until the Jerusalem Church, led by St. James, the “brother of God” as he is called, confirmed that circumcision was not necessary, only faith in Christ (see Acts 15:6-21). The Apostolic Church had rightly divided the word of truth, determining what was essential and what was not.

What Was Paul’s Gospel?

The Gospel which Christ had preached was simple, according to the Evangelists. “*The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel*” (Mk 1:15).

Paul’s summary of the Gospel which he preached in 1Cor 15:3-8 tells us how he understood the kingdom of God to be at hand. “*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.*” It was in the death and resurrection of Christ that the kingdom of God was to be found.

Perversions of the Gospel

St. Paul did not hesitate to say that the promoters of circumcision in the Church were perverting the Gospel. Over the centuries a number of alternatives to the Gospel emerged: teachings which St Paul would surely have called “another gospel.” Some of the following first millennium teachings about Christ were quickly discarded; others have been revived over the years by different sects.

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Saturday Afternoon, December 28

Mystery of Repentance:

Confessions: 3:00 p.m.

Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, December 29

PATRONAL FEASTDAY: ST. JOSEPH

Iris Marie Baptism: 9:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Potluck following: Hall

EVENTS IN JANUARY

Wednesday Morning, January 01

FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Friday, January 3

PARAMONY OF THE THEOPHONY

[STRICT ABSTINENCE,

& FASTING UNTIL NOON]

Saturday Afternoon, January 04

NO LITURGICAL SERVICES

Sunday Morning, January 05

Resurrectional Orthros: 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Sunday Afternoon, January 05

Vespertal Divine Liturgy: 5:30 p.m.

Monday, January 06

THEOPHONY OF THE LORD J.C.

[HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION]

Festal Orthros: 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 5:30 p.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.

2024 WEEKLY COLLECTION

December 22

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Weekly Offering: | \$ 425.00 |
| Candles: | \$ 25.00 |
| Total: | \$ 450.00 |

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

28 December: Joseph Viola Family
29 December: P.H.S. Marie Barron,
Lois Cianci, Joanna Simon
01 January: ✠Robert Jeanotte
from Sandra Abda King

Father Christopher away to visit family in Chicago
from Sunday, December 29, 2024 through
Saturday, January 4, 2025.

Parish Emergencies: Dr. Patrick Clark: 570.677.1344
Sacramental Emergencies: Rev. Leonard Martin: 43.935.7615

SHINING THE LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE

IN THE SERVICES PREPARING US for the Feast of the Nativity and on the feast itself there are frequent readings from or references to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. On the Saturday after the feast we read a passage from the Gospel of St Matthew which also cites an Old Testament prophecy, but it is one not usually associated with the Nativity, as it appears only later in the Gospel. It is, however, one of the few prophecies which the Lord Himself says applies to Him.

The Hostility of the Pharisees

We have seen how the Pharisees reacted to the healings which Jesus performed on the Sabbath. They saw these actions as violating the rule that one should not work on the Sabbath. Two such “violations” are recorded in Mt 12. Verses 1-8 relate the incident in the grain fields on the Sabbath, when Jesus’ followers plucked grain and ate it, to the chagrin of the Pharisees. Verses 9-13 tell how the Lord then went into a synagogue and healed a man with a withered hand. Matthew concludes these narratives by saying, “*Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him*” (v. 14).

In response to their hostility, we are told: “*But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there*” (v. 15). The Lord did not want a decisive confrontation with His adversaries; as stated elsewhere in the Gospels, His hour had not yet come. “*Yet He warned [His followers] not to make Him known, that might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet...*” (vv. 16-17).

And here the prophecy in Is 42:1-4 is quoted:

*“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen,
My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him,
and He will declare righteousness to the Gentiles.
He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench,
till He sends forth righteousness to victory; and in His name Gentiles will trust.”*

The Chosen One

In applying this passage to Himself the Lord in effect answers the question, “Who is this newborn Child?” He assumes the titles Servant and Chosen One which in Isaiah are used repeatedly to refer to the Jewish people (“*Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one*”). Many Jews still apply this verse to the people of Israel or even to the modern state of Israel. Jesus here is portraying Himself as **personifying the People of God** in a unique way. He is the embodiment of God’s Israel; He represents all the hopes and expectations of those Jews who were looking for God to deliver them.

The Greek text of the Gospel adds another note by quoting Isaiah in the Septuagint (Greek) version. The early Christians believed that, under the guidance of the Holy

Spirit, the Septuagint put forth the best interpretations of the sacred text. Thus, for example, while the Hebrew text of Is 7:14 reads, “*A young woman will conceive and bear a son...*” the Septuagint uses a Greek word for “young woman” which also means “virgin.”

In the Septuagint version of Is 42 the word for “servant” is translated as ὁ παῖς (o paees). In the Greek of the day this word could mean *servant* or *child* depending on the context. The Gospel writer saw that Jesus completely fulfilled this prophecy because He was **both God’s servant and His Only-Begotten Son**.

Bearer of the Spirit

The next element in this prophecy which is fulfilled in Christ is the statement “*I will put My Spirit upon Him.*” The Gospels **connect Christ with the Spirit of God** from the moment of His conception. When the Holy Virgin questions Gabriel as to how she could have a child, he answers “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God*” (Lk 1:35). The Gospels show that the Holy Spirit was manifested at the Lord’s baptism and in His encounter with the Tempter in the wilderness. When He returns to Nazareth and is given the Book of Isaiah to read in the synagogue, He selects the passage, “*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor...*” Then, closing the book, He announces, “*Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*” (Lk 4:16-22). Jesus is the One who bears the Spirit and will, after His resurrection, bestow this Spirit upon the Church.

A Light to the Gentiles

Another element in the prophecy which Matthew quotes is that the Chosen One is to “*declare righteousness to the Gentiles.*” **He will bring the righteousness of God’s People to those who are not of this People**. The “Gentiles” were the surrounding peoples who worshipped the various gods and goddesses of the Middle East and the Greco-Roman world. To declare righteousness to them meant, for Jews like the Pharisees, that the Chosen People by observing the Law would make the Gentiles righteous by teaching them to observe the Torah as well.

An image used in the prophets to express this ministry is to **bring light to the Gentiles**. As we read in Is 49: 6 “*I [i. e. God] will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.*” Gentiles would receive salvation when they came to know the true God through the witness of the Jews.

In the Gospel as well, salvation comes from knowing the God of Israel. What the Gospel adds is that the true God is revealed in Christ. He is the true “*Light to bring revelation to the Gentiles*” (Lk 2:32) as Simeon said of the Infant Christ. Knowing the one true God in Christ is what brings salvation to the ends of the earth.

The fulfillment of this prophecy is what we proclaim every time we repeat the troparion of the Nativity: “Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge. Through it those who had been star-worshippers learned through a star to worship You, the Sun of righteousness and recognize in You the one who rises from on high. O Lord, glory to You!”