



ST. MARY ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A PARISH OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

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CLERGY

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

His Grace Bishop THOMAS, Auxiliary Bishop of Charleston, Oakland & the Mid-Atlantic

Very Rev. Fr. George Alberts, Pastor

Very Rev. Fr. Dr. David Hester, Pastor Emeritus ✕ Very Rev. Fr. Herbert Nahas, Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Deacon Joseph Clark (Temporarily Attached)

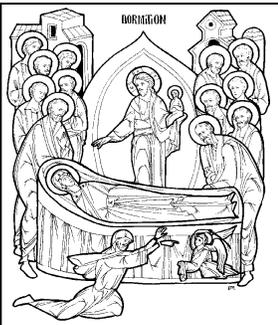
Subdeacon William Obeid + Subdeacon N.D. Namey + Subdeacon John Moses Jr. + Subdeacon Marshall Goodge

WELCOME to the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. We are the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Christian Church whose roots trace directly back to the first century Antioch, the city in which the disciples of Jesus Christ were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

The Orthodox Church is the oldest and second-largest Christian group in the world. We are called by God, our Creator, to worship and follow Him and to proclaim to the world His message of love, peace and salvation.

God loves all mankind and desires that all human beings should believe in Him, know Him, abide in Him, and receive eternal life from Him. To accomplish this God Himself came into the world as a man in Jesus Christ --- becoming man that we might become like God. The Parishioners of St. Mary Parish welcome you and are pleased that you have decided to worship Almighty God with our Parish family today. We encourage you to learn about our Orthodox faith and our Parish if you are not yet Orthodox.

Although the non-Orthodox may not receive Holy Communion, which may only be given to the Orthodox faithful, we invite you to come forward at the close of the Liturgy to receive a blessing from the Priest and blessed bread. Please also come downstairs to the Parish Hall join us for our fellowship hour.



Our Patronal Feast is the DORMITION (FALLING-ASLEEP) OF THE THEOTOKOS, which is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated each year on August 15. The Theotokos, the Virgin Mary, was “blessed amongst women,” and she was chosen “to bear the Savior of our souls.” Orthodox Christians consider her to be the Queen of all the saints and angels. Knowing she is eternally present at the throne of God interceding for mankind, we pray for her love, guidance, and protection.

**SCHEDULE OF
UPCOMING SERVICES & EVENTS**

- Today Basket Raffle is today!
- **Monday Dec. 24** Royal Hours for the Nativity at 9:00 am + Orthros 10:00 pm followed immediately (11:00 pm) by the Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- Thur. Dec. 27 No Spaghetti Dinner this week!
- Sat. Dec. 29 Confessions from 4:30 - 5:00 pm & Vespers at 5:00 pm
- Sun. Dec. 30 Matins at 8:50 am + Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am



COMMEMORATIONS

- ✘ **Today** Holy Bread, Bulletin & Coffee Hour are sponsored in loving memory of John Neddoff for the 40 day memorial of his repose by Dallal Neddoff and Family and also Trisagion Prayers are for John Neddoff for his 40 Day Memorial
- ✘ **December 30** Holy Bread, Bulletin and Coffee Hour offered in loving memory of Charles J. Audi by Gail and John Luksic
- ✘ **January 6** Holy Bread, Bulletin and Coffee Hour in loving memory of Sylvia and John Morrash by Diane and Mike Fort and daughters also Trisagion Prayers for Sylvia Morrash on the 4th Anniversary of her repose and also Bulletin & Coffee Hour are sponsored in loving memory of Charles Casem by Denise Hasneh and also Trisagion Prayers are for Charles Casem

THE SYNAXARION

On December 23 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the holy Ten Martyrs of Crete; New-martyr Nicholas; and Venerable Nahum of Ochrid, enlightener of the Bulgarians.

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, we have been enjoined by our holy and God-bearing Fathers to make commemoration of all them that from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing unto God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist hath recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been well-pleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ's human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2018
FOREFEAST OF & SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)
TEN MARTYRS OF CRETE; NEW-MARTYR NICHOLAS; VENERABLE NAHUM OF OCHRID

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FIVE

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF THE DORMITION

In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity and thy repose thou didst not forsake the world O Theotokos, for thou art the mother of life and thou didst pass over into life. And through thine intercessions from death thou dost redeem our souls.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to * God the Word ineffably, * Who was before all the ages. * Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing * the gladsome tidings; * with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him * Who is willing to be gazed on * as a young Child Who * before the ages is God.

✠ THE EPISTLE ✠

*Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.
For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.*

THE READING FROM THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE HEBREWS. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

✠ THE GOSPEL ✠

THE READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW. (1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

THE WINTER PASCHA, CHAPTER 16: THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

The following is an excerpt from THE WINTER PASCHA, by Fr. Thomas Hopko

The gospel reading for the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday before Christmas is "the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," taken from the gospel according to St. Matthew. This genealogy lists the generations of people from Abraham to David, to the Babylonian captivity of the people of Israel, to the birth of Jesus. It is a selected genealogy, ending in the appearance of "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ" (Mt 1:16). It differs from the genealogy presented in St. Luke's gospel which begins with Jesus "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph," and goes back all the way not simply to Abraham but to Adam (Lk 3:23-38).

There are many purposes for presenting the genealogy of Jesus in the gospels, chief among which is the affirmation that Jesus, being in truth the Son of God, as all the gospels testify, has come "in the flesh" as a real human being. This affirmation was critically important in the time of the apostles and the first Christian generations because, unlike today, the temptation of the early period of Christianity was not to deny Jesus' divinity, but to deny His real and authentic humanity.

As a matter of historical fact, the first Christian heretics were those who said that Jesus was some sort of divine being (how this was explained had many variations and versions) who only appeared to be a true man, but was not really one since "flesh and blood" were taken to be intrinsically degrading if not downright evil. Thus the

apostle Paul had to insist that in Jesus, who belongs to the Jews "according to the flesh" (Rom 9:5), the "wholeness of deity dwells *bodily*" (Col 2:9), and that it is the same Jesus who died and was buried and raised in the flesh as a real man, who is Messiah and Lord.

...

The genealogies in the gospels of Saints Matthew and Luke are made to and from Joseph. This is not to give the impression that Jesus came from Joseph's seed. Both gospels are absolutely clear on this point. Jesus is born from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. The point is rather that Joseph is Jesus' father according to the law, and it is from the father that one's lawful descent is to be traced. Jesus' legal father is "Joseph, son of David," the legal husband of Mary (Mt 1:20).

One other important point is made in listing the human generations which led to the birth of Jesus. This is the fact that God is faithful to His promises even though His chosen people are often not faithful. Among the people from whom Jesus came are both sinners and heathens. In a word, Jesus comes not only from the righteous and holy, but from the wicked and sinful. And He comes not only from Jews, but from Gentiles. The names of the four women specifically mentioned in St. Matthew's list- Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba)- were noted, not to say notorious, Gentiles, including one of David's own wives, the mother of Solomon. The point to be seen here is one beautifully made in an early Christian hymn quoted in the Bible in the second letter to Timothy:

*If we have died with Him,
we shall also live with Him;
If we endure,
we shall also reign with Him;
If we deny Him,
He also will deny us;
If we are faithless,
He remains faithful- for He cannot deny Himself. (2 Tim 2:11-13)*

This is the wonderful witness of the genealogies of Jesus: If we are faithless, the Lord God remains faithful- for he cannot deny Himself!

*Behold, the time of our salvation is at hand.
Prepare yourself, O cavern,
For the Virgin approaches to give birth to her Son.
Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,
For from you our Lord shines forth as the dawn.
Give ear, you mountains and hills
And all lands surrounding Judea,
For Christ is coming to save the people
Whom He has created and whom He loves.¹*

¹Vespers of the Sunday before the Nativity

*We are observing St. Ignatius Sunday today throughout the Archdiocese
We have included information concerning the Order of St. Ignatius with
today's Bulletin ... Please consider joining the Order if you are able
Please see Father George if interested*