



## 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*

Deacon Ephraim Vest

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

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.



PLEASE NOTE

All our services can be watched as they occur on our Parish Face Book page at <https://www.facebook.com/StMaryAO/>

**COMMEMORATIONS**

- Today Bread, Bulletin and Coffee Hour are sponsored for the Saint Mary Parish Family and all our loved ones for God's blessings of good health and divine protection for the living and for the blessed memory and peaceful repose of our deceased loved ones. Sponsored by Sky Elizabeth Blue in thanksgiving for her Chrismation *and also* Bread is offered in loving memory of Jimmy Cardillo by daughter Ann and Bulletin is also sponsored in loving memory of Nono from his grandchildren Ryan Alex Samantha and McKenzie
- Jan. 2 Bread, Bulletin and Coffee Hour are offered/sponsored in Loving Memory of Sylvia and John Morrash and Bob Chrzanowski by the Fort Family and for the Good Health of the Fort Family *and also* Trisagion Prayers are offered for Sylvia and John Morrash and Bob Chrzanowski
- Jan. 9 Bread, Bulletin and Coffee Hour are offered/sponsored in Loving Memory of Simon "Si" Saba by Julie Saba *and also* Trisagion Prayers are offered for Simon "Si" Saba
- Jan. 16 Bread, Bulletin and Coffee Hour are offered/sponsored in Loving Memory of Hal Morrash for her 5 year memorial for George A Morrash for his 3 year memorial by their family *and also* Trisagion Prayers are offered for Hal and George Morrash

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**SCHEDULE OF PARISH LIFE AT ST. MARY**

Advent Fast Continues

- Tuesday, December 21 Father George at the Church from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Wed. December 22 Advent Paracletis at 6:00 pm
- Thursday, December 23 Father George at the Church from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Friday, December 24 Royal Hours at 9:00 am  
Nativity Matins at 6:00 pm  
Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of our Lord at 7:00 pm
- Saturday, December 25 The Nativity of Our Lord ... *CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!*

No Vespers Today

Sunday, December 26      Matins at 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am



### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

We received permission to hold our Christmas Eve Services as follows:

- ✘ Royal Hours beginning at 9 a.m. Christmas Eve, December 24th
- ✘ Christmas Matins at 6 p.m. Christmas Eve, December 24th
- ✘ Christmas Divine Liturgy at 7 p.m. Christmas Eve, December 24th

Please consider that Bishop THOMAS took into consideration our Parish situation and we thank him for his Fatherly concern and understanding. We hope ALL our Parishioners show their appreciation by attending these services so that we can have a full church as we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We will hold the Royal Hours of the Nativity Service beginning at 9 a.m. this Friday (December 24). Royal Hours are a combination of several short services comprised of Psalms, readings and prayers. There is no communion and the atmosphere is one of calm reverence. The Royal Hours (which are celebrated only three times a year) contain prayers from which we can learn and better appreciate the meaning of the Nativity for Orthodox Christians.

The Royal Hours afford us insight into the atmosphere surrounding the birth of Our Lord; the venality of Herod who fears being supplanted; Joseph's fear of disgrace; Mary's faith, which leads her to inspire Joseph—and us—with words like "mystery" and "wonder" to describe the event she does not fully understand but fully accepted and embraced.

Noted Orthodox theologian Father Alexander Schmemmann has rightly called the Royal Hours *"one last meditation on the cosmical meaning of the Nativity, on the decisive and radical change it performed in the entire creation."*

We encourage all of you whose schedules permit to attend this most solemn and meaningful divine service of our Holy Church. We as Orthodox Christians have been spiritually preparing for this great day for forty days through prayer, fasting, repentance, purification, and worship. It is a most beautiful way to celebrate the Birth of Our Savior and the Savior of the world – especially if you cannot attend the Christmas Liturgy later that evening .....

*Adapted from several articles from the Archdiocesan webpage as well as the OCA and Geek Orthodox WebPages*

Also ... Nativity is celebrated for twelve days after December 25 culminating in the Feast of Epiphany, or Theophany. We will be holding the Advent Paraclesis Service on Wednesdays during Advent unless otherwise listed on the calendar or in the bulletin. Please take some time to slow down and orient yourself to the Season ... *Please join us as often as possible throughout Advent for these Paraclesis Services.*

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**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021  
SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)**

**Martyrs Boniface and Aglaïs of Rome; Boniface the merciful, bishop of Ferentino in Tuscany; Martyrs Eutychios and Thessalonica and their companions**

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**RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE ONE**

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

**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 just in all that Thou hast done to 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**

(For the Sunday before the Nativity: “The Genealogy”)

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.

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### **THE SYNAXARION**

On December 19 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Martyrs Boniface and Aglaïs of Rome; Boniface the merciful, bishop of Ferentino in Tuscany; and Martyrs Eutychios and Thessalonica and their companions.

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*

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## PARISH NEWS

- ✘ Today is St. Ignatius Sunday. The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch is an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America with the objective of financially supporting the departments, programs and charitable works of the Antiochian Archdiocese, Patriarchate of Antioch and the Orthodox Christian faith. The Order assists the Antiochian Archdiocese in its continued effort to reach out to all in need and bring to them the message of the Gospel. The membership of the Order is comprised of clergy and lay individuals who make a lifetime financial commitment and pledge to work together in harmony to promote the spiritual and financial well-being of the Antiochian Archdiocese and the Orthodox Christian faith. Anyone interested in joining the Order should see Father George.
- ✘ Father George is meeting with our Teens and College Students to continue the class discussion about moral issues today following the Divine Liturgy. All our Teens and College Students are invited to attend. Teens and college students are urged to get their coffee hour items and go to the Library where we will be meeting.
- ✘ The Parish Annual Meeting is set for Sunday, January 16, 2022. Please mark the date and let everyone know. Anyone interested in serving on the Parish Council can see Father George or John Moses.
- ✘ Please remember we celebrate the Advent Paraclesis Service each Wednesday at 6:00 pm. Let's join together at this service to give thanks for all that God has done for us and continues to do for us.
- ✘ Please remember we are all asked to receive the Sacrament of Confession during the Advent Fast. Father George will be hearing Confessions this week on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 p.m. and from 5:30-6 p.m. prior to the Paraclesis Service on Wednesday evening and on Friday after Royal Hours.