

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

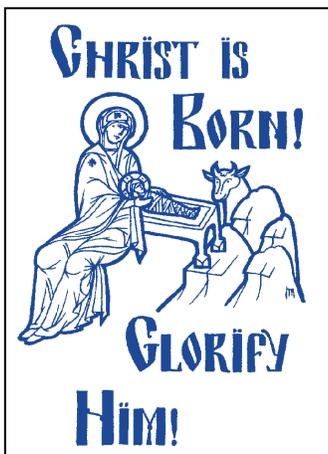
All our services can be watched as they occur on our Parish Face Book page at <https://www.facebook.com/StMaryAO/>

COMMEMORATIONS

- 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

SCHEDULE OF PARISH LIFE AT ST. MARY

- Tuesday, December 28 Father George at the Church from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Thursday, December 30 Father George at the Church from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Saturday, January 1 No Vespers Today
- Sunday, January 2 Matins at 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am
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Brothers and Sisters In Christ

We Greet Each Other After The Nativity By Exclaiming "Christ Is Born" and Responding "Glorify Him!" When Meeting Each Other And Also During The Liturgy When Offering Each Other The Sign Of Peace ... Greet each other by exclaiming ...

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2021
SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS & SUNDAY AFTER THE
NATIVITY OF CHRIST**

Commemoration of Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King, &
James the brother of God

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn there from to worship Thee, O Sun of justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to 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 THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE THREE

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; * to the Unapproachable, * the earth doth offer a small cave; * Angels join in choir with shepherds * in giving glory; * with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; * for our sakes is born a young Child, * He Who existed * before the ages as God.

THE EPISTLE

God is wondrous in His saints. In the churches, bless ye God.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel, which was preached by me, is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:13-23)

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

THE SYNAXARION

On December 26 in the Holy Orthodox Church, the first day of the After-feast of the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate Euthymios the Confessor, bishop of Sardis; and Hieromartyr Constantios the Russian of the Great Lavra on Athos.

On this day, we celebrate the Synaxis of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos.

With words as blameless gifts, I welcome the blameless Mother, Who not knowing the bed of man, now lieth in child-bed. On the twenty-sixth I sing a song to the Most Pure in child-bed.

This Synaxis, or our coming together, to glorify the Theotokos is celebrated especially in her honor because she gave birth supernaturally to the Son and Word of God, and thus became the instrument of the salvation of mankind. This feast of Mary is one of the earliest in Orthodox Christian tradition.

He that smote thee of old, cometh to thee, O Egypt; Tremble before Him, and mind Him as God Almighty.

God saw the wicked King Herod's plan to slaughter all the children in Bethlehem, and sent His angel to Joseph. The angel commanded him to take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt. Joseph did this. They first travelled to Nazareth (Lk. 2:39), where Joseph set his household affairs in order and then, taking his son James with them, went off to Egypt (Matt. 2:14). And so the words of the prophet: "The Lord, riding upon a swift cloud, shall come into Egypt" (Is. 19:1), were fulfilled. The family lived in Egypt for several years, and then returned to Palestine in response to a command by an angel of God. And so a second prophecy was fulfilled: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1). On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our

Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of God and the first bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

I honor Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin, who to be her protector was alone chosen. Thou art a carpenter's son, but also the brother of the Lord that built all with a word, O blest James. What shall I say, seeing that the Lord testifieth, as a man after Mine own heart, I have found David.

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. Thus, God was not ashamed to take upon Himself flesh from David's seed. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin, and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. Although Joseph was of the royal lineage of David, he was a humble carpenter in Nazareth. At the age of 80, Joseph took the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem and into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110. The Apostle James is called the "Brother of the Lord" because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph, when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

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



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.