

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley
a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406 stmichaelvannuys.org

His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York

and Metropolitan of all North America

www.antiochian.org

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The Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (the Genealogy)

Martyrs Boniface and Aglaïa of Rome; Boniface the merciful, Bishop of Ferentino in Tuscany; Martyrs Eutychios and Thessalonica and their companions

Sunday, December 19, 2021

Tone 1; Eothinon 4

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 4)

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 the Sunday before the Nativity (Tone 2)

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 pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

Apolytikion of our Patron, Michael the Archangel (Tone 2)

O ye foremost of the heavenly hosts, we beseech thee, though we are unworthy, pray that we may be encompassed with a shadow of thine unearthly glory; preserving us who kneel and cry endlessly: Deliver us from oppression since ye are the prince of the highest powers.

Kontakion of the Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave where she will give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word Who is before all the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest it heralded: Glorify Him, with the angels and the shepherds, Who chose to be seen as a new-born babe, the God Who is before all the ages.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (Sunday before the Holy Nativity)

*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 (Sunday before the Holy Nativity; “the Genealogy”)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is 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 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.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread is being offered by Phyllis Anne Grates and family in loving memory of her parents and her children's grandparents: William "Bill" & Mary Anne Mansour. Memory eternal.

Holy Bread is also being offered by Laila Dawud in loving memory of her beloved husband, Assad, and her dear sweet daughter, Dema. Memory eternal. Prayers are also being offered for her continued health and the members of her family.

Holy Bread is also being offered by Bobbi Monsue for the three-month memorial of the priest John Kovach of the Ruthenian Catholic Church in Parma, Ohio. Memory eternal.

Special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for the one-year memorial of the servant of God, Elyas Alber
(+13 December, 2020). Memory eternal.

for the repose of the newly-departed Archpriest, Nicholas Neyman (+12 December, 2021), beloved husband of Khouriye Malvi Chala Neyman; 4 children and 13 grandchildren. Memory eternal.

for the one-year memorial of the servant of God, Elyas Alber (+13 December, 2020) of Antakya, Syria; beloved brother of Aziza Eskaf Chelebian. Memory eternal.

by Sharon Katerelos for the repose of her good friend, the newly-departed Samiah Khatib-Hinton (+13 December, 2021). May the Lord have mercy on her soul and provide peace and comfort to all members of her family: especially her son, Logan (age 9), husband, Brian, and mother, Karima. Memory eternal.

by the Murr and Obenhaus families in memory of Conner Owen (+18 December, 2021), great nephew and cousin. Memory eternal.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December is “St. Ignatius Month” in the Antiochian Archdiocese

Reading the epistle this morning is: Constantine Nasr. Please see the letter from Roger David, National Chair of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch provided with this bulletin (below).

Join Us Today in the Singing of Christmas Carols During the Church School Christmas Program, and a Pizza Lunch That Will Follow the Divine Liturgy This Morning

A free-will offering will be received for today's lunch. Your support of our Church School will assist in providing materials for our curriculum. Thank you for your support of our children. We also thank Lila Coudsy, our teachers, parents and the choir for their support in today's program.

State of California Department of Public Health

To ensure that we collectively protect the health and well-being of all Californians, keep schools open for in-person instruction, and all allow California's economy to thrive, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) **is requiring masks to be worn in all indoor public settings,**

irrespective of vaccine status, through January 15, 2022. Since Thanksgiving, the statewide seven-day average case rate has increased by 47% and hospitalizations have increased 14%. While the percentage of Californians fully vaccinated and boosted continues to increase, we continue to have areas of the state where vaccine coverage is low, putting individuals and communities at greater risk for COVID-19. Given the current hospital census, which is at or over capacity, even a moderate surge in cases and hospitalizations could materially impact California's health care delivery system within certain regions of the state. Other states and countries with similar vaccination rates that have relaxed masking requirements are seeing surges in COVID-19 cases and increasing stress in their healthcare systems. The following **individuals** are exempt from wearing masks at all times:

- Persons younger than two years old. Very young children must not wear a mask because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a mask. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a mask could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a mask without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.

Bookstore Orders Available on Parish Website

Place an order through our parish website or e-mail Bobbi Monsue (Manager) for special orders at: bobbi_monsue@att.net. Your credit card will also be accepted for payment. Please come in and browse through our expanding selection of new books, icons and special Christmas gift ideas. Special orders may also be made by request. A new book soon to arrive is: *Syria Crucified: Stories of Modern Martyrdom in an Ancient Christian Land*.

SCHEDULE OF FESTAL SERVICES

[The Sacrament of Confession with Absolution is available by appointment or up until 15 minutes prior to the services.]

[All Services are Live-streamed]

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Friday, December 24th (Christmas Eve and *Paramon*)

The Great (“Royal”) Hours and Typika, 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon

The Ninth Royal Hour, 2:30 p.m. Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great* – 3 p.m.

Saturday, December 25th (Christmas Day)

Orthros and the Christmas Canon, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

[There is **no** fasting from December 25th to January 4th]

The Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos

The Sunday after The Holy Nativity

Saturday, December 25th – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 26th – Orthros, 8:45 a.m.; Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

The Circumcision of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ and the Feast of St. Basil the Great (New Year’s Day)

Friday, December 31st (New Year’s Eve) – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

with prayers for the New Year

Saturday, January 1st (New Year’s Day) – Orthros, 8:45 a.m.;

Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m., with prayers for the New Year

THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)

Wednesday, January 5th - The Eve (*Paramon*)

The Great and Royal Hours, 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon

The Ninth Royal Hour, 2:30 p.m. Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great* – 3 p.m.

Thursday, January 6th — Festal Orthros, 8:30 a.m. immediately followed by

The Festal Divine Liturgy* and the Great Blessing of the Waters

* *Services with Holy Communion*

Parish Christmas Card

Our 2020 Parish Christmas card was mailed this past week. The purpose of the card is to provide the convenience of having Christmas greetings extended to our hierarchs and parishioners by means of a group card. It also provides the schedule of services for the festal season. The Project is a service that helps to St. Michael to receive donations from parishioners and friends of our community who are listed on the card. The order those listed is not alphabetical, but in a sequence based upon the date the request is received. We thank all who have supported our project this year and continue to support our parish in Christian stewardship.

Note to Coffee Hour hosts: Please contact Father Timothy for Instructions.

Holy Bread Offering List

Dec 24, 25, 26 - open

Jan 01, 02 - open

Jan 05, 06 - Holy Theophany

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

**Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org)
to sign-up to offer Holy Bread.**

Notice to All Who Have Used Church Envelopes:

We will no longer use the old envelope system for tithes and offerings. This has been an added expense to our budget and the majority of our members (even those for whom they have been provided) have not used them. Instead, standardized weekly envelopes will be available in the narthex for all who choose to use them, especially for those who make cash offerings. Envelopes will also be provided to those who have regularly mailed in their offering using the envelopes. The new envelopes will provide room for filling in your name and address (if necessary). It will also allow you to specify the earmark or designation of the offering (i.e., "raffle tickets," "lunch," "Spiritual Bouquet," etc.). **Any donation or pledge payment to the Building Fund (including designated Spiritual Bouquets) must be made by a separate check and cannot be combined with offerings to the Church General / Operating Fund.** Thank you for your faithful support of our parish with your regular contributions.

**St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church
of the San Fernando Valley**

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622

Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and all North America

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor
frtimothy@stmichaelvanuys.org

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313
www.stmichaelvanuys.org

*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things,
at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
(II Corinthians 9:8)*

Dear Members of St. Michael,

We are rapidly approaching the end of the calendar year and our Parish Council is preparing to provide us with our 2022 Annual Budget. A parish cannot solely rely upon the income of Sacramental offerings because we would not be able to meet our month-to-month expenses based upon anticipating baptisms, weddings, or funerals that takes place each year. Nor can we adequately pay for our ongoing property maintenance without the shared responsibility and the help of volunteers of our membership. Our parish is able to provide its clergy and facilities, the prayer services of the church and its Sacraments because of our faithful parishioners who help to financially support the salaries and the operational costs of our church property.

We are again asking everyone to prayerfully consider making a reasonable annual financial pledge to our parish for the New Year. We look forward, by God's grace, for continued growth in the future. We are also very grateful for the commitments of those who have provided us with contributions to complete the construction of our new church sanctuary. We encourage others who have not done so to prayerfully consider doing the same. One of our goals is to remain debt free. We are anticipating the completion of the church in the New Year. Additional information will be provided at our Annual Parish Meeting at the end of January.

May you and your family enjoy God's continued blessings as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of our Lord's birth.

In Christ,

Subdeacon Richard Tamoush

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church
16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406 Phone: 818-994-2313
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2022 CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT FORM

- 1. All enrolled members must first fulfill a fair share contribution that is paid 100% by St. Michael Church to the Archdiocese annually (this does not include your family pledge obligation BELOW).**

Total number of baptized Orthodox persons (age 18 & above) in your household _____ \$50 each _____

Total number of baptized Orthodox persons (age 17 & under) in your household _____ \$35 each _____

(Please print all names with information in the section below)

- 2. In gratitude of God's blessings, I / we pledge to contribute St. Michael Church expenses.**

A total annual amount of: ____ (see Treasure self-assessment chart)

\$ _____ weekly \$ _____ monthly \$ _____ quarterly \$ _____ semi-annually \$ _____ annually

Name _____ Spouse Name _____

Phone number _____ E-mail Address _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

- 3. How do you wish to pay? We accept personal checks or credit card payments. (See below)**

- a. You may write a check to "St. Michael Church" and mail it to the Church Office. (see address above)
- b. You may process an "automatic bill pay" with your bank that will mail a recurring monthly hard-copy earmarked check to St. Michael Church.
- c. You may pay by credit card using our website donation page (a 3% processing fee will apply) at: <https://www.stmichaelvannuys.org/donate/> and we will be immediately notified.
- d. You may arrange for a recurring monthly automatic withdrawal from your bank account using our church bank routing number and bank account.

Note: Each donation to St. Michael Church should be earmarked, i.e., "Building Fund," "Pledge," etc.

Print names of baptized Orthodox persons in your household.

Name

Age

Upcoming Events

Continuation of The Second Installation of Church Iconography

December 27 to January 8

Teen SOYO Holiday Movie Night - Tuesday, December 28; 6 p.m.

St. Nicholas Cathedral; register at: <https://tinyurl.com/SOYO-ELF>

Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership (Virtual and In-person)

Sunday, January 30, following the Divine Liturgy

St. Michael 30th Golf Classic: Monday, May 23, 2022 at
Wood Ranch Golf Club (Simi Valley) <www.woodranchgc.com>

Thank you!

We sincerely thank all of our contributors to our Christmas toy collection this year. There were over 100 toys that were provided to help make the children of prisoners happier this Christmas.

We also thank everyone who contributed to this year's Teen SOYO Holiday Raffle that ended. The drawing took place on Sunday, December 12, at the end of the Divine Liturgy. The winners were: 1st Place, Edward Wassef; 2nd Place, Jonah Moujaes; 3rd Place, Magued Wassef. Congratulations!

Personal Tours of Our New Church Sanctuary

Personal tours or Zoom meetings are being scheduled by appointment for all who are interested in designated "sponsorships" or "dedications" of various parts of the new church sanctuary that are available. The tour will also provide answers to questions. Please contact Father Timothy for more information at: frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org

Our Weekly Bible Study Will Resume in January 2022

Our study of Corinthians have concluded. Recorded links of the study are available upon request. Our study will continue on Tuesday, January 11 at 7 p.m. We will begin our study of the Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy.

Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Report Booklet

The Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership will be held on Sunday, January 30, 2022. In the best interest of time, a Report Booklet will be prepared for distribution prior to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 23. All Council officers, Standing Committees and Subsidiary Organizations should turn in their single page reports to the Church Office no later than Sunday, January 2, 2022 in order to be compile on time for distribution to the Voting Membership.

Capital Funds Campaign Committee Recommends Building Fund Donation Tax Benefits

A charitable donation of long-term appreciated securities, i.e., stocks, bonds and/or mutual funds that have realized significant appreciation over time is one of the best and most tax-efficient of all ways to give. This method of giving has become increasingly popular in recent years. There are two main advantages: 1) Any long-term appreciated securities with unrealized gains (meaning they were purchased over a year ago, and have a current value greater than their original cost) may be donated to the church with the benefit of receiving a tax deduction for the full fair value of the securities—up to 60% of the donor's adjusted gross income; 2) since the securities/stock is being donated rather than sold, capital gains taxes from selling the securities no longer apply. And the more appreciation the securities have, the greater the tax savings will be.

Second: A Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) is an option for anyone 70.5 years of age or older. You are able to take advantage of withdrawing from your personal IRA (Individual Retirement Account) without paying Federal or State Taxes. This will give the donor an opportunity to fulfill their pledge. You would not be able to take a tax deduction on the donation, however, not having to pay Federal or State Taxes on the IRA withdrawal far exceeds the benefit of a tax deduction. [Your IRA deduction cannot exceed \$100,000 per year.]

In both of the above options the funds would need to be transferred from either your Securities Brokerage Account or IRA Account directly to the St.

Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church Brokerage Account in order for the donation to qualify.

Third: Many corporations provide their employees with a “Matching Funds Program” to the charity of their choice. The amount may vary with each company. We suggest that you check with the Human Resources Department or the Comptroller of the company where you are employed to see if such a program is being offered.

St. Michael Church has benefited by all of the above from its members. For more information please speak with Ron Zraick, Chairman of the Capital Funds Campaign Committee <ronaldzraick@yahoo.com>.

Establishing a Prayer Discipline

Have you ever found praying to be difficult? Do you feel too busy to pray? Or perhaps you don't know where to begin? Maybe you have found it hard to focus, or even experienced emptiness when you pray. If so, you're not alone. For many Orthodox Christians, prayer can be misunderstood, or even frustrating. But prayer is how we build an intimate relationship with the living God! The reality is that cultivating that relationship takes time and effort. Our parish is partnering with Faithtree Resources in *The Encounter*, a prayer initiative that will help us grow closer to God, closer to each other, and to grow in our faith.

Made up of daily Orthodox prayers that you can utilize on a free app, or through a physical prayer book, *The Encounter* is a simple and easy way to begin to grow in your prayer life and do so with others in our community.

If you'd like more information about participating, sign up on the google doc here: tinyurl.com/encounterfaithtree [Your fellow parishioner, Elizabeth Waters]



The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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Phone: 201-871-1355 Fax: 201-871-7954

E-Mail: theorder@antiochian.org

December 11, 2020

Christ is in our Midst!

During this Advent period of our Orthodox faith we prepare ourselves in joyful anticipation for the Greatest Gift of all ... our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. On behalf of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch Governing Council, we want to express our sincere gratitude for your membership but more importantly for taking on "the responsibility" to become a part of our ministry that helps change countless lives. We pray that during this Blessed Season and throughout the year that you continue to receive God's blessings of grace, compassion and love along with His many other gifts to us that are both seen and unseen in our daily lives. May God bless you and keep you under His watchful care.

As a member of the Order and in a spirit of compassion, you not only give of what you have but you also strive to do it in a spirit of humility and love. You give without expecting anything in return and without recognition by the Order's recipients. Your gift is an unconditional, personal sacrifice. It is an act of Faith that is infinite in its effect.

In Fiscal year 2020 the impact of your gift to the Order has been felt by many and in countless ways. The Order's Fiscal Year 2020 actual expenses included \$297,014 to support our retired clergy, active clergy and seminarians. You helped fund \$390,924 for the youth of the Antiochian Archdiocese (including camp scholarships). \$254,988 was provided to support programs and departments for the development & growth of the Antiochian Archdiocese. You've also helped give \$43,000 toward outreach organizations which include but are not limited to Project Mexico, SOYO Special Olympics and the IOCC.

Clergy	\$297,014	Archdiocese Development & Growth	\$254,988
Retired Clergy Housing Allowance	\$270,000	Missions & Evangelism	\$129,996
Married Seminarian Assistance	\$14,965	Parish Development / Mission Grants	\$24,996
Clergy Symposium & Convention Assistance	\$12,049	Internet Ministry	\$99,996
Archdiocese Youth	\$390,924	Other Grants	\$43,000
Summer Camp Scholarships	\$190,000	Project Mexico	\$10,000
Youth Ministry	\$120,000	SOYO Special Olympics	\$8,000
SOYO Leadership & Youth Worker Training	\$25,928	IOCC	\$25,000
Christian Education	\$39,996		
College Conference	\$15,000		

On behalf of all the members of the Order, we thank you for accepting "the responsibility" ... to take care of each other as we commit to financially provide for and reassure our retired clergy during their golden years, to strengthen our children in their Orthodox Faith, to help share and to reveal Orthodoxy throughout North America to people of any nationality, background or socioeconomic position and to become part of the families of our married seminarians by assisting them financially so they can answer God's call. We thank you in sincere gratitude and humility.

So as you contemplate your support of the Order over the years, encourage your family and friends to become a part of the Order, or consider becoming a part of The Order's ministry for the first time, we leave you with what we believe should be in your heart. These words are what guide our work as a Governing Council and come from the teachings of St. Ignatius himself ...

"Let no man's place, or dignity, or riches, puff him up; and let no man's low condition or poverty abase him. For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those good things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbor."

In His service,

Roger J. David
North American Chairperson
The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

PASTORAL SERMON
The Sunday Before the Nativity
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
December 20, 2020

Each year, on the Sunday before Christmas in all Orthodox Churches we hear the genealogy of Jesus, recorded at the beginning of Saint Matthew's Gospel (1:1-25). It is actually one of two genealogies on Jesus presented by the Gospel writers in the New Testament of the Bible. The other is found in the Gospel of Saint Luke. In St. Luke's Gospel, however, the genealogical list is in reverse order, beginning with Jesus and ending with Adam. Each Gospel writer had his own reason for presenting a lineage. In fact, the names included in one Gospel, as well as those that were not included in the other, were intentional choices by each writer for the purpose of making a point.

St. Matthew's genealogy is chosen because it reveals that Christ truly became a man, taking on our nature. We hear from the text of the *Synaxarion*: "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, like David, who also repented greatly."

The value of the Gospel genealogies lies not in their legal or historical accuracy but rather in their spiritual meaning, they place an emphasis upon the fact that Christ did in fact become a man, but they also demonstrate the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. Man's failure did not mean that it was all over, or that God had failed or made a mistake.

Unique to the genealogy of Jesus in St. Matthew's gospel is that women are included, while in St. Luke's Gospel, they are not. In fact, one of the women mentioned, whose name is Rahab, was a Gentile prostitute. The list also includes: Tamar, who committed incest, Ruth a Gentile, and even the adulteress, Bathsheba. David is mentioned, who not only committed murder, but was also an adulterer. **St. Matthew intentionally demonstrates that the Lord's incarnation was the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. By being born a man in human flesh, the**

Lord completely identified with the human race, with men and women of flesh and blood, failings and all. However, as the “new Adam” (see Romans 5:12-18), Christ was perfect Man by voluntarily choosing obedience to the will of God the Father. And this is what Christmas is all about.

Again from the text of the *Synaxarion* we hear: “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 did 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.”

St. John Chrysostom says that Christ was not embarrassed by the *skeletons* hidden in His ancestors’ closets. The conclusion of the genealogy is the beginning of a new generation – the age of the Messiah – and we are part of it as Christians. The age of preparation and promise is over; the *fullness of time* has arrived – a new age of completion and fulfillment. Very shortly we will also celebrate what is the culmination of this wondrous season: It is the Great Feast of Holy Theophany: The baptism of our Lord by John in the River Jordan. It is the Feast which is the full revelation of God as Trinity: the Divine Son of God as *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world*, the descent of the Holy Spirit and the confirming word of God the Father.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Son of David, Son of Abraham, the Son of Mary, as we behold your humble birth, we pray Thee: Be merciful unto us sinners, and renew us by your presence, cleansing us from all sin as we now draw near to Thy Holy Table and dare to partake of your Holy Body and precious Blood. Sanctify our souls, purify our thoughts, cleanse our minds and deliver us from the Evil One. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. A-men.

THE 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

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الأول

إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ لَمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، وَجَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الْجَنْدِ، قُمْتَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّالِثِ أَيْهَا
 الْمَخْلُصُ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الْحَيَاةَ. فَلذَلِكَ قَوَاتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ هَتَفُوا إِلَيْكَ يَا وَاهِبَ الْحَيَاةِ: الْمَجْدُ
 لِقِيَامَتِكَ أَيْهَا الْمَسِيحُ، الْمَجْدُ لِمَلِكِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِنَدْبِيرِكَ يَا مُحَبَّ الْبَشَرِ وَحَدِّكَ

طروبارية الأحد الذي قبل الميلاد على اللحن الثاني

عَظِيمَةٌ هِيَ مَفَاعِيلُ الْإِيمَانِ، فِيهِ ابْتَهَجَ الثَّلَاثَةُ الْفَتِيَّةُ الْقَدِيسُونَ فِي يَنْبُوعِ الْهَيْبِ كَأَنَّهُمْ عَلَى
 مَاءِ الرَّاحَةِ. وَدَانِيَالُ النَّبِيُّ ظَهَرَ رَاعِياً لِلْأَسْوَدِ كَأَنَّهَا غَنَمٌ. فَبِتَضَرُّعَاتِهِمْ، أَيْهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ،
 خَلَصَ نَفُوسَنَا.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة بالحن الرابع

أَيْهَا الْمُتَقَدِّمُونَ عَلَى الْأَجْنَادِ السَّمَاوِيِّينَ، نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكُمْ نَحْنُ غَيْرِ الْمُسْتَحَقِّينَ، حَتَّى أَنْكُمْ
 بِطَلْبَاتِكُمْ تَكْتَوْفُونَا بِظِلِّ أَجْنَحَةِ مَجْدِكُمْ غَيْرِ الْهَيُولِيِّ، حَافِظِينَ إِيَّانَا نَحْنُ الْجَائِثِينَ
 وَالصَّارِحِينَ بِغَيْرِ فِتُورٍ، أَنْقَدُونَا مِنَ الشَّدَائِدِ، بِمَا أَنْكُمْ رُؤَسَاءُ مَرَاتِبِ الْقَوَاتِ الْعُلُويَّةِ.

قنداق تقدمة الميلاد على اللحن الثالث

الْيَوْمَ الْعِذْرَاءُ تَأْتِي إِلَى الْمَغَارَةِ، لَتَلِدَ الْكَلِمَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَ الدَّهْوَرِ، وَوَلَادَةً لَا تُفَسَّرُ، وَلَا يُنْطَقُ
 بِهَا، فَافْرَحِي أَيْتَهَا الْمَسْكُونَةُ إِذَا سَمَعْتِ، وَمَجْدِي مَعَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرَّعَاةِ، الظَّاهِرَ بِمَشْنَتِهِ
 طِفْلاً جَدِيداً، وَهُوَ الْإِلَهُ قَبْلَ الدَّهْوَرِ.

الرسالة

مبارك أنت، اله آباننا، لأنك عادل في كل ما صنعتَه لنا.
 فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى العبرانيين.

يا اخوة، بالإيمان نزل إبراهيم في أرض الميعاد نزوله في أرض غريبة، وأقام في الخيام مع اسحق ويعقوب شريكه في الوعد ذاته، لأنه كان ينتظر المدينة ذات الأسس التي لله صانعها وبانيها. وماذا أقول أيضا؟ الوقت يضيق بي إذا أخبرت عن جدعون وباراق وشمشون ويفتاح وداود وسموئيل. فهم بالإيمان أخضعوا الممالك وعملوا البر ونالوا المواعد وسدوا أفواه الأسود. وأخمدوا لهيب النار ونجوا من حدّ السيف، وتغلبوا على الضعف وصاروا أبطالاً في الحروب وكسروا جيوش الغرباء واسترجعت نساء أمواتهنّ بالقيامة. وعذب آخرون بالضرب ورفضوا النجاة في سبيل القيامة إلى حياة أفضل، وقاسى آخرون الهزء والجلد، والقيود أيضاً والسجن. ورجموا ونشروا وقتلوا بحدّ السيف وهاموا على وجوههم لابسين جلود الغنم والماعز محرومين مضايقين مظلومين، لا يستحقهم العالم، فتأهوا في البراري والجبال والمغاور وكهوف الأرض. فلم يحصل هؤلاء على الوعد، مع أنهم مشهود لهم بالإيمان، لأنّ الله سبق فأعدّ لنا مصيراً أفضل من مصيرهم وشاء أن لا يصيروا كاملين بدوننا.

الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس متى

سجل انتساب يسوع المسيح ابن داود ابن إبراهيم: إبراهيم ولد اسحق. واسحق ولد يعقوب. ويعقوب ولد يهوذا واخوته. ويهوذا ولد فارص وزارح من ثامار. وفارص ولد حصرون. وحصرون ولد أرام. وأرام ولد عميناداب. وعميناداب ولد نحشون. ونحشون ولد سلمون. وسلمون ولد بوعز من راحاب. وبوعز ولد عوبيد من راعوث. وعوبيد ولد يسي. ويسي ولد داود الملك. وداود ولد سليمان من أرملة أوريا. وسليمان ولد رحبعام. ورحبعام ولد أبيا. وأبيا ولد آسا. وآسا ولد يهوشافاط. ويهوشافاط ولد يورام. ويورام ولد عزيا. وعزيا ولد يوثام. ويوثام ولد أحاز. وأحاز ولد حزقيا. وحزقيا ولد منسى. ومنسى ولد أمون. وأمون ولد يوشيا. ويوشيا ولد يكنيا وإخوته زمن السبي إلى بابل. وبعد السبي إلى بابل يكنيا ولد شلتيل. وشلتيل ولد زربابل. وزربابل ولد أبيهود. وأبيهود ولد ألياقيم. وألياقيم ولد عازور. وعازور ولد صادوق. وصادوق ولد أخيم. وأخيم ولد أليود. وأليود ولد أليعازر. وأليعازر ولد متان. ومتان ولد

يعقوب. ويعقوب ولد يوسف رجل مريم التي ولد منها يسوع الذي يدعى المسيح. فمجموع الأجيال من إبراهيم إلى داود أربعة عشر جيلا، ومن داود إلى سبي بابل أربعة عشر جيلا، ومن سبي بابل إلى المسيح أربعة عشر جيلا. أما ميلاد يسوع فهكذا كان: لما كانت أمه مريم مخطوبة ليوسف، وجدت قبل أن تسكن معه حبلى من الروح القدس. وكان يوسف رجلها باراً، فلم يرد أن يشهر أمرها، فعزم على أن يتركها سرا. وبينما هو يفكر في الأمر ظهر له ملاك الرب في الحلم وقال له: يا يوسف ابن داود، لا تخف أن تجيء بامرأتك مريم إلى بيتك. فإن الذي كون فيها هو من الروح القدس. وستلد ابناً فسمّه يسوع، لأنه يخلص شعبه من خطاياهم. حدث هذا كله ليتم ما قال الرب على لسان النبي: ها هي العذراء تحبل، فتلد ابناً يدعى عمانوئيل، أي الله معنا. فلما قام يوسف من النوم، صنع ما أمره به ملاك الرب، فجاء بامرأته إلى بيته، ولم يعرفها حتى ولدت ابنها البكر، فسماه يسوع.

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعنى عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المشاركة في سر القربان المقدس هنا مقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسية والذين يحضرون أنفسهم بالصلاة والصوم والاعتراف منذ فترة قريبة (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة في الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية.