

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 Beatitude, Patriarch JOHN X, of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch
and all the East www.antiochpatrarchate.com
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The Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (the Genealogy)

Martyrs Sebastian and Zoe of Rome, and those with them

Sunday, December 18, 2022

Tone 2; Eothinon 5

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 2)

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 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 18 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs Sebastian and Zoe of Rome, and those with them.

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 Ron & Kathy Zraick for the six-year memorial of Protosyngelos Paul Doyle (+17 December, 2016) of blessed memory and eternal repose. Memory eternal.

Holy Bread and Wheat are being offered by the Apostolou and Turley families for the one-year memorial of the servant of God, Emily Apostolou (+7 December 2021), beloved wife of John Apostolou, father and grandfather. Memory eternal. αἰώνια ἡ μνήμη

Holy bread is lovingly offered by Minnie Tobey Lush in joyous celebration of her dear children, Nicole and Robert Webster's 18-year wedding anniversary. Minnie especially prays for God's unending blessings for her daughter, Nicole, for her constant devotion to her care and well-being, and for Robert, aiding her in all faithful and selfless endeavors. What more dedicated a daughter and son-in-law could a mother have? May God grant Nicole and Robert, a long, happy healthy life together filled with God's abundant blessings.

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

for Ron & Kathy Zraick, celebrating their 64th wedding anniversary
(December 17th). May God grant them many years!

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

for the speedy recovery and continued health of Samir & Amira Boutari

for the repose of the newly-departed Raymond Snare
(+13 December, 2022), close friend of Rachel Grundler's father,
Philip Freed. Memory eternal.

by Mae Tortolano for the successful surgery and
speedy recovery of Rima Hage

for the speedy recovery and good health of
Mandy & Constantine Nasr and family.

by Subdeacon Richard Tamoush for the healing and speedy recovery of
James George Fadel, the brother of Georgia Fadel Tamoush.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 Elizabeth House in Pasadena much happier this Christmas. We especially thank, Brittney Ajalat for her help as coordinator.

We also thank everyone who contributed to this year's Teen SOYO Holiday Raffle that ended. The drawing took place on Sunday, December 11, at the end of our Church School Christmas Program; the proceeds of which will contribute towards our teen programs and The Special Olympics Sports Camp. The winners were: 1st Place, Waleed Moujaes; 2nd Place, Nick Miller; 3rd Place, August Maturo. Congratulations!

SCHEDULE OF FESTAL SERVICES

[Live-streaming of our services has been temporarily suspended, however the services of The Royal Hours will be viewed live at the designated times.]

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

Friday, December 23rd (Fourth Day of the Forefeast)

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

The Ninth Royal Hour at 3 p.m. followed by Vespers of the Forefeast

Saturday, December 24th (Saturday before the Nativity; the *Paramon*)

Orthros of the Forefeast, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom,* 10 a.m.

Great Vespers of the Nativity, 3 p.m.

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

The Great Feast of The Holy Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ

Sunday, December 25th – Orthros and the Christmas Canon, 8:30 a.m.,

Followed by the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great,* 10 a.m.

The Leave-taking of the Holy Nativity

Saturday, December 31st (New Year’s Eve) — Great Vespers, 5 p.m.
with prayers for the New Year

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

Sunday, January 1st (New Year’s Day) – Orthros, 8:30 a.m.;

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

THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)

Thursday, 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*



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: PV016/2022

Nativity 2022

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!



Blessed is He Who gave Thee to us without our asking,
so that by Thee we might thank Thy Father for His gift.

—St. Ephraim the Syrian, Hymn 4 on the Nativity

On this holy feast of the Nativity of Christ, God gives us everything through Christ: true knowledge of Him, inspiration to seek Him, empowerment to serve Him, and the means by which to thank and praise Him. May His Gift spiritually enrich all our lives, always and in every way.

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous feast, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

✠Metropolitan ANTONIOS

Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies
Patriarchal Vicar of New York and All North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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**December Virtual Parish Council Meeting - Monday,
December 18 at 6 p.m.**

**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,

In approaching the end of this calendar year our Parish Council is preparing to provide us with our 2023 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 the General Fund 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 fulfilled commitments of all who have provided us with contributions to complete the construction of our new church sanctuary. Additional information will be provided at our Annual Parish Meeting to all pledging and regular contributing members 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

**SAINT MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH
2023 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, credit card payments in-person, automatic bill pay, automatic payments from your bank (See back). Church address: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406-4622; Website: www.stmichaelvannuys.org

Ways to pay your pledge or donation:

- 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

Name Age

Name Age

Name Age

Frequently Asked Questions When Completing a Pledge Form

What is the reason for completing an annual parish Pledge Form?

Each year planning for budgeted receipts and expenditures are an important part of being responsible stewards of Christ's church. Some of our month-to-month expenses include: priest and staff salaries, utility and maintenance expenses, the payment of taxes on all investment (income) property (yes, churches do pay property taxes), and insurances. Moreover, it is not uncommon for these regular expenses increase each year. It is a goal of our Parish Council to meet these expenses with the contributions of our members. The Pastor does not receive stipends (monetary gifts) for house blessings, baptisms, weddings and funerals if a family is not enrolled as a regular contributor of the parish. The Pastor's living expenses and allowances are included the Annual Budget of the parish that will be presented at our Annual Meeting on January 29th.

Our 2023 Pledge Form is provided with this bulletin and available on our parish website.

The form may be completed and returned to the Church Office at: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys; California; 91406; or placed in the narthex offering box. Thank you for your continued support of our parish.

Parish Christmas Card

Our 2022 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.

**December is “St. Ignatius Month” in the Antiochian Archdiocese
Learn more about The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch with the
attachment provided with this bulletin (below)**

Reading the epistle this morning is our Project Manager, Michael J. Malouf

Upcoming Events

[Note: You may now access our Google Parish Calendar
to your personal calendar.

Here is the link: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/1?cid=YWRtaW5Ac3RtaWNoYWVsdmFubnV5cy5vcmc>]

Questions and Answer Session with Metropotlian ANTONIOS -

Saturday, December 17 at St. Nicholas Cathedral following
Great Vespers at 6 p.m. and a Reception

St. Nicholas Cathedral New Year’s Celebration - 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 31st; \$155/person; \$55/ages 5-12

Special Convention of the Antiochian Archdiocese

Thursday-Friday, January 12-13, 2023; Dallas, Texas

Young Adult Ministry Winter Retreat - January 13-16, 2023

at Big Bear; \$225/person by December 3 (see flier)

Our Weekly Bible Study Will Resume in January 2022

Our study of the Book of Genesis will resume on Tuesday, January 10, 2023.
Recorded links of our study are available upon request.

Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Report Booklet

The Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership will be held on Sunday, January 29, 2023. In the best interest of time, a Report Booklet will be prepared for distribution prior to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22. 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, 2023 in order to be compile on time for distribution to the Voting Membership.

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.

Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.

Holy Bread Offering List

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Dec 24 (The Pre-Feast) - open

Dec 25 (The Holy Nativity) - open

Jan 01 - open

Jan 06 (Holy Theophany) - open

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread or host the coffee hour.

Building Fund Capital Funds Campaign

Our Building Project will not be complete until all of the external requirements that have been temporarily postponed are contracted. This means that our ongoing financial support will be needed. We have been able to reach this point in our project without a commercial loan, however, we welcome Promissory Note Agreements that can help us to complete all of our obligations with the City of Los Angeles.

The funding of our Building Project is divided in two parts: Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 is the actual church building that includes the exterior property improvements required by the City of Los Angeles Building Department. The exterior property improvement requirements include: a) a new Vanowen Street base wall and fence, electric gate, landscaping (now complete); b) parking lot repairs, including slurry sealing, stripping (currently underway); c) disabled persons and low emission vehicle signs (now completed); c) a bicycle rack (just completed); d) a trash shed enclosure that must also be erected, with water and power provided to the structure. As a “public use facility,” St. Michael Church is also required to complete: e) electrical vehicle parking space connections.

Phase 2 of the Project includes the interior Byzantine church iconography and furniture that many of you have witnessed in the course of construction. The fifth installation of iconography in the narthex is scheduled to begin at the turn of the year. The work has been overseen by our Pastor, the V. Rev. Timothy Baclig.

We need everyone's continued financial support of Phase I of the Project since we have fallen short in funding to complete the external requirements.

As you consider your possible tax liability to the IRS for 2022, we ask that you consider making a donation to the St. Michael Church Building Fund which can be a substantial tax deduction for you. It truly is a win-win situation for you and St. Michael. Please consider a financial contribution according to your situation, with a cheerful heart.

If you have any questions with regards to Phase 1 please direct them to our Project Manager Michael Malouf michael@jacksonia.com, Ron Zraick ronaldzraick@gmail.com, and for any questions regarding Phase 2 Sponsorships to Fr. Timothy at: frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org

Bear in mind that your first responsibility is an annual pledge to the General Fund of our parish in support of our month-to-month expenses. Pledge Forms for the New Year are now available with this bulletin and may be provided to any parishioner upon request.

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.

The Encounter is 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

PASTORAL SERMON
The Sunday Before the Nativity
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
December 18, 2022

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.

EOTHINON 5

الايوثينا 5

STONE 2

الحن 2

**THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY),
MARTYRS SEBASTIAN AND ZOE OF ROME, AND THOSE WITH THEM**

طروبارية القيامة على الحن الثاني

عندما انحدرت إلى الموت، أيها الحياة الذي لا يموت، حينئذ أمتّ الجحيم ببرق لاهوتك، وعندما أقمت
الأموات من تحت الثرى، صرّحْ نحوك جميعُ القواتِ السماويين أيها المسيحُ الإلهُ المعطي الحياة،
المجدُ لك.

طروبارية الأحد الذي قبل الميلاد على الحن الثاني

عظيمةٌ هي مفاعيلُ الإيمانِ، فيه ابتهجُ الثلاثةُ الفتيةُ القديسون في ينبوعِ اللهبِ كأنهم على
ماءِ الراحة. ودانيال النبي ظهرَ راعياً للأسودِ كأنها غنمٌ. فبتضرعاتهم، أيها المسيحُ الإلهُ،
خلصْ نفوسنا.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة بالحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسلُ إليكم نحن غير المستحقين، حتّى أنكم
بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظلِّ أجنحةِ مجدكم غير الهولي، حافظين إيانا نحن الجائين
والصارخين بغير فتور، أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القواتِ العلوية.

قنداق تقدمة الميلاد على الحن الثالث

اليومَ العذراءُ تأتي إلى المغارة، لتلدَ الكلمةَ الذي قبلَ الدهورِ، ولادةً لا تُفسرُ، ولا يُنطقُ
بها، فافرحي أيتها المسكونةُ إذا سمعتِ، ومجّدي مع الملائكةِ والرعاةِ، الظاهرَ بمشئتهِ
طفلاً جديداً، وهو الإلهُ قبلَ الدهورِ.

الرسالة

مبارك أنت، اله آباننا، لأنك عادل في كل ما صنعتنا 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 أمواتهن بالقيامة. وعذب آخرون بالضرب ورفضوا النجاة في سبيل القيامة إلى حياة أفضل، وقاسى آخرون الهزء والجلد، والقيود أيضا 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، لأن الله سبق فأعد 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 بوغز من راحاب. وبوغز 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 يوئام. ويوئام ولد أحاز. وأحاز ولد حزقيا. وحزقيا ولد منسى. ومنسى ولد

آمون. وآمون ولد يوشيا. ويوشيا ولد يكنيا وإخوته زمن السبي إلى بابل. وبعد السبي إلى بابل يكنيا ولد شألتيل. وشألتيل ولد زربابل. وزربابل ولد أبيهود. وأبيهود ولد ألياقيم. وألياقيم ولد عازور. وعازور ولد صادق. وسادوق 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. 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 بأمرأتك 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 فى الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية.