

December 12, 2021
Second Sunday before the Nativity



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

Use the Typica Book this Sunday

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., DEC. 12 **SECOND SUNDAY** before the **NATIVITY**, of the **FOREFATHERS**,
FEAST of the **THEOTOKOS** of **GUADELUPE**
8:30 A.M. **TYPICA SERVICE** with Communion

SUN., DEC. 19 **SUNDAY** before the **NATIVITY**, of the **ANCESTORS** of **CHRIST**
8:30 A.M. **DIVINE LITURGY**
+ Anna George, offered by Matthew & Julianne Hillman

Typica Service Today

Father Geoff is quarantined for Covid. There was no priest available on short notice so we will have a Typica Service with Communion this Sunday with Deacon Tom.

Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.

Malachi 3:10

Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

December 16: Serafina Zimmerman

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Mary Salamon, John Simunick

Ann Trombulak – **Rochester Manor:** (174 Virginia Ave., Rochester, PA 15074)

Josephine Maruhnich – **Beaver Elder Care** (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001)

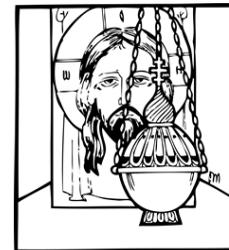
Betty Polas – **Apple Blossom Senior Living** (125 Apple Blossom Wy, #307, Moon Twp., PA 15108)

Carol Huchko – **Concordia at Villa St. Joseph** (1040 State St, Baden, PA 15005)

Epistle Readers – Dec. 12: L. Hersh – Dec. 19: P. Peya

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Dec. 12: J. Yurosky – Dec. 19: R. Mudron



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

December 12 - 18, 2021

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Joseph Klacik

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

JoAnn & Francis Hersh



This icon is a detail of an icon of the Holy Forefathers and Patriarchs, who foretold the coming of the Messiah.

Upcoming Divine Services Schedule

Christmas Eve Great Compline, caroling, and Divine Liturgy at **St. George** at 7:00 PM
Christmas Day..... Divine Liturgy at **St. Mary** at 9:00 AM
December 26...Synaxis of the Theotokos/Sunday after Christmas, Sunday Liturgy here as usual 8:30 AM
December 27 Protomartyr St. Stephen Holy Day, Divine Liturgy at **St. Mary** at 9:00 AM
December 31Vesperal Divine Liturgy for the Circumcision/St. Basil at **St. George** at 6:00 PM

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

What is the nature of the invitation? "Come, for look, all things are ready." God the Father has prepared in Christ gifts for the inhabitants of the earth. Through Christ, he bestowed the forgiveness of sins, cleansing away of all defilement, communion of the Holy Spirit, glorious adoption as children, and the kingdom of heaven. To these blessings, Christ invited Israel, before all others, by the commandments of the Gospel. He has even said by the voice of the psalmist: "*But I have been sent as a king by him,*" that is, by God the Father, "*on Zion his holy mountain to preach the commandment of the Lord.*" (Psalm 2:6)

(St. Cyril of Alexandria)



As we prepare for the Christmas and Theophany holy days let us not lose sight of the fact that we have been invited to a Great Feast. Let's not let the presents, trimming and other preparations blind us to the coming of the Savior. *Come, Lord Jesus, come!*

Decorating the Church Today

As part of our preparation for the Nativity of Christ, we will decorate our holy Church today following the service. We are asking men to stay and help out with putting up the trees and EVERYONE to help with decorations for this sacred time of the year. *Thank you!*

Sanctuary Candles for 2022 - The 2022 weekly sanctuary candle intentions are available for you to sponsor with your intention in memory of a deceased loved one or friend, or for the health and well-being of a friend or loved one. Please see Joanne Futato at the candle table in the narthex if you wish to sponsor the weekly candle.

Christmas Altar Candles

A sign-up sheet is now in the Narthex to donate altar candles for Christmas.

Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

A Note from Father Geoff

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In addition to today being the Sunday of the Forefathers (commemorating the ancestors of our Lord according to the flesh), it is the Feast of the Theotokos of Guadalupe. This feast commemorates the appearance of the Mother of God to St. Juan Diego in 1531 on the Hill of Tepeyac in what is now a suburb of Mexico City. It is a feast that has been close to my own heart since I visited the site of the apparition and saw St. Juan's holy tilma when I was 13 years old. Although I was a young, evangelical boy at the time, I believe that the *Virgen de Guadalupe* has been leading and guiding me ever since that first, moving encounter.

It may seem strange to have such a "Western" commemoration on our Byzantine Catholic Calendar. But the reality is that the appearance at Tepeyac is a very powerful witness to the *universality* of the love of God and the call of the Gospel of Christ. In a time of colonialism and empire, the Mother of God appeared to a poor Aztec man, spoke to him in his native Nahuatl language, and appeared as Mestizo (a person of mixed race). In doing so, the message from heaven was clear: the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for *all* people, of every language, race, nation, and origin. Christ died for *all*. In 1895, Pope Leo declared the Virgin of Guadalupe "Patroness of the Americas."

Our Lady, especially under her apparition and title of the Theotokos of Guadalupe, is a powerful witness to the sanctity of life both in the womb (as she appeared as pregnant with the Holy Child) and beyond. She represents the dignity of all people as made in the image and likeness of God and deserving of our respect and protection. As we sing in the Troparion: "*All the poor, hungry, and oppressed seek you, Lady of Guadalupe!*"

May our Lord, through the intercessions of his Mother, the Virgin of Guadalupe, inspire us to pray and work for the good of our brothers and sisters, especially the most vulnerable and powerless. And may our lives be witnesses to the universal and limitless love of God in Christ Jesus, in our lives, in our parish and in our communities.

Gloria a Jesucristo!

Fr. Geoff

Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

Sunday of the Forefathers

All too often when we read the Gospel we keep the words of Jesus at arm's length, never letting them sink in and really challenge our life. Why? Most of the time the reason that we would prefer to pass over our Lord's teaching in a superficial way is because his teachings are truly challenging and life changing if we allow them to have their full impact. Today's Gospel is one of those "challenging" teachings of Jesus. "Many are called but few are chosen," Jesus tells us in the Gospel today and these words are spoken to us today just as much as they were spoken to Jesus' hearers two thousand years ago. *"Many are called but few are chosen."*

Among those who hear this Gospel passage today in the Church most will allow Jesus' words to pass over them with little or no serious consideration. A few however, hearing these words will respond to Jesus by asking how one is to be "chosen." The invitation to participate in God's life, the invitation to salvation, is offered to all, as Saint Paul says in the Epistle, "Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, Barbarian and Scythian, slave and freeman." However, not all respond to the invitation. Many then, and many today, find more important things with which to occupy their lives. The way of salvation begins with an invitation on God's part, but to that invitation we must respond in a real way. All of us are invited to the wedding banquet (heaven), but not all of us will choose to go.

Choosing to go is not simply an intellectual act – it is not a matter of mere words. To go to the wedding banquet of God we must, as any good wedding guest must do, prepare ourselves. We must make ourselves acceptable to God so that when we arrive we will be chosen to enter. Are we willing to prepare ourselves to enter into heaven or will we find something more important to do with our lives?

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

1. What things in our life do we spend the most time being concerned about?
2. If our first concern is not for God and our salvation, can we really expect to be among the chosen few?
3. What things can cause us not to respond to God's invitation?
4. What practical steps can I take to be sure to make God's invitation the most important thing in my life?
5. How does my life look different if I am preparing for the wedding feast of Jesus or if I am not?

Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

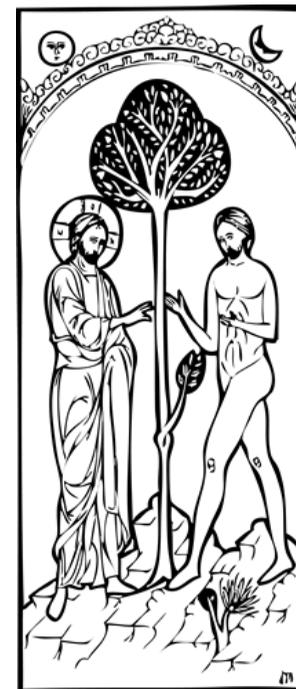
Sunday of the Forefathers

Today is the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. Every year, two Sundays before we celebrate the Nativity of Christ, we remember His forefathers, His relatives according to the flesh. This remembrance is given to us for a very specific reason, which is mentioned by our holy father Gregory Palamas in one of his homilies for this very Sunday. St. Gregory writes that this Sunday is given to us so that we can know that the Hebrews were not cut off by God, nor were the Christians grafted on (as St. Paul writes) in a way that was unjust or unreasonable. There is an inner continuation between the Old and the New Covenants. In learning this, we're offered a warning from the history of God's chosen people.

The forefathers of Christ were, for the most part, Jews. They were from the Chosen People of God in order to prepare the people and eventually bring forth the Messiah from them. The Fathers of the Church are very careful to make sure we understand that being a chosen people doesn't mean you're better than everyone else. The Chosen People are chosen by an all-knowing God to fulfill His purposes. All of Hebrew people were the Chosen People, but only some of the people are recognized to be the forefathers of Christ.

This is where the great importance of this day for us is seen. It is a reminder that our relationship with God, as members of the New Covenant, is based on the same factor as those members of the Old Covenant - the true members of Christ are those who do the will of God. Outward membership in the Church is not enough. What we learn on this Sunday is the fact that being chosen by God is an inner transformation. Through the history of God's dealing with us, it was not outward but inward obedience that indicates chosen-ness. In our understanding of the New Testament to be chosen by God for salvation means that we choose God. The Church is the New Covenant, the chosen people...but we must choose to be her members. So, the question put before us by the Church today: are we living as true members of the Body of Christ?

Through faith You justified the Forefathers, betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles. These saints exult in glory, for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:



Come, O Jesus, our Savior, redeem and save us!

SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, Louisa Hersh, David Klacik E.C.F. coordinator: Jo Ann Hersh

Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate

O Christ the Savior, source of our Salvation, come to us and save us!

