

December 19, 2021
Sunday before the Nativity, of the Ancestors



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

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

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 5: pg. 146 & For the Ancestors: pp. 285 -287

Divine Services for the Week:

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

FRI., DEC. 24 **CHRISTMAS EVE**
7:00 P.M. **GREAT COMPLINE** and **DIVINE LITURGY** for the **NATIVITY**
For the Parishioners

(At St. Mary: Saturday, Dec. 25, 9:00 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Nativity)

SUN., DEC. 26 **SUNDAY** after **THE NATIVITY**, **Synaxis of the Theotokos**
8:30 A.M. **DIVINE LITURGY**
+ Sr. Rose Elizabeth, offered by Sr. Mary Virginia

(At St. Mary: Monday, Dec. 27, 9:00 AM, Divine Liturgy for St. Stephen Holy Day)

FRI., DEC. 31 **CIRCUMCISION** of our **LORD**, **ST. BASIL**, *Anticipated*
6:00 PM **VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY**
+ Philomena Rossi, offered by Yolanda Barbuto

*He shall be born unto us, and God will be with us;
And we shall find Him in the cave of Bethlehem.*

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

December 21: Ella Zimmerman, December 22: Joanne Futato, Suzanne Klacik

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)

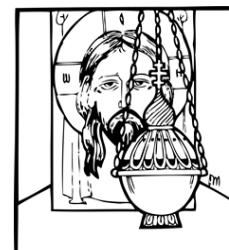
Betty Polas – **Apple Blossom Senior Living** (125 Apple Blossom Wy, #307, Moon Twp., PA 15108)

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

Epistle Readers – Dec. 19: P. Peya – Dec. 26: J. Hersh

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders– Dec. 19: R. Mudron – Dec. 26: F. Hersh



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

December 19 - 24, 2021

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Bob Fedell

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

Wife, Eleanor & family



Excerpts from Christ our Pascha: The Incarnation of the Son of God

The Nativity of Christ: Creation joyfully welcomes God in the flesh, bearing gifts for the newborn Child: angels—their song; the heavens—a star; the magi—gold, frankincense, and myrrh; the shepherds—their wonder; the earth—a cave; the deserted place—a manger; humankind—the Virgin Mother. The mystery of the Nativity, namely God's entry into human history, continues to this day: "Today has God come upon earth, and the human race gone up to heaven." (#195)

In our Church's tradition, the Eve of the Nativity feast, also called Holy Eve (*Svjatyj Vecer/Velija*), is honored with particular solemnity. Every home becomes a Bethlehem of the family: the table symbolizes the manger; straw is placed under the tablecloth, and upon the tablecloth are placed the prosphora (Communion bread), a symbol of the Child Jesus. A lit candle is placed next to the prosphora to symbolize the star of Bethlehem. With a meatless supper, the family gathers around the table to prayerfully honor the incarnate Son of God. Christmas carols are sung by the faithful. In hospitality, homes open their doors to everyone who celebrates the Nativity of Christ. The high point of the celebration of the Nativity feast is the solemn divine service, for which all parishioners gather. The Eucharistic Supper at the Divine Liturgy crowns the family supper. (#196)



Thank you to all who decorated our Holy Church for the Christmas season!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!

A Note from Father Geoff

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... The true Light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world." - John 1.5, 9

We Christians in the Northern Hemisphere always have the Winter Solstice - the longest night of the year - in the week leading up to Christmas. I've always thought that this provides us with a beautiful symbol from the natural world: that the Light of the World comes to us in the midst of the darkest night.

"Darkness," of course is not just something that we experience at night, but is an ancient metaphor for many things. Darkness is associated with wickedness, ignorance, abandonment, and being lost. The Psalmist sings of the Lord's provision in darkness, putting in the Lord's mouth, as it were: *"You will not fear the terror of the night"* (Ps. 91).

Darkness represents the human person apart from the light of God's presence and grace. So I find it wonderfully, mysteriously appropriate and encouraging that we celebrate the coming of Christ into the world when our world is the darkest.

All the way back in the Book of Leviticus, God promised to his people, *"I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people."* (Lev. 26.12) And the Prophet Isaiah, looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, prophesied: *"Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."* (Is. 7) Emmanuel means, "God with us."

This is the great truth and promise of Christmas: that God is with us. It is not a promise that our lives will be without difficulty, pain, frustration, loss, or care. Our lives will not be completely without darkness until the great Last Day (which you can read about in Revelation 21.23-27). But in the meantime, **God is with us!** God has come among us. He has lived a human life. He understands our cares and concerns, our worries and fears. And he is with us *in them*.

The answer to all our prayers in the darkness of our lives is God himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, who has come among us and continues to be present to each and all of us by his Spirit. God answers all of our prayers with *himself*.

Glory to God who, by his Incarnation, has united heaven to earth and earth to heaven; who, by his Incarnation has glorified all of creation; who, by his Incarnation has come to live and dwell among us. Glory to our gracious God!

May these last few days of the Nativity Fast bring you closer and closer to his loving, Sacred Heart. And may your Christmas celebration be filled with joy and peace of knowing our Lord dwells with you and that his light, ever coming into the world, can never be overcome by the darkness!

"God is with us! Understand, all you nations, and submit yourselves, for God is with us!"

Christ is among us!
He is and will be!

Merry Christmas!
Fr. Geoff

Sunday of the Ancestors

The genealogy of the Lord is often underappreciated. All too often we tune it out or gloss over it when we read the Bible because it might seem “boring.” It is anything but boring! The genealogy of the Lord is breathtaking because it tells us of God’s abiding love for us – his abiding love which culminates in him taking us to himself in the incarnation.

He embraces us so fully that we can say the two – God and Man – have become “one flesh” in Jesus. It is not just a list of names but it is our story – our history – the accounting of God’s abiding love in our life.

However, there is more; something hidden, something missed by many who hear this “list” of names.

Those who are counted as “ancestors” of Christ were not particularly holy. Some were far from it, and yet, they are given the most exalted status of being ancestors of Christ. As one author put it – It seems that the “Sinless Lord” was happy to descend from an awfully sinful stock.”

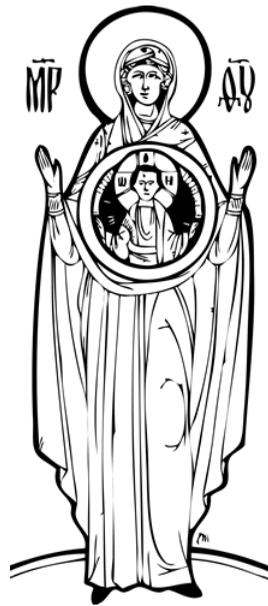
So why include them? They are included to show us the very depth and breadth of God’s abiding love for us. Regardless of our weakness and sinfulness, the Lord has a future plan for each and every one of us if only we would open ourselves to that plan.

Even Bethlehem, the very place the Lord chose as the place where he would come into our midst, as it is even today, is not a great city – it is not Jerusalem, or Rome or New York, and yet, somehow in its “smallness” it is chosen by God. In a similar way Mary is chosen – a small, apparently insignificant Palestinian girl.

By outward appearances, she is of little value, much as Bethlehem is “too small” to be considered great. And yet, the Lord does not see as we see. He does not judge as we judge. While we see what is on the outside, he reads the heart.

When we hear the genealogy of the Lord this Sunday, let us be reminded that it is not by our own strength that we will be saved, but by our willingness to allow the Lord to act in our life. As we approach the feast of the Nativity – the feast of God’s humility in taking on our human nature – let us become small that the Lord who is Great might lift us up to Glory.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!



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

Sunday of the Ancestors

When our Lord and Savior came to earth and made Himself bodily present, the angels appeared in chorus and gave the good news to the shepherds: I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people. We, too, borrow this hymn from these holy angels and announce great joy to you.

Today, very dearly beloved, the people of Christ have been exalted, and the enemies of truth have been humbled. Today, dearly beloved, Christ is in joy, and the Devil in grief. Today, the angels are in exaltation, and the demons in confusion.

Today, Christ, the King of peace, has come forth with His peace and routed all discord, banished dissension, and dissipated conflict. As the brilliance of the sun lights up the sky, so He illumines the Church with the splendor of peace. For, the text says, there has been born to you today a Savior of the world. O how desirable is the very name of peace! How firm a foundation peace is for the Christian religion, and what a heavenly ornament for the altar of the Lord! What can we utter worthy of peace? Peace is a name of Christ Himself, as even the Apostle says: For Christ is our peace. He it is who has made both one. The two were at variance, not over conflicting opinions or faith, but because of the Devil’s envy. But, just as the streets are cleansed when the king comes forth, and the whole city decked with myriad flowers and banners to keep out of sight anything less worthy of the king’s countenance, so also now, when Christ the King of peace comes forth, let everything depressing be removed from our midst. While truth is shining, let falsehood be banished, and discord flee, and concord be resplendent.

St. Peter Chrysologus

Christ is Judge, King and High Priest

Fourteen generations were completed three times, under judges, kings and high priests. Now all generations came forth under one Christ who was Judge and King and High Priest. The judges, kings and high priests were always to be understood as anticipatory figures of Christ. Joshua was the first judge; David, the first king; and Jeshua, the son of Josedech, the first high priest.

(From the Incomplete Commentary on Matthew)

The Nativity of our Lord: New Resources Today, Dec. 19

We again have **CATECHETICAL RESOURCES** to share with you for the renewal of our Eastern Churches! Today we have a reflection for The Nativity of our Lord and the December reflection: Man’s Eyes are Made to Look Upward available for your personal formation. Kindly bring these resources and your Church bulletin home with you weekly for **deeper review** and family discussion. *Many thanks!*

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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 Come, O Come, Emmanuel!