

From the Divine Office for the Nativity

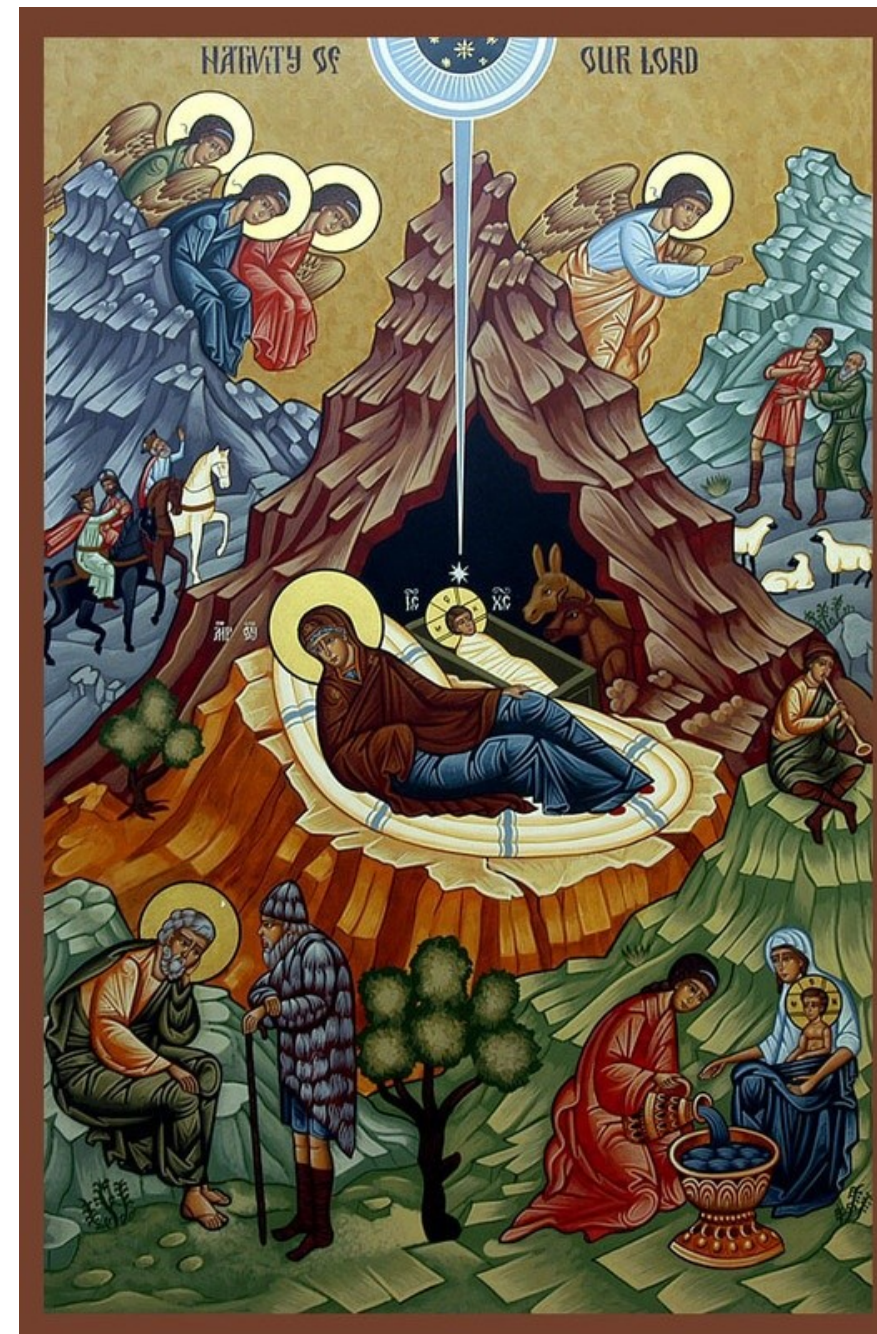
Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born. Today God has come upon the earth, and man has gone up to Heaven. Today for man's sake is seen in the flesh He who by nature is invisible. Therefore let us give glory and cry aloud to Him: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, which Your coming has bestowed upon us, O Savior. Glory to You! (Lete)

Christ is born: Give Him glory! Christ is come down from Heaven: go out to receive Him! Christ is now on earth: exalt Him! Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Praise Him in joy, O Peoples, for He is gloriously triumphant (Orthros)

From on high our Savior came, the rising Sun who rose from the East to visit us in His mercy—we who sat in darkness and gloom. But now we see the Light of Truth for the Lord Jesus is born of the Pure Virgin Mother. (Exapostilaria)



**NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
DECEMBER 25, 2022**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord: he will establish himself firmly within His commandments.

O Son of God Who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Powerful on earth shall be his race; the descendance of the righteous ones shall be blessed.

O Son of God Who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Glory and wealth shall abide in his house, and his justice shall stand from age to age.

O Son of God Who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: From the womb before the morning star, I begot You. The Lord has sworn, and He will not repent: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

People: **O Son of God, Who were born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!**

Troparion of the Nativity (Tone 4) 3X

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed the light of knowledge upon the world. Through it, those who had been star-worshippers learned through a star to worship You, O Sun of Justice, and to recognize in You the One Who rises and Who comes from on high. O Lord glory to You!

Hypacoi of the Nativity (Tone 8)

O Little Child lying in a manger, by means of a star, heaven has called and led to You the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, astounded to behold, not scepters and thrones, but extreme poverty. What, indeed, is lower than a cave? What is humbler than swaddling clothes? And yet the splendor of your divinity shone forth in them resplendently. O Lord, glory to You!

Kontakion of the Nativity (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent in essence, and the earth presents a cave to the Inaccessible. The angels with the shepherds sing His glory, and the Wise Men travel on their way, for to us is born a new Child, who is God from all eternity.

The Hymn of the Angels (Lk 2:14) – The announcement of Christ’s birth to the shepherds concludes with these words: “*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’*”

The prophet Isaiah foretold that “*For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ...and His name will be called ... the Prince of Peace*” (Is 9:6). And so this proclamation that Christ, our peace, is on earth resounded through the early Church. “*He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation*” (Eph 2:14).

By the third century the Hymn of the Angels would be expanded into one of the most solemn chants of the Church. We find it in expanded form in the Great Doxology, sung at festal Orthros and in another form at daily Orthros. It was introduced in the West in the fourth century and is heard in a slightly different form at festal Masses. In a sense this song represents the entire liturgy of the Church as now reconciled to God and one another in Christ, we join the angels in the worship of God.

The Canticle of Simeon (Lk 2:29-32) – The fourth New Testament canticle is uttered by Simeon the Just when he greets the infant Christ in the temple. Here too we see Christ proclaimed as the One who reconciles Jew and Gentile in a new people of God. Simeon declared Him to be “*A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.*”

This canticle is sung every day at vespers. It also forms a part of the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, said as the priest removes his vestments.

The Ultimate New Songs

The New Testament records two other “new songs.” We find them in the Book of Revelation. The first is Rev 5.9 where hosts of angels and all creation with them cry out: “*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing ... Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!*” (Rev 5:12-13)

Finally we are told there is another song – the Song of the Chaste, who have died to the world to follow Christ. “*They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God*” (Rev 14:3-5).



BISHOP’S APPEAL

The Bishop’s Appeal is in full swing. You should have received your letter from Bishop Francois. The Appeal makes it possible to grow the diocese by helping to establish new outreaches and missions as well as train candidates for the diaconate and priesthood.

Bishop Francois’ motto is: *Becoming Disciples, Making Disciples.*

Let us become disciples and help make disciples. Let each of us share our time, talents, and treasure to build up the Diocese of Newton.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Our Families and Friends**
+Our Families and Friends

There is no Coffee Hr. today
Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Marilyn & Zenon Tencza

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Vi Gazal, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Anthony Poti, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, Richard Abraham, Sr., Daneil Sarrouf, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt Willian Rahall, and the people of Ukraine.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

SECOND COLLECTION & CALENDARS

There will be a second collection this morning.

The 2023 calendars are at the rear of the church. Please take only one until we're sure everyone has gotten one. We will not do a general mailing of calendars. If you know someone who would like a calendar and can't get to church, please let me know and I will send them one.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$1,241
Candles	\$ 26
Coffee Hr.	\$ 54
Christmas Flowers	\$ 70
Donation	\$ 100
Bookstore	\$ 16
Christmas Offerings	\$1,105
Memorials	\$ 250
TOTAL	\$2,772

God bless you for your generosity!



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

BLESSED FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

On behalf of Kh. June, Alana, Richard and Meredith and myself, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Thanks to all who work so hard for the parish. It does not go unnoticed!

May the spirit of this most holy time be in our hearts every day of the year!

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Fr. Bryan

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE NATIVITY & THEOPHANY

SUN 12/25, 10AM *Nativity Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*

SUN 1/1, 10AM *Divine Liturgy - Sunday before Theophany/Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord*

THU 1/5, 6PM *Great Vespers—Feast of Theophany*

FRI 1/6, 6PM *Divine Liturgy-Feast of Theophany followed by the Great Blessing of Water*



The Christmas Carol: Our New Song

“*SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG: His praise in the assembly of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King*” (Psalm 149:1, 2). This psalm is heard at every Orthros service throughout the year. We may know the words by heart, but do we know why we should sing a “new song” – won’t the old favorites do?

A new song is, in a sense, like a new outfit. It expresses a new beginning in the life of a person or a community. Thus some commentators think this psalm was written to celebrate King David’s conquest of Zion where he established his capital of Jerusalem – certainly a new beginning for David and his kingdom.

Other new beginnings in the Old Testament, such as the bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and the establishment of regular worship there (see Ps 95, 1 Chr 16:23-33), occasioned new songs. In Is 42:10 people are enjoined to “*Sing to the LORD a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth*” as the Jews prepare to return to their homeland after their captivity in Babylon. But the newest of the new songs in the Bible are found, not in the Old Testament but in the New where they celebrate new beginnings that surpass any others in the history of Israel.

New Songs in the Gospel

The Gospel of Luke records four “new songs” which have become part of our Church’s liturgy since the earliest days. All of them are connected with the coming of Christ into the world. They are:

The Canticle of Mary (Lk 1:41-56) – This song is placed in Mary’s mouth in the Gospel story of her visit to Elizabeth. It is reminiscent of several Old Testament hymns, especially the “song of Hannah” (1 Samuel 2:1-10), a prayer giving thanks to God for the birth of her son, Samuel. Mary’s Canticle gives thanks because God “*has regarded the humility of His hand-maid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed because He that is mighty, has done great things to me; and holy is His name,*” alluding to her conception of Christ. Its last lines – “He has received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy: as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever” – received new meaning in light of the Gospel. The promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ.

This Canticle is thought to be the earliest Marian hymn used by the Church. It is found in the daily services of all the historic Churches of East and West. In the Byzantine rite this hymn is regularly sung at Orthros.

The Canticle of Zachariah (Lk 1: 67-79) – This song of thanksgiving is uttered in the gospel by Zechariah on the occasion of the birth of his son, John the Baptist. Like the Canticle of Mary, this hymn also refers to “*The oath, which he swore to Abraham our father*” which is now fulfilled as God has “*visited and wrought the redemption of His people; and has raised up a horn of salvation to us, in the house of David his servant.*” This image, a “horn of salvation,” probably alludes to the might of a steer, the leader of a flock. Applying this image to John indicates that he fulfills the biblical prophecy that “*I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed*” (Ps 132:17). As the Forerunner of Christ John would be “the burning and shining Lamp” as Jesus described him (Jn 5:35), powerfully calling the people to repentance.

The canticle employs another image, this time for Christ whom John announced. “*The Orient from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*” (Lk 1:78-79). The One who rises from the east is the sun, enlightening those in the dark. The ultimate sun, we may say, is the Lord Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. This image is also used in the troparion for Christmas, alluding to Christ as the One who led the Magi from the East to be the first Gentiles to worship Him: Your nativity, O Christ our God, has shed the light of knowledge upon the world. Through it those who had been star-worshippers learned through a star to worship You, O Sun of Righteousness, and recognize in You the One who rises from on high. O Lord, glory to You!

The Canticle of Zachariah may be heard at Orthros on certain days.

Instead of Trisagion: All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Prokimenon

Reader: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

People: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

Reader: Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth; sing praise to the glory of His name.

People: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

Reader: Let all on earth worship and sing praise to You,

People: Sing praise to Your name.

Epistle: Gal. 4:4-7

Alleluia Verses

The heavens declare God’s glory, and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands.

Verse: Day pours out the word today, and night to night imparts knowledge.

Gospel: Mt. 2:1-12, Nativity of our Lord

Hirmos of the Nativity (Tone 1)

Magnify O my soul the Virgin more glorious than the heavenly powers! Behold a strange and wonderful mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin a Cherubic throne, the manger a noble place where reposes Christ the uncontainable God. Let us praise and magnify Him!

Kinonikon

The Lord has sent redemption to His people. Alleluia!

After Communion: Troparion of the Feast