

Hymns on the Sunday of the Holy Ancestors

O faithful, let us sing of all the ancestors of Christ who arose on earth for our sake. With hymns, let us celebrate Him who worked wonders through them, for they prefigured His coming and His birth of the Virgin in an ineffable way, announcing it to the whole world.

The Son was born ineffably of the Father before all ages. And in these last days, He has willed to be incarnate of the Virgin Mary without seed. Let us lift up our voices to the Lord and say: "You have lifted us up from our fallen state. Holy are You, O Christ God.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM
December 15, 2019



**The Holy Youths
Ananias, Azarias, & Mishael**

SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS

Antiphon (2nd)

1: Be gracious to us, O God, and bless us; let your face shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

2: That your name may be known upon the earth, among all the nations your salvation.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

3: Let the peoples praise You, O God, let all the peoples praise You.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn:

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ

People: **O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!**

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 2, Pg. 38)

When You descended to death, O immortal Life, You put Hades to death by the splendor of Your divinity. And when You raised the dead from below the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out to You: “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!

Troparion of the Ancestors (Tone 2)

Through faith, You have justified Your Ancestors, O Christ our God; and through them, You have espoused in advance the Church set apart from the Gentiles. The saints rejoice in glory because, from the seed of these Ancestors, has come forth the glorious fruit, who gave You birth without seed. Through their intercessions, O Christ God, save our souls!

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1, Pg. 15)

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Preparation (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth to the eternal Word of God, in an ineffable manner. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when you hear this news, and glorify with the angels and the shepherds, Him who shall appear as New Child, being God from all eternity.

The United Kingdom

1050-931 BC – The Israelites form a united kingdom under Saul, David and Solomon. This is the Golden Age of the Israelite nation. Saul was chosen by God and anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the first king. In 1007, during a losing battle with the Philistines, Saul fell on his sword to avoid capture.

Through the prophet Samuel, God chooses the righteous (although flawed) David to succeed Saul. God makes a covenant with him that his throne would be established forever. David would be the ancestor of the Messiah, promised to come from the house of David. The third king, Solomon, was renowned for his wisdom and power. He is considered author of the earliest Biblical Wisdom Literature. Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, but ultimately turned to the idolatry of his foreign wives (*1 Sam 8-31; 1 Kings 1-11; Chronicles*).

Breakup of the United Kingdom

931-860 BC – The kingdom is divided in two: north and south (Israel and Judah). Unity and monotheism give way to squabbling and pagan influences (*1 Kings 12-17; 2 Chronicles*).

860-722 BC – Prophets Elijah, Elisha, Joel, Amos, Hosea and Isaiah insist on a return to monotheism and justice among the people (*1 Kings 17-22; 2 Kings 1-17; Joel; Amos; Hosea and Isaiah*).

722 BC – Northern Kingdom (Israel) defeated. The victorious Assyrians settle foreigners in the land. The intermingling of Israelites and pagans gives rise to the Samaritans (*2 Kings 17-24*).

700-590 BC – Prophets Naoum, Zepheniah, Jeremiah, Habbakuk, and Ezekiel warn the Southern Kingdom (Judah) that they too have forsaken God and face destruction.

The Babylonian Captivity

588-586 BC – The Babylonians attack Jerusalem, conquer it and deport the Jewish elite to Babylon. Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesy a return.

537 BC – The Persians defeat the Babylonians and allow the Jews to return to their country and rebuild Jerusalem (*Ezra 1-6*). Many Jews remain in Babylon and prosper there (*Esther*).

535-430 BC – Judah is restored, rediscovered temple scrolls become the basis of the Hebrew Scriptures, and Jewish life is revived (*Ezra, Nehemiah*) under nominal Persian rule.

Greek and Roman Rule

333 BC – Alexander the Great defeats the Persians and extends Greek rule throughout the Middle East. Jews establish an important colony in Alexandria, Egypt.

250 BC – Jews in Alexandria translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. Other books written in Aramaic, Greek and Hebrew are included (*Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch* and parts of *Daniel*) in what is called the Septuagint (LXX).

175-164 BC – Jews in the Holy Land are suppressed by the Greek ruler of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiles the temple and tries to abolish the Jewish religion. The Jews, led by the Maccabees, revolt and recover Jewish independence, which lasts until 63 BC. The books of *Maccabees*, written later in Hebrew and Greek, are added to the Septuagint.

63 BC – The Romans seize control of Syria. The Jewish kingdom becomes the Roman province of Palestine. The events of the New Testament take place under their rule.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Steven G. Esper. Requested by Ronald & Arleen Abraham
+Archimandrite Frank Milienewicz
+Archimandrite Joseph Francavilla

Jan. 5 +Amelia Filewicz, Michael Filewicz, deceased members of Filewicz & Harayda Families. Requested by the Filewicz Family

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **38/\$891**
- ◆ Fr. Bryan will be available for confessions on Saturdays from 9AM until noon.

HOUSE BLESSINGS

In our Byzantine tradition, it is customary to have one's house blessed after the feast of Theophany. I would like to come and bless your homes and spend time getting to know you a little better. Please call the Rectory or email me (Brymc56@comcast.net) to schedule a time for me to bless your home after January 6. - Fr. Bryan

If you would like to send Fr. Paul a note or card, his new address is:

Rt. Rev. Paul G. Frechette
St. George Melkite Church
1617 State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

ICON & BOOK SALE

The Icon and Book Store is open on Saturdays from 9AM till Noon. Come and spend a little time with us and purchase a book and/or an icon or two!

Welcome to those who are visiting today. We are happy to have you worship with us. If this is your first time here, please come downstairs to the Hall, introduce yourself, have some refreshments, and get to know the Community. If you have any questions about the Melkite Church and its traditions, please don't hesitate to ask Fr. Bryan.

Weddings — One year notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Baptisms — One month notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Please let Fr. Bryan know about anyone who is sick, in the hospital, or homebound so that he can visit and bring them the Eucharist on a regular basis.

Liturgical Schedule for the Holiday Season

Sunday December 15 @ 10:00AM- Divine Liturgy followed by St. Nicholas Celebration

Friday December 20 @ 7:00PM - Service of Holy Anointing

Sunday December 29 @ 10:00AM - Sunday after the Nativity

Christmas Divine Liturgy

Tuesday December 24 @ 5:00PM - Vesper-Liturgy of St. Basil

Wednesday December 25 @ 10:00AM - Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Note: There is no fasting from December 25 through January 4

Theophany Divine Liturgy

Monday January 6 @ 7:00PM - Divine Liturgy followed by the Great Blessing of Water

THE LONG ROAD BACK TO GOD

THE SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS intensifies our countdown to the feast of Christ's Nativity. During the Nativity Fast, we celebrate the memorials of several Old Testament prophets – Obadiah (Nov. 19), Nahum (Dec. 1), Habakkuk (Dec. 2), Zephaniah (Dec. 3), Haggai (Dec. 16) and Daniel (Dec. 17). Today we reflect on how the entire Old Testament period has been a preparation for Christ and how it reveals Him as the long-awaited Messiah.

It is appropriate, as we prepare for Christmas, to reflect on what the Scriptures tell us preceded the Incarnation. The following timeline and reading guide may be helpful in doing so. All the dates older than 1000 BC are approximate.

Before Time

The Word was with God before anything material came to be (*John 1:1-4*). It is through this eternal Word that our material creation came into being.

The Pre-History of the Israelites

Before 4000 BC – The creation of our universe • the human race falls away from communion with God • life on earth as we know it begins. Genesis actually contains two creation stories. The first (*Gen 1:1 – 2:3*) is a version of an older Babylonian myth, re-edited to teach that creation is by the will of the only true God, not the result of warring gods and demons. It is cast in the form of a single week to promote the character of the Sabbath as a day of rest. Its narrative (creation begins with a burst of light, followed by the creation of the planets, etc.) harmonizes with the modern Big Bang theory and subsequent discoveries

Before 3000 BC – Godlessness prevails and increases, illustrated by Cain and Abel, Lamech, Noah and the Great Flood (*Gen 4-9*). According to Jewish tradition, God makes a new covenant with Noah after the flood. Man is committed to observe the seven Noahide Laws prohibiting idolatry, blasphemy, and the eating of meat with its blood (i.e. while the animal is still alive). They are also enjoined to establish courts of law.

Before 2100 BC – The rise of Middle Eastern peoples • the Tower of Babel (*Gen 10, 11*). Jewish tradition sees the tower as an act of arrogance aimed at world domination by a particular people which God rejects.

Before 1991 BC – Abraham and his sons, Isaac and Jacob (*Gen 12-36*): God calls the Mesopotamian Abram, re-names him and promises that his offspring will be as numerous as the stars and that they will inherit the land of Canaan. He establishes circumcision as the sign of that covenant.

Israel in Egypt

1900-1806 BC – Joseph and his brothers, the descendants of Abraham in Egypt (*Gen 37-50*): Sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, Joseph becomes the most powerful person in Pharaoh's court when he favorably interprets the sovereign's dream, averting a famine in Egypt. He is then able to rescue his father and brothers and thus insure the Israelites' survival.

1800-1446 BC – The Israelites prosper, then are enslaved (*Exodus 1, 2*).

1450-1400 BC – The call of Moses • the exodus from Egypt • beginnings of Judaism: the Ten Commandments, the establishment of the priesthood, and erection of the tabernacle (*Ex 2-40, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*). This is the formative experience of Israel, celebrated each year at the Passover: their liberation from slavery in Egypt and passage through the Red Sea to freedom in the Land promised by God to Abraham and his descendants.

The Promised Land

1400-1375 BC – Joshua leads the Israelites to conquer parts of the "Promised Land" (*Joshua*).

1375-1050 BC – Israelite tribes settle in the Promised Land. Governed by tribal elders, or Judges, they extend their control of the area at the expense of the Philistines (*Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-7*).

Prokimenon

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy praise and glorious forever.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy praise and glorious forever.

Verse: For You are just in all You have done to us, and all Your works are true and Your ways right.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy praise and glorious forever.

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers,

People: And Your name is worthy praise and glorious forever.

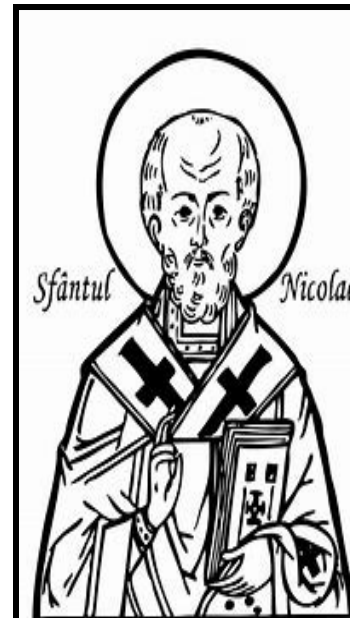
Epistle: **Col. 3: 4-11**

Alleluia Verses

Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel among those who called upon His name.

Verse: The just cried out, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them from all their trials.

Gospel: **Luke 14:16-24, Sunday of the Forefathers – The Great Banquet**



ST. NICHOLAS CELEBRATION

Please join us after this morning's Divine Liturgy as we celebrate our Father among the Saints, Nicholas the Wonderworker. St. Nicholas is beloved in both the East and West. It is from the Dutch for St. Nicholas, *Sinterklaas*, that we get *Santa Claus*. His feast day, December 6, was traditionally the day for giving gifts in honor of St. Nicholas' great generosity and gift-giving.

During the coffee hour, which is sponsored by the Aulo and Francis families we will have a short program, highlighting the life of St. Nicholas and his many miracles. St. Nicholas will likely make an appearance, passing out the traditional gold candy coins.