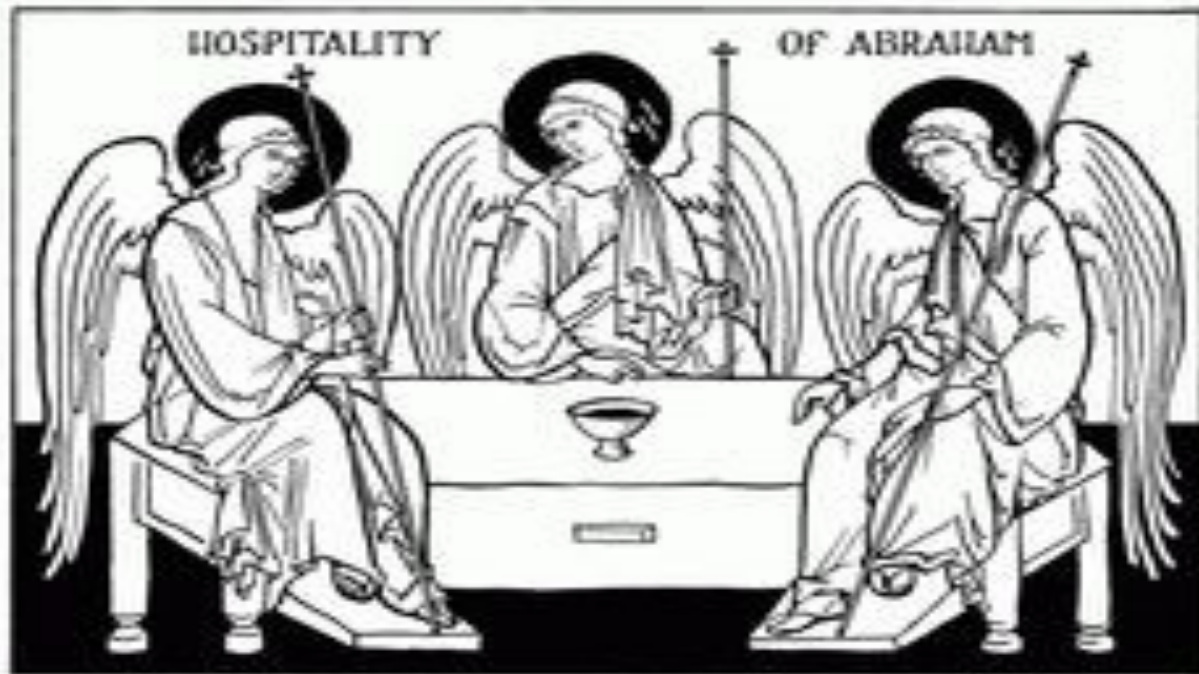


Canon of the Fore-feast, Ode 3

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 our God!"

The Son was born ineffably of the Father before all ages. We sing to Him! And in these last days, He has willed to be incarnate of the Virgin Mary, for He willed to lift up the human race which fell through the deadly advice of the serpent.

He who is enthroned in the highest heaven with the Father and the Holy Spirit saw the humiliation of the human race. The Son of the Father, without beginning, enters into time. Behold, He allows Himself to be born in the flesh as man.



Sunday Before the Nativity Genealogy of Christ December 22, 2019



Great Martyr Anastasia
December 22

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

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

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 3, Pg. 39)

Let all in heaven rejoice, and all on earth be glad, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: By death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn from the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted to the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Preparation (Tone 4)

Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all; Ephrata, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb has become a spiritual Paradise wherein the divine Fruit was planted - and if we eat of it, we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost at the beginning.

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.

These interpretations suggest that Matthew's genealogy is an example of what Pope Benedict XVI, in his three-volume work *Jesus of Nazareth*, called "interpreted history": based on events that actually happened, but presented "as they were interpreted and understood in the context of the Word of God."

"Son of Adam"

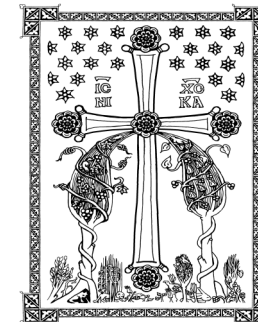
St Luke's Gospel also contains a genealogy: one with a different placement and a different emphasis. While Matthew connects Jesus' lineage with the story of His birth, Luke places it in the context of His hearers' idea of Him. "*Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of...*" (Lk 3:23). And while Matthew emphasizes the connections between Jesus, David and Abraham, Luke traces Jesus' lineage back to "*Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God*" (Lk 3:38). Luke, of Gentile origin, traces Christ back to the beginnings of the human race, stressing His connection with all mankind. Jesus is not only a son of Israel, but of the entire human race.

Many commentators have noted other discrepancies between these genealogies which would be contradictory, if these passages were not 'interpreted history.' Thus St Ambrose sees Matthew showing Christ's royal family heritage and Luke stressing His priestly connection. "We should not consider one account truer," he writes, "but that the one agrees with the other in equal faith and truth. According to the flesh, Jesus was truly of a royal and priestly family, King from kings, Priest from priests" (*Exposition of the Holy Gospel according to Luke*, 87-88).

Fr John Custer summarizes another theological message in this passage. "Adam has no other 'father' but God and no 'mother' but the virgin earth from which he was taken. Adam became a 'living being' when God breathed into him (Gen 2:7). All this resembles the Holy Spirit overshadowing the Virgin Mary in the conception of Jesus, whose only true father is God" (*The Holy Gospel, a Byzantine Perspective*, p.408).

"In the Beginning Was the Word"

While not offering a genealogy in the same sense, St John's Gospel begins with another Genesis-like statement on the Lord's origins. Using the same opening words as the Book of Genesis, (definitely not an oversight), John tells us that "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*" (Jn 1:1). The Son of God became incarnate in time (Jn 1:14 – "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*"); but even before that, before time, He was with the Father as His eternal Son.



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Archimandrite Frank Milienewicz. Requested by Ronald & Aileen Abraham

+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: 66/\$1,362

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

Theophany Divine Liturgy

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

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 W. State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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.

On December 22, we commemorate the Great Martyr, Anastasia, the Deliverer from Potions. Anastasia was martyred during the persecution of Christians by the Emperor Diocletian She was Roman by birth. Her father was a pagan but her mother was secretly a Christian. After the death of her mother, her father made her marry against her will. Her husband, Publius, was also a pagan. Dressing as a beggar, Anastasia visited the prisons of Rome, tending to those suffering for the Faith. When her husband found out about her activities, he locked her up in their house and cut her off from contact with the outside world. The harsher his punishments, the more resolute her faith. After three months, her husband perished at sea and Anastasia was once again free to tend to her imprisoned fellow Christians. St. Anastasia received the name Deliverer from Potions (Pharmakolytria), since by her intercessions she has healed many from the effects of potions, poisons, and other harmful substances. She was eventually martyred along with 200 other Christians.

Her relics were originally taken to Rome, where a church was built in her honor. They were later transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church named for her.

O Holy Martyr, intercede for us!

SON OF GOD/SON OF MAN

RESEARCHING FAMILY HISTORY has become a favorite pastime for many Americans seeking to discover their roots. One reason for this resurgent interest is that, for many, family history was ignored for so long. Many Americans see themselves as forward-looking rather than as fixated on their past. The growing interest in genealogical research shows that at least some Americans want to know where they came from.

In more traditional societies, one's family tree may be a source of pride or amusement, but it is always an object of interest. Little wonder, then, that the first Christians displayed an interest in the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ. They had encountered Him healing the sick and touching their hearts. They knew Him as the One who forgave sins, raised the dead and rose Himself. They looked to His ancestry to discover more about who He really was.

“Son of David, Son of Abraham”

St Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy of Christ (Mt 1:1-16); it is the passage we read each year on the Sunday before Christmas. The first words of the passage – *biblios geneleos Iisous Christos*, translated literally as “the book of the genesis of Jesus Christ” – would remind the reader of the entire sweep of Jewish history by hearkening back to Genesis, the first Book of the Torah. They would realize that Christ was being presented as both the beginning and the climax of God's dealing with the human race, starting in the Garden.

Matthew's genealogy presents Christ as descended from David through the house of Joseph, His adoptive father. Since the time of King David (tenth century BC), Jewish rulers had based their authority on their connection to David. The awaited Messiah was presented in Jewish tradition as “the son of David” for a similar reason: to show that he, like David, was anointed by God to be Israel's deliverer.

In this passage, Jesus' ancestry is traced back another millennium to the patriarch Abraham, with whom God had made His first covenant with the ancestors of the Jewish people. For the first Christians, portraying Jesus as the son of Abraham meant that He was the personification of the nation, heir to the promises made by God to Abraham and to his seed, “*who is Christ?*” (Gal 3:16).

Commentators have pointed out other aspects of this passage which reflect the early Church's faith in Christ. In this listing of fathers and sons, we find two women – and foreign women at that! This indicates that Jesus is not only son of Abraham and David. He is son of all mankind – Jew and Gentile, male and female – truly one of us in the flesh.

Finally, we note that, besides being an exercise in genealogy, this passage is also built on numerology: the significance of numbers in the narrative it recounts. The ancestry of Christ is divided into three groups of fourteen, the numerological equivalent of “David.” Several less-than-worthy individuals are removed from the

Old Testament lists to come up with this number, leaving us with a catalog of the righteous ancestors of Christ. This grouping also alludes to the 28-day lunar cycle. Like the star of Bethlehem, the moon is introduced to show the cosmic significance of Jesus' birth.

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.

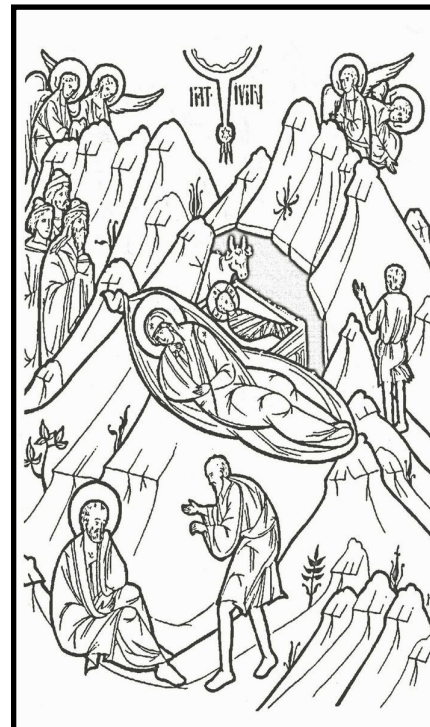
Epistle: Heb 11:9-10; 32-40, Sunday Before the Nativity

Alleluia Verses

O God, our ears have heard, our fathers have declared to us the deeds You did in their days, in the days of old.

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

Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25, Sunday Before the Nativity – The Genealogy of Christ



Christmas Divine Liturgies

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.