

From the Divine Office for the Paramony of the Nativity of Our Lord

*Today, He who holds the whole creation in the hollow of His hand is born of the Virgin!
He whose essence none can approach will be wrapped in swaddling cloths as a mortal. God,
who established the heavens at the beginning of time will lie in a manger. He who rained down
manna on His people in the desert will be nourished by milk from His Mother's breast! The
Bridegroom of the Church, who called the Magi, will accept their gifts as the Son of the
Virgin.*

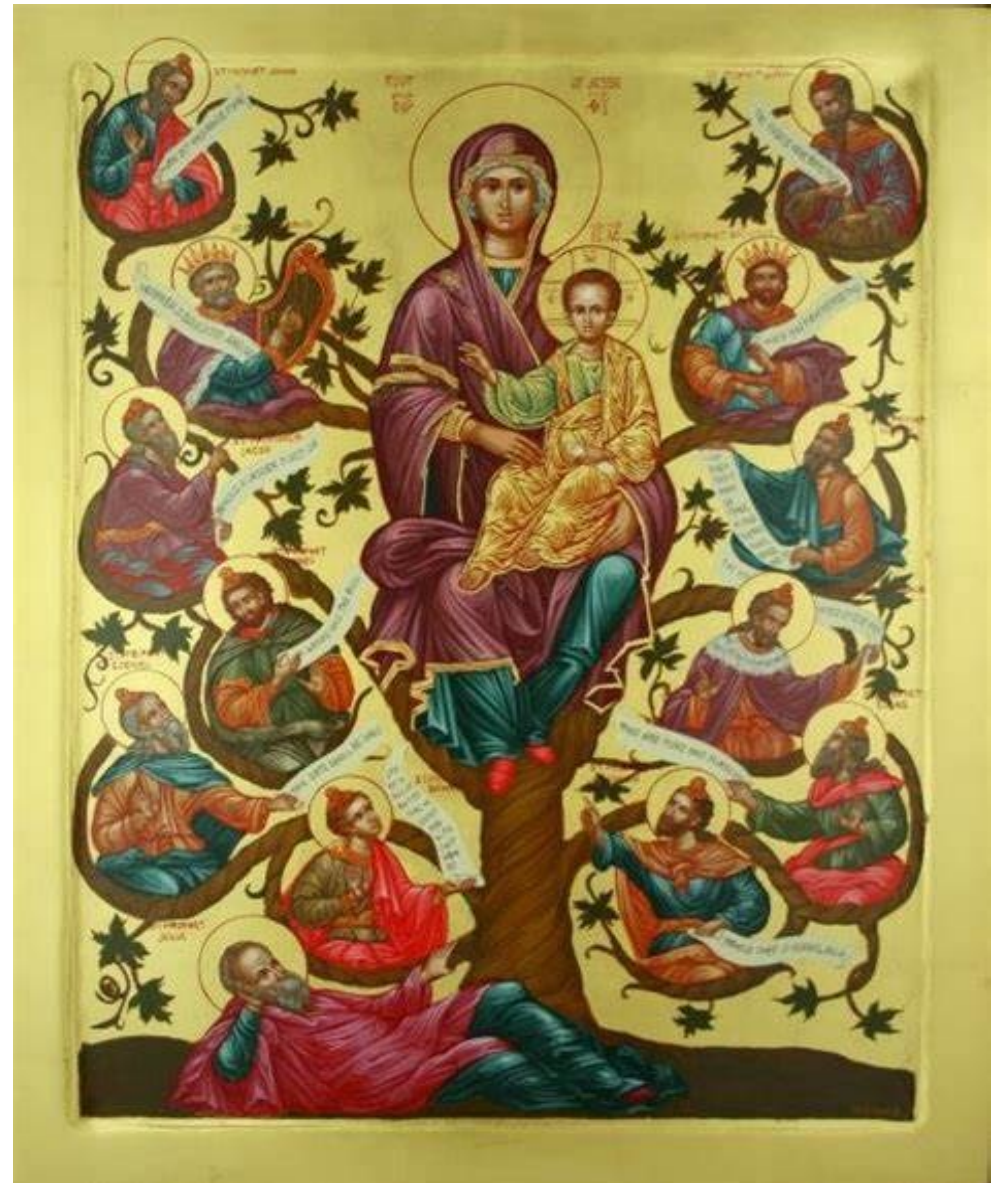
We bow down and worship You Nativity, O Christ!

Show is also Your Theophany!

(Ninth Royal Hour)



**Sunday Before the Nativity of our Lord - Genealogy
Paramony of the Nativity of our Lord
December 24**



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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 Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

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

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

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 Theotokos, 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 5) pg. 40

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our Salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross, and to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of the Ancestors (Tone 2)

Faith can accomplish great things. Through it, the Three Holy Children rejoice in the flames as if they had been in refreshing water, and Daniel in the midst of lions is like a shepherd among his sheep.

Through their intercession, O Christ God, save our souls.

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 in 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.

Kontakion of the Preparation of the Nativity of our Lord (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 a new Child, being God from all eternity.

The Paramony of the Nativity

Usually translated as vigil or eve, paramony actually refers to the uninterrupted nature of the Church's prayer on this day. During the day the lengthier Great Hours or Royal Hours are chanted.

The Royal Hours replace the ordinary First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, served every day in Byzantine practice. They contain some different psalms as well as readings from both the Old and New Testaments. While for most of the year the Hours are "cell services" – without choral responses or accompanying ritual, meant to be served by monastics in their cells (or by anyone at work or at home), the Royal Hours are served solemnly in church with hymns, Scripture readings and ceremony, concluding with the Typika. The name "Royal Hours" comes from the practice of the Great Church in Constantinople. The emperor and his court would attend the Hours on these days, emphasizing their importance in the life of the Church.

The Royal Hours are served on the Paramony of Christmas, the Paramony of the Theophany and on Great and Holy Friday, which we might call the "Paramony of Pascha." In addition, some Greek Churches serve the Royal Hours on the Eve of Pentecost as well, but without fasting.

At the Christmas Royal Hours the following prophecies are read. Each one has found fulfilment in the Nativity of Christ:

Micah 5:2-4 "But you, Bethlehem Ephratha, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel."

Baruch 3:36-4:4 "Wisdom has appeared on earth, is at home with mortals... what pleases God has been revealed to us!"

Isaiah 7:10-16 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

Isaiah 9:6-7 "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; the government will be upon His shoulder and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

A Day of Fasting

The Paramony is a strict fast day. Many people don't eat anything until the evening. This is why the Divine Liturgy is not served until the end of the fasting day, when it is joined to a more elaborate than usual Great Vespers. As on other fast days, the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil is prescribed for Christmas Eve.

In the fullest observance a special service of Great Compline with a Lita for the feast ends the day. Sometimes this leads directly into the Orthros and Divine Liturgy of December 25. The same order is also prescribed for the Eve of the Theophany.

In some countries of Eastern Europe the Paramony culminates with a Holy Supper of twelve vegan courses representing the apostles. In the Balkans wheat pies and kutia (boiled wheat) are popular on this day.

Come, O Bethlehem, and prepare a birth-place with the most precious manger and the God bearing swaddling-bands, in which our Life was wrapped. Come, O Joseph, and register yourself with Mary! Christ our God breaks asunder the bonds of death, enfolding men in incorruption.

Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem! Adorn yourself well, O manger! The Truth has come! Receive Him, O cave! The shadow has passed away, and God has appeared to men through the Virgin, assuming our form and deifying our flesh. Wherefore, Adam is restored, and cries out with Eve: Blessing has appeared on earth to save our race!

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today Our families and friends living and deceased

- +**Robert Aboody**. Requested by Antoinette Arraj and family
- +**Mary Donahue**
- +**Rose Sabbagh**
- +**Kh. Judy Handal**

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by the parish

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Tom Sarrouf, Sandra Hanlan, Melissa Kalpakgian, Susan Bailey, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

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.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$2,065
Coffee Hr.	\$ 37
Candles	\$ 33
Xmas Flowers	\$ 220
Xmas Offering	\$ 325
Stole	\$ 25
Other	\$ 350
TOTAL	\$3,053



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.

Nativity & Theophany Liturgical Schedule

Sun 12/24, 4PM –Vesper/Liturgy of St. Basil for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ

Mon 12/25, 10AM-Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ

Fri 1/5, 6PM - Great Vespers for the Feast of Theophany

Sat 1/6, 10AM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Theophany followed by the Great Blessing of Water

There is no fasting from December 25 until the Paramony of Theophany (Jan. 5)

Christmas Toy Drive

We delivered over ten bags of toys, hats, coats, jackets, and food to Pernet House. Thanks to all who donated to our Drive. The folks at Pernet were extremely glad to get the donations as the need this year is great.

I never cease to be moved by your generosity toward our needy brothers and sisters!

May God continue to bless you all!

FROM DECEMBER 20 TO 24 we observe a five-day “holy week” during which Christ’s birth seems ever closer. This fore-feast of the Nativity culminates on December 24, the Paramony of the feast. During these days we focus on how the birth of the long-expected Messiah is at hand. As we sing during those days, “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.”

The hope that One would come to deliver God’s people from their enemies is found throughout the Old Testament. In Numbers 24 we read a prophecy of Balaam, “*I see a star that rises out of Jacob, a stem that springs from Israel’s root; one who shall lay low the chiefs of Moab, shall bring devastation on all the posterity of Seth*” (v.17). The “star rising out of Jacob” is a way of saying “a descendant of Jacob.”

As we read in Matthew’s genealogy, Jesus was a descendant of Jacob. This expected one was clearly a national leader who would deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Jewish people expected this kind of savior throughout their history. Some Jews, however, looked for more. They read God’s promise to David to mean that the kingdom of his son Solomon would endure forever: “*When your days are ended, and you are laid to rest beside your fathers, I will grant you for successor a son of your own body, established firmly on his throne. He it is who shall build a house to do my name honor. I will prolong forever his royal dynasty*” (2 Sam 7:12-13). As we read in Matthew’s genealogy, Jesus was a descendant of David.

The prophets deepened the Jews’ understanding of just who the Messiah would be. We read in Isaiah 40, “*Tell the cities of Juda, See, your God comes! See, the Lord God is coming, revealed in power, with his own strong arm for warrant; and see, they come with him, they walk before him, the reward of his labor, the achievement of his task, his own flock! Like a shepherd he tends them, gathers up the lambs and carries them in his bosom*” (vv. 10, 11). The promised One is the Lord Himself, our Good Shepherd.

The Tree of Life

Every day during the fore-feast of the Nativity we sing the following troparion: *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 had 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 in the beginning.*

In the Genesis story of creation the Tree of Life was the giver of immortality from which fallen man could not be allowed to eat (see Gen 3:22). Were he to do so, Genesis suggests, sin would live forever.

For us, however, Christ is the source of our immortality. He is the Tree of Life and, sinners though we are, we are called to eat of this Tree and live forever. We also find the Tree of Life in the last chapter of Revelation. There the Tree is in the center of the New Jerusalem, the ultimate Paradise. For St Augustine and other Fathers, “Paradise is the Church, as it is called in the Canticles...the Tree of life is the holy of holies, Christ...” (St Augustine, The City of God). Christ, at the heart of the Church, gives us life through the Holy Spirit who works in the Church.

In our troparion Christ is called the Fruit planted in the spiritual paradise of the Virgin’s womb. As Mary’s cousin Elizabeth proclaimed – with countless generations after her – “*Blessed is the Fruit of your womb!*” (Lk 1:42)

Prokimenon

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

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

Reader: 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 of praise and glorious forever.

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

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

Epistle: Heb. 11:9-10; 32-40

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: Mt. 1:1-25, Sunday Before the Nativity of our Lord – Genealogy

