

*From the Divine Office for the Sunday of the Forefathers*

O Christ, we worship You, our eternal King. Being Lord and Master, You rescued the three holy young men from the fire and saved Daniel from the lions. You blessed Abraham, Isaac Your servant, and Jacob his son. You willed to be like one of us by choosing to be born from them, in order that, by accepting crucifixion and burial, You could save our forefathers who had sinned against You. Thus did You crush the powers of Death and raise those who had been long dead. (Vespers)

Come, O faithful, let us celebrate the memorial of the Fathers who lived before the Law: with hymns let us honor Abraham and those with him in his line. Let us fittingly honor the tribe of Judah and praise the young men who were in Babylon, who put down the flames of the furnace. They were foreshadowing the Trinity. Let us praise Daniel with them. Heeding the voice of the prophets, let us cry out with Isaiah and say, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son and they shall call him Emmanuel which means 'God-is-with-us!'" (Orthros)



**SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS  
DECEMBER 15, 2024**





**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church**

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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 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.

***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 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 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 Forefathers (2<sup>nd</sup> Tone)**

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 intercession, 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 of the Nativity of our Lord ( 3<sup>rd</sup> Tone)**

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 newborn Child, being God from all eternity.

Again, we must turn to St Paul, who gives us an entry into the mind of Christ, particularly in regard to the Incarnation. “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:5-11).

The *why* of the Incarnation, according to the Apostle Paul is our deification. The *how* of the Incarnation is what has been called the *kenosis* (self-emptying) of Christ: His voluntary putting aside of divine glory and putting on “the form of a bondservant” (our humanity). As man He further humbled Himself by submitting to all the circumstances of time, place and state of life which we find described in the Gospels. He put on the condition of a village carpenter who became an itinerant preacher, challenging the religious status quo of the Jewish establishment supported by Rome. Little wonder that His path led to the death of the cross.

When St Paul says that we should “*let this mind be in you*” as it was in Christ, He is echoing the Lord Jesus, who proposed humility as the hallmark of the Christian. After the Lord had washed His disciples’ feet, He told them, “*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*” (John 13:14, 15). The Lord was not proposing that His disciples be characterized by actual foot-washing, but by humble service to one another.

As the Word of God exchanged His heavenly glory for the manger in a Bethlehem cave, His followers must learn to exchange their views of their own self-importance for the “*form of a bondservant.*” In this way, the humility of Christ rather than human “wisdom” will direct our actions.

In addition to humility, the mind of Christ according to the Scriptures is characterized chiefly by dependence on God and compassion toward others. Developing a mindset of humility, dependence and compassion is contrary to the way of thinking most people learn from the society and culture that surrounds us. It requires continual attention and effort to maintain our focus on the mind of Christ. “*Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and be holy in all your conduct ... as He who called you is holy*” (1 Peter 1:13, 15).

**St Athanasios on the Incarnation**

“What, then, was God to do? What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it we might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? We could not have done it, for we are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father, Who could recreate man made after the Image.

“The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father’s Son, could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, ... By surrendering to death the body which He had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, He abolished death for His human brethren ... Naturally also, through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by the Word’s indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all” (*On the Incarnation* 34, 35).

## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

**Today** +Antonio Solitro, deceased members of Harayda & Filewicz Families  
Requested by Maria Filewicz

**Next Sunday** +Antonio Solitro. Requested by Antoinette Arraj & family

**This morning's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Maria Filewicz**

**Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by**

**Please remember in your prayers:** George Arraj ,Jr., Peter Abraham, Mark Bashour, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Thomas Houde, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Jeannine McNeil, Linda Gartner, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, Thomas Houde, Jeanette Halal, those affected by the natural disasters hroughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in Ukraine & 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	\$ 1,667
Candles	\$ 57
Coffee Hr.	\$ 68
Xmas Flowers	\$ 220
Stole	\$ 240
Hall Rental	\$ 200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,452</b>

**Let us pray for increased generosity to our parish!**

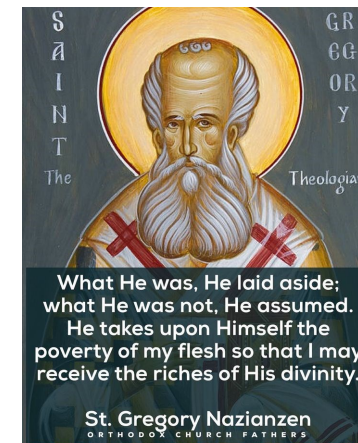


**Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.**

**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.**

### BISHOP'S APPEAL UPDATE

In the Gospel today we hear and receive God's invitation to us to His Kingdom. We pray daily in the Our Father for the coming of the fulness of that Kingdom. But we also see the danger of not responding or delaying a response to it. We could be oblivious to it. The Bishop's Appeal helps us as parishes, families and individuals to be very involved with the Kingdom here and now. *Our parish has raised \$4,200.14 and our goal is \$8,000.* We're over halfway to our goal! Let's keep up the good work!! Appeal envelopes and reply cards are available in our parish. Thank you for your continued generosity to our parish and to the Diocese of Newton. You may also donate online at: [melkite.org/appeal](http://melkite.org/appeal) or scan the QR code below:



## SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY

BEGINNING STUDENTS OF JOURNALISM or other disciplines involving research are taught the importance of the “Five Ws” in compiling information. Fact-finders must be able to answer the following questions on any subject they are investigating: **Who** (was involved)? **What** (happened)? **When** (did it take place)? **Where** (did it take place)? And **Why** (did that happen)?

In reflecting on the incarnation of the Word of God, we focus on the last question: *why* did Christ become man? Our answer is that the reason He assumed our human nature – His incarnation – is to change us by making us partakers of the divine nature (theosis). As the Church Fathers never ceased to repeat, God became human so that man might be deified.

But the answer to that question brings us to ask another one: *how* do we become deified? The Scriptures give us a two-part answer: our deification results initially from being united to Christ at baptism. We maintain this gift of our deification by “*putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 13:14) in the way we conduct our lives.

### **We *Have* Put on Christ in Baptism**

The hymn sung repeatedly at baptisms – drawn from St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians – affirms the teaching that we “put on” Christ at our baptism. As the Incarnation began with a concrete, physical act, the conception of the Lord Jesus, so our deification begins with the concrete, physical act of baptism. In this mystery, the earthly humanity of a believer is joined to the divinized humanity of Christ. The believer is organically united to Christ, immersed in Him, just as he or she is immersed into the water. The believer has clothed himself with Christ, a spiritual reality symbolized by the white baptismal garment.

St Paul frequently reminds his readers how their likeness to God has been restored in baptism through the image of “putting-off” and “putting-on.” He tells the Ephesians, “... *you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Ephesians 4:24). He tells the Colossians, “*you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him*” (Colossians 3:10). Their divinization is a restoration of their likeness to God which was lost in Eden.

According to the Scriptures, that “putting-on Christ” also connects us to the eternal God in a new way. As St Paul says, “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Galatians 3:26, 27). A person renewed in baptism is, in fact, no longer simply related to God as creature to Creator; the baptized is now an adopted child of God. Because of our baptism it is realistic to call God “Father.”

### **We *Must* Put on Christ in Our Actions**

In baptism we *ontologically* put on Christ. We are connected to Him on the level of our deepest nature. We must also put on Christ *psychologically*, on the level of our actions and perceptions. In other words, we must strive to think and act like Him. To do that, we must study the actions of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and begin to know His mind.

### **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:** Col 3:4-12

### **Alleluia**

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:** Lk 14:16-25

### LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY

**Tue 12/17 6PM—Anointing Service**

**Tue 12/24 4PM—Vesper Liturgy (St. Basil) for the Nativity of Christ**

**Wed 12/25 10AM-Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ**

**Sun 1/5 10AM –Divine Liturgy for the Paramony of Theophany**

**Sun 1/5 Noon - Vespers for Theophany**

**Mon 1/6 6PM - Divine Liturgy for Theophany followed by the Great Blessing of Water**