

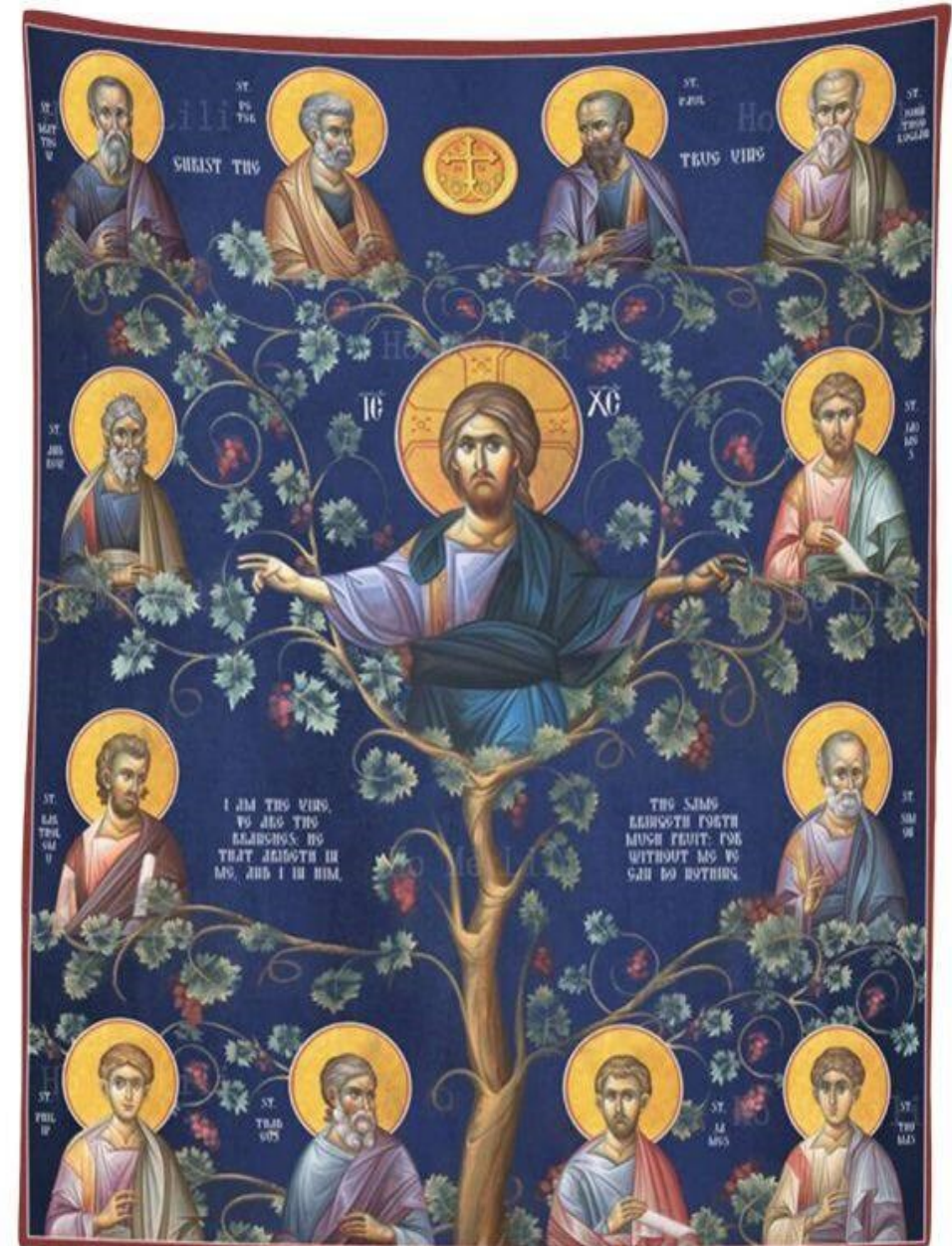
From the Divine Office for the Paramony of the Nativity of Christ

O people, let us celebrate the forefeast of the Nativity of Christ. Raising our minds on high, let us go to Bethlehem in spirit. With the eyes of the soul, let us gaze upon the Virgin as she hastens to the cave to give birth to our God, the Lord of all. When he beheld this wonder, Joseph thought he saw a mortal wrapped as a baby in swaddling clothes; but from all that came to pass, he understood that it was the true God, who grants mercy to the world. (Vespers)

Rejoice, exceedingly, O Sion! Make ready, O Bethlehem! The Upholder of all things, sending a star before Him, has made known His condescension without measure. He, before whom the heavenly powers tremble, our only God, without suffering change is born in very truth from the Virgin. (Orthros)



**SUNDAY OF THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST
DECEMBER 22, 2024**



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (3rd)

1: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us shout with joy to God our Savior.

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

2: Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving and let us joyfully sing psalms to Him.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka. Haleloueya.

3: For God is a great Lord and a great King over all the earth.

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 6) Pg. 41

The angelic powers were around Your tomb, and the guards became as dead; and Mary stood at the tomb, seeking Your spotless body; Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it, and You met the Virgin O Bestower of life. O Lord, who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Troparion Of The Forefathers (Tone 2)

Faith can accomplish great things. Through it, the three holy young men rejoice in the flames 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!

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 (3rd 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.

• ***His Conception*** (Isaiah 7:14, cited in Mt 1:23) – “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son.”

• ***The Place of His Birth*** (Micah 5:2, cited in Mt 2:6) – “Bethlehem...out of you shall come a ruler...”

• ***The Flight into Egypt*** (Hosea 11:1, cited in Mt 2:15) – “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

• ***The Slaughter of the Infants*** (Jeremiah 31:15, cited in Mt 2:18) – “A voice was heard in Ramah...”

• ***His home in Nazareth*** (possibly Judges 13:5, cited in Mt 2:23) – “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Other prophecies were frequently cited as pointing to Jesus as the Messiah:

• Numbers 24:17 – “a star shall come forth out of Jacob...”

• Isaiah 11:1 – “There shall come forth a shoot from the root of Jesse...”

• Isaiah 60:5-6 “...they shall bring gold and frankincense”

While there are no verbatim quotations of prophecies in Luke’s infancy narratives, there are allusions to Old Testament scriptures throughout. In Luke 1:17, for example, John the Baptist is described by the angel as going “before him in the spirit and power of Elijah.” This alludes to Malachi 4:5-6: “Behold I am sending to you Elijah the Thesbite before the great and notable day of the Lord comes.”

These allusions, and others throughout the Gospels, reflect the early Church’s belief that the entire Old Testament leads us to see Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Our Preparation Continues

From December 20 to 24 we observe a five-day “holy week” during which Christ’s birth seems ever closer. As we sing during those days, “Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth.”

This fore-feast of the Nativity culminates on December 24, the Paramony of the feast. 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, followed by the Typika and a more elaborate than usual Great Vespers, to which is attached the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil.

A special service of Great Compline with a Litia for the feast ends the day. Sometimes this leads directly into the Orthros and Divine Liturgy of December 25. In some countries of Eastern Europe it culminates with a Holy Supper prior to the Liturgy. The same cycle of uninterrupted prayer is also prescribed for the Feast of the Theophany on January 5.

Let us offer up a hymn to the fathers who shone forth before the Law and under the Law, and who, by their upright will, were pleasing to the Lord and Master Who shone forth from the Virgin, for they now delight in the unfading light.

Canon of the Forefathers, Ode 1

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Dan Rahall.** Requested by the family
 +**Antonio Solitro.** Requested by Antoinette Arraj & family
Next Sunday **Our Families & Friends, living and deceased**

This morning's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Marilyn & Zenon Tencza
Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Sam, Hiam & Mary Francis

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 throughout 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	\$ 968
Candles	\$ 30
Coffee Hr.	\$ 56
Xmas Flowers	\$ 30
Stole	\$ 25
Parking Rent	\$2,000
Donation	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$ 8,109

Let us pray for increased generosity to our parish!

THANK YOU

The parish received a generous donation of \$5,000 From the Burke Family Donor Advised Fund at the University of Notre Dame. On behalf of the parish thank you so much!

May God continue to bless the University and the Burke family for their 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.

BISHOP'S APPEAL UPDATE

Today's Gospel gives us the wonderful list of the "Ancestors" who prepared the way for the coming of Christ and His Kingdom. Each and every one of them was necessary and had to respond, even though they may not have been fully aware of that. As we prepare as parishes and families for the Nativity, let us become involved more fully and actively in the Bishop's Appeal to make sure that the Kingdom embraces as many as possible.

To date, *Our parish has raised \$4,200.14 and our goal is \$8,000.* Let's keep up the good work and surpass our goal! 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 or scan the QR code below:



Thanks to all who donated to our Christmas Drive for Pernet Family Health Services. There was a large pile of gifts, hats, coats & gloves, as well as a number of gift cards. When I dropped them off, the workers commented on the number of items we donated!

I never cease to be moved by your generosity!

God bless you all!

SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY

THE LITURGICAL PREPARATION for the feast of Christ's Nativity intensifies today with the Sunday of the Genealogy, which commemorates those who were Christ's physical ancestors.

The Sunday of the Genealogy accelerates the 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), Habakuk (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 we are called to be ready for His ultimate triumph.

Prophecies of the Messiah

It is appropriate today to reflect on what the Scriptures tells 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 comes 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 1-3). Genesis actually contains two creation stories. The first (Genesis 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.

Genesis continues with the story of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. This tragic story concludes with these words addressed to the serpent: *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head while you strike at his heel"* (Genesis 3:15). Many Fathers saw this as the first heralding of the Messiah's victory over sin and death (the "proto-gospel"). Satan's seeming defeat of Christ on the cross is but a striking of His heel while Christ's striking at his head is His ultimate defeat of Satan. It would take countless generations – from the beginning of humanity, through the years of both Old and New Testaments and the subsequent history of this age – for this event to be fulfilled.

Before 3000 BC – Sin prevails and increases, illustrated by Cain and Abel and 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, murder, theft, sexual immorality, 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.

The Prophets Read in the Church

At the time of the Hebrew kingdoms (the six or seven hundred years before Christ) prophets were periodically calling the people to trust in God despite the troubles of their nation. Despite conflicts with the Philistines or the Assyrians, and even in the midst of defeat and exile by the Babylonians and occupation by the Romans, the prophets encouraged the people to trust in God who would provide a deliverer.

After the death and resurrection of Christ the apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit came to see these prophecies fulfilled in a decisive way by Jesus Christ, who delivers all mankind – not just the Jewish people – from its ultimate enemies, sin and death, not just foreign oppressors. Around the Old Testament prophecies of a deliverer, the apostles built their preaching of the true Messiah (Anointed One) of God, Christ Jesus the Savior. What we call the Old Testament was the Bible for the early Church as well as for Judaism and its prophecies shaped the presentation of the incarnation in the New Testament. As the following quotations show, the apostles considered these prophecies as clearly pointing to the coming of Christ:

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, Sunday before the Nativity

Alleluia

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

Verses: 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 (Genealogy of Christ)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY

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