



The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

Sunday, December 19th, 2021 - The Sunday Before Nativity - Sunday of the Genealogy of the Lord



Hymns for Today

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

Great are the accomplishments of faith, for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest; and the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

You did not worship the graven image, O thrice-blessed ones, but armed with the immaterial Essence of God, you were glorified in a trial by fire. From the midst of unbearable flames you called on God, crying: "Hasten, O compassionate One! Speedily come to our aid, for Thou art merciful and able to do as Thou dost will!"

Epistle Reading - Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented - of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!*

the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Gospel Reading - Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord

commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

This Week's Schedule

THIS WEEKEND

SAT, Dec 18th: Baptism of Anya Nealon @ 11 AM

SAT, Dec 18th: Great Vespers @ 5 PM, Confessions

SUN, Dec 19th: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy @ 9 AM, Coffee Hour & Annual Yolka

THIS WEEK

Nativity Fast Continues

WED, Dec 22nd: Private Prayer 11:30 AM-1:30 PM

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The Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

FRI, Dec 24th: Royal Hours for Nativity @ 8 AM

FRI, Dec 24th: Compline & Matins w/ Litya @ 6:30 PM

SAT, Dec 25th: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord @ 9 AM

SUN, Dec 26th: Hours @ 8:40 AM, Divine Liturgy of the Synaxis of the Theotokos @ 9 AM

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CONFESSIONS: Remember to come to confession during the Nativity Fast in preparation for the Great Feast of Nativity. Confession is available before and after all services leading to the feast.

Memorial Donations

In Memory of Helen Gudaitis

\$25 by Kara Goobic

In Memory of Rosalie Bagenski

\$30 by Margaret Stephens

\$50 by Renee & George Wood

\$100 by Susan Springer

\$50 by Margaret Dooley

\$25 by Mary Ann Kudey

\$20 by Mr & Mrs William Gurka

\$75 by Ned & Betsy Podehl

\$100 by Mary Krill

In Memory of Matushka Anne Pawlush

\$50 by Brian & Debra Morse

\$100 by Michael & Noreen Germak

\$100 by Jeff & Elaine Tishko & Family

**Upcoming Parish Events
& Announcements**

NATIVITY POINSETTIA DONATIONS - \$15: As customary, our Nativity Poinsettia Donations will purchase flowers to adorn the Church for the Feast of the Nativity. Your donations may be made in remembrance of, or for the health of, your family and loved ones. The names you provide at the time of your donation will appear in the Church Bulletin for the Feast of the Nativity. Please see the signup sheet in the vestibule and give your donation to Mary Ann Kudey. Many thanks and may God Bless You for your donation!

TODAY - CHANGE COVERS IN THE CHURCH - Sunday, December 19th after our Annual Yolka we will be changing the covers in the church. Anyone who would like to help is welcome!

SUN, JAN 2 - COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING to discuss our continued efforts in reaching out to the poor and homeless in our community.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

December Birthdays: David Clark (12/1), Helen Gudaitis (12/5), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratich (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21), Kellie Ann DiBattista (12/27), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Peter Holoviak (12/30), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31)

This Week's Birthdays: Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21) Dolores Rilko (12/21)

PARISH PRAYER LIST Living: Cynthia Dulsky, Theodore & Elenor Sovryda, Nadine Breisch, Sonja & Leanne Kay, Josie Bissett, Lisa & Scott Harvey, Daniel & Shannon Bissett, Delores Karas, Archpriest Daniel & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Violet Filipi, Catherine, Danny Gobish, Lorraine Pace, Camden Thomas, Peter Holoviak & Family, Rose Marie, George Scott, Evelyn Kosmiski, Joe Sloan, Betty Serafin, Matushka Elizabeth, Karen Maier, John Metz, Tim, Jeri Basarab, Fr. Theodore Orzolek, Bernie Elko, Delores Voda, Mary Ann Lepa, Melanie Bishop, Eric, Lynn Bankos, Mat. Delores Donlick, Archpriest Michael Lepa, Archpriest Vladimir Fetchko
Departed: Mat. Anna Pawlush, Antonette Terry, Rosalie Bagenski, Helen Gudaitis

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS SERVICE SCHEDULE



Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

FRI, Dec 24: 8 AM Royal Hours

FRI, Dec 24: 6:30 PM Compline & Matins w/ Litya

SAT, Dec 25: 8:40 AM Hours, **9 AM** Divine Liturgy

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Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God

SUN, Dec 26: 8:40 AM Hours, **9 AM** Divine Liturgy

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St. Basil the Great / Circumcision of Our Lord

FRI, Dec 31: 4 PM Vespers Divine Liturgy

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Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ

WED, Jan 5: 6:30 PM Great Vespers w/ Litya

THURS, Jan 6: 8:40 AM Hours, **9 AM** Divine Liturgy

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On the Genealogy of Our Lord

By Met. Anthony Bloom

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Every year before Christmas we read the genealogy of Christ from St. Matthew's Gospels, and for years I asked myself, why? Why have we got to read all these names that mean so little to us, if anything at all? And then I became more perceptive of what they convey to us.

For one thing, they are the people to whose family the Lord Jesus Christ belongs through His humanity. They all are relatives of His, and this should be enough for us to find their names deeply moving: Christ is of their blood, Christ is of their family. Each of them, thinking of the Mother of God can say, 'She is a child of our family', and of Christ, 'He also is a child of our family, although He is our God, our Saviour, the very Divine Presence in our midst'. Furthermore, some names stand out: names of Saints, heroes of the spirit, and names of sinners.

The Saints among them could well teach us what it means to believe; not simply to have an intellectual faith, a world-outlook which coincides, as far as it is able, with God's vision, but a faith which means a complete trust in God, an unlimited faithfulness to Him, the readiness, because of what we know of God, to give our lives for what He stands for, for what He is. In this context think of Abraham whose faith was tested to the utmost. How difficult we find it to give to God something of ours: but Abraham was asked to bring as a blood-offering his own son - and he did not doubt God. And Isaac? He surrendered without resistance, in perfect obedience to his father, and through him - to God.

We can remember the struggle of Jacob with the Angel in the darkness, as we at times struggle for our faith, for our integrity, for our faithfulness, in the darkness of the night, or the darkness of doubt, in the darkness that seizes us at times on all sides.

But we can also learn something from those who in history, in the Bible, appear to us as sinners. They were frail, this frailty conquered them, they had no strength to resist the impulses of their bodies and of their souls, of the complex passions of men. And yet - and yet, they believed in God passionately. One of them was David, and one of his Psalms expresses it so well: "From the deep I cry unto Thee .." From the depths of despair, of shame,

from the depths of his fall, from the depths of his alienation from God, from the darkest depths of his soul he still cried to God. He does not hide from Him, he does not go away from Him, it is to Him he comes with this desperate cry of a desperate man. And others, men and women have this same concreteness as, for instance, Rahab the harlot - and so many more.

Do we, when we are at the darkest point of life, when we are wrapped in all the darkness that is within us - do we, from within this darkness turn to God and say: It is to You, oh Lord, I cry! Yes - I am in darkness, but You are my God. You are the God who created the light, and the darkness, and You are within the darkness as You are within the blinding light; You are in death as You are in life; You are in hell, as You are on the Throne; and from wherever I am I can cry to You.

And then, there is a last thing I would like you to think about. To us these people are names; of some of them we know a little from the Bible, about others we know nothing. But they all were concrete human beings, men and women like us, with all our frailty and all our hope, all the wavering of the will and all the hesitations, all the incipient love that is so often marred, and yet remains light and fire. They are concrete and real, and we can read their names with the feeling, that, Yes - I don't know you, but you are one of those who are of the family of Christ, concrete, real, who through all the vicissitudes of life, inner and outer, belong to God. And we ourselves can try and learn, in the concreteness of our lives, whether we are frail or strong at a given moment still to be God's own.

So let us reflect on this genealogy, let us next time we come to hear it receive it with a spark in our eyes, with a warm feeling in our hearts; but this will be possible only to the extent to which Christ becomes more and more real to us and when it is in Him, through Him that we discover them all - real, living, our own and God's own. Amen.