



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

"The Genealogy"

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad! For the Lord has shown strength with His arm! He has trampled down death by death! He has become the firstborn of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell, and has granted to the world great mercy!

Troparion of Annunciation, Tone 4

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Kontakion of Annunciation, Tone 8

O Victorious Leader of triumphant hosts! We, your servants delivered from evil, sing our grateful thanks to you, O Theotokos! As you possess invincible might set us free from every calamity so that we may sing: Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!

The 27th Sunday after Pentecost, Dec. 21st, Tone 3; Matt. 1:1-25

The second Sunday which is specially consecrated to preparation for the Nativity is that which immediately precedes the feast of Christmas. It is called "Sunday of the Fathers or of the Genealogy". It falls between December 18th and 24th.

"Turning our thoughts to Bethlehem, let us lift ourselves in spirit to contemplate the great Mystery which is taking place in the cave...Now that the time of our salvation draws near...Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem...", the choir sings during the service, and mentions made of the patriarchs, the prophets, the holy women of the Old Covenant who "through faith shine like the stars". The Church's idea, this Sunday, seems to be to bring the righteous who lived before Christ into the joy of the Nativity "inviting them all by praises and divine songs to prepare for the birth of Christ".

The gospel read at the Liturgy (the whole of Matthew 1) traces back the genealogy of Jesus according to the flesh: "The generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob;...". And it continues up to Joseph "the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ". We have read or heard the genealogy many times. We may have the impression that the reading is of purely historical and documentary interest. What can this list of names bring us that has any spiritual import?

But each one of these names does have a particular meaning, if we remind ourselves of the story of the person who bore it. What needs to be clearly understood is that the ancestors of Jesus were not all just and holy men. Amongst them are also sinners; those who have committed incest, adultery, murder; and alien woman: the names of Judas, Thamar, of David and Ruth are filled with spiritual significance. Jesus wanted, humanly, to be linked with "all that" and to "all those". He wanted to clear a way for himself through the sins and crimes of men. And so it is the history of each one of us that he takes upon himself and overcomes. For each one of us has some of the features of those of Jesus' ancestors who are the furthest from holiness. In each of us can be found, either dormant or awakened, the sins of the patriarchs and all their children. All the

Announcements and Activities

Catechesis— NO Wednesday Catechesis, due to services for the Feast of Nativity.

Summer/Fall Study—will NOT be held on Wednesday, either.

Sunday through Tuesday, Compline with Pre-festal Nativity Canon—7PM

Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil—Wednesday, at 9AM.

Nativity of Christ Vigil—Compline and Matins combined. 7PM on Wednesday. This service is where we hear the church reflecting on the mystery of the incarnation through selected readings from the Holy Scriptures and magnificent hymnography. Some Slavic traditions have the holy supper on Christmas eve and go to church together..

Nativity Liturgy—Thursday at 10AM.

Great Vespers—Saturday, at 5:30PM

Matins—Sunday, December 28th, at 8:30AM..

Church School/Adult Education—Sunday, January 4th, at 9AM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM

Coffee Hour— This week's coffee hour is being sponsored by Steve and Luci Fetzko. Next Week's coffee hour will be replaced by our monthly potluck. **The Advent Fast began** on Saturday, November 15th and ends after Liturgy for the Nativity on Thursday after Liturgy.

Holy Confession—All of us, yes, including we who are clergy, should make time to include a soul-cleansing confession. While putting up decorations and attending the Christmas office parties, let us penetrate the true meaning of Christmas and offer Christ the only thing He truly desires, our pure heart. Father is available before and after services and by appointment during the week.

Please pray for...

Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—who is battling cancer. **Wounded soldier Cody**, the son of Brian and Kerri Richey. Cody is doing very well and challenging himself in ever-new physical feats. **Natasha**—prayer request for a person in need. **Tina**—a person in need of our prayers. **Janie**, who has been battling health issues. **Dan Callaway**—health problems. **Sarah**—the sister of John Deak, who is battling cancer. **Tracy, Robin, and Michelle**— friends of Lana, who are battling cancer and health issues. **Salina**— the daughter of Lana's work associate, who suffered a head injury and is having seizures. **Ronald**—Matushka's father who reposed. **Natasha**—Olga's friend, health issues. **Emily** — Jesse's sister, who is suffering. **Tsige**—and Gobezie Goshu Home. Mike Lynne—Joan M. request. **Departed infant Nicholas. Steve Fetzko—back problems. Nicholas and Anthony**—foster boys and their new home. **Reposed Abbot George. Reposed Met. Vladimir. Heather**, who hasn't been feeling well. **Lana's friends David**—who reposed, **Raymond and Helen**, who also reposed recently. **Natalie**—Olga's friend. **Madeline**—Jean Dusonblon's sister, reposed this week. **John Deak's** general health. **Joanna**, had a healthy baby girl (7lbs) by C-section and is recovering. **Mary Serguik's** daughter. **Robin**—reposed. **Joe**, ill.

same, however, Jesus must be born in us. We must, in ourselves, overcome and go beyond the misdeeds that certain names in the genealogy of Jesus represent. It is necessary for us to live this genealogy, for us to acquire a personal experience of it, so that through falling and starting afresh we shall eventually reach Joseph and Mary. This does not mean sinning deliberately so that we can identify ourselves more closely with the genealogy of the Lord, but simply means recognizing certain elements of this genealogy in the sins that we do commit, and uniting ourselves in spirit to the progressive purification which prepared for the birth of Jesus. Thus the genealogy of Christ will become and integral part of our own lives.

(From, *The Year of the Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church)

From the Lives of the Saints...Holy Martyr Juliana and 630 Martyrs with her

This glorious virgin and martyr was born in Nicomedia of pagan parents. Hearing the Gospel preached, she turned to Christ with all her heart and began to live in exact observance of the Lord's commandments. Eleusius, a senator, was her betrothed. In order to turn him away, Juliana told him that she would marry him only if he became the eparch of that city. She suggested this to him, thinking that this young man would never attain such a high position. Nevertheless, Eleusius tried and, by flattery and bribery, attained the post of Eparch of Nicomedia. Juliana then revealed to him that she was a Christian and could not enter into marriage with him until he embraced her Faith, saying: "What does it benefit us to be united physically but divided spiritually?" Embittered by this, Eleusius denounced her to her father. The enraged father scorned her, beat her, and then handed her over to the eparch for torture. The eparch ordered that they severely beat her, then she was cast into prison, all wounded and bloody. However, the Lord healed her in prison, and she appeared before the eparch completely well. He then threw her into a glowing furnace but the fire did not burn her. Seeing this miracle, many believed in Christ God. Five hundred men and one hundred and thirty women were converted. The eparch condemned them all to death and ordered them all to be beheaded. Thus their souls entered Paradise. Then the wicked judge condemned holy Juliana to be beheaded. With a joyful spirit, Juliana went out to the place of execution, prayed to God on her knees, and placed her head on the block. Her head was severed and her soul went to the Kingdom of Christ's eternal light in the year 304. God's punishment quickly befell Eleusius: as he was sailing on the sea, his ship broke up and he fell into the water. He did not find death in the water, but swam to an island, where dogs tore him to pieces and devoured him.

Saint Peter the Wonderworker, Metropolitan of Russia

Peter was born in the province of Volhynia and embraced the monastic life at the age of twelve. He was a wonderful ascetic and iconographer. He founded a monastery on the river Rata and became its abbot. Against his will, he was appointed Metropolitan of Kiev and consecrated in Constantinople by Patriarch Athanasius. As metropolitan, he endured much at the hands of the envious and the heretics. He governed the Church for eighteen years as a good and zealous shepherd. During his lifetime he built a crypt for himself in the Church of the Dormition, where his holy and miracle-working relics repose even today. He entered into rest in the year 1326 and went to his true homeland.

Taken From The Prologue of Ochrid, , by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)