



The Genealogy

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 1

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!

Troparion of the 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.

Troparion of the Ancestors, Tone 2

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!

Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

December 19th , Tone 1, 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 mention is 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 women: the names of Judas, Tamar, 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 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

Announcements and Activities

Great Compline with Pre-festal Canon: Wednesday and Thursday, at 7 PM. If you are at all able to come, please do. These two services set a beautiful tone for those of the 24th and 25th.

Baptism of Edie O— Friday, at 8AM.

Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for the Nativity of Christ— Friday, at 9AM.

The Vigil for the Nativity of Christ— Friday, at 6:30PM. I often tell you that the Vigil service is the service at which all the best poetry reflecting the joy of the feast is sung. I know that people often get together with family on the 24th, but the Services of the Great Feasts are the consummation of all that we have prepared for during the Fast. Why not try to make at least a part of the vigil service on the Eve.

Divine liturgy of Nativity of Christ— Saturday, at 10AM.

Saturday Great Vespers— we will forego serving Great Vespers on Saturday evening.

Sunday Divine Liturgy— 10AM.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour will be sponsored Brandon and Leanna and April. Next week's Coffee Hour will be our monthly potluck. As of Saturday, the 25th, we begin a Fast-free period that ends on January 4th.

Confessions— Many of you have already been to confession during the Nativity Fast. All of us should have come to the Holy Mystery of Confession in preparation for the Great Feast of the Nativity of the Lord. Father is available before and after the Pre-festal compline services on the 22nd and 23rd, and by appointment during Monday through Wednesday. He would prefer not to hear confessions on the 24th or 25th, as there is so much to do in conjunction with the feast.

Church School/Adult Ed.— will next meet on Sunday, December 26th, at 9AM.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—battling cancer. Samir's friend, **Johnny, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight.** **Brian, Sunday's**

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.

Taken from the *Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church

From the Lives of the Saints... THE HOLY MARTYR BONIFACE

Martyrdom for Christ makes a saint out of a sinner. The example of St. Boniface shows this. At first, he was a servant in Rome to a wealthy and immoral woman, Aglaida, and had impure and unlawful relations with her. They were both pagans. Once, Aglaida desired to have the relics of a martyr in her house as an amulet to protect against evil, so she sent her servant to Asia to find and purchase what she desired. Boniface took several slaves with him and a large amount of money. Before parting with Aglaida, he said to her: "If I cannot find a martyr, but instead they bring you back my body martyred for Christ, will you receive it with honor, my lady?" Aglaida laughed and called him a drunkard and a sinner, and then they parted. Coming to the city of Tarsus, Boniface saw many Christians undergoing torture: some with their legs cut off, others with their hands severed, others with their eyes plucked out, still others on the gallows, and so forth. Boniface's heart was changed, and he repented of his sinful life and wept. He cried out among the Christian martyrs: "I too am a Christian!" The judge took him for interrogation and ordered that he be harshly flogged, then that boiling lead be poured into his mouth, and--since this did him no harm --that he be beheaded. The slaves then took his body and carried it to Rome. An angel of God appeared to Aglaida and said: "Receive the one who was once your slave but now is our brother and fellow servant; he is the guardian of your soul and the protector of your life." The awestruck Aglaida came out to meet them, received the body of Boniface, built a church for him, and placed the relics of the martyr in it. She then repented, gave away her goods to the poor, withdrew from the world, and lived for fifteen more years in bitter repentance. St. Boniface suffered in the year 290 A.D.

SAINT GREGORY (GRIGENTIUS), BISHOP OF OMIR

At first, Gregory was a deacon in a church in Mediolanum [Milan] and had many visions. By God's providence he was taken to Alexandria. There Patriarch Proterius, according to a heavenly revelation, consecrated him bishop of the land of Omir in southern Arabia, which St. Elesbaan the King (October 24) had just freed from the tyranny of Dunaan the Jew. He was a good shepherd and great miracle-worker. He organized the Church in Omir with the help of the Christ-loving King Abramius, built many churches, and baptized many Jews. By his prayers he performed great and awesome miracles, even bringing about a revelation of Christ the Lord before the unbelieving Jews, which led to their baptism. He governed the Church for thirty years and entered peacefully into life eternal in the year 552 A.D.

Prologue of Ochrid, edited and written by St. Nikolai

"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)