



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

The Sunday of the Genealogy

Troparion of the Resurrec- tion, Tone 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

Troparion for the Prefeast Tone 4

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

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 28th Sunday after Pentecost December 18th , Tone 2, 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, 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

he gospel for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost teaches us to trust even in

Announcements and Activities

Compline with Nativity Pre-festal Canon— Wednesday and Thursday, at 7PM. Words taking us to the very gateway Nativity through the Church's meditation on the days surrounding Nativity. Come and see.

Vigil for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ— Saturday, December 24th at 6:30PM The vigil is the service where we hear the Theology of the Incarnations: the wonder, the joy, the mind-boggling character of the feast. I am so looking forward to celebrating the Vigil of the feast with all of you...to offer our thanks, our joy, our wonder to the Lord on the Feast.

Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ— Sunday, at 10AM.

Church School/Adult Ed.— January 1st, at 9AM.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Sunday and Rhoda. Next week's coffee hour will provide some coffee and cookies for those able to come to the hall and sing some Christmas songs and spend a little time together before the day's activities in our various homes.

Congratulations to Derrick—on his reception through baptism, and to his sponsor Aaron. A good paradise!

Christmas Charities— we're ready to distribute our Christmas cheer to the families we adopted for Christmas. Thanks to all for your purchases for the families we are sponsoring.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—battling cancer. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **All those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor, who reposed. **Our Vladyka Benjamin** — battling on-set parkinsons. **George and Alesis**, Brother and Daughter of Peter and Irene S. **Matushka Ioanna R. reposed. Matushka Priscilla**, ill. **Anya J**— a longtime friend of the parish who is ill. **Stephen F.**— battling back pain. **John F.**— battling cancer. **Arch-priest Anthony**— battling cancer. **Julie**— sister of Kathy M., battling health problems. **Rhoda's requests for Douglas and Kayana. Reposed Constance**— the mother of Andrew F. **Will**— reposed, Michael T.'s brother-in-law. **Reposed Vadim. Christian**— undergoing some medical testing. The reposed— **Novice Nonna, Robbie**— cancer. **Raphael**, cancer. **Child Aidan**— seizures. **Child Henry. Robbie** the cousin of Brian R., who reposed after a battle with cancer. **Louis Joseph M.**, is now home and, thank God, ready to come to church **Reposed Dn. George. Jobie**, cancer. **Darryl and Laura Beth. Repose: Stavrophore Elizabeth, of Kazan Skete . Pastor Brad**, a friend of Kirk's who is going through a difficult time. **Sarah**, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy**— who are ill. **Matushka Ann Hopko**, reposed. **Jonathan**— ill. **Sonja**— Sunday's daughter-in-law who gave birth through C-section and is recovering. **Congratulations!** Reposed **Metropolitan Herman**, former Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America. **Reposed Armand**— former member of our parish.. **Reposed Barbara Ranjo. Reposed Matushka Ann Hopko, Tom Wood**— heart surgery. **Fr. And Matushka's Granddaughter Annabella is battling and persistent illness. Reposed: Fr. Maximos of St. Silouan Monastery, Laure**— battling Cancer. **Laure**— battling cancer. **Paul**— ill **Ralph**—ill **Archpriest Lawrence**, from Canada, progressive eye disease. **Tsige Roman**— our beloved Tsige reposed on December 3rd. Please keep praying for her homeland of Ethiopia. **Brian**— ill. **Jonathan**— ill.

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.

(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 SEBASTIAN AND THOSE WITH HIM

This glorious saint was born in Italy and brought up in the city of Milan. While still young, he dedicated himself to military service. Being educated, handsome and courageous, he received the favor of Emperor Diocletian, who appointed him captain of his imperial guard. Secretly he confessed the Christian Faith and prayed to the Living God. As an honorable, just and merciful man, Sebastian was greatly beloved by his soldiers. Whenever he could, he saved Christians from torture and death, and, when he was unable to do so, he exhorted them to die for Christ the Living God without turning back. Two brothers, Marcus and Marcellinus, who had been imprisoned for Christ and were already on the verge of denouncing Him and worshiping idols, were confirmed in the Faith by Sebastian, who strengthened them for martyrdom. As he spoke with them, encouraging them not to fear death for Christ, his face was illumined. Everyone saw his shining face, like that of an angel of God. Sebastian also confirmed his words by miracles: he healed Zoe, the jailer Nicostratus's wife, who had been mute for six years; he brought her, Nicostratus and his entire household to baptism; he healed the two ailing sons of Claudius the commander and brought him and his household to baptism; he healed Tranquillinus, the father of Marcus and Marcellinus, of gout and pains in his legs which had troubled him for eleven years, and brought him to baptism together with his entire household; he healed the Roman eparch Chromatius of the same illness and brought him and his son Tiburtius to baptism. The first of them to suffer was St. Zoe, whom they seized at the tomb of the Apostle Peter, where she was praying to God. After torturing her, they threw her into the Tiber River. They then seized Tiburtius, and the judge placed live coals before him, telling him to choose between life and death, that is, either to cast incense on the coals and to cense the idols or to stand barefoot on the hot coals. St. Tiburtius made the sign of the Cross, stood barefoot on the hot coals, and remained unharmed. After this, he was beheaded. Nicostratus was killed with a stake, Tranquillinus was drowned, and Marcus and Marcellinus were tortured and pierced with spears. Then Sebastian was brought before Emperor Diocletian. The emperor rebuked him for his betrayal, but Sebastian said: "I have always prayed to my Christ for your health and for the peace of the Roman Empire." The emperor ordered that he be stripped naked and shot through with arrows. The soldiers shot him through with arrows until the martyr was so completely covered with arrows that his body was not seen because of them. When all thought that he was dead, he appeared alive and completely healthy. Then the pagans killed him with staves. He suffered gloriously for Christ his Lord and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ in the year 287 A.D. at the time of Diocletian the Emperor and Gaius the Bishop of Rome.

SAINT FLORUS, BISHOP OF AMISUS

Florus lived at the time of the Emperors Justin II and Maurice (565-602). He was the son of nobles. He renounced the commotion and vanity of the world and withdrew to a monastery in order to live a life of asceticism for the salvation of his soul. Later he was chosen bishop of the town of Amisus in the province of Cappadocia. And as an ascetic and a hierarch, Florus pleased God, and he peacefully took up his habitation in the Kingdom of God.

(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)