



Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

Ancestors of the Lord

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 Prefeast of Nativity, Tone 4

Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn yourself, O Naphtali; River Jordan, cease flowing and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized. Adam, rejoice with our first Mother and do not hide yourself as you did of old in Paradise; for having seen you naked, He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment. Christ has appeared to renew all creation

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, Tone 3, December 17th, Lu. 17:12-19

The first of the two Sundays before Christmas is called, “Sunday of the Ancestors of the Lord”. It is celebrated on the second Sunday before the 25th December — this falls between December 11th and the 17th.

The “Ancestors” are the Patriarchs and the Prophets of the Old Covenant, from Adam to John the Baptist. The Church sings: “Let us rejoice together, we who are friends of the Fathers, in commemorating their memory...”. One wonders whether these words correspond to any genuine feeling on the part of the majority of believers. Many among us have lost touch with the Old Testament, and neither read nor understand it, and so do not take into account that Jesus Christ is present, though veiled, in all the events and all the texts of Hebrew Scripture. All is centered on Him. Many do not recognize in Abel the first Martyr, and the prototype of the Good Shepherd as well as the Sacrificer; in Melchisadek the type of the eternal priest; in Abraham the spirit of faith and type of the Father; in Isaac the spirit of Sonship and of sacrifice; in Jacob free election, patient service and conversion; in Joseph the great features of the Passion and of Christ’s redemptive work. The forget that through the reading of the Prophets the voice of Jesus himself speaks to our heart. They are not really “friends of the Fathers” and they do not delight in remembering them.

Let us ask our Lord, on this Sunday, to open our understanding to the message of the Old Covenant and to teach us, as He taught the disciples at Emmaus: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ...And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

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

From the Lives of the Saints...

THE HOLY PROPHET DANIEL AND THE THREE CHILDREN: ANANIAS, AZARIAS AND MISAEAL

All four were of the royal tribe of Judah. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed and plundered Jerusalem, Daniel, as a boy, was carried away into slavery together

Announcements and

Activities

Compline with the Pre-festal Nativity Canon—Thursday and Friday, at 7PM. Come and don the spirit of Christmas through the beautiful reflections of these 30 to 40 minute services..

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM.

The Vigil for the Nativity of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ— Sunday, at 6:30 PM. I want to encourage everyone to be at the Vigil on Sunday Evening and the Liturgy for Nativity on Monday morning. These services are, or ought to be, life-changing. Though the tidings of Nativity are proclaimed throughout the world, the Feast, itself, is most radiantly celebrated in the temple of God, with the liturgical worship fitting for the new-born King.

Coffee Hour— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Lana and Chris C. Next week's Coffee Hour will be our mini-potluck..

Church School/Adult Ed— Dec. 31st, at 9AM.

The Nativity Fast— began on November 15th. No meat, eggs, dairy products may be served at Coffee Hours— including items containing these products, such as sour CREAM, MILK Chocolate, Cakes, doughnuts and baked goods containing these items, etc. Fish is permitted on all the Sundays of the fast except for December 24th, which is kept as a stricter fast. The fast ends with the celebration of the Christmas Divine Liturgy on the morning of Monday, December 25th.

Confessions- ALL members of the parish should find time to receive the Holy Sacrament of Confession during the days of the fast. Fr. Lawrence is available before and after Saturday Vespers and by appointment during the week.

Christmas Charity— blessings to all who shopped and donated toward making for a very blessed Christmas for the people we helped.

Pariah Council —met last Sunday. We adopted two treasurer's reports with a deficit budget (actually 3), but we're still above water for 2023 and hope that all the special fundraising done in December will add even more to our bottom line. Thank you for your faithfulness. We also discussed various elements of our parish life: youth, fundraising, church grounds, etc.

Pray for... Sarah, the daughter of Fr. Lawrence's godfather, health issues. **Youseff and Jimmy**— who are ill. **Jonathan**— ill. **Reposed Barbara Ranjo**. . **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. **Katia**— sister of Shkbarra's . **Patrick**, reposed. **Heather Mary**— uncommon fatigue **Lou Mendez**. Battling ongoing health issues. **George and Steve**, a request from Luci. **F. Dr. Joseph**— personal needs. **Lance**— special request for prayers. **Christian**— prayers for upcoming surgery. **Michelle**— looking for housing. Mike Meko's Mother-in-law, **Lois**. Larissa's newly-reposed husband **Raphael**. Departed **Matushka Priscilla** and **Newly-departed, George**. Aaron C. surgery. **Luci F. upcoming surgery**. **Newly-Departed Marylyn**.

with the Jewish King Jehoiachim and countless other Israelites. An account of his life, sufferings and prophecies can be found in detail in his book. Completely devoted to God, St. Daniel from his early youth received from God the gift of great discernment. His fame among the Jews in Babylon began when he denounced two lecherous and unrighteous elders, Jewish judges, and saved the chaste Susanna from an unjust death. But his fame among the Babylonians began from the day he deciphered and interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. For this, the king made him a prince at his court. When the king made a golden idol on the Plain of Dura, the Three Children refused to worship it, and for this they were cast into a fiery furnace. But an angel of God appeared in the furnace and cooled the fire so that the children walked around the furnace unharmed by the fire, singing: Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our fathers (Daniel 3:26). The king saw this miracle and was amazed. He then brought the children out of the furnace and bestowed upon them great honors.

In the time of King Belshazzar, when the king was eating and drinking with his guests at a banquet from consecrated vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, an invisible hand wrote three words on the wall: Mene, Tekel, Upharsin (Daniel 5:25-28). No one was able to interpret these words except Daniel. That night, King Belshazzar was killed. Daniel was twice thrown into the lions' den because of his faith in the One, Living God, and both times the Lord saved him and he remained alive. Daniel beheld God on a throne with the heavenly hosts; saw angels; discerned the future of certain people, of kingdoms, and of the whole human race; and prophesied the time of the coming of the Savior on earth. According to St. Cyril of Alexandria, Daniel and the three children lived to old age in Babylon and were beheaded for the true Faith. When they beheaded Ananias, Azarias stretched out his cloak and caught his head; following this, Misael caught Azarias's head and Daniel caught Misael's head. An angel of the God translated their bodies to Judea, to Mount Gebal, and placed them under a rock. According to tradition, these four God-pleasers arose at the time of the death of the Lord Christ, appeared to many and again fell asleep. Daniel is numbered among the four great prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel). He lived and prophesied five hundred years before Christ.

THE VENERABLE DANIEL (DUNALE)

Daniel was a nobleman and governor of the island of Nivertum near Cadiz in Spain. Realizing the vanity of this world, he renounced both honors and riches and went to Rome, where he was tonsured a monk. After this, he went to Constantinople, where he spoke with the Emperors Constantine and Romanus Porphyrogenitus, and then he set off for Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he received the great schema at the hands of Patriarch Christodoulos, who gave him the name Stephen. Mistreated by the Saracens, who forced him to shave off his beard, he withdrew to Egypt, where he endured much suffering and finally died for the name of Christ. He took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ toward the end of the tenth century.

THE VENERABLE NEW MARTYRS PAISIUS AND HABAKKUK

Paisius was abbot of the Travna Monastery near Čačak in Serbia, and Habakkuk was his companion and deacon. As Christians, both were impaled on stakes by the Turks on Kalemegdan in Belgrade on December 17, 1814 A.D. Carrying his stake through the streets of Belgrade, the courageous Habakkuk sang. When his mother begged him with tears to embrace Islam in order to save his life, this wonderful soldier of Christ replied to her:

My mother, thank you for your milk,
But for your counsel I thank you not:
A Serb is Christ's; he rejoices in death.

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)