

Sts. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

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December 22, 2019

27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY
OF CHRIST, THE HOLY FATHERS, GREATMARTYR ANASTASIA
TONE 2

Today 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Tues 24 6:00pm Compline & Matins
Wed 25 10:00am Divine Liturgy for the
Nativity of our Lord
Sat 28 **No Vespers**
Sun 29 10:00am Divine Liturgy

One must be baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian to receive Holy Communion. Guests are invited to receive a blessing at the chalice and partake of the post-Communion bread (Antidoron).

Fast Days: Every day. (fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, oil, wine and hard spirits as you are able. Wine and oil are permitted on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Fish is also allowed on Saturday.)

Troparion - Tone 2
(Fathers)

*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 -Tone 3
(Forefeast)

*Today the Virgin comes to the cave
to give birth to the Eternal Word.
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O
universe!
Glorify with the angels and the
shepherds
the Eternal God, Who is willing to
appear as a little child!*

Welcome to all visitors! Please join us upstairs in the church hall for coffee hour after liturgy.

Prayers for those in our Sts. Peter and Paul community (parishioners, family, friends) can be listed for remembrance in our litanies during the Liturgy. Feel free to give names to Fr. Nicholas - please indicate how each person listed is connected to us (parishioner, family, friend, etc.), as well as why we are praying for them (health, memory, travel, etc.).

Confessions can be heard by appointment. If you need, I will come to you during the week. Please do not hesitate to call for a time to drop by the church or to have me visit you.

Remembrances for both the living and the dead during the prayers of preparation of the Eucharistic Lamb and during the Augmented Litany should be given the week before the desired remembrance so that the names can be put into the bulletin and given to the Deacons for the prayers. Any names of the living that are not marked as sick or traveling will be listed under general prayers.

SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

Church Lectionary

Today

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40
Matthew 1:1-25

Monday

2 Timothy 2:20-26
Mark 10:46-52

Tuesday

2 Timothy 3:16-4:4
Mark 11:11-23
Hebrews 1:1-12
Luke 2:1-20

Wednesday

Galatians 4:4-7
Matthew 2:1-12

Thursday

Hebrews 2:11-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Friday

Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60
Matthew 21:33-42
Titus 1:15-2:10
Mark 12:1-12

Saturday

Ephesians 5:1-8
Luke 17:3-10

Reading the Bible in a Year

Dec 22: 1 John
Dec 23: 2 John; 3 John
Dec 24: Jude
Dec 25: Revelation 1-3
Dec 26: Revelation 4-6
Dec 27: Revelation 7-9
Dec 28: Revelation 10-12

Special Prayers



Ill/Home-bound:

Ruth Rifkin, Virginia Daka, Emmelia Stone, Liam, Denise Gormley, Sonya, Anna, George, Lyanna, Barbara, Katelyn, Margarita, Annmarie, Shpresa, Ralph John, Christina, Mary, Alexandra, Matthew, Fran, Sophie Plasari, Donna, Fr. Gregory & Mat. Linda DuDash, Leon, child Luka, child Makayla, Rhonda, Ashley, John, Lev, Margarita, Ludmilla, Jake, Amanda, David, Thomas, Helen, Nahum

General:

Michael, John, Darian, Tammy, Jean Dimitri, Cheryl Dimitri, Jason, Anna, George, Sonya, Catherine, Alisha, Sasha, Joseph, Kimberly, Niko, Kristin, Robert, Jerry, Pina, Jerry, Chris, Matt, Gianna, Menina, John, Sophia and the child to be born of her, Catherine and the child to be born of her,

Memory Eternal: Newly Departed Fr. Paul Pentalis, Newly Departed George, Tsiadis, Newly Departed Mira Jupi, Gregory Vrato

“And the Word became flesh!...in order to make us earthly beings into heavenly ones, in order to make sinners into saints; in order to raise us up from corruption into incorruption, from earth to heaven; from enslavement to sin and the devil – into the glorious freedom of children of God; from death – into immortality, in order to make us sons of God and to seat us together with Him upon the Throne as His royal children. O, boundless compassion of God! O, inexpressible wisdom of God! O, great wonder, astounding not only the human mind, but the angelic [mind] as well!”

-St. John of Kronstadt



December

22 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Sunday School
24 – 6:00pm Compline & Matins
25 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Nativity of our Lord
28 – **No Vespers**
29 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
31 – 7:00pm Vesperal Liturgy &
Pot Luck
Circumcision of our
Lord & St. Basil's Day

December/January Events

January

04 – 6:00pm Vespers & General
Confession
05 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Vespers of Theophany
Blessing of the Waters
06 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Theophany
08 – 6:30pm Bible Study
10 – 6:00pm Fun Night

11 – 6:00pm Vespers
12 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Sunday School
15 – 6:30pm Bible Study
18 – 6:00pm Vespers
19 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Sunday School
23 – 6:30pm Bible Study
25 – 6:00pm Vespers
26 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Sunday School
3:00pm Blessing of the Waters
at Camden Boathouse

Fr. Nicholas will be away from December 26 – 28. If there are any emergencies, he will still be able to be reached via phone (860-861-7468) Fr. Victor from St. Stephen's Cathedral is also available and close by.

Coffee Hour

Today: Gregory Vrato Memorial

Next Week:

Birthdays/ Anniversaries

Tina Murianka B – 12/27
Anne Halkedis B – 12/27
Tamara Kiselev B – 12/28

Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 (Epistle, Sunday Before)

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

Matthew 1:1-25 (Gospel, Sunday Before)

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.

Children's Word

The Most Important Book

Do you know where the word "Bible" comes from? Well, it comes from the Greek word, "biblos," which means "book." And today's Gospel reading starts with that very word. It starts "The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ." The words "the book" are the very beginning of the New Testament, when we learn about our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Why do we call this book just "the book"? Because it's the most important book in the world! It's the book that tells us the whole history of how God has helped us, how God has helped the whole world. That's why we call it "the book," or "biblos." It's the most important one. It's THE book.

Today the Gospel tells us the whole family tree of our Lord Jesus Christ. It tells us where Jesus came from. When we hear all of the names like Abraham and Isaac and Ruth and David and Josiah and Joseph, we think about all the Bible stories we have heard that happened before Christ was born. We think about all the ways that God helped the world, even before Christ was born.

But now we get to read why this is called THE book. We get to read about the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and how He came to save the world forever!

THE 10 HOLY MARTYRS OF CRETE— A GREAT DISCOVERY!

Do you know what an archaeologist does? Sometimes archaeologists dig under the ground to find out things from long ago. They might find a piece of pottery or jewelry from long ago.

A little more than a hundred years ago, some people in the great Greek island of Crete discovered something from long ago too. They found the place where ten holy saints had been buried! In the year 1898, a very sick man was healed from the water in a lake in Crete. He drank the water, and he was healed from a bad disease. He told everyone about it, and other people were also healed from this water. The bishop from that area visited it too, and he had the lake drained (dried up). Sure enough, under all that water had been the tombs of the saints.

The bishop had a little church built to the saints, and now faithful people can come and pray before their relics!

People from Crete had been praying to the 10 holy martyrs of Crete for hundreds and hundreds of years, but they never knew where their bodies were. They lived many, many years ago, but they were still alive with Christ, and they still help people today!

We celebrate these 10 saints on Mon., December 23rd.

ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF
HIS BEATITUDE METROPOLITAN TIKHON
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

2019

To the Honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,
My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord,

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

As we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and His baptism in the River Jordan, we call to mind the important roles that his mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and his Forerunner, John the Baptist, had in bringing about these events that manifested Christ to the world. For the Theotokos and the Baptist are indeed excellent examples for us, as we share their same calling to make Christ present in the world.

When Mary received the glad tidings that she was to become the Birth-giver of God, she humbly responded: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy word." She then visited her relative Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant, and when she greeted Elizabeth, the babe in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy. This babe, as we well know, was Saint John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ.

The importance of John the Baptist in the Gospels cannot be overemphasized. As the Forerunner of Christ, he not only proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, but also died a martyr's death for speaking the truth, foreshadowing that Christ, the Truth, would die for the Salvation of the world. In dying for the truth, John is not only the Forerunner to Christ, but also the Forerunner to all those who have died for Christ throughout the centuries, the countless martyrs who have struggled and been slain for Christ for more than two thousand years. Some Christians are still called to this level of witness, to this level of dying in martyrdom for the sake of Christ. The twentieth century saw more Christian martyrs than any century beforehand, in places such as Russia, Romania, and Turkey. The twenty-first in turn is seeing many Christian martyrs in places like Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Syria. We pray for strength and steadfastness for all Christians suffering persecution for the sake of Christ, and in turn we ask for the intercessions of those who have died martyr's deaths in witness of Christ.

Yet certainly, not all Christians are called to be slain for Christ, to be beheaded like John the Baptist or many of the later martyrs. Neither are all called to be like the Baptist as public preachers or wandering ascetics. For those who do not have the Baptist's calling, another route is provided: the calling to live like the Virgin Mary. For while John made Christ known to the world, it was through the Virgin Mary that Christ came to be born in the flesh. She is the Theotokos, the bearer of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the same way, Christians can "bear Christ" and make Him present. Instead of preaching God's works across hills and dales, we can keep them close and ponder them in our hearts (see Luke 2:19). By thus meditating on God's works, we will become authentically humble, gentle, and kind like Mary. And in this process of contemplating what Christ has done for us, we will gain boldness before Him in our private conversations with Him. Forging a personal relationship with Christ, we will have boldness to ask Him and His servants for what is needed, just as Mary His Mother did at the wedding in Cana.

These two great figures, John the Baptist and Mary the Theotokos, thus help us grapple with a perennial problem of Christians: how do we keep the winter feasts of the Nativity and Theophany meaningful throughout the year? The Church's calendar points us to the solution: the day after the Nativity of the Lord, December 26, is dedicated to the Lord's Mother, and January 7, the day after the Theophany of the Lord, is dedicated to the Lord's Forerunner. Hence the Church tells us that imitation of the Forerunner and the Theotokos are the keys to making Christ's winter feasts more than just a few days of celebration. The Baptist shows us the way of outward witness, of forceful and defiant objection to the falsehood propagated in the world, while the Theotokos shows us the way of inner stillness, of contemplation of the mystery of Christ. And Christians can imitate the lifestyle of either one, because ultimately both John and the Theotokos are doing the same thing: both are witnesses to Christ, and steadfastly remain eternal witnesses to His death and resurrection.

So, give glory to Christ on the feasts of His Nativity and Theophany, while honoring and magnifying in song the Theotokos and Mother of the Light, and praising the Baptist as is his due. For they reveal to us the different ways in which Christians can witness to Christ, and are our primary examples of how to live a Christian life, not only at this festal season of Nativity and Theophany, but throughout the entire year.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

With love in the New-Born Christ,

+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada