

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 20, 2020

28TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST : SUNDAY OF FOREFEAST OF THE
NATIVITY OF CHRIST
TONE 3

Today 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Thu. 24 7:00pm Compline & Matins
Wed. 25 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Nativity of Christ
Sun. 27 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: Strict fast all week (fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, oil, wine and hard spirits as you are able.) Fish, wine and oil are allowed Sunday and Saturday. Wine and oil are also allowed on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Troparion – Tone 4
(Forefeast)

*Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has
been opened to all!
Adorn thyself, O Ephratha, for the
Tree of Life blossoms forth from the
Virgin in the cave!
Her womb is a spiritual paradise
planted with the Divine Fruit;
if we eat of it, we shall live forever
and not die like Adam.
Christ comes to restore the image
which He made in the beginning.*

Kontakion – Tone 1
(Fathers)

*Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare
thyself, O Ephratha!
The Lamb is on her way to give
birth to the Chief Shepherd she
carries in her womb.
The God-bearing Forefathers will
rejoice, beholding Him,
and with the shepherds, they will
glorify the Virgin nursing Him.*

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

Hebrews 3:5-11, 17-19
Mark 9:42-10:1

Tuesday

Hebrews 4:1-13
Mark 10:2-12

Wednesday

Hebrews 5:11-6:8
Mark 10:11-16

Thursday

Hebrews 1:1-12
Luke 2:1-20

Friday

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

Saturday

1 Timothy 6:11-16
Matthew 12:15-21
Hebrews 2:11-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Reading the Bible in a Year

Dec 20: 1 Peter
Dec 21: 2 Peter
Dec 22: 1 John
Dec 23: 2 John; 3 John
Dec 24: Jude
Dec 25: Revelation 1-3
Dec 26: Revelation 4-6

“By reading the Bible you are adding yeast to the dough of your soul and body, which gradually expands and fills the soul until it has thoroughly permeated it and makes it rise with the truth and righteousness of the Gospel.”

-St. Justin Popovich

Children's Word

Getting ready for Christmas

How do YOU get ready for Christmas? Do you buy or make presents? Do you help cook a fancy dinner? Do you decorate the house? We all have ways of getting ready for the great day.

But in today's Gospel reading, we hear about how people had been getting ready for the very first Christmas. They had been getting ready...for almost two thousand years! We hear, "Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob..." and so on, all the way down to Joseph and Mary.

Abraham lived almost two thousand years before Christ was born! Ever since then, the faithful people had waited. They got ready for the first Christmas. Not with fancy dinners or pretty Christmas trees, of course.

Health of the Parish



\$15,000.00

\$10,000.00

\$5,000.00

They prayed that God would give them a Savior, somebody who would save the world. This Somebody was our Lord, Jesus Christ!

On the day before Christmas, we read the Gospel that tells us about how Jesus was born. "for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." This was wonderful news—news that the world had been waiting for, for a very long time!

So on Christmas Eve night, when you are excited for Christmas to come, just remember the people who really had to wait...for two thousand years! Then, let's thank God that He has come!

RIGHTEOUS SARAH THE HOLY FOREMOTHER

Have you ever had visitors at your house? Did you make them feel welcome? Did you talk to them and give them food and something to drink? Welcoming visitors is called "hospitality," and today we celebrate a saint who welcomed some very special visitors.

Sarah was the wife of Abraham. We call Abraham a forefather of our Lord, Jesus Christ, because he came before Jesus. He was like a great-great-great...grandfather. So, his wife Sarah, was a foremother of the Lord!

Once, three visitors came to see Abraham and Sarah. The old husband

and wife welcomed the visitors, even though they were strangers to them. Abraham and Sarah took care of the visitors, and the visitors told them that Sarah would have a baby. Later on, Sarah did have a baby, Isaac, and that was a special miracle. Abraham and Sarah were faithful to God. If you go to a wedding, you will hear their names in the wedding prayers. We remember them because they were married to each other, but they were faithful to God together.

The icon up above is called "The Hospitality of Abraham" but we know that Sarah showed hospitality and love for the visitors too! And God knows it too!

We celebrate St. Sarah today, the Sunday before Christmas.

December/January Events

December

20 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

24 – 7:00pm Compline & Matins

25 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

Nativity of our Lord

27 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

31 – 7:00pm Vesperal Liturgy (*St. Basil*)

January

03 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

05 – 7:00pm Vesperal Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water for the Feast of Theophany

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

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)

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.

Do You Not Yet Understand?

December 14, 2020 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

Why is it we humans struggle with understanding certain things about life, technology, relationships, politics, and the list goes on and on? Well, it's got everything to do with different experiences, different upbringing, different priorities, and so on.

But what if there was a basic understanding that was fundamentally common to all humans, something meant to be so basic and so fundamental that every human could and should understand it?

Misunderstanding something that basic could have huge consequences! And, you know what, there is something that is fundamental to every human, no matter when or where they're from, language they speak, culture they were raised in, amount of education they have, or even their economic status. This fundamental Truth common to all people affects everything about them and ripples through time, nations, cultures, and societies!

Look at our lesson today in Mark 8:11-21:

At that time, the Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven, to test him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation." And he left them, and getting into the boat again he departed to the other side. Now they had forgotten to bring bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. And he cautioned them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." And they discussed it with one another, saying, "We have no bread." And being aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" They said to him, "Twelve." "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?" And they said to him, "Seven." And he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

Jesus is warning His disciples about the "leaven of the Pharisees." And immediately the disciples think He's talking about the fact they have no bread! Talk about slow on the uptake! Come on, boys, plug in! OK, wait a minute, before we are too hard on the disciples, how many times have we missed the clear meaning of the Faith when it's right there in front of us? The Lord here is warning the disciples not to fall into the trap the Pharisees had fallen into. These religious and pious men had become so enamored by doing things for God they forgot to actually love God! In fact, what motivated their behavior was actually a self-love that had reduced the Faith meant for the whole world to some tribal religion exclusively belonging to the "right people."

So, what keeps us from understanding the central message of the Faith that is meant for everyone created in God's image?

First, we misunderstand when we live distracted lives. The disciples were focused on what they didn't have, that inattentiveness, distracted them from what they already had – God in the Flesh among them to lead them to true LIFE!

Next, we misunderstand when we measure everything by ourselves rather than by God. Too often what trips me up in understanding is my focus on myself – what's in it for me, how can I benefit from this – and so on. When that happens I lose the ability to focus on God and my mind is gripped by too small a vision!

Finally, we misunderstand when we forget all God has done for us in our lives. My bad memory of God's faithfulness steals my ability to remain grateful and I get captured by fear and doubt!

Today, do you find yourself misunderstanding your life? Are you forgetful of God's faithfulness and do you get distracted by small, things so that you miss really important things? You're not alone! Why not stop, right now, take a few minutes and refocus your mind, heart, and life on God Who knows you and loves you and wants you to understand what's really important! Enter into this Festal preparation and, once again, rejoice that God has come in the Flesh to make you a whole person! It's all about being Orthodox on Purpose.

К Евреям 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Верою обитал он на земле обетованной, как на чужой, и жил в шатрах с Исааком и Иаковом, сонаследниками того же обетования; ибо он ожидал города, имеющего основание, которого художник и строитель Бог. Верою Авраам, будучи искушаем, принес в жертву Исаака и, имея обетование, принес едиnorodного, о котором было сказано: в Исааке наречется тебе семя. Ибо он думал, что Бог силен и из мертвых воскресить, почему и получил его в предзнаменование. Верою в будущее Исаак благословил Иакова и Исава. Верою Иаков, умирая, благословил каждого сына Иосифова и поклонился на верх жезла своего. Верою Иосиф, при кончине, напоминал об исходе сынов Израилевых и завещал о костях своих. Верою Моисей по рождении три месяца скрываем был родителями своими, ибо видели они, что дитя прекрасно, и не устрашились царского повеления. И что еще скажу? Недостанет мне времени, чтобы повествовать о Гедеоне, о Вараке, о Самсоне и Иеффаяе, о Давиде, Самуиле и (других) пророках, которые верою побеждали царства, творили правду, получали обетования, заграждали уста львов, угашали силу огня, избегали острия меча, укреплялись от немощи, были крепки на войне, прогоняли полки чужих; жены получали умерших своих воскресшими; иные же замучены были, не приняв освобождения, дабы получить лучшее воскресение; другие испытали поругания и побои, а также узы и темницу, были побиваемы камнями, перепиливаемы, подвергаемы пытке, умирали от меча, скитались в милотях и козьих кожах, терпя недостатки, скорби, озлобления; те, которых весь мир не был достоин, скитались по пустыням и горам, по пещерам и ущельям земли. И все сии, свидетельствованные в вере, не получили обещанного, потому что Бог предусмотрел о нас нечто лучшее, дабы они не без нас достигли совершенства.

От Матфея 1:1-25

Родословие Иисуса Христа, Сына Давидова, Сына Авраамова. Авраам родил Исаака; Исаак родил Иакова; Иаков родил Иуду и братьев его; Иуда родил Фареса и Зару от Фамари; Фарес родил Есрома; Есром родил Арама; Арам родил Аминадава; Аминадав родил Наассона; Наассон родил Салмона; Салмон родил Вооза от Рахавы; Вооз родил Овида от Руфи; Овид родил Иессея; Иессей родил Давида царя; Давид царь родил Соломона от бывшей за Урикою; Соломон родил Ровоама; Ровоам родил Авию; Авия родил Асу; Аса родил Иосафата; Иосафат родил Иорама; Иорам родил Озию; Озия родил Иоафама; Иоафам родил Ахаза; Ахаз родил Езекию; Езекия родил Манассию; Манассия родил Амона; Амон родил Иосию; Иосия родил Иоакима; Иоаким родил Иехонию и братьев его, перед переселением в Вавилон. По переселении же в Вавилон, Иехония родил Салафииля; Салафииль родил Зоровавеля; Зоровавель родил Авиуда; Авиуд родил Елиакима; Елиаким родил Азора; Азор родил Садока; Садок родил Ахима; Ахим родил Елиуда; Елиуд родил Елеазара; Елеазар родил Матфана; Матфан родил Иакова; Иаков родил Иосифа, мужа Марии, от Которой родился Иисус, называемый Христос. Итак всех родов от Авраама до Давида четырнадцать родов; и от Давида до переселения в Вавилон четырнадцать родов; и от переселения в Вавилон до Христа четырнадцать родов. Рождество Иисуса Христа было так: по обручении Матери Его Марии с Иосифом, прежде нежели сочтались они, оказалось, что Она имеет во чреве от Духа Святаго. Иосиф же муж Ее, будучи праведен и не желая огласить Ее, хотел тайно отпустить Ее. Но когда он помыслил это, --се, Ангел Господень явился ему во сне и сказал: Иосиф, сын Давидов! не бойся принять Марию, жену твою, ибо родившееся в Ней есть от Духа Святаго; родит же Сына, и наречешь Ему имя Иисус, ибо Он спасет людей Своих от грехов их. А все сие произошло, да сбудется реченное Господом через пророка, который говорит: се, Дева во чреве примет и родит Сына, и нарекут имя Ему Еммануил, что значит: с нами Бог. Встав от сна, Иосиф поступил, как повелел ему Ангел Господень, и принял жену свою, и не знал Ее. Как наконец Она родила Сына Своего первенца, и он нарек Ему имя: Иисус.

Hebrenjve 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Me anë të besimit Abrahami banoi në tokën e premtuar, si në një dhe të huaj, dhe ndenji në çadra bashkë me Isakun dhe Jakobin, bashkëtrashëgimtarë të të njëjtit premtim, sepse priste qytetin që ka themelet, mjeshtër dhe ndërtues i të cilit është Perëndia. Me anë të besimit Abrahami, pasi u vu në provë, ofroi Isakun dhe ai që kishte pritur premtimet ofroi birin e tij të vetëm, ndonëse Perëndia i pati thënë: “Te Isaku do të quhet pasardhja jote (që do të mbajë emrin tënd),” sepse Abrahami mendonte se Perëndia ishte i fuqishëm sa ta ringjallte edhe prej së vdekurish; prej të cilëve edhe e mori atë përsëri si një lloj figure. Me anë të besimit Isaku bekoj Jakobin dhe Esaun, për gjërat që do të ndodhnin. Me anë të besimit Jakobi, duke vdekur, bekoj secilin nga bijtë e Jozefit dhe adhuroi duke u mbështetur mbi majën e shkopit të tij. Me anë të besimit Jozefi, duke vdekur, përmendi eksodin e bijve të Izraelit dhe dha porosi për eshtrat e tij. Më anë të besimit Moisiu, si lindi, u fsheh nga prindërit e tij tre muaj, sepse ata panë se fëmija ishte i bukur dhe nuk u frikësuan nga urdhëri i mbretit. Dhe ç’të them më? Sepse nuk do të më mjaftonte koha, po të doja të tregoja për Jedeonin, Barakun, Sansonin, Jeftin, Davidin, Samuelin dhe për profetët, të cilët, me anë të fesë nënshtruan mbretërit, realizuan drejtësinë, arritën ato që u premtuan, ua zunë grykën luanëve, fikën fuqinë e zjarrit, shpëtuan nga tehu i shpatës, nga të dobët u bënë të fuqishëm, u bënë të fortë në betejë, thyen ushtritë e huaja. Gratë morën të vdekurit e tyre me anë të ringjalljes; e të tjerët u torturuan, sepse nuk pranuan çlirimin, për të fituar një ringjallje më të mirë. Dhe të tjerë hoqën përqeshje dhe goditje, madje edhe pranga dhe burgime. U vranë me gurë, me sharrë, u prenë, u vranë nga shpata, u endën të mbuluar me lëkurë dhënshe e dhish, nevojtarë, të pikë-lluar, të keqtrajtuar (bota nuk ishte e denjë për ta), u sollën nëpër shkretëtira e nëpër male, nëpër shpella dhe nëpër guva të dheut. E pra, të gjithë këta, ndonëse morën dëshmim të mirë me anë të besimit, nuk morën atë që u ishte premtuar, sepse Perëndia kishte paraparë diçka më të mirë për ne, që ata të mos arrinin në përsosje pa ne.

Mateu 1:1-25

Libri i gjenealogjisë së Jezu Krishtit, birit të Davidit, birit të Abrahamit. Abrahamit i lindi Isaku; Isakut i lindi Jakobi; Jakobit i lindi Juda dhe vëllezërit e tij. Judës i lindi nga Tamara Faresi dhe Zara; Faresit i lindi Esromi; Esromit i lindi Arami; Aramit i lindi Aminadabi; Aminadabit i lindi Naasoni; Naasonit i lindi Salmoni. Salmonit i lindi Boozi nga Rahabi; Boozit i lindi Obedi nga Ruthi; Obedit i lindi Jeseu. Jeseut i lindi Davidi mbret; mbretit David i lindi Salomoni nga ajo që kishte qenë bashkëshortja e Urias. Salomonit i lindi Roboami; Roboamit i lindi Abia; Abias i lindi Asai. Asait i lindi Jozafati; Jozafatit i lindi Jorami; Joramit i lindi Ozia. Ozias i lindi Joatami; Joatamit i lindi Akazi; Akazit i lindi Ezekia. Ezekias i lindi Manaseu; Manaseut i lindi Amoni; Amonit i lindi Josia. Josias i lindi Jekonia dhe vëllezërit e tij në kohën e internimit në Babiloni. Pas internimit në Babiloni Jekonias i lindi Salatieli; Salatielit i lindi Zorobabeli. Zorobabelit i lindi Abiudi; Abiudit i lindi Eliakimi; Eliakimit i lindi Azori. Azorit i lindi Sadoku; Sadokut i lindi Akimi; Akimit i lindi Eliudi. Eliudit i lindi Eleazari, Eleazarit i lindi Matthani, Matthanit i lindi Jakobi. Jakobit i lindi Jozefi, bashkëshorti i Marisë, nga e cila lindi Jezusi, që quhet Krisht. Kështu të gjithë brezat nga Abrahami deri te Davidi bëhen katërmëdhjetë breza; dhe, nga Davidi deri te internimi në Babiloni, katërmëdhjetë breza; dhe, nga internimi në Babiloni deri te Krishti, katërmëdhjetë breza. Tani lindja e Jezu Krishtit ndodhi në këtë mënyrë: Maria, nëna e tij, i ishte premtuar Jozefit, por para se të fillonin të rrinin bashkë, mbeti shtatzënë nga Frymën e Shenjtë. Atëherë Jozefi, i fejuari i saj, i cili ishte njeri i drejtë dhe nuk donte ta poshtëronte botërisht, vendosi ta linte fshehtas. Por, ndërsa bluante me vete këto çështje, ja që iu shfaq në ëndërr një engjell i Zotit dhe i tha: “Jozef, bir i Davidit, mos ki frikë ta marrësh me vete Marinë si gruan tënde, sepse ç’është ngjizur në të është vepër e Frymës së Shenjtë. Dhe ajo do të lindë një djalë dhe ti do t’i vësh emrin Jezus, sepse ai do të shpëtojë popullin e tij nga mëkatet e tyre.” E gjithë kjo ndodhi që të përmbushej fjala e Zotit, e thënë me anë të profetit që thotë: “Ja, virgjëresha do të mbetet shtatzënë dhe do të lindë një djalë, të cilit do t’i venë emrin Emanuel, që do të thotë: "Zoti me ne".” Dhe Jozefi, si u zgjua nga gjumi, veptoi ashtu siç e kishte urdhëruar engjëlli i Zotit dhe e mori pranë vetës gruan e tij; por ai nuk e njohu, derisa ajo lindi djalin e saj të parëlindur, të cilit ia vuri emrin Jezus.