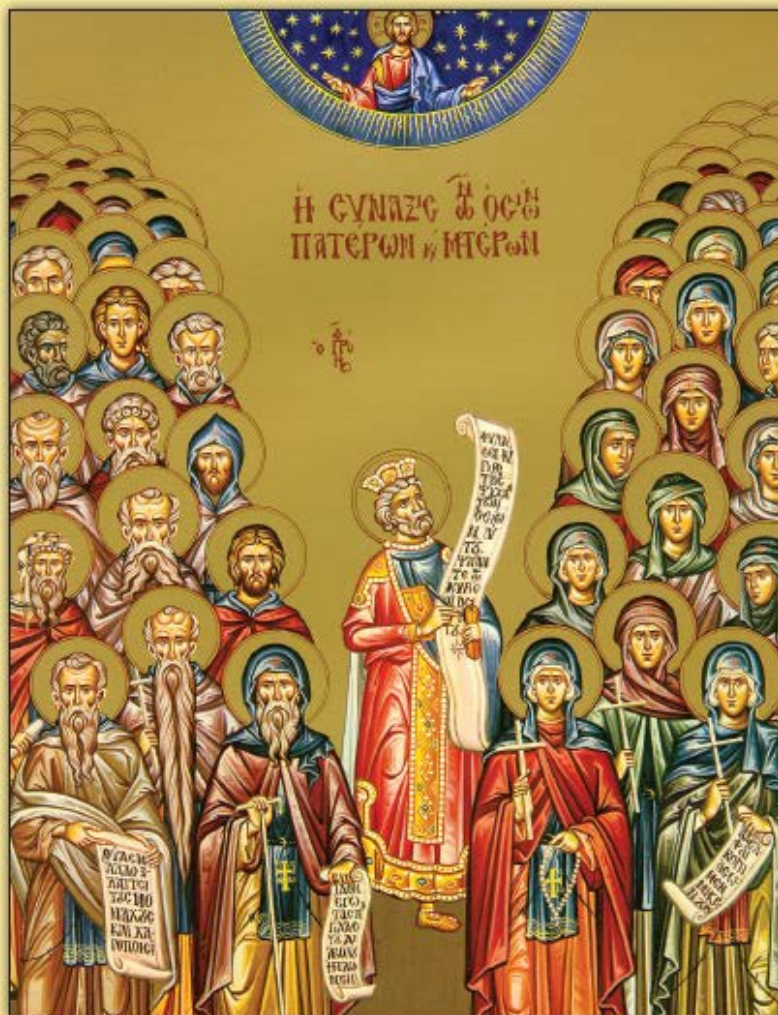


SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS



Icon of the Holy Ancestors

St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

A Parish of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (antiochian.org) ... and ...
The Diocese of Charleston, Oakland & The Mid-Atlantic (antiochian.org/east)
("...the Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch!" [Acts 11:26](#))



111 Alberta Avenue // Johnstown, PA 15905-3002
Website: stmaryaocc.org // E-Mail: stmaryaocc@outlook.com

Most Rev. Metropolitan SABA – Archbishop & Primate
Right Rev. Bishop THOMAS – Auxiliary Bishop
Very Rev. Fr. Donald E. Shadid, M.Div. & D.Min. – Archpriest & Pastor
Sub-Deacon Timothy (Cade) Scott, MAT
Edward Makdad, Jr. – Parish Council Chairperson

“Go to Church ... Say Your Prayers ... Don’t Forget God!” (+Fr. Tom Hopko’s Mom)

Fr. Don – Cell: 814-242-0084 – abeenad1@gmail.com – Office: 814-255-2148

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (Sunday of The Genealogy), WHICH FALLS ON THE PARAMON (EVE) OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Glory be to Jesus Christ! Glory be to Him Forever!

All Those who of old have been well-pleasing to God, from ADAM down to JOSEPH The Betrothed / The Prophets & Prophetesses, especially DAVID The Prophet and The Three Holy Youths / The Venerable Martyr EUGENIA of Rome and Those With Her

We welcome all of you, our Faithful and our Visitors, to St. Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church! It is a pleasure to have you with us as we glorify and praise the Name of our God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Please sing along with our Choir during the Liturgy.

Please note, as has been the practice of the Church since the Feast of Pentecost, that the Sacrament of Holy Communion can only be given to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, regular Confession (at least twice per year ... 7 Yrs. old & up), who attend Liturgy regularly & on time (at least 3 times a month) ... and ... are at peace with all people.

When receiving Holy Communion, please fold your arms over your chest, open your mouth wide, tip your head back slightly and allow the priest to place the elements in your mouth.

For our non-Orthodox brethren, we welcome you to sing and pray with us, venerate the Cross and receive the Blessed Holy Bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy. Please join us again soon. May God Bless You Always!

HOLY OBLATION: Offered by: **(1)** *Lawrence Bertino* in beloved memory of parents, *Dr. Lawrence & Lottie (Corey) Bertino* and dear friend, *Marjorie Hamaty ... and ... (2)* *The Faithful of our St. Mary Parish Family* for the health & safety of *all within Palestine, Israel, Ukraine & Russia;* and in beloved memory of *those who have perished in the conflicts which have enveloped these nations.*

PASCHAL CANDLES: Offered in beloved memory of: son, brother & uncle, *Eddie Martin (+16 Yrs.)* by *Huda Martin & Family ... and ... Jesse George* by his mom, *Christine Asfar.*

PROSKAMEDIA CANDLE: Offered: in beloved memory of father, *William ("Speedo" – +59 Yrs.)* & mother, *Barbara (+4 Yrs.)* and for all within the *Salem & Galayda Families who have "Fallen-Asleep in the Lord;"* and for the health of all within the *Salem & Galayda Families* by *Christine Salem.*

SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLE: Offered: for the health of niece, *Lexi,* & sister, *Susan,* as they celebrate their Birthdays; and in beloved memory of grandmother, *Domnicki* & great-grandmother, *Maria,* by *Jay & Nitsa McClatchey.*

PRAYERS OF LITURGICAL REMEMBRANCE

Offered for the health of: our parishioners who are members of The Order of St. Ignatius (*Larry Bertino, Lisa Catanese, Renee D'Ettorre, William & Lindsay (Heider) Fennell, Albert Ghantous, Elaine Heider, Norman Joseph, Dr. Adib Khouzami, Ed Makdad, Jr., Sandy Milkie, Christine Salem, Fr. Don, Khouria Janet, Fr. Christopher & Dr. Stephen Shadid and Loretta Shahade*) by our St. Mary Parish ... **and ...**

Offered in beloved memory of: our parishioners who belonged to The Order of St. Ignatius and have "Fallen-Asleep in the Lord" by our St. Mary Parish.

TRISAGION PRAYERS OF MERCY (Naha): Offered in beloved memory of: *David J. Farra, Jr. (+40 Days)* by loving wife, *Majda,* daughters, *Nadine & Darlene* and their Families, and *David J. Farra, III.* ***May David's Memory Be Eternal ... Christ is Risen!***

***For The Living – "God Grant Them Many Years!"...and...
For The Departed – "May Their Memory Be Ever Eternal!"***

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- VARIATIONS & NOTES ON THE LITURGY -

THIRD ANTIPHON: (*Troparion During The Little Entrance – Tone Four*)
See "Troparion of The Resurrection" Below.

AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE:

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION: *(Tone Four)*

Having learned the joyful message of the resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation and proudly broke the news to the disciples saying death hath been spoiled. Christ God is risen granting the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD: *(Tone Two)*

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

TROPARION OF THE PARAMON (EVE) OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD: *(Tone Four)*

As the fruit of David’s seed, Mary was registered of old with the Elder Joseph in the little town of Bethlehem, when she conceived with a seedless and pure conception. Behold, the time was come that she should bear her Child, but no place was found within the inn for them; yet the cave proved a delightful palace for the pure Lady and Queen of all. For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforesaid.

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION: *(Patron Feast Day - Tone One)*

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION FOR CHRIST’S NATIVITY: *(Tone Three)*

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

EPISTLE: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40 *(The Sunday Before The Nativity)*

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 1:1-25 *(The Sunday Before The Nativity)*

Concerning the “Kiss of Peace,” prior to the Nicene Creed, we encourage you to greet those around you with a bow of the head and your hands across your chest, saying: **“Christ is in Our Midst!”**...the response being: **He is and Always Shall Be!**” In this way, we express: (1) our Joy that God has acted to restore our Communion with Him ... and ... (2) our Hope in the Resurrection from the Dead that is offered to us by our Lord’s own “trampling down death by death!” **God is With Us (“Emmanuel”)!**

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THOSE IN SPECIAL NEED OF OUR PRAYERS: UPMC MERCY INPATIENT REHABILITATION FACILITY – Pittsburgh: Anna Marie (Abraham) Rovansek (#6024); AMBER HILLS @ CAMBRIA CARE CENTER (Ebensburg, PA): Mary Ann Unis-Asfar (#606); LAURELVIEW VILLAGE: George Zdravecky (Health Care #302) & Rhoda (Nasser) Zdravecky (Vista – 913); LAURELWOOD CARE CENTER: Suzanne George (#37-W) & George Haidar (#49); (LUTHERAN HOME (Johnstown): Elaine Heider (#34); WESTMONT WOODS – QUALITY LIFE SERVICES (Westmont): Emma (Nasser) Audey (#115-W) ... **and ...** IN TREATMENT, RECOVERING AND / OR “SHUT-IN AT HOME”: Becky Azar; Larry Bertino; Carolyn Clark; Renee D’Ettorre; Michael & Patty Devich; Joanne George; John & Dalal George; Olga Hodge; Denise Khorey-Harriman; Matthew Makdad; Huda Martin; George Milkie; Maryanne Milkie and Sara Shahade. **May God Be With All of Them & All of Those Who Are Ill and / or in Need!**

SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND: A donation has been given to our “St. Mary Special Project Fund” in beloved memory of Marge Ajay, Margie Hamaty & Alvie Kennan by Loretta Shahade. **May Their Memory Be Eternal! Christ is Risen!**

STEWARDSHIP OFFERINGS TO ST. MARY PARISH

Please note that in order for your Stewardship Offerings to be on your Stewardship Statements for the Calendar Year of 2023, we must receive them by noon on Tuesday, December 26, 2023. If there are any questions, please contact either Eddie Makdad (Council Chair) or Fr. Don. **Thank You and God Bless You & Your Loved Ones!**

Parishioner Envelopes & Calendars – 2024: Please stop in the Social Hall for refreshments and/or to pick up your 2024 Parishioner Envelopes & Calendar. You will notice two changes in the Envelope Booklets for 2024: **(1)** there is a slight change in the design of the envelope ... they can now be mailed to Church via the USPS ... e.g. if you have to miss Church, if you would rather not carry them with you, etc. ... **and ... (2)** we have increased the amount requested for your stewardship to the Archdiocese to \$75.00 per baptized soul in your family who belongs to our St. Mary Parish ... it has been many years since we have increased it and we do tithe (10% of our parish’s income) as our parish’s offering to the ministry of the Archdiocese as a whole.

Please remember that our Lord teaches us in the Holy Bible that all we have is not ours, but God’s and we are stewards of that which he has blessed us with. Thus, He asks for us to offer the “first fruits of our gifts” (Exodus 23:16, Leviticus 23:10, Proverbs 3:9) and to tithe from our treasury (10% of our income – Malachi 3:7-12). When we give of our first fruits it reminds us that God is our ultimate priority. It manifests our obedience to God and that we can be trusted with more.

Epistle

(For the Sunday before the Nativity)

*Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.
For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Gospel

(For the Sunday before the Nativity: “The Genealogy”)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah

was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

May God Be With You!

101 THINGS GOD CAN'T DO

What You Must Know to Win ... by Maisie Sparks (12/24)

23. God can't give us a spirit of fear.

*"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power,
and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 TIMOTHY 1:7)*

+++ CONFSSION SCHEDULE +++

By Appointment ... Please Call or Text Fr. Don @ 814-242-0084.

Due to Fr.'s Commitment to Matins, Confession Will Not Be Offered On Sun. Mornings.

