

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
SUNDAY OF KING DAVID, JOSEPH AND JAMES



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord

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 THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY) OF CHRIST, WHICH FALLS ON THE APODOSIS (LEAVE-TAKING) OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Sunday, December 31, 2023

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Holy & Righteous JOSEPH The Betrothed, DAVID The Prophet & King and
JAMES The Brother of God / Venerable Mother MELANIA The Younger of Rome

Happy New Year! God Grant Our St. Mary Parish Family “Many Years!”

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.

***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 -

FIRST ANTIPHON: (*Refrain - "Through the intercessions of the Theotokos..."*)
"I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders. In the council of the upright, and in the congregation, great are the works of the Lord." / *Refrain.* / "They are sought out in all the things that He hath willed. Confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages." / *Refrain.* / "Glory & Now" ... *Refrain*

SECOND ANTIPHON: (*Refrain – "Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin; who sing to Thee. Alleluia."*)

“Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed. / *Refrain.* / “Glory and riches shall be in His house, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages.” / *Refrain.* / “There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright; he is merciful and compassionate and righteous.” / *Refrain.* / “Glory & Now” ... and ... “O Only-begotten Son & Word of God”

THIRD ANTIPHON: (*Sung During The Little Entrance – Tone Four*)

Verses: “The Lord said unto my Lord: ‘Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send Thee a rod of strength out of Zion. With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of Thy saints.’ ”

<p><i>Troparion:</i> See “Troparion of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ” Below.</p>
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ENTRANCE HYMN (*Instead of “Come, let us worship & fall down...”*):

From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent; thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE:

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION: (*Tone Five*)

Let us believers praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit; born of the Virgin for our salvation. For He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh, to suffer death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: (*Tone Four*)

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn therefrom to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

TROPARION OF THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST: (*Tone Two*)

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

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 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: *(Tone Three)*

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; to the Unapproachable, the earth doth offer a small cave; Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; for our sakes is born a young Child, He Who existed before the ages as God.

EPISTLE: 2 Timothy 4:5-8 *(The Sunday Before Theophany/Epiphany)*

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 1:1-8 *(The Sunday Before Theophany/Epiphany)*

Concerning the “Kiss of Peace,” prior to the Nicene Creed, we encourage you to greet those around you with a handshake, saying: **“Christ is Born!”**... the response being: **“Glorify Him!”** 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”)!**

MEGALYNARION OF THE LEAVE-TAKING OF THE NATIVITY *(Instead of “It Is Truly Meet...” – Tone One):*

Magnify, O my soul, her who hath delivered us from the curse.

Verily it is easier for us to endure silence since there is no dread danger therefrom for us. But because of our strong desire, O Virgin, and Mother of sameness, to indite well-balanced songs of praise, this becometh indeed onerous to us. Wherefore, grant us power to equal our natural inclination.

KOINONIKON OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST *(Communion Hymn ... Tone Eight):*

“The Lord hath sent redemption to His people. Alleluia!”

INSTEAD OF “We Have Seen The True Light...”:

See “Troparion Of The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ” Above.

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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!**

- THIS WEEK'S EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS -

(Church Office: Tuesday – Friday ... Variable Hours This Week – please call Fr. Don)

+ Sunday, December 31 – SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST, WHICH FALLS ON THE APODOSIS (LEAVE-TAKING) OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST – ORTHROS (Early Morning Prayers) @ 8:30 AM & DIVINE LITURGY @ 9:30 AM ... Followed By Agape Fellowship ... HAPPY NEW YEAR! ... May our Lord Bless all within our St. Mary Parish Family with Health, Joy & Peace (John 14:27) during the New Year of 2024!

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

+ Friday, January 05 – GREAT (ROYAL) HOURS FOR THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY) OF OUR LORD – 9 AM ... and ...

+ Friday, January 05 – FESTAL ORTHROS (Early Morning Prayers) @ 5:45 PM & FESTAL DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM and THE GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS FOR THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST @ 7 PM.

+ Saturday, January 06 – THE FEAST OF THE DIVINE THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY) OF OUR LORD, GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST! ... and ... GREAT VESPERS – 5 PM.

+ Sunday, January 07 – THE SUNDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY) – THE AFTER-FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY) OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST – ORTHROS (Early Morning Prayers) @ 8:30 AM & DIVINE LITURGY @ 9:30 AM ... Followed by Agape Fellowship.

“OLD CALENDAR” CELEBRATION OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

SUNDAY, JANUARY 07, 2024

We pray that all of our brothers & sisters-in-Christ who observe the “Old Calendar” cycle of Fasts & Feasts will enjoy a Most Blessed, Joyous & Peaceful (John 14:27) Feast of The Nativity ... we wish them a “*Merry Christmas*” and greet them with “*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*”

STEWARDSHIP OFFERINGS TO ST. MARY PARISH

Due to today being the last day of the calendar year of 2023, please note that your financial offerings today will be credited towards the 2024 Calendar Year. We thank you for your support of our St. Mary Parish. ***Happy New Year! Thank You and God Bless You & Your Loved Ones!***

*** ATTENTION * ATTENTION * ATTENTION ***

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. Perhaps most important of all, when we are generous in this way we express our gratitude for all God has given to us.

Epistle

(For the Sunday before the Theophany)

*All those on earth worship thee and sing unto Thee: Alleluia to God, O all the earth.**

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy. (4:5-8)

Timothy, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.

** The Prokeimenon is for the Nativity in recognition of the Apodosis of the Feast.*

Gospel

(For the Sunday before the Theophany)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (1:1-8)

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, "Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight." John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes He Who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."



May God Be With You!

+++ CONFESSION 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.

Saint of the Day – December 31, 2023

THE VENERABLE MELANIA THE ROMAN

Melania was born in Rome to devout and very wealthy parents. She was forced by them to enter into marriage with a young nobleman, Apinianus. She became gravely ill in giving birth to her second child, and she told her husband that she would be healed only if he vowed before God to live with her in the future as a brother with a sister. Her husband vowed, and Melania, out of spiritual joy, was physically restored to health. When it was pleasing to God to take both of their children to Himself, they decided to sell all their possessions and distribute the proceeds to the poor, the churches and the monasteries. They traveled through many lands and cities, doing good works everywhere with their wealth. They visited famous spiritual fathers in Upper and Lower Egypt, learned much and were inspired by them. During that entire time, Melania lived an ascetic life of strict fasting, fervent prayer, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Melania had the custom of reading the entire book of the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, three times every year. She lived with her husband as with a brother and fellow-ascetic. Coming to Alexandria, they received the blessing of the Patriarch, St. Cyril. After that, they traveled to Jerusalem and settled on the Mount of Olives. There Melania closed herself off and devoted herself to divine contemplation, fasting and prayer. Thus, she lived for fourteen years, after which she came out to help others to salvation. She founded a monastery for men and a convent for women. At the invitation of her kinsman, Senator Volusian, a pagan, she went to Constantinople and converted him to the Christian Faith (which even Blessed Augustine himself was unable to do). She then returned to the Mount of Olives, where she presented herself to God in the year 439 A.D. at the age of fifty-seven.

THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS JOSEPH, KING DAVID, AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF THE LORD

They are all commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ. One can learn all about King David, the son of Jesse, in the Book of Kings, and for St. James see October 23. Joseph the Righteous is called in the Gospel *a righteous man* (Matthew 1:19), and because of this God designated him to protect the Most-holy Virgin and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. Although Joseph was of the royal lineage of David, he was a humble carpenter in Nazareth. At the age of eighty, he took to himself the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110.

To God be the Glory and Praise Always!

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+++ **ST. MARY PARISH PRAYER CARD PROGRAM** +++

Did you know that we have a "Prayer Card Program" here at our St. Mary Parish? Your Prayer Intentions will be offered during the Saturday Vespers & Sunday Divine Liturgy "for the health of" or "in memory of" a Loved One and a beautiful Icon Card will be sent to the person or Family. All you need to do is call the Church Office or fill out an "Order Form" (on the Table below the Brochure Rack outside of Offices). Then we will take care of the rest! **IT IS THAT SIMPLE!**

The suggested donation is \$10/card. Larger donations are greatly appreciated.

This is an excellent way to show a loved one that you are: (1) thinking of them and remembering them in prayer on their birthday, during holidays, or any special occasion ... OR ... (2) remembering their departed loved one(s) in prayer. **Any questions, please call our Secretary, Anne ... 814-255-2148. Thank You & God Bless!**

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Celebrate and Be Glad

Let us strive to comprehend the mystery. The reason God is in the flesh is to kill the death that lurks there. As diseases are cured by medicines and assimilated by the body, and as darkness in a house is dispelled by the coming of light, so death, which held sway over human nature, is done away with by the coming of God. And as ice formed on water covers its surface as long as night and darkness last but melts under the warmth of the sun, so death reigned until the coming of Christ; but when the grace of God our Savior appeared and the Sun of Justice rose, death was swallowed up in victory, unable to bear the presence of true life. How great is God's goodness, how deep his love for us!

Let us join the shepherds in giving glory to God, let us dance with the angels and sing: Today a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ the Lord. The Lord is God and He has appeared to us, not as God, which would have been terrifying for our weakness, but as a slave so as to free those who live in slavery. Who could be so lacking in sensibility and so ungrateful as not to join all here present in our gladness, exultation, and radiant joy? This feast belongs to the whole of creation. Let everyone join in and be grateful. Let our voices too ring out in songs of jubilation!

St. Basil the Great

For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit www.ecpubs.com