



SS. PETER AND PAUL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

"All Things Are Possible to Him Who Believes" (Mark 9:23)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST, 2025

FOREFEAST OF & SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)

**VIRGIN-MARTYR JULIANA OF NICOMEDIA;
MARTYR THEMISTOKLES OF MYRA IN LYCIA**

****Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom****

Metropolitan SABA
Primate of the Antiochian
Archdiocese

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Let us weep now, if not rivers of tears, then at least streams, then at least drops. If we cannot even find this much, then let us become contrite in heart and confess our sins to the Lord, begging Him to forgive them, and promising not to offend Him any more through violation of His commandments. Then, let us be zealous to faithfully fulfill this promise.

St. Theophan the Recluse

Great Vespers: Saturday 6:00 pm
Check the Calendar
for possible cancellation or changes
Matins: Sundays 9:20am
Divine Liturgy: Sundays 10:30am
Confessions: By appointment

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Antiochian Women

Please note that we livestream our services on the Church's YouTube channel

@SaintsPeterPaulAntiochian

We welcome all our guests worshipping with us at the Divine Liturgy. Please let our ushers know that you are visiting with us today. We would love to stay in touch!
Please know that we take Holy Communion very seriously and is offered to Orthodox Christians, **after** preparing themselves through prayers, fasting, & confession. **Non-Orthodox** visitors are welcome to receive blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy & share food with us at coffee hour. The reason is simple following the advice of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 27-31:

"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning

THE SYNAXARION

On December 21 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia; and Martyr Themistokles of Myra in Lycia.

On this day, the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, we have been enjoined by our holy and God-bearing Fathers to make commemoration of all them that from the beginning of time have been well-pleasing unto God, from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as Luke the Evangelist hath recounted historically; and likewise for the Prophets and Prophetesses, especially of Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths.

It is also known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. We remember the aforementioned names, those in the Old Testament who were related to Christ by blood, and those who spoke of His Birth as a man. In the Divine Liturgy, we shall read of Jesus Christ's lineage from the Gospel of Saint Matthew. In this way, the Church shows us that Christ truly became a man, taking on human nature. He was not a ghost, an apparition, a myth, a distant imagined god, or the abstract god of philosophers; such a god does not have a family tree. Our God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has flesh and blood, human ancestors—many of whom sinned greatly, but like David, also repented greatly. Yet, all of these righteous ones in every age had been wellpleasing to God because they loved Him. By taking on human nature, the Son of God became like us in all ways, in flesh and blood, in mind and soul, and in heart and will. He differed from us in only one way: He could not sin. Since we know that Christ's human nature remained sinless, He is also fully divine, and He shows us the way in which we can avoid sin, and so improve and transform our human nature.

By their intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforeside.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY IN 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.

APOLYTIKION OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TONE FOUR

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles, and teachers of the world, Peter and Paul, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace unto the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN 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.

For the Health of these Parishioners

Mike & Dorothy Marge	Victor & Family	Hanneh Daoud
Michael Shihadi	Ibrahim Saah	Vilma Bellone
Nadim Zarour	Michael Amouri	Jennifer Brown & Family
Ann Marie Moses	Asma Ayoub	Nour & Anastasia
Mary Ishak	Yousef & Ghada	Abdallah, Christiane & Family
Isabel Threded	Zakieh Jweied & family	Christo & Mary Christakis
Shakeh Kerjilian & Family	Hind, Habib & Family	Margo, Sam & Family
Frank & Barbara Ellis	Paul Misleh	Barbara Zamer & Family
Brian, Caroline & Family	Fadia, Rich & Family	Edward & Eleanor Husson
Mary Sahouri & Family	Allison Ayoub	Elizabeth Albinger & Family
Saydeh Shaheen	Michael & Leila	John & Bette Adam
Jesse Daumit	Heidi Saba & family	Antoinette Najmeh

DEPARTED

Shahady Khoury
 Ala Ewies
 Naim Issa
 Abdallah Dahir
 Showke George
 Victoria Massouh
 Evelyn Kogok Hier
 Harry Hier
 Maurice Maalouf
 Mufid K. Ayoub
 Lana Hatoum
 Maya Moufawad
 Edmond Neam
 Nicholas Mourad

Special Prayer this Week for

Stacey Franetzki	Abdalla, Jackline Ewies & Family
Julia Issa & Family	Mona Ayoub & Family
Garrett & Katy Ayoub and Family	The Mourad Family
The Zoghbi Family	The Moufawad Family
Scott, Martha & Family	Nancy & Family
Fadi, Lena & Family	

MEMORIAL

Abdallah Dahir (2 years)
 Showke George (1 year)
 Maurice Maalouf (1 year)

Coffee Hour & Memorial Wheat are offered by **Scott George and Family** in loving memory of **Showke George** for his 1-year memorial.

Holy Bread is offered by **Nancy Dahir and Family** in loving memory of **Abdallah Dahir** for his 2-year memorial.

Holy Bread is offered by **Fadi & Lena Saroufim** in loving memory of **Maurice Maalouf** for his 1-year memorial.

Holy Bread is offered by **Walid & Najla Mourad** in loving memory of their **departed loved ones**.

If you want to offer Holy Bread or host Coffee Hour please use the QR Codes on the side.

Coffee Hour Available Dates

January 11	February 1
January 18	February 22
January 25	March 1

Host Coffee Hour



Offer Holy Bread



Coming Up @ Ss. Peter & Paul

Wednesday, Dec 24, **Royal Hours for the Nativity @ 10 AM**
Matins and divine liturgy @ 6 PM

Wednesday, Dec 31, **Circumcision, St. Basil, and New Year** Matins and Liturgy
@ 6 PM

LITURGICAL TEXTS

Scan the QR Code To Follow
Along the Service

Got a Question about
Orthodox Christianity
or Our Faith & Worship

Join Us every Sunday
in the social hall
after the Divine Liturgy
for a Catechism Class

Join the Order of St Ignatius

Scan the QR Code To Submit your
interest in the Order

Ss. Peter & Paul WhatsApp Community

Join a Variety of Chat Groups
And Receive Parish Announcements

Scan the QR Code To Join

St. Raphael's Table First Saturday of the Month

Preparing and distributing meals and
toiletries to our neighbors in need.

Scan the QR Code To Participate

Forever Young!

First Friday of the Month

Scan the QR Code To Register

Prayer Request

For Living and/or Departed

Scan the QR Code To Request a Prayer

Pursuing Christ as a Community

Bible Study

(8:30 PM/ZOOM)

Jan 20

Feb 3, 17

Mar 3, 17

April 21

May 5, 19

June 2, 16

Archdiocesan Choir Christmas Sing-Along

December 28th @ 6:45 PM
at St. Luke Orthodox Church
6801 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA
22101

Tickets are \$15 in advance
and \$20 at the door

Scan QR Code for Tickets

Sunday School OCMC Coin Boxes Drive

Pick Up Your Box at the Narthex
And Return it on **December 21st**

Parenting Toward the Kingdom Project

Join us for a discussion/workshop titled
Parenting Toward the Kingdom, based on a
bestselling book by the same name.

Thursdays at 8 PM Via Zoom

Jan 15 April 16
Feb 12 May 14
March 12 June 11

Scan the QR Code To Participate

December Charity Drive Orthodox Christian Mission Center

Dedicated to galvanizing Orthodox Christians in the United States to
advance Orthodox missions around the world. We deploy both human and
financial resources to establish Christ's Church through a uniquely Orthodox
approach to missionary work.

Ultimately, we aspire to bring people into the
fullness of life in Christ.

*Scan the QR Code
For Online Donations*

MULTILINK QR CODE

For your online donations, registration for events,
and participation in activities

- 1- Use **your phone's camera** to scan the QR code
- 2- Click on the Appropriate Link



THE EPISTLE

*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 First 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.

THE GOSPEL

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.

Silent Hands

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

I am struck by the silence in which You entered our wretched world, my sweet Jesus.

You came to us, my Lord, with awe-filled humility. You did not appear in glory and splendor. You turned toward us with a veiled majesty and stillness. You were born in the flesh on a quiet night, in a desolate place where no people dwell. And a great multitude of men was not present at Your birth.

You wished to tell a few shepherds who, in the stillness of the night, were beginning to rest from the day's toil. You sent Your angels to announce to them, with great joy, "Unto you is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And You encouraged them with a multitude of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Did You choose them alone, above all others, because You knew that the simplicity of their lives would grant them the ability to discern Your divinity, and consequently, to accept Your message of salvation?

You said with Your silence, O Christ, that noise does not produce life, and that being satisfied with appearances increases problems, and does not solve them.

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Silence was not only at Your birth, but You willed it to be Your constant companion throughout the years You spent among us. Did You not conceal your Messianic mystery, choosing to reveal it only on the Cross?

And in performing miracles, did you not ask those whom You healed not to spread the news of their healing, but to simply thank God?

You asked no thanks from anyone. You sought neither praise nor glorification.

Even Your glorious Resurrection, O Lord, was accomplished in silence. It was not accompanied by clamor or noise. There was an earthquake, yet no one felt it. We learned of Your Rising from the women who brought spices, who found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

And Mary Magdalene did not recognize you until you called her by name, for she mistook You for the gardener!

Silence, my Lord, is a language understood only by those freed from the noise of their passions. It is the language of the age to come, as your saint, Isaac the Syrian, said.

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You deign to lower Yourself, though You are the Most High Lord. You become humble, though You are the Almighty God. You take on flesh and blood, though You are the Holy of Holies!

You become poor so that we may become rich. You empty Yourself so that we may be filled. You die so that we may live. You distribute Yourself to us so that we may be nourished.

And because You alone are the Compassionate One, You saved us without fanfare. Yes, O Christ, for compassion is born of a full heart, and the full heart needs no adornment.

If we were truly captivated by You, we would no longer seek life from anyone else, our very beings would be filled with Your presence, and we would never again drink water that does not quench our thirst.

If we were to prostrate ourselves at Your feet this feast day to behold Your unique beauty, then the "good portion" would be ours.

You saw us floundering in pain and misery, so You pitched Your tent in our neighborhood, and it remains there, to open for us the door to true life.

You came to us in absolute simplicity to tell us, through action and not just words, that You are all we need.

You taught us, from your humble manger, that we cannot find You unless our souls are emptied of all worldly glory. How can we know Your worth unless we experience that "money is ashamed to be gathered in the presence of your poverty?"

Strengthen us so that we do not run from confronting ourselves, but rather that we may present ourselves to You as we are, so that Your silence may purify us, and we may join Your angels in praise.

Strengthen us so that we do not flee to what makes us forget our reality, but rather face it armed with Your gentle strength, so that we may find the security we lack and yearn for at the same time.

Be with us, O Almighty and Compassionate Jesus, so that we may not throw ourselves into the noise of the flesh, or money, or pride, or any of the deceptive noises of this world.

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You neither argued nor disputed nor engaged in debates to prove that You are the truth. You simply said, "I am the truth, I am the way, I am the life." And those who believed You discovered the truth of what You said. As for us, Your followers, it is ours to take refuge in the shadow of Your humility, confident in Your power at work within us.

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Teach us, O Lord, on this day of Your birth, to kneel and be silent, so that we may be filled with You.

Teach us, O Lord, to gaze upon Your manifest poverty, so that we may cast off our deadly desires and taste the joy of liberation from enslavement to them.

Grant, O Lord, our hearts a tranquility that makes them independent of the allurements of this world, so that they may find true peace.

We yearn for peace on this feast day. O Lord, guide our steps to Your true path, so that when we experience Your peace, we may, by Your grace, share it in deed, not just in word.

The shepherds bowed down to You, possessing nothing but their need for You. O Lord, help us to cast aside to whatever we cling when we come to You.

Grant us the courage, O Jesus, to accept that we cannot truly open our hearts to You unless we come to You with empty hands.

Church History

Eighth Century

Liturgical Development

Saint John of Damascus was also responsible for very significant liturgical developments in the eighth century. He wrote many liturgical hymns still sung in the Church, such as the Canon of Easter Matins, and some of the hymns sung at the Orthodox funeral service. He is considered to be the original composer of the Octoechos, the collection of hymns sung in the Church using eight different melodies, one per week on a rotating basis throughout the year (see Worship). Saint John is also the author of the first systematic treatise of Orthodox Christian doctrine, called the Complete Exposition of the Orthodox Faith. This treatise forms the third part of his trilogy, The Fount of Knowledge.

Saint Cosmas the Melodist, Bishop of Maiuma (c. 675–c. 751), Saint John of Damascus's adopted brother and a very accomplished hymnwriter, also was active in this era. Fourteen of his canons for various feasts of the Church year were incorporated into the liturgical services of the Eastern Church.

Saint Andrew of Crete, Archbishop of Gortyna (c. 660–740), wrote the lengthy penitential canon which is still sung in the Orthodox Church during the first week and then in the fifth week of Great Lent.

The feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple was introduced in Constantinople. According to Saint Andrew of Crete, the feast was already being celebrated in Jerusalem as early as the sixth century. By the eighth century, it had found its place in the universal calendar of the Orthodox Church.

The West

In the West in the eighth century, barbarian tribes in northern Europe continued to be converted to Christianity. The greatest missionary in this time was Saint Boniface, the Apostle to Germany (680–754). Working on behalf of the Roman Church, he eventually missionized much of northern Germany, and reformed the whole Frankish Church along Roman lines.

During this century the Roman Church turned away from the Byzantine Empire for support, allying itself instead with the newly emerging dynasty of the Franks. This northern tribe, which gave their name to the nation of France, was led by three remarkable leaders in the eighth century: Charles Martel (r. 723–741), who led the army that stopped the advance of the Arabs in western Europe at the famous Battle of Poitiers in 732; Pepin III the Short (r. 741–768), who gave the Roman Church vast tracts of land in central Italy in return for its favor and support; and especially Charlemagne (Charles the Great) (r. 768–814), who was anointed and crowned as Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in the year 800.

Ever since Emperor Constantine the Great had permanently moved the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople, the Roman Church had felt somehow abandoned, if not betrayed. Then it felt threatened when Constantinople began claiming, at the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, to be the “New Rome.” Such feelings only increased with the fall of Rome to the barbarians in 476. Ever since Pope Saint Gregory the Great (r. 590–604) had negotiated a separate peace with the Lombards, the Roman Church had been operating basically independently from Byzantium, fending for itself. When Iconoclasm broke out in the East, the Papacy was given another reason to distrust the Byzantines.

However, in turning to the Franks for protection and support, the Roman Church opened itself to foreign influences which would alienate the two halves of Christendom much further from each other. Three of the most important of these developments were the large tracts of land given to the Church by King Pepin III—the Papal States—that the Papacy would rule administratively as an independent temporal power up until the 19th century; the acquiring of a certain militaristic spirit that would lead to the Crusades, with some Popes even leading armies in battle; and the eventual acceptance of the addition of the filioque in the Nicene Creed, which to this day, along with the dogma of papal infallibility, is probably the single greatest theological difference between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy.