December 20, 2020
Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (The Genealogy)

On December 20 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the New-martyr John the tailor of Thasos; and Daniel II, archbishop of Serbia.

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 well-pleasing 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 holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.
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 aforetime.

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.

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.

THE EPISTLE
(For the Sunday before the Nativity)
Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.
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.

THE 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 Jehoniah 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.

WISDOM

“The body of the Word, then, being a real human body, in spite of its having been uniquely formed from a virgin, was of itself mortal and, like other bodies, liable to death. But the indwelling of the Word loosed it from this natural liability, so that corruption could not touch it. Thus is happened that two opposite marvels took place at once: the death of all was consummated in the Lord's body; yet, because the Word was in it, death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished.”
— St. Athanasius, On the Incarnation

“You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that single house, the whole city is honored, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all; He has come into our country and dwelt in one body amidst the many, and in consequence the designs of the enemy against mankind have been foiled and the corruption of death, which formerly held them in its power, has simply ceased to be. For the human race would have perished utterly had not the Lord and Savior of all the Son of God, come among us to put an end to death.”
— Athanasius of Alexandria, On The Incarnation
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Daily Lives, Miracles, and Wisdom of the Saints and Fasting Calendar 2021 - The Lives Of The Saints calendar books for 2021 are now available in the bookstore for only $20.00. These make a wonderful Christmas gift and addition to any home. Get them while they last!

Babysitter wanted 1 day per week - Bryne Rush is looking for a babysitter one day per week for her children. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Bryne directly at (208) 818-4362.

Parish Engagement and Stewardship Surveys
As we continue into this exciting time of rapid growth for our parish family I am looking forward to your participation in these two surveys.

Along with the paper surveys which were mailed out recently, here are the links to complete the Engagement Survey and the Stewardship Survey online if you'd prefer.

* Please only answer one survey and do not return both an email and an online form. If you have already completed and mailed your forms in, then you are all done and may disregard this email. Thank you so much for your promptness!

Click here for the online Parish Engagement Survey:  https://forms.gle/pmWjdjmrYfP4PtHQ9
(Use password: TheWay)

The purpose of this survey is to explore the areas of strengths and weaknesses, both real and perceived, at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church and to establish a church demographic. This information will be used as a guideline to meet the needs of our parish family in order to promote spiritual growth both personally and for the whole community. Our hope is to find ways to strengthen our community in order to be a beacon of the Faith to those in North Idaho. When answering these questions, please consider your entire personal experience at St. John the Baptist. Thank you for your participation!

Click here for the online Stewardship Survey:  https://forms.gle/AyT4eiF5VxcFYjyE8
(Use password: TheWay)

The goal is to make a stewardship promise, usually 10% or greater, and then faithfully follow through in giving of your Time, Talent, or Treasure. Take a look at the attached Stewardship handout. There is a tithing chart provided that will assist you in determining your households financial commitment and assess where your giving lies relative to biblical guidelines.

Feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Your Servant in Christ,  Fr. Mark
Faith

The Order of St. Ignatius Supports
College Conference
SOYO Leadership Training
Camping Scholarship Program

... you help build the foundation and provide the essential tools of knowledge, relationships and memories that help our children remain steadfast in their Orthodox faith.

For less than a daily cup of this.

... This, The Order Ministry

You can be a part of supporting ...
SCHEDULE OF SERVICES & EVENTS

Saturday, Dec 19: Transfer of St. Ignatius of Antioch - Festal Orthros & Divine Liturgy for St. Ignatius 9:00am; Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, Dec 20: Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (The Genealogy) - Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am

Thursday, Dec 24: Great Royal Hours & Typica 9:00am; Vesperal Divine Liturgy 3:00pm; Festal Orthros & Divine Liturgy of the Nativity 11:00pm

Friday, Dec 25: +NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST+

Saturday, Dec 26: +The Holy Righteous Ones, Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord - Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, Dec 27: Sunday after the Nativity of Christ - Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am

EPISODE READERS
12/20 Reader Nicholas
12/27 Reader Sebastian
1/3 Reader Silouan
1/10 Reader Mark

BOOKSTORE (*If you’d like to volunteer please see Kelly Peterson.)
12/20 Samson Lyman
12/27 Tim & Kelly Peterson
1/3 Terri Izzi
1/10 Volunteer Needed

CLEANING ROTATION (nave, narthex, hallway and upstairs restrooms; hall floor)
*Volunteer needed, please contact Shamassy Susan 940-723-1726
Week of 12/20 Dn. Joseph + Sh. Susan
Week of 12/27 Sandberg Fam+Tim Peterson
Week of 13 Week of 1/3 Jeane Rickert+Sbdcn.Barnabas
Week of 1/10 Volunteer needed+Simon Bardwell

PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING: Subdeacon Athanasios, Richard "Sergius" Neyman, Raymond Magdaleno, Jennifer Magdaleno's dad Lee, Samson's mother Ann, Brian and Steve (friends of the Rush family), Joe Goodsen, Donna (Tara Harmon's mom), Kh. Joanna Townsend, Dale Ayoub, Helen Weddle, Chris (Friend of Bryne Rush), John (Emily Sanchez’s father), Lasha (Michelle Molloy's mother), Barbara Garbinski, Barbara Schaefer, Kaitlin Weisman, Helen Odell, those suffering with the Covid-19 virus and those caring for the sick and suffering, victims of injustice and social unrest, Metropolitans Paul and John (hostages in Syria), the suffering Christians throughout the Middle East

PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED: David (father of Mark Weisman), Natalia Fairbrother, Victims of abortion, Victims of the Covid-19 virus, Victims of injustice and social unrest, the departed Christians throughout the world who have died for the Faith.
**Troparion of St. John the Baptist**

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise
But the Lord’s testimony is enough for thee O Forerunner
For thou was shown to be more wonderful than the prophets
Since thou was granted to baptize Him whom thou didst proclaim
Then having endured great suffering for the truth
Thou didst rejoice to bring even to those in hades the good tidings
That God who has appeared in the flesh
Takes away the sins of the world
And grants us great mercy.