

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

DECEMBER 26, 2021



St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

Mailing Address: 4718 Horsehaven, Post Falls, Idaho 83854-6668 - Church Phone: (208) 261-1010
His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

Fr. Mark Townsend: (208) 797-0748 –emtowndsend@gmail.com

Dn. Joseph Mannion: (208) 819-4255 –jemannion1@gmail.com

Dn. Michael Tubbs: (208) 219-4765 - michaelstubs@gmail.com

Church Website: <https://www.stjohnorthodox.org>

Member Directory: <https://stjohnorthodox.org/directory.html> u: Faithful p: TheWay

DECEMBER 26, 2021

SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS & SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

On December 26 in the Holy Orthodox Church, the first day of the After-feast of the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate Euthymios the Confessor, bishop of Sardis; and Hieromartyr Constantios the Russian of the Great Lavra on Athos.

On this day, we celebrate the Synaxis of our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos.

*With words as blameless gifts, I welcome the blameless Mother,
Who not knowing the bed of man, now lieth in
child-bed.*

*On the twenty-sixth I sing a song to the Most
Pure in child-bed.*

This Synaxis, or our coming together, to glorify the Theotokos is celebrated especially in her honor because she gave birth supernaturally to the Son and Word of God, and thus became the instrument of the salvation of mankind. This feast of Mary is one of the earliest in Orthodox Christian tradition.

***Verses on the Most Holy Theotokos' Flight
into Egypt***

*He that smote thee of old, cometh to thee, O
Egypt;*

*Tremble before Him, and mind Him as God
Almighty.*



God saw the wicked King Herod's plan to slaughter all the children in Bethlehem, and sent His angel to Joseph. The angel commanded him to take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt. Joseph did this. They first travelled to Nazareth (Lk. 2:39), where Joseph set his household affairs in order and then, taking his son James with them, went off to Egypt (Matt. 2:14). And so the words of the prophet: "The Lord, riding upon a swift cloud, shall come into Egypt" (Is. 19:1), were fulfilled. The family lived in Egypt for several years, and then returned to Palestine in response to a command by an angel of God. And so a second prophecy was fulfilled: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Hosea 11:1). On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of God and the first bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King.

*I honor Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin, who to be her protector was alone chosen.
Thou art a carpenter's son, but also the brother of the Lord that built all with a word, O blest
James.*

*What shall I say, seeing that the Lord testifieth, as a man after Mine own heart, I have found
David.*

David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. Thus, God was not ashamed to take upon Himself flesh from David's seed. God designated Joseph 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 80, Joseph took the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem and into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110. The Apostle James is called the "Brother of the Lord" because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph, when Herod sought to slay the newborn King.

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

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN 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 there from 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.

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY IN 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.

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN 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.

THE EPISTLE

God is wondrous in His saints. In the churches, bless ye God.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel, which was preached by me, is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:13-23)

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in

Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

WISDOM

"The present feastday is for us the beginning of feastdays. Serving as boundary limit to the law and to foretypes, it at the same time serves as a doorway to grace and truth. "For Christ is the end of the law" (Rom 10:4), Who, having freed us from the writing, doth raise us to spirit. Here is the end (to the law): in that the Lawgiver, having made everything, hath changed the writing in spirit and doth head everything within Himself (Eph 1:10), hath taken the law under its dominion, and the law is become subjected to grace, such that the properties of the law not suffer reciprocal commingling, but only suchlike, that the servile and subservient (in the law) by Divine power be transmuted into the light and free (in grace), "so that we—sayeth the Apostle—be not enslaved to the elements of the world" (Gal 4:3) and be not in a condition under the slavish yoke of the writing of the law. Here is the summit of Christ's beneficence towards us! Here are the mysteries of revelation! Here is the theosis [divinisation] assumed upon humankind—the fruition worked out by the God-man.

The radiant and bright coming-down of God for people ought to possess a joyous basis, opening to us the great gift of salvation. Suchlike also is the present feastday, having as its basis the Nativity of the Mother of God, and as its purposive end—the uniting of the Word with flesh, this most glorious of all miracles, unceasingly proclaimed, immeasurable and incomprehensible."

+ St. Andrew of Crete, "Discourse on the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God"

"O Lady, Mother of God, who gave birth in the flesh to God the Word, I know, O how well I know, that it is no honour or praise to thee when one so impure and depraved as I look up to thy icon, O ever-virgin, who didst keep thy body and soul in purity. Rightly do I

inspire hatred and disgust before thy virginal purity. But I have heard that God Who was born of thee became man on purpose to call sinners to repentance. Then help me, for I have no other help. Order the entrance of the church to be opened to me. Allow me to see the venerable Tree on which He Who was born of thee suffered in the flesh and on which He shed His holy Blood for the redemption of sinners and for me, unworthy as I am. Be my faithful witness before thy son that I will never again defile my body by the impurity of fornication, but as soon as I have seen the Tree of the Cross I will renounce the world and its temptations and will go wherever thou wilt lead me.”

+ Prayer of St. Mary of Egypt while standing in front of the icon of the Theotokos at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honey for the Temple:

A supply of local honey harvested from our own property is currently available for sale; 1lb for \$12 and 8oz for \$8 with 100% of the proceeds towards the new temple fund.

CHRISTIAN CHARITIES OPPORTUNITIES:

Ecumenical Food Kitchen: St John's is responsible for making and serving meals to the homeless at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Coeur d' Alene on the following evenings:

Thursday March 31st, 2022

Thursday May 26th, 2022

Thursday June 30th, 2022

Warming Shelter: On Saturday evenings from Jan 1 to March 26, 2022, individual families are signing up to bring Pizza or Pasta to the warming shelter in Post Falls. Contact Jeane Wood if you would like to be included on the schedule. Jeane is offering to deliver the pizzas if that would help anyone. She will keep everyone informed as to the needs of families in the shelter for us to help and pray for them.

If you are able to help with any of these projects, contact Jeane Wood: text or phone at (208) 660-3046, or email at plastinowood@gmail.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES & EVENTS *{Calendar}*

Sunday, December 26: Orthros & Divine Liturgy 9am (Fr. Samer)

Wednesday, December 29: Readers Vespers 6pm (No Catechism Class)

Friday, December 31: Spiritual Circle 9:30

Saturday, January 1: Great Vespers 6pm

Sunday, January 2: Orthros & Divine Liturgy 9am

Wednesday, January 5: Great Royal Hours & Typica 9am; Vespers & Divine Liturgy 3pm

Thursday, January 6, Theophany: Festal Orthros & Divine Liturgy 9am; Blessing of the Waters at Gencarella's 2:30pm

EPISTLE READER *{Sign Up}*

12/26	Reader David Gencarella
1/2	TBD
1/9	TBD
1/16	TBD

LUNCH TEAM

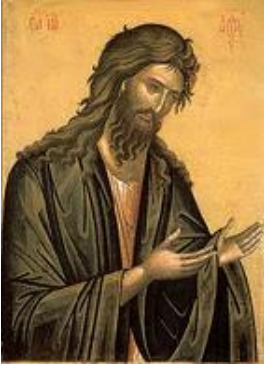
Ignatius Chapman's Team
Sarah Plew's Team
Joy Corey's Team
Lisa Gencarella's Team



PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING: Cassian & Lane family, Kh. Malvi and all the Neyman and Townsend families, Mark and Michelle Bruto Da Costa, John/Steven Wood, Fr. Jeremiah Vollman, Thao, Gwenn, Lilly & the children & mothers of the Hogar in Guatemala, 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: Fr. Nicholas, Michael, Andrew Mulford, Ernest (Kh. Mona's Father), 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.

CONFESSIONS: Please remember to contact Fr. Mark to schedule confessions, *even* if you intend to confess after the evening services. This ensures that your confession is well prepared, and that everyone can be heard in an orderly fashion. Father is available to meet at the Church Tuesday through Saturday.



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 wast shown to be more wonderful than the prophets since thou wast 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 hast appeared in the flesh, takes away the sins of the world, and grants us great mercy.