

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley
a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406 stmichaelvannuys.org

His Eminence, Metropolitan SABA, of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America www.antiochian.org

His Grace, Bishop ANTHONY, Auxiliary to the Metropolitan

Archpriest Timothy Baclig, Pastor frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org

Rev. Deacon Andrew Monsue armcopper@gmail.com

Subdeacon Richard Tamoush Tamoush.Richard@gmail.com

Subdeacon Elias Mankouche eli.mankouche@hotmail.com

Parish Council Chair - Kris Thabit kthabit66@hotmail.com

Council Vice-Chair - Constantine Nasr , Jr. constantinenasr@icloud.com

Council Secretary - Michael Mitchell mgmitchell3@gmail.com

Council Treasurer - Praneet Panga praneet.panga@stepupconsultingco.com

Assistant Treasurer - Britton McLinn britton@stmichaelyannuys.org

Long-range Planning Chair - Michael Mitchell mgmitchell3@gmail.com

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America (AOCWNA)

Chairperson: Charmaine Cormier ccormier@chsglobal.net

Chair President: Charnaine Darmour
Chair Director: William Grindler
darmour@seiglobal.net
grindler@seiglobal.net

Choir Director William Grundler w.grundler@gmail.com
Church School Dir. Rachel Grundler churchschool@waukesha.org

Church School Dir. - Rachel Grindler
Youth Director - Michelle Maruca
superintendent@summaclaevalverius.org
with all inquiries @ email above

Youth Director: Michele Moujacs michelemoujacs@gmail.com

Young Adult Ministry Coordinator - George Khouli khouli@gmail.com

Men's Fellowship - Saint Azzano menstriforum@outlook.es

Faithtree Resources Exec. Director - Michelle Moujaes Michelle@faithtree.org
St. Louis, Mo. Chair - Construction - N/A Construction@faithtree.org

Stewardship Chair - Constantine Nasar
constantinenasar@icloud.com

Communications Chair - Michael Paraskevas
michaelparaskevas15@gmail.com
Publicity Manager - Balaji M
balajim1995@gmail.com

BOOKSTORE Manager - BOBBI Monsue bobbi_monsue@att.net
Gulf Coast Gasoline - P. M. bobbimonsue@bellsouth.net

Website: www.EduardoHernandezW.com | Email: nhuider@aol.com

Website - DanRajuandJosephWang.com | Email - jpw378@gmail.com

Charity Coordinator - Cindy Tamoush cindy.tamoush@gmail.com
Help - Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/Help4Cancer>

The Sunday before the Nativity of Christ (the Genealogy)

Virgin-martyr Juliana of Nicomedia; Martyr Themistokles of Myra in Lycia

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Tone 3; Eothinon 6

Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 3)

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 (Tone 4)

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 for the Sunday before the Nativity (Tone 2)

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 for our Patron, Michael the Archangel (Tone 2)

O ye foremost of the heavenly hosts, we beseech thee, though we are unworthy, pray that we may be encompassed with a shadow of thine unearthly glory; preserving us who kneel and cry endlessly: Deliver us from oppression since ye are the prince of the highest powers.

Kontakion of the Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3)

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.

Daily Readings

THE 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.

THE GOSPEL (for the Sunday before the Nativity: “The Genealogy”)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is 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.

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

A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only* those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread is also being offered by Florentina Manea in loving memory of her mother, Elena Radulescu (+12 December, 2021). Memory eternal.

Special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for the newborn child: Henry Edward Hines, born on December 13, 2025
to Adrienne & Regan Hines. May God grant him,
his parents and sisters many years!

by Minnie Tobey Lush and family, for all at St. Michael, for health, long life, and every abundant blessing. Minnie and her family thank everyone dearly for all of their prayers, "get well" cards, email and phone messages, and remembrances, and Christmas cards!

This love and support means so much to Minnie and her family.
Blessed Nativity to all!

for the continued health of Ramez Hage as he recovers
from his recent surgery.

for the continued health of Jean Pierre Saadeh as he recovers
from his recent surgery.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December is “St. Ignatius Month” in the Antiochian Archdiocese

Members of the Order of St. Ignatius are assisting in the services this month. Today's ushers are: Reading the epistle this morning is Joseph Price, and ushering are: Michael Srour and Nicole Webster. Delivering the message is Elias Milkie. Learn more about The Order with the following link:<https://content.delivra.com/etapcontent/AntiochianOrthodoxChristian/attachments/14.DEC.25.pdf>

Church School Recess

Church School will begin a recess following today's program. Classes will resume on January 11, 2026, when we celebrate the Post Feast of Holy Theophany.

Weekly Teaching of Metropolitan SABA (in English and Arabic)

View this week's teaching from Metropolitan SABA titled: "Silent Hands"
Go to: <https://www.antiochian.org/regulararticle/2680>

**View the November/December Issue of The Word Magazine by going to:
<https://www.antiochian.org/regulararticle/2617>**



The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

358 Mountain Road, Englewood, NJ 07631

Phone: 201-871-1355 Fax: 201-871-7954

E-Mail: theorder@antiochian.org

December 11, 2020

Christ is in our Midst!

During this Advent period of our Orthodox faith we prepare ourselves in joyful anticipation for the Greatest Gift of all ... our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. On behalf of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch Governing Council, we want to express our sincere gratitude for your membership but more importantly for taking on *"the responsibility"* to become a part of our ministry that helps change countless lives. We pray that during this Blessed Season and throughout the year that you continue to receive God's blessings of grace, compassion and love along with His many other gifts to us that are both seen and unseen in our daily lives. May God bless you and keep you under His watchful care.

As a member of the Order and in a spirit of compassion, you not only give of what you have but you also strive to do it in a spirit of humility and love. You give without expecting anything in return and without recognition by the Order's recipients. Your gift is an unconditional personal sacrifice. It is an act of Faith that is infinite in its effect.

In Fiscal year 2020 the impact of your gift to the Order has been felt by many and in countless ways. The Order's Fiscal Year 2020 actual expenses included **\$297,014** to support our retired clergy, active clergy and seminarians. You helped fund **\$390,924** for the youth of the Antiochian Archdiocese (including camp scholarships). **\$254,988** was provided to support programs and departments for the development & growth of the Antiochian Archdiocese. You've also helped give **\$43,000** toward outreach organizations which include but are not limited to Project Mexico, SOYO Special Olympics and the IOCC.

Clergy	\$297,014	Archdiocese Development & Growth	\$254,988
Retired Clergy Housing Allowance	\$270,000	Missions & Evangelism	\$129,996
Married Seminarian Assistance	\$14,965	Parish Development / Mission Grants	\$24,996
Clergy Symposium & Convention Assistance	\$12,049	Internet Ministry	\$99,996
Archdiocese Youth	\$390,924	Other Grants	\$43,000
Summer Camp Scholarships	\$190,000	Project Mexico	\$10,000
Youth Ministry	\$120,000	SOYO Special Olympics	\$8,000
SOYO Leadership & Youth Worker Training	\$25,928	IOCC	\$25,000
Christian Education	\$39,996		
College Conference	\$15,000		

On behalf of all the members of the Order, we thank you for accepting *"the responsibility"* ... to take care of each other as we commit to financially provide for and reassure our retired clergy during their golden years, to strengthen our children in their Orthodox Faith, to help share and to reveal Orthodoxy throughout North America to people of any nationality, background or socioeconomic position and to become part of the families of our married seminarians by assisting them financially so they can answer God's call. We thank you in sincere gratitude and humility.

So as you contemplate your support of the Order over the years, encourage your family and friends to become a part of the Order, or consider becoming a part of The Order's ministry for the first time, we leave you with what we believe should be in your heart. These words are what guide our work as a Governing Council and come from the teachings of St. Ignatius himself ...

"Let no man's place, or dignity, or riches, puff him up; and let no man's low condition or poverty abase him. For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those good things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbor."

In His service,

Roger J. David
North American Chairperson
The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

SCHEDULE OF FESTAL SERVICES

[The Sacrament of Confession with Absolution is available by appointment or up until 15 minutes prior to the services.]

The Sunday before The Holy Nativity

“The Sunday of the Genealogy”

Saturday, December 20th – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 21st – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Wednesday, December 24th (Christmas Eve and *Paramon*)

The First Royal Hour, 6 a.m., The Third Royal Hour, 9 a.m.,

The Sixth Royal Hour, 12 noon, The Ninth Royal Hour, 3 p.m.

Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great* – 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, December 25th (Christmas Day)

Orthros and the Christmas Canon, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

[There is **no** fasting from December 25th to January 4th]

The Circumcision of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ and the Feast of St. Basil the Great (New Year’s Day)

Wednesday, December 31st (New Year’s Eve) – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

with prayers for the New Year

Thursday, January 1st (New Year’s Day) – Orthros, 8:45 a.m.;

Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m., with prayers for the New Year

THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)

Monday, January 5th The Eve of Theophany (*Paramon*) – [observed as a strict fast day]

The First Royal Hour, 6 a.m., The Third Royal Hour, 9 a.m.,

The Sixth Royal Hour, 12 noon, The Ninth Royal Hour, 3 p.m. followed by

The Vesperal Divine Liturgy of the *Paramon* (Eve) of Theophany, 5 p.m.

Tuesday, January 6th — Festal Orthros, 8:30 a.m. followed by “The Great Sanctification of Water” immediately followed by The Festal Divine Liturgy

* *Services with Holy Communion*

Weekly Bible Study Tuesday (December 23)

Our next Bible Study will be held on Tuesday evening, December 23rd, at 7 p.m. We will be concluding our review of Metropolitan SABA's guidelines for "permanent Deacons" in parishes. An explanation of the Festal Services of Christmas and Holy Theophany will also be provided. Sessions are recorded for those unable to attend who may also request the link to the study. Attendance is required for all catechumens.

Additional Informative Links

The Associated Press published "[Converts are finding Eastern Orthodoxy online. The church wants to help them commune face-to-face.](#)" Fr. Thomas Zain is one of several Orthodox Christian priests and laity who all said that the in-person experience of the Church transcends ideologies of this world and so-called Internet Orthodoxy. Feel free to share this article with your congregations.

Registration is now open for two important opportunities for your church musicians: the spring semester of the [Antiochian Orthodox Ecclesiastical Online Music School](#) with classes starting on Jan. 12; and the [Winter Sacred Music Institute](#) in Phoenix, Arizona from Feb. 5-8. Thanks be to God, music education in our Archdiocese is year-round. Please encourage your choirs, chanters and their directors to sign up.

Please find attached the 2026 Fasting Calendar which is also available at the [Online Liturgical Guide](#) (scroll down to "Seasonal Liturgical Resources.") Feel free to share the calendar with your congregations.

For Planning Ahead

This year the Feast of the Holy Nativity (Christmas) falls on a Thursday. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for the Pre-Feast will be served following the Ninth Royal Hour, beginning at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24th beginning at 3:30 p.m. (Christmas Eve). The Festal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom will be celebrated on Christmas Day (Thursday), December 25th at 10 a.m., preceded by Orthros and the Christmas canon at 8:30 a.m.

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622

Metropolitan SABA, Archbishop of New York and all North America

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor
frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.com

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313
www.stmichaelvannuys.org

December 12, 2025

Beloved Parishioners and Friends of St. Michael Church,

Seasonal greetings to you and your family as we anticipate the celebration of the Feast of our Lord's Birth!

As we reach the end of our fiscal year, the Parish Council is focused on preparing for the future to the best of our ability. This is a very formidable task for any individual, family or community, big or small. Much of this has to do with how we minister and put God's commandments into action, how we care for one another, how we interact with our neighbors, and how we care for what God has provided.

Look around at one another. Look around this church. You will see many more people, many more new faces than we had at the beginning of this year. This is God's ministry in action, as we welcome, embrace, educate and worship together. But we also must look at this new sanctuary – God's home - and take seriously the responsibility of caring for what Christ has allowed to build. This is where Stewardship comes into play.

Christian stewardship builds communities in the macro and fortifies the soul in the micro. It strengthens the spiritual life, the social life, and the dutiful life. All three need to be attended to, and attended well, for positive Christian living and also for St. Michael to remain healthy today and grow stronger tomorrow.

You will be hearing about the financial needs of our budget, and these are real. We on the council work diligently to make sure we spend only what is needed from the hard-earned gifts our members contribute. We are going to ask you to please consider what you can to help us cover what are the most minimal of costs – all of which are broken down line by line for your review. We are here to offer solutions and listen to solutions.

However, it is our goal in 2026 to prove that Stewardship can provide meaningful social experiences to unite our community, so we can get to know one another, become better friends with one another, and tighten the bonds that I can see forming between founding members, cradle Orthodox and our catechumens. Starting in January, we will begin sharing specific plans for new events that we hope to implement.

Some will be spiritual, some will be social, but all will be aimed to help make our church, this building, these walls, a place that we will want to come and visit, come to see each other more, and a place we want to take care for, so that God's home will also feel like our home – because it will have become our home. Thank you and God bless you.

In Christ,

Constantine Nasr, Jr.

Stewardship Committee Chair

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Frequently Asked Questions When Completing a Pledge Form

What is the reason for completing an annual parish Pledge Form?

Each year planning for budgeted receipts and expenditures are an important part of being responsible stewards of Christ's church. Some of our month-to-month expenses include: priest and staff salaries, utility and maintenance expenses, the payment of property taxes (yes, churches do pay property taxes), and insurance. It is not uncommon for these expenses increase each year. It is a goal of our Parish Council to meet these expenses with the contributions of our members. The Pastor does not receive stipends (monetary gifts) for house blessings, baptisms, weddings and funerals if a family is not enrolled with the parish and completed an annual pledge form. The Pastor's living expenses and allowances are included the Annual Budget of the parish.

What is the St. Michael annual "Archdiocese Parish Contribution"

Each parish of the Antiochian Archdiocese pays 10% of its parish income to assist with the expenses of our bishops, Archdiocesan and Diocesan departments and programs. Over one-fourth of the Archdiocese budget is dedicated to youth programs. We project that our annual payment to the Archdiocese from St. Michael Church to be \$36,000, or 10% of our income (excluding contributions received for the charity collections, special Archdiocese collections, and memorial gifts).

Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.

Holy Bread Offering List

Dec 24 - (Vesperal Liturgy)
Dec 25 - (Festal Liturgy)
Dec 28 - open
Jan 01 - open

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Please contact Father Timothy (818/219-3761; frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread or to host the Coffee Hour.

We Gratefully Acknowledge the Receiving 2026 Pledge Commitments Totaling \$49,479.84 From the Following Members:

Adeeb & Nuha Abughazaleh
Laila Abughazaleh
Frances Allen
Kevin Anthoney
Fr. Timothy Baclig
Salim El-Darzi and Marwan
Samia Habib
Don Meena
Fred & Tanya Milkie
Mary Ann & Michael Mitchell
Michelle & Waleed Moujaes

Dn Andrew & Barbara Monsue
Riad Nasser
Mandy & Constantine Nasr, Jr.
Barbara & Fred Nicola
Chrisa Sadd
Richard & Cindy Tamoush
Ronald & Georgia Tamoush
Daphne Thabet
Geri Thabit
Nicole & Robert Webster
Laila Zaki
Ron & Kathy Zraick

2026 Pledge Forms are now available on-line and hard copies may be found in the narthex.

Parish Christmas Card

Our 2025 Parish Christmas card was mailed to everyone on our mailing list. The card is to provides the convenience of having Christmas greetings extended to our hierarchs and parishioners by means of a group card. It also provides the schedule of services for the festal season. The Project is a service that helps St. Michael to receive donations from parishioners and friends of our community who are listed on the card. The order those listed is not alphabetical, but in a sequence based upon the date the request is received. We thank all who have supported our project this year and continue to support our parish in Christian stewardship.

PASTORAL SERMON
The Sunday Before the Nativity
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
December 21, 2025

Each year, on the Sunday before Christmas in all Orthodox Churches we hear the genealogy of Jesus, recorded at the beginning of Saint Matthew's Gospel (1:1-25). It is actually one of two genealogies on Jesus presented by the Gospel writers in the New Testament of the Bible. The other is found in the Gospel of Saint Luke. In St. Luke's Gospel, however, the genealogical list is in reverse order, beginning with Jesus and ending with Adam. Each Gospel writer had his own reason for presenting a lineage. In fact, the names included in one Gospel, as well as those that were not included in the other, were intentional choices by each writer for the purpose of making a point.

St. Matthew's genealogy is chosen because it reveals that Christ truly became a man, taking on our human nature. We hear from the text of the Synaxarion: "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, like David, who also repented greatly." The value of the Gospel genealogies lies not in their legal or historical accuracy but rather in their spiritual meaning, they place an emphasis upon the fact that Christ did in fact become a man, but they also demonstrate the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. Man's failure did not mean that it was all over, or that God had failed or made a mistake.

Unique to the genealogy of Jesus in St. Matthew's gospel is that women are included, while in St. Luke's Gospel, they are not. In fact, one of the women mentioned, whose name is Rahab, was a Gentile prostitute. The list also includes: Thamar, who committed incest, Ruth a Gentile, and even the adulteress, Bathsheba. David is mentioned, who not only committed murder, but was also an adulterer. St. Matthew intentionally demonstrates that the Lord's incarnation was the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. By being born a man in human flesh, the Lord completely identified with the human race, with men and women of flesh and blood, failings and all, except for sin. However, as the "new Adam" (see Romans 5:12-18), Christ was perfect Man by voluntarily choosing obedience to the will of God the Father. And this is what Christmas is all about. Again from the text of the Synaxarion we hear: "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 did 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."

St. John Chrysostom says that Christ was not embarrassed by the skeletons hidden in His ancestors' closets. The conclusion of the genealogy is the beginning of a new generation – the age of the Messiah – and we are part of it as Christians. The age of preparation and promise is over; the fullness of time has arrived – a new age of completion and fulfillment. Very shortly we will also celebrate what is the culmination of this wondrous season: It is the Great Feast of Holy Theophany: The baptism of our Lord by John in the River Jordan. It is the Feast which is the full revelation of God as Trinity: the Divine Son of God as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, the decent of the Holy Spirit and the confirming word of God the Father.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Son of David, Son of Abraham, the Son of Mary, as we behold your humble birth, we pray Thee: Be merciful unto us sinners, and renew us by your presence, cleansing us from all sin as we now draw near to Thy Holy Table and dare to partake of your Holy Body and precious Blood. Sanctify our souls, purify our thoughts, cleanse our minds and deliver us from the Evil One. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. A-men.

EOTHINON 6

الايوثينا 6

TONE 3

الحن 3

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)

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

أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن الثالث

لتفريح السماويات وتبهيج الأرضيات، لأنَّ الرَّبَّ صَنَعَ عِزًّا بِسَاعِدِهِ، ووطئَ الموتَ بالموتِ،
وصارَ بِكُرَّ الأمواتِ، وأنقذَنا مِنْ جُوفِ الجَحِيمِ، ومنَحَ العالمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعَظِيمَى.

أبوليتيكيون تقدمة عيد الميلاد بالحن الرابع

() إِنَّ يُوسُفَ الْخَطِيبَ

إِسْتَعِدِي يَا بَيْتَ لَحْمٍ، فَقَدْ فُتِّحَتْ عَدْنُ لِلْجَمِيعِ، تَهَيَّأِي يَا أَفْرَاثًا، لَأَنَّ عَوْدَ الْحَيَاةِ قَدْ أَزْهَرَ فِي الْمَغَارَةِ مِنَ الْبَتْولِ. لَأَنَّ بَطْنَهَا قَدْ ظَهَرَ فِرْدُوسًا عَقْلِيًّا، فِيهِ الْغَرْسُ الْإِلَهِيُّ، الَّذِي إِذْ نَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ نَحْيَا وَلَا نَمُوتُ مِثْلَ آدَمَ. الْمَسِيحُ يُولَدُ مُنْهَضًا الصُّورَةَ الَّتِي سَقَطَتْ مُنْذُ الْقَدِيمِ.

أَبُولِيْتِيْكِيُونَ الْأَحَدُ الَّذِي قَبْلَ عِيدِ الْمَيْلَادِ بِالْحَنِّ الثَّانِي

عَظِيمَةُ هِيَ أَفْعَالُ الْإِيمَانِ، لَأَنَّ الْفَتْيَةَ الْثَّالِثَةَ الْقَدِيسِيْنَ قَدْ اِبْتَهَجُوا فِي يَنْبُوعِ الْهَبِيبِ كَأَنَّهُمْ عَلَى مَاءِ الرَّاحَةِ، وَالنَّبِيُّ دَانِيَالُ ظَهَرَ رَاعِيًّا لِلْسَّبَاعِ كَأَنَّهُمْ غَنَمٌ، فَيَتَضَرَّعُونَ إِلَيْهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُ الْخَلْصَ نُفُوسَنَا.

طَرُوبَارِيَةُ رُؤْسَاءِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِالْحَنِّ الرَّابِعِ

أَيُّهَا الْمُتَقَدِّمُونَ عَلَى الْأَجْنَادِ السَّمَاوِيَّينِ، نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكُمْ نَحْنُ غَيْرُ الْمُسْتَحْقِينِ، حَتَّى أَنْكُمْ بِطَبَاتِكُمْ تَكْتُنُونَا بَظَلَّ أَجْنَحَةَ مَجِدِكُمْ غَيْرُ الْهَيْوَلِيِّ، حَافِظُنَّنِيْ إِيَّانَا نَحْنُ الْجَاثِينَ وَالصَّارِخِينَ بِغَيْرِ فَتْورٍ، أَنْقَذُونَا مِنَ الشَّدَادِ، بِمَا أَنْكُمْ رُؤْسَاءُ مَرَاتِبِ الْقَوَافِعِ الْعَطْوَيَّةِ.

فَنْدَاقُ تَقْدِيمَةِ الْمَيْلَادِ عَلَى الْحَنِّ الثَّالِثِ

الْيَوْمَ الْعَذْرَاءُ نَأْتِي إِلَى الْمَغَارَةِ، لِتَلَدَّ الْكَلْمَةُ الَّذِي قَبْلَ الْدَّهُورِ، وَلَادَةً لَا تُفَسِّرُ، وَلَا يُنْطَقُ بِهَا، فَافْرَحِي أَيْتَهَا الْمَسْكُونَةُ إِذَا سَمِعْتِ، وَمَجْدِي مَعَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرَّعَاةِ، الظَّاهِرُ بِمَشَيْتِهِ طَفَلاً جَدِيدًا، وَهُوَ إِلَهُ قَبْلَ الْدَّهُورِ.

الرَّسَالَةُ

(لِلْأَحَدِ الَّذِي قَبْلَ عِيدِ الْمَيْلَادِ)

الْإِنْجِيلُ

(لِلْأَحَدِ الَّذِي قَبْلَ عِيدِ الْمَيْلَادِ: أَحَدُ النَّسْبَةِ)

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعني عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوي العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المشاركة في سر القربان المقدس هنا مقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسيّة والذين يحضورون أنفسهم بالصلوة والصوم والاعتراف منذ فترة قريبة (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة في الخبز المقدس الذي يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً في الكنيسة الارثوذكسيّة