



# **Our Lady of Victory Maronite Catholic Parish**

**At Saint Pamphilus**

**1000 Tropical Avenue**

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15216**

## **December, 2022 Monthly Bulletin**

**YOU ARE THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCH IS YOU**

**Rev. Samir Chebli, Pastor**

**Chorbishop Michael Kail, Adviser**

**Rev. Deacon Bahige Alchoufete**

**Anne Ayoob, Financial Administrator**

**Judi Perry, Office Administrator & Victory Hall Manager**

**Lori Evans, Religious Education Director**

**Naji Farah, Choir Director**

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**SEASON OF ANNOUNCEMENT &  
GLORIOUS BIRTH OF OUR LORD**

**OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday—Friday from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm**

# Liturgy Intentions—December 2022

Thur	Dec 1	5:30 PM	Prophet Nahum	Well Being of Fred Bosh	Judith Kail
Fri	Dec 2	5:30 PM	Prophet Habakkuk	Sarkis & Thomas Families	Sadie Thomas
Sat	Dec 3	4:00 PM	Francis Xavier	Soul of Joseph Sassine	Borik Family
Sun	Dec 4	8:30 AM	St. Barbara		
		11:00 AM		Souls of Aida Farah and Victoria & Adib Abboud	Family
Mon	Dec 5	5:30 PM	Saba the Hermit		
Tue	Dec 6	5:30 PM	Nicholas (Zakhia)	Ray and Marie Schrello	Frank and Anna Marie Mecca
Wed	Dec 7	5:30 PM	Ambrose	Soul of Mansour Youssef	The Pastor
Thur	Dec 8	5:30 PM	End of Vatican II	Soul of Betty Pearce-Birthday	Debbie Raymond
Fri	Dec 9	5:30 PM	Francis of Paola		
Sat	Dec 10	4:00 PM	Pope Miltiades	Soul of Theresa DiMasi	Mary Anne DiMasi
Sun	Dec 11	8:30 AM	Daniel Stylite	Souls of Naif & Gloria George	Marie Smith
		11:00 AM		Souls of Rich & Rose Sarkis	Joe & Jocelyn Chahine
Mon	Dec 12	5:30 PM	Spiridion, Guadalupe		
Tue	Dec 13	5:30 PM	Lucy		
Wed	Dec 14	5:30 PM	Nemtallah Hardini		
Thur	Dec 15	5:30 PM	Eleutherius & Mother		
Fri	Dec 16	5:30 PM	Pophet Haggai	Soul of Eugene Kail	Kail Family
Sat	Dec 17	4:00 PM	Ananias, Azarius & Misael	Souls of Joseph & Maha Basil	Theresa Basil & Family
Sun	Dec 18	8:30 AM	Prophet Daniel	Deceased Members George & Bartirome Families	Mary Anne DiMasi
		11:00 AM		Soul of Joseph Sassine	Souad Mejalli
Mon	Dec 19	5:30 PM	Athenodorous		
Tue	Dec 20	5:30 PM	Ignatius of Antioch		
Wed	Dec 21	5:30 PM	Julian	Soul of Pietro Molinaro	Molinaro Family
Thur	Dec 22	5:30 PM	Anastasia of Balkans	Liturgy of St. Sharbel	The Pastor
Fri	Dec 23	5:30 PM	Eugenia		
Sat	Dec 24	4:00 PM	Christmas Vigil	For the Parishioners	The Pastor
Sun	Dec 25	10:00 AM	Birth of the Lord	For the Parishioners	The Pastor
Mon	Dec 26	5:30 PM	Felicitation to Mary		
Tue	Dec 27	5:30 PM	Stephen-First Martyr		
Wed	Dec 28	5:30 PM	Magi		
Thur	Dec 29	5:30 PM	Flight to Egypt; Massacre		
Fri	Dec 30	5:30 PM	Return to Nazareth		
Sat	Dec 31	4:00 PM	Zoticus		
Sun	Jan 1	10:00 AM	Circumcision Basil & Gregory	For the Parishioners	The Pastor

If you want to schedule a liturgy for open times on weekdays or weekends in December 2022, please call the office as soon as possible. Please call the office to schedule liturgies for January 2023 no later than December 20, 2022. We will email an updated Liturgy Schedule weekly as needed.



## STEWARDSHIP

If your treasure is on earth, you are going from it; if it is in heaven, you are going to it.

### NOVEMBER 2022 COLLECTIONS

	30-Oct	6-Nov	13-Nov	20-Nov	27-Nov	Total
Collection	\$1,224.00	\$2,210.00	\$1,501.00	\$1,266.00	\$1,155.00	<b>\$7,356.00</b>
Mail Collection	\$145.00	\$695.00	\$670.00	\$70.00	\$20.00	<b>\$1,600.00</b>
Online Giving	\$120.00	\$180.00	\$100.00	\$170.00	\$100.00	<b>\$670.00</b>
Maronite Patriarchal Charities	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$138.00	\$40.00	\$5.00	<b>\$188.00</b>
Help for Lebanon	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$97.00	\$45.00	\$15.00	<b>\$192.00</b>
Individual Donation	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
World Mission Day	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$25.00</b>
Altar Bread & Wine	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$0.00</b>
Sanctuary Lamps	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$25.00</b>
Candles	\$43.00	\$52.00	\$68.00	\$43.00	\$28.00	<b>\$234.00</b>
Lebanon Giving Tree	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$245.00	<b>\$245.00</b>
Christmas Flowers	\$10.00	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$472.00	\$220.00	<b>\$707.00</b>
Veterans Day Dinner	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,292.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>\$2,292.00</b>
Church Fund	\$70.00	\$221.00	\$15.00	\$135.00	\$25.00	<b>\$466.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,657.00</b>	<b>\$5,408.00</b>	<b>\$4,881.00</b>	<b>\$2,241.00</b>	<b>\$1,813.00</b>	<b>\$16,000.00</b>

### OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2022—2023

Attached is a Calendar of Events for Our Lady of Victory Parish for the remainder of 2022 and all of 2023. We will add to this list of events as needed. We ask that you do not schedule individual family events at the same time we are having a parish event. This diminishes participation in our parish celebrations and also keeps some of our parishioners from attending your family events because they are involved in our activities. A little coordination is most appreciated. Thank you.

### Victory Hall Rental

**Our Victory Hall is the perfect location for all of your Personal and Business Events.**

**Victory Hall has ample Free Parking. 300 Person Capacity. We allow the Renter to bring their own food or Caterer.**

**For more information or to tour the hall, please contact the Church at 412-278-0841.**

**Now is the time to book your company's Christmas Party!**

## CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE FOR LEBANON



Shortly after our Veterans Day Celebration, we will set up our annual **Giving Tree for Lebanon**. This is an invitation for us to assist the needy of Lebanon and help give families there a better and more merry Christmas. You were very generous last year and we look forward to even better participation this year.

Envelopes on the tree range from \$10 to \$100 donations with several denominations in between. Our Christmas Tree donations will become part of our ***Christmas Village II Project***. The deadline for donations will be ***Sunday, December 18th***. Your envelopes and donations can be sent to the Church, dropped into the weekend collection basket, or simply brought to the Church Office.

As Americans, it is difficult to wrap our minds around just how bad the situation in Lebanon really is. If our donations can help a few families and children have a better Christmas, it is well worth it.

Think about it, pray about it, and let us do our best to help our brothers and sisters in Lebanon have a better Christmas.

### DO WE HAVE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS?

If you are not receiving the Monthly Bulletin via email, we do not have a correct email address for you. Please provide your email address to the Church Office by emailing us at: [office@olovpittsburgh.org](mailto:office@olovpittsburgh.org)

**Please note:** Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary**. It is a Holy Day which requires us to gather to worship the Lord and honor his mother on her feast day. It is also the patronal feast of the United States of America. You can attend Liturgy on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> or on Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM Please mark your calendars.

### MARONITE CHRISTMAS NOVENA

The annual Christmas Novena will take place following the Weekday and Weekend Liturgies from December 15<sup>th</sup> through December 23<sup>rd</sup>. This series of hymns, prayers and procession form our final preparation for the Glorious Birth of the Lord on Christmas. We hope you will join us for both the Liturgy and the Christmas Novena which follows the week day liturgies at 5:30pm and the 4:00 pm and 11:00 am on the weekends.

### MYO/MYA Event

**MYO/MYA Bible Study with Fr. Boniface Hicks on Saturday, December 17, 2022 after the 4:00pm Liturgy that will be served by the youth. There will also be a pizza dinner for everyone attending the Bible Study.**

We are pleased to inform you that Julian Jalkh achieved High Honors this quarter at Bishop Canevin High School. Congratulations, Julian!



# OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH EVENTS FOR 2022-2023

*Please mark down the dates and plan on joining us.*

## VETERANS DAY LITURGY & DINNER

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2022**

The Veterans Day celebration here at Our Lady of Victory is a very special celebration, a feast day. We celebrate our men and women who served in the various Armed Forces of the United States during World War II and Korea and came home to us safely through the intercession of Our Lady of Victory. It is a time to celebrate their memories and sacrifices, but also to salute our present-day veterans for their years of service to our Country.

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2022**

Our Annual Christmas Party is a FAMILY event to enjoy with our children and socialize as adults. It is a time to share food and fun for everyone as we prepare for the Birth of the Lord.

## SAINT MARON FEAST DAY

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2023**

Our Annual Saint Maron Day Celebration begins by praising God for the gift of Saint Maron with the Liturgy followed by a banquet honoring Saint Maron. It is a time for us to celebrate as a Parish Family and enjoy prayer, food, drink and dance.

## CHILDREN'S EASTER EGG HUNT & PARTY

**SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2023**

This is an opportunity for our children and their parents to gather for an Easter Egg Hunt, fun games and some food.

## ANNUAL LEBANESE FESTIVAL

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, SEPT 8-10, 2023**

The Annual Lebanese Festival is the other major Church Fund Raiser. It requires both advance preparation and a hands-on attitude among parishioners to be successful. Your assistance is both needed and appreciated.

## COOKIE & PASTRY DAY

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2022**

The Cookie Walk or Lebanese Pastry & Cookie Day is a chance for us to enjoy delicious homemade, authentic Lebanese Pastries and other cookies. We can purchase what we like individually or by the pound while we socialize with friends and family.

## CHRISTMAS VILLAGE II

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2022**

Sponsored by the MYO and MYA, all proceeds from this gathering will go to help Lebanon.

## LENTEN MEATLESS MEALS

**FRIDAYS OF GREAT LENT: 2/24 TO 3/31, 2023**

OLOV Meatless Meals are a chance for us to gather for our meal before gathering in the Church for our Friday Night Lenten Services.

## ANNUAL GOLF OUTING (SHADOW LAKES)

**FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2023**

Our Annual Golf Outing is a major Church Fund Raiser. The income funds many repair and improvement projects needed here in our new home.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2023**

This is an opportunity to bring our neighbors and parishioners together for a picnic and social. This allows us to meet our neighbors and thank them for welcoming us to their neighborhood as well as allowing them to get to know us better.

## MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION

Confession is available before and after Liturgies on Saturday and Sunday, and by appointment during the week.



## PRAYER BEFORE THE EUCHARIST

The church is open from Tuesday to Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM

for prayer and meditation

before the Eucharist in the Tabernacle.

**Eucharistic Adoration every Thursday from 5:00 to 6:00 PM.**

## In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Please keep in your prayers:



Maxine Schoen, Chuck Borik, Martha Kail, Peter DeSando, Angie Joseph, Michael Rattie, Alicia Hruby, Helen McGoun, Diana Kuzma, Elaine Moses, Dr. Adnan Abla, Ashley Ayooob, Frances Barack, David Ingrid Franklin, Donald Kovanis, Faten Fatfat, Marylou Joseph, Sr. Mary Ann Karas, Franice Pattinato, Helen Mierski, Rebecca Rodgers, Rina Molinaro, Patty Doerzbacker, Anna Marie Mecca, Ken Kovach, Frank Joseph, Alex Joseph, Rosemary Thomas Hartman, Celeste Cancilla, Stephanie Vail, John Abbas (Youngstown), James Brocato, Fr. Tony Gargotta, Dalal Romah, Isaac Simon, Sue Cravens, Kim B., Chuck Joseph (Detroit), Chrissy Coury and Frank Gill.

## Scripture Readings

Birth of John the Baptist (Dec 4th)

Gal 4:2-5:1

Lk 1:57-66

Revelation to Joseph (Dec 11th)

Eph 3:1-13

Mt 1:18-25

Genealogy Sunday (Dec 18th)

Rom 1:1-12

Mt 1:1-17

Glorious Birth of the Lord (Dec 25th)

Heb 1:1-12

Lk 2:1-20

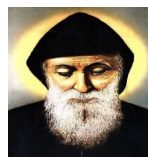
Circumcision of the Lord (Jan 1st)

Eph 2:11-22

Lk 2:21

*All Scripture Readings are taken from the Revised Edition of the New American Bible*

## Saint Sharbel Liturgy



Every 22nd (or the weekday closest) of the month we will celebrate the Liturgy of Saint Sharbel which will be offered for the intentions of our parishioners, relatives and friends who need our prayers.

## Month of December

### Altar Bread and Wine

In memory of Joseph and Maha Basil requested by Theresa Basil and Family

### Sanctuary Lamps

In memory of deceased members of Barack, Monoriti, Budway, Davis, Kuzma, and Kovach Families requested by Frances Barack and Family.

**Altar Bread and Wine or Sanctuary Lamps can each be sponsored for a donation of \$25 per month, in memory or in honor of our loved ones.**

**Altar Bread & Wine is available for January 2023.**



## **Our Catholic Faith - December, 2022 Edition**

*This month, we are continuing our study of Our Catholic Faith by concentrating on the Catechism of the Catholic Church section on the Ten Commandments.*

### **CHAPTER TWO: YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF**

**The Fourth Commandment: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.” The Family and Society / the Duties of Family Members / the Duties of parents / the Family and the Kingdom / the Duties of civil authorities / the political community and the Church**

2247 *“Honor your father and your mother” (Deut 5:16; Mk 7:10).*

2248 *According to the fourth commandment, God has willed that, after him, we should honor our parents and those whom he has vested with authority for our good.*

2249 *The conjugal community is established upon the covenant and consent of the spouses. Marriage and family are ordered to the good of the spouses, to the procreation and the education of children.*

2250 *“The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life” (GS 47 § 1).*

2251 *Children owe their parents respect, gratitude, just obedience, and assistance. Filial respect fosters harmony in all of family life.”*

2252 *Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all the virtues. They have the duty to provide as far as possible for the physical and spiritual needs of their children.*

2253 *Parents should respect and encourage their children’s vocations. They should remember and teach that the first calling of the Christian is to follow Jesus.*

2254 *Public authority is obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person and the conditions for the exercise of his freedom.*

2255 *It is the duty of citizens to work with civil authority for building up society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom.*

2256 *Citizens are obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when they are contrary to the demands of the moral order. “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).*

2257 *Every society’s judgments and conduct reflect a vision of man and his destiny. Without the light the Gospel sheds on God and man, societies easily become totalitarian.*

**The Fifth Commandment: “You shall not kill.” / Respect for Human Life / Legitimate defense / Intentional homicide / Abortion / Euthanasia / Suicide / Respect for the Dignity of Persons / Respect for the Dead**

2318 *“In [God’s] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10).*

2319 Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its own sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God.

2320 The murder of a human being is gravely contrary to the dignity of the person and the holiness of the Creator.

2321 The prohibition of murder does not abrogate the right to render an unjust aggressor unable to inflict harm. Legitimate defense is a grave duty for whoever is responsible for the lives of others or the common good.

2322 From its conception, the child has the right to life. Direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, is a “criminal” practice (GS 27 § 3), gravely contrary to the moral law. The Church imposes the canonical penalty of excommunication for this crime against human life.

2323 Because it should be treated as a person from conception, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being.

2324 Intentional euthanasia, whatever its forms or motives, is murder. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator.

2325 Suicide is seriously contrary to justice, hope, and charity. It is forbidden by the fifth commandment.

2326 Scandal is a grave offense when by deed or omission it deliberately leads others to sin gravely.

2327 Because of the evils and injustices that all war brings with it, we must do everything reasonably possible to avoid it. The Church prays: “From famine, pestilence, and war, O Lord, deliver us.”

2328 The Church and human reason assert the permanent validity of the moral law during armed conflicts. Practices deliberately contrary to the law of nations and to its universal principles are crimes.

2329 “The arms race is one of the greatest curses on the human race and the harm it inflicts on the poor is more than can be endured” (GS 81 § 3).

2330 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God” (Mt 5:9).

**The Sixth Commandment: “You shall not commit adultery” / Male and Female He Created Them / the integrality of the gift of self / the various forms of chastity / Chastity and homosexuality / the Love of Husband and Wife / Conjugal fidelity / the gift of a child / Offenses against the dignity of marriage / divorce / other offenses against the dignity of marriage**

2392 “Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being” (FC 11).

2393 By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.

2394 Christ is the model of chastity. Every baptized person is called to lead a chaste life, each according to his particular state of life.

2395 Chastity means the integration of sexuality within the person. It includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery.



2396 *Among the sins gravely contrary to chastity are masturbation, fornication, pornography, and homosexual practices.*

2397 *The covenant which spouses have freely entered into entails faithful love. It imposes on them the obligation to keep their marriage indissoluble.*

2398 *Fecundity is a good, a gift and an end of marriage. By giving life, spouses participate in God's fatherhood.*

2399 *The regulation of births represents one of the aspects of responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Legitimate intentions on the part of the spouses do not justify recourse to morally unacceptable means (for example, direct sterilization or contraception).*

2400 *Adultery, divorce, polygamy, and free union are grave offenses against the dignity of marriage."*

**The Seventh Commandment: "You shall not steal" / The Universal Destination and the Private Ownership of Goods / Respect for Persons and Their Goods / Respect for the goods of others / Respect for the integrity of creation / the Social Doctrine of the Church / Love for the poor**

2450 *"You shall not steal" (Ex 20:15; Deut 5:19). "Neither thieves, nor the greedy... , nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:10).*

2451 *The seventh commandment enjoins the practice of justice and charity in the administration of earthly goods and the fruits of men's labor.*

2452 *The goods of creation are destined for the entire human race. The right to private property does not abolish the universal destination of goods."*

2453 *The seventh commandment forbids theft. Theft is the usurpation of another's goods against the reasonable will of the owner.*

2454 *Every manner of taking and using another's property unjustly is contrary to the seventh commandment. The injustice committed requires reparation. Commutative justice requires the restitution of stolen goods.*

2455 *The moral law forbids acts which, for commercial or totalitarian purposes, lead to the enslavement of human beings, or to their being bought, sold or exchanged like merchandise.*

2456 *The dominion granted by the Creator over the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be separated from respect for moral obligations, including those toward generations to come.*

2457 *Animals are entrusted to man's stewardship; he must show them kindness. They may be used to serve the just satisfaction of man's needs.*

2458 *The Church makes a judgment about economic and social matters when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it. She is concerned with the temporal common good of men because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, their ultimate end.*

2459 *Man is himself the author, center, and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point*

*of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity.”*

*2460 The primordial value of labor stems from man himself, its author and beneficiary. By means of his labor man participates in the work of creation. Work united to Christ can be redemptive.*

*2461 True development concerns the whole man. It is concerned with increasing each person's ability to respond to his vocation and hence to God's call (cf. CA 29).*

*2462 Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.*

*2463 How can we not recognize Lazarus, the hungry beggar in the parable (cf. Lk 17:19-31), in the multitude of human beings without bread, a roof or a place to stay? How can we fail to hear Jesus: “As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me” (Mt 25:45)?”*

**The Eighth Commandment: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” / Living in the Truth / to Bear Witness to the Truth / Offenses Against Truth / Respect for the Truth / the Use of Social Communications Media / Truth, Beauty, and Sacred Art**

*2504 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Ex 20:16). Christ's disciples have “put on the new man, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24).*

*2505 Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.*

*2506 The Christian is not to “be ashamed of testifying to our Lord” (2 Tim 1:8) in deed and word. Martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith.”*

*2507 Respect for the reputation and honor of persons forbids all detraction and calumny in word or attitude.*

*2508 Lying consists in saying what is false with the intention of deceiving one's neighbor.*

*2509 An offense committed against the truth requires reparation.*

*2510 The golden rule helps one discern, in concrete situations, whether or not it would be appropriate to reveal the truth to someone who asks for it.”*

*2511 “The sacramental seal is inviolable” (CIC, can. 983 § 1). Professional secrets must be kept. Confidences prejudicial to another are not to be divulged.*

*2512 Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, and justice. One should practice moderation and discipline in the use of the social communications media.*

*2513 The fine arts, but above all sacred art, “of their nature are directed toward expressing in some way the infinite beauty of God in works made by human hands. Their dedication to the increase of God's praise and of his glory is more complete, the more exclusively they are devoted to turning men's minds devoutly toward God” (SC 122).”*



OLOV MYO & MYA Present



# Village Night II

Christmas 2022 Edition



Friday, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>  
5pm to 9 pm

Our Lady of Victory  
Maronite Catholic Church  
(at St. Pamphilus)  
1000 Tropical Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15216

100% of proceeds go to Lebanon

Questions? Contact us at  
[office@olovpittsburgh.org](mailto:office@olovpittsburgh.org)



Hot Food,  
Bonfire,  
Christmas  
Music,  
and more...





**COME JOIN US FOR  
THE PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY.**

**Don't miss out on live entertainment  
from our youth.**

**DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2022**

**TIME: 12:00 PM (After 11:00 am Liturgy)**

**RSVP: By December 14, 2022 to  
Lori Evans 412-445-9131**

**Happy holidays to you and your families!**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_**

**No. of people attending \_\_\_\_\_**

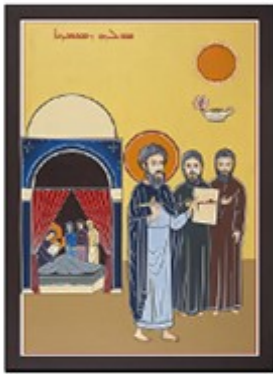
**Happy holidays to you and your families!**





## THE SUNDAYS OF DECEMBER 2022

### THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER - DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>



The Church does not usually celebrate the earthly birthdays of the saints, but rather their birthdays in heaven, namely the day of their deaths when they obtain their crown of glory. However, in the case of John the Baptist, we celebrate his earthly birth--his coming into the world to announce the Son.

John's coming was filled with marvels. The angel announced his birth. Because of his doubt Zechariah was struck dumb. John leaped with joy in the womb of his mother when visited by the Virgin. He was sanctified at that time by the Holy Spirit. As soon as John was born, Zechariah was able to speak and sing the beautiful song of "*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,*" a hymn the Church continues to sing even today.

The angel predicted that many would rejoice at John's birth and that he would be great in the sight of God, and holy, ascetic, and just before the people. He will bring many back to God. He will be the Forerunner of the Savior and return the hearts of parents to their children, and the unbelievers to the wisdom of the just. He will prepare for God a holy people.

The words of Jeremiah the prophet are applied to him:

*Before I found you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you a prophet to the nations. I appointed you... Say not I am too young. To whomever I send you, you shall go. Whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them because I am with you to deliver you. See, I place my words in your mouth. I set you over nations and over kingdoms to root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant... They will fight against you, but not prevail over you, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.*

The prophet Malachi says, "*I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me*" (Mk 1: 2; Lk 7:27). This messenger is John the Baptist. He ended the law and the prophets and was praised by the Lord himself.

Some months before the Lord began his preaching ministry, John came out of his solitude and appeared near the Jordan River, as the Forerunner of the Lord predicted by the prophets. He impressed the crowds by his poverty, austerity of life, severity of preaching and the practicality of his exhortations. His ministry was quite successful. Many people came to him to receive his baptism and confess their faults as announced the imminence of the messianic kingdom. He was so humble that he declared himself unworthy to untie the sandals of the Lord. "*I have baptized you in water; he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit*" (Mark 1: 8). He will separate the sinners from the just.

When Jesus came to be baptized, John wanted to withdraw, saying that it was he who should be baptized by the Lord, but Jesus insisted. John said, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world," and told his disciples to follow Jesus. When the disciples complained that Jesus was becoming more and more popular, John said, "*He must increase and I must decrease.*" He reproached Herod for his scandalous conduct and was put in jail. In prison he sent his disciples to Jesus. He wanted then to follow him and to let Jesus declare himself as the Savior predicted by Isaiah. John was praised as superior to all the faithful of the Old Testament.

### THE REVELATION TO JOSEPH - DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>



Joseph, the spouse of Mary, lived a life of relative obscurity; and suffered the same lot during the first centuries of the Church. However, we find that Jerome praises his virginity; John Chrysostom spoke about his sufferings and his joys. It is said that Helen built a church in his honor at Bethlehem and a feast has been celebrated in his memory by the Eastern Churches since the ninth century.

The Maronite Church celebrates his feast on the fifth Sunday of the Season of Announcement and also on March 19 in unison with the Latin Church.

From the day of the announcement of Gabriel to Mary and her virginal conception, three months had already passed. During this time, Mary kept silent. Although the consequence



could have been disastrous to her reputation, she revealed the great mystery to no one, not even Joseph, her betrothed, or her relative, Elizabeth. She trusted in God and knew that he would reveal the great mystery in his own time and in his own way. The Lord did just this.

According to Jewish law, betrothal was equivalent to marriage. Even before cohabitation, if a man desired to leave a woman, he had to give the bride a written decree of divorce. If the groom were to die, the bride was considered to be a widow. If the woman was found guilty of adultery, it was the duty of the man to repudiate her publicly (Deuteronomy 22: 10-29; Leviticus 20: 10).

When Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant, he could not understand how something like this could have happened. Mary continued to be modest, kind and compassionate. Saint Jerome describes Joseph's confusion: "Joseph, knowing the chastity of Mary and admiring what happened, hid in a silence the mystery he was unable to understand." Just as Mary respected the mystery, so also did Joseph. However, he decided that it was his duty to send her away in silence, even though he would have to suffer. They would have to separate rather than unveil the mystery. The Holy Family began with this martyrdom of self in the face of God's mystery.

God intervened in a dream, which Joseph did not doubt as coming from heaven. God told Joseph that Mary was pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. He also gave Joseph his role as the "father" of the family: "Mary will give birth and you will call him Jesus. This child will deliver people from their sins" (Matthew 1: 21). A great responsibility was given to Joseph and, like Mary, he accepted the will of God.

Joseph was called to be the humble servant of God, Jesus and Mary. He would do all his duties in silence. He would serve, protect, provide and die before even seeing a miracle. His entire life became one of love, immolation, sacrifice, work and self-effacement.

He would take Mary to Bethlehem, flee to Egypt, bring Jesus and Mary out of Egypt, look for Jesus in the Temple--and die in silence. This was his mission and he accomplished it because he trusted in God; blessed is the one who trusts that God's words to them will be fulfilled.

Joseph has often been compared to the Joseph of the Old Testament, the son of Jacob. As Joseph of the Old Testament saved Egypt and its neighbors, may the Joseph of the New Testament save the Church and all those who come to him. "Go to Joseph. He has the riches of the king! The king has entrusted to him the distribution of his goods!"

## GENEALOGY SUNDAY - DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>

We find that there are two versions of the genealogy of Jesus in the New Testament. One is in Matthew (1: 1-17) and another is in Luke (3: 23-38). The basic aim of any such list of descendants in the scriptures, is the connection of each era to God's progressive plan of salvation which reaches its fulfillment in Christ.



The genealogy of Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the promises God made to Abraham and David. One notes that there are four women, perhaps all gentiles, in the list. The inclusion of these women may serve to indicate that Jesus came to save all mankind and not just the Jews (Mt. 28: 19). David, a sinner guilty of adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11: 6), is also included in the list, thus indicating that Jesus, who was without sin, was fully immersed in the sinfulness of humanity.

The genealogy of Luke's gospel is even more obvious in indicating the universal mission of Jesus. He goes back from Jesus, to Abraham, and all the way back to Adam, the son of God; thus he shows Jesus as the New Adam, who begets a new humanity.

The two genealogies are quite diverse in the personages included. In fact, they agree only on two names from David to Joseph. Matthew's royal lineage supports his concept of messianic fulfillment while Luke may have been more authentic in tracing the line through Nathan. In any case, one finds that the theological purpose of the genealogies supersedes any consideration for factual accuracy. The intention of the lists is to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that had been prophesied in the Old Testament. The covenant that the Lord established with David will stand forever. The Lord says that his covenant with David stands firm and he will make his posterity endure forever and his throne as the days of heaven" (Ps. 89: 29-30).

Not only does the psalmist assure us that the covenant with David and his posterity will last forever, but Jer-



emiah the prophet tells us that one of David's descendants will appear and rule as a glorious king:

*"The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and Judah. In those days, in that time, I will raise up for David a just shoot; he shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: The Lord our justice. For thus says the Lord: Never shall David lack a successor on the throne of the house of Israel, nor shall priests of Levi ever be lacking."*

Micah tells us that the great king will come from Bethlehem: *"But you Bethlehem, Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth one for me who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from old, from ancient times"* (Micah 5: 1).

Isaiah tells us that the sign that will be given to the people is that the child will be born of a virgin: *"Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child and bear a son and shall call him Emmanuel"* (Isaiah 7: 14).

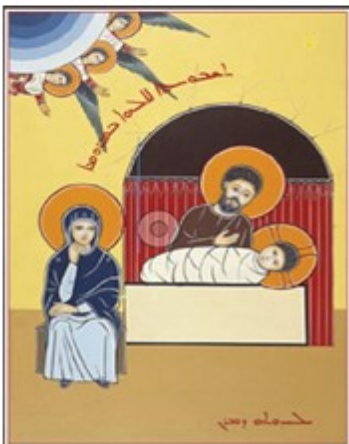
He also describes the Messiah, beginning with the statement that he will spring from the root of Jesse:

*"But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding. A spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his lips (Isaiah 11: 1-5)."*

The genealogies call us to trust in the salvific plan of God: all will be brought to fulfillment by the Lord in his own time and in his own way. In spite of difficulties, we are called to trust in the promises of the Lord. Jesus himself, the Son of the Father promised, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not"* (Luke 21: 33).

***Blessed is the one who trusts that the Lord's word to them will be fulfilled!***

## THE GLORIOUS BIRTH OF THE LORD - DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>



The divine Liturgy in the Maronite tradition often mentions the title "Mary, Mother of the Light." The opening prayer of the liturgy used to mention it every day. This title is rich in theological and spiritual significance and is indeed one of the treasures of the Maronite Church.

The image of light conveys a sense of joy, festivity, and life. Religion uses the image of light to express the notion of purity and the presence of God. Since light is the element which is proper to the divine Being, from ancient times the pagans adored the sun. At the end of December, the pagans celebrated a feast dedicated to the "Unconquerable Sun." In fact, on December 21st the nights, which had been becoming longer and longer, begin to shorten. The ancients celebrated this conquest of the light over the darkness.

When Constantine granted freedom for Christians to worship publicly, it was appropriate to replace the celebration of the Unconquerable Sun, with the Feast of the New Sun of the world, to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world (John 3: 19).

The image of light is found throughout salvation history. The Aramaic Fathers of the Antiochene tradition teach us that creation is a preparation for the incarnation of the Son of God. All was created by the Father, through the Son.

Scripture tells us that the first thing that was created is the sun: it is the heavenly body which gives forth light, warmth and life itself.

The sun is the image of the Son of God because Christ himself is that light which comes from heaven. As a ray of light coming through a cloud, he appeared from the Virgin Mary.

When God created the world, he separated the light from the darkness and throughout the Old Testament, one finds the light and the darkness contrasted with one another. In the New Testament, there is a constant struggle between the light and the darkness.



The genealogy in the gospel account of Matthew describes the human ancestry of Jesus and, as such, lists the sinners whose sins Jesus had to bear. This is the side of darkness in the spiritual realm. Saint John describes Jesus as coming from God, light from light: "I have come to the world as its light to keep anyone who believes in me from remaining in the dark" (John 12: 46).

The account of the birth of Jesus contains the image of light throughout. The shepherds saw a great light, "The glory of the Lord shone around them" (Luke 2:9). The Magi saw a brilliant star in the skies, and followed it (Matthew 2: 9-11). The shepherds said, "Let us go", and the Magi said, "we saw a light and we came" (Luke 2:15; Matthew 2:2).

Throughout the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we find the image of light used to express his divinity. His baptism was a true revelation and, as such, a great enlightenment. During the transfiguration, Jesus was surrounded by light (Matthew 17: 2-5). When Jesus died on the cross, darkness came upon the earth (Matthew 27: 45) and the soldier, standing at the foot of the cross, was moved to say, "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27: 54).

The resurrection itself was blinding light (Matthew 28: 2). The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is described as "tongues of fire" (Acts 2: 3). Upon seeing a great light and being thrown from his horse, Saul came to believe (Acts 9: 3). While in prison, Peter saw a bright light and was freed from his chains (Acts 12: 6).

Just as the shepherds and Magi saw and followed the light, we who have seen the Light must follow. Jesus told us, "Walk while you have the light" (John 2: 19; 5: 34; 12: 35-36). This feast of the Birth of Our Lord, the Light of the world, should be an incentive for us to be the light of the world (Matthew 5: 14).

"The night shall be no more. They will need no light from lamps or the sun, for the Lord God shall give them light and they shall reign forever" (Revelation 22: 5).

#### ST. EPHREM THE SYRIAN HYMNS: HYMNS ON THE NATIVITY, NO. 1

- 1     **My Lord, this day gladdens kings, priests and prophets,**  
      **for on it were fulfilled and realized all their words.**

Refrain: **GLORY TO YOU, SON OF OUR CREATOR!**

- 2     **Since today the Virgin has given birth to Emmanuel in Bethlehem,**  
      **the word Isaiah spoke was accomplished today.**
- 3     **He Who registers the peoples was born there;**  
      **the psalm that David sang has been fulfilled today.**
- 4     **The word that Micah spoke was realized today,**  
      **for a shepherd went out from Ephrata, and his staff herded souls.**
- 5     **"Behold, a star shone forth from Jacob, and a prince arose from Israel."**  
      **The prophecy that Balaam spoke found its meaning today.**
- 6     **The hidden light descended, and its beauty shone forth from a body;**  
      **the dawn of which Zechariah spoke lights up Bethlehem today.**
- 7     **The light of kingship glorifies him in Ephrata, the city of kings;**  
      **the blessing that Jacob pronounced found its fulfillment today.**
- 8     **"The tree of life brings hope" to the dying;**  
      **the hidden saying of Solomon found its explanation today.**
- 9     **Today a child was born, and he was called "wonder,"**  
      **for it is a wonder that God reveals Himself as an infant.**



Translated Dr. Kathleen E. Mc Vey





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Dear Parishioners and Friends:

We have come full circle and the holidays are here again, just as they do year after year, bearing peace and hope for a better tomorrow, a better life and a brighter and more successful future.

With the incarnation of Christ, the Son of God among us, God has given us all the long-awaited hope Who gives us the true meaning of our lives.

Today, like every day that has preceded it for two thousand years and will follow it to eternity, it is our responsibility and our duty as Christians to live in joy, happiness and peace in every aspect of our daily lives spent with family, friends, neighbors and colleagues at work, university and school.

You can't wait until life isn't hard any more before you decide to be happy, to be with the real and only true God. God alone is the source of all peace and happiness; the real meaning of life.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Joyful New Year!

Fr. Samir



## The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

St. Ephrem's "*Hymns on the Nativity*" are like a dazzling display of Christmas lights—or better yet, like the brightly shining stars shimmering over the fields of Bethlehem. St Ephrem believes that God reveals Himself through symbols, mysteries, hidden meanings found not only throughout Holy Scripture, but everywhere in nature as well.

However, they can be truly comprehended not by the merely inquisitive, but only by those who approach them with humility, love, wonder, and above all, faith. Perceiving God as revealed in these mystical symbols, we are elevated to an eternal dimension that nevertheless remains linked with historical time and everyday space.

Here, Adam and Eve stand with Noah and Moses and King David; the staff of Moses (itself transformed from a serpent) is united with the staffs of shepherds outside Bethlehem and then the staff of the Good Shepherd Who has just been born there. Poetic imagery of birth and fertility, of virginity and marriage, of sacrifice and death and rebirth, swirl together with pastoral imagery of sheep and lions and predatory wolves. Angels and animals and townspeople of all ages and conditions come together here to worship the Newborn Babe, who restores to those who understand (along with Adam and Eve) their youth and innocence.

This is not just a hymn, but theology of the highest sort done poetically, as St Ephrem believes the symbolic character of God's revelations in nature and scripture requires.

*St Ephrem's Hymn (number 5 in some editions, number 7 in others) as presented here is a rendering by the editors of Another City that is based on the early translation by J. B. Morris (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol 13, Part II) with modifications drawn from the more recent translation by Kathleen E. McVey (Paulist Press, Classics of Western Spirituality).*

At the birth of the Son, there came a great clamor in Bethlehem;  
for Angels descended and gave praise there.  
Their voices were a great thunder;  
And along with that voice of praise  
the silent ones [i.e. the animals] came and gave praise to the Son.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

The shepherds also came, laden with  
the best gifts of their flock: sweet milk,  
fresh meat, and befitting praise!  
Dividing the gifts, they gave to Joseph the meat,  
to Mary the milk, and to the Son the praise.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

They brought and presented to Him: a suckling lamb  
to the Paschal Lamb, a first-born to the First-born,  
a sacrifice to the Sacrifice, a lamb of time  
to the Lamb of Truth. A fair sight to see  
the lamb offered to The Lamb!

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

The lamb bleated as it was offered  
to the First-born. It praised the Lamb,  
that had come to set free the flocks and the oxen  
from sacrifices—even the paschal lamb,  
who was handed down to serve as a symbol of the Son.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

The shepherds came near and worshiped Him.  
With their staffs, they saluted Him,  
prophesying: "Peace, O Prince  
of the Shepherds. The staff of Moses  
acknowledges Your staff, O Shepherd of all."

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

For Moses acknowledged You  
—he whose lambs became wolves, and his flocks  
like dragons, and his sheep like  
savage beasts. For in the fearful wilderness  
his flocks became furious, and attacked him.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*





You, then, the Shepherds praise,  
for You reconciled wolves and lambs  
within the fold; O Newborn One,  
Who are older than Noah and younger than Noah,  
Who reconciled all within the ark amid the billows!

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

Your father David, for a lamb's sake  
killed a lion.<sup>3</sup> You, O Son of David,  
have killed the unseen wolf  
that killed Adam, the innocent lamb  
who grazed and bleated in Paradise.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

At that voice of praise, brides were moved  
to hallow themselves, and virgins  
to be chaste, and even young girls  
were purified: they rose early, and coming  
in multitudes, they worshipped the Son.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

Aged women of the city of David came  
to the daughter of David; they gave thanks and said,  
"Blessed be our country, whose streets are made light  
with the rays of Jesse! Today is the throne of David  
established by You, O Son of David.

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

The old men cried out, "Blessed be the Babe  
Who restored Adam to youth, he who was vexed to see  
that he had grown old and wasted away, while the serpent who had killed him,  
had shed his skin and had gotten away. Blessed be the Babe  
by Whom Eve and Adam and were restored to youth."

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

The chaste women said, "O Blessed Fruit,  
bless the fruit of our wombs; given to You  
as first fruits." They waxed fervent and prophesied  
concerning their children, who, when they were killed for Him,  
were to be plucked by Him as first-fruits.<sup>4</sup>

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*

The barren women also hovered over Him, and held Him;  
they rejoiced and said, Blessed Fruit  
born without marriage, bless the wombs of us that are married;  
have mercy on our barrenness,  
You wonderful Child of Virginity!

*Blessed be the Babe by whom Adam and Eve were restored to youth!*



**A Blessed & Merry Christmas to All of You!**