

ST. THOMAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX MISSION

1201 N. Llano Street
Fredericksburg, Texas

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

Sunday, December 22, 2019



TROPARION OF ST. THOMAS

Thou wast a disciple of Christ and a member of the divine choir of Apostles, by thine unbelief thou didst make known Christ's Resurrection, and by touch thou wast assured of His holy Passion, O all-glorious Thomas, and now pray that we be granted peace and great mercy.

MEGALYNARION OF ST. THOMAS

Doubting, thou did come forth to touch His side; yet the resurrection was confirmed by thine unbelief. Henceforth, all have been taught by thee to serve Christ, O Thomas, who did end thy course well by holy martyrdom.

*Antiochian Diocese of
Wichita and Mid-America*

Primate
His Eminence, the Most
Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH

Diocesan Hierarch
His Grace, the Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL

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**Sunday, December 15, 2019; Forefeast of & Sunday before the Nativity of Christ
(The Genealogy)**

Great-martyr Anastasia the deliverer from potions and her teacher the Martyr Chrysogonos

FOURTH EOTHINON GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke (24:12-35).

At that time, Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, wondering to himself what had happened. That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. And He said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered Him, "Art Thou the only visitor to Jerusalem Who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find His body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So He went in to stay with them. When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

THE SYNAXARION

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.

THE EPISTLE

The Reading from the Epistle of 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.

GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (1:1—25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

WELCOME TO VISITORS

If you are visiting with us today, we are glad you joined with us in prayer today. Please join us for coffee and snacks after the Liturgy. Please leave your email address with Fr. Methodios if you would like to receive this bulletin and the services. If you are interested in studying the Orthodox faith systematically, please speak to Fr. Methodios.

REGULAR SERVICES

WEDNESDAY (7:00 p.m.) — Paraklesis

SATURDAY (6:00 p.m.) — Great Vespers

SUNDAY (9:00 a.m.) — Orthros

(10:00 a.m.)— Divine Liturgy

Confessions after Great Vespers, or by appointment — contact the Pastor.

NATIVITY FAST—PART 2

The Nativity Fast continues as a strict fast is observed every day until the Divine Liturgy Christmas morning. As always, wine and oil are permitted on Saturday and Sunday.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Tuesday, 12/24, 9:00 a.m. —Royal Hours

4:00 p.m.—Vesper Liturgy of St. Basil

Wednesday, 12/25, 9:00 a.m.—Festal Orthros, then Divine Liturgy of the Nativity of Christ

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Everyone is invited to the Ingalls' house immediately following Christmas Liturgy for a Christmas dinner and open house. Please RSVP to Kh. Dannielle. Side dishes and desserts will be appreciated.

THEOPHANY SERVICES

Divine Liturgy for Theophany will be celebrated on Sunday, January 5. The Outdoor Blessing of the Water will be held after social hour at Lady Bird Park (weather permitting).

Christmas Meditations—St. Basil the Great "On the Incarnation"

The actual, first nativity of Christ, His actual birth from all eternity in the bosom of His Father, must be venerated in silence. We should never permit our mind to investigate this mystery. Since time and space did not exist, since no form of expressions had yet been created, since there is not a single eyewitness, nor anyone who can describe this eternal birth, how can reason form any concept for reflection?

How can the tongue give expression to thoughts that cannot be formulated?

The Father was, and the Son was born!

Do not say: "when?" but rather leave that question unasked.

Do not ask "how?" for there is not answer!

For the word "when" suggests time, and "how" suggests birth in the flesh...

God is on earth, He is among men, not in the fire nor amid the sound of trumpets; not in the smoking mountain, or in the darkness, or in the terrible and roaring tempest giving the Law, but manifested in the flesh, the gentle and good One dwells with those He condescends to make His equals!

God is in the flesh, not operating from a distance, as did the prophets, but through Him human nature, one with ours, He seeks to bring back all mankind to Himself.