



St. Elias Melkite Catholic Church

Serving San Jose Valley & Bay Area, CA

Church Information

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Pastor

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo
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Sunday Service Time

Divine Liturgy: 11:00 am

Confession Times

Wednesdays: 5:30-6:30 pm
Sundays: Before Divine Liturgy

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, December 21st

Bible Study @ 7:00pm

Coffee Socials and Qurban

This Sunday, December 18th

Qurban: Linda Kaldani
Coffee Social: Isaac Kaldani

Next Sunday, December 25th

Qurban: Holly Handal
Coffee Social: Holly Handal

Please pray for:

The Orthodox Servants of God

The Kaldani Family
Joanna Higareda
The Kalil Family
Christian Rosario
Joseph & Camille Pulsoni
Jonathan Kaldani
The Sramcik Family
Kamal & Eugenie Neimat
Ann Bowden
Laure Kelly
William Connelly
Issa Sehak
The Lemme Family
Rosalie
The Chan Family
The Peterson Family

The Orthodox Servants Asleep in the Lord in the Hope of the Resurrection

Michael Harris
Wilbur Smith
Vanda Kaldani
Siham Hanna

If you have names you would like
added to the list of
commemorations, please send to
steliasmelkite@gmail.com

Sunday, December 18, 2016

Sunday Before the Nativity of our Lord - Geneology

Troparion of the Resurrection (6th Tone)

The angelic powers were around Your tomb * and the guards became as dead * and Mary stood at the tomb * seeking Your spotless body * Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it * and You met the Virgin O Bestower of life * O Lord, who rose from the dead * glory to You!

نشيد القيامة باللحن السادس

إن القوات الملائكية ظهرت على قبرك، والحراس صاروا كالأموات، ومريم وقفت عند القبر، طالبةً جسدك الطاهر. فسلبت الجحيم ولم تنلك بأذى، ولاقيت البتول واهباً الحياة. فيا من قام من بين الأموات، يا رب المجد لك.

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40

Brethren, by faith, Abraham lived in the Land of the Promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the co-heirs of the same promise, for he was looking for the city with fixed foundations, of which city the architect and builder is God. And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barac, Samson, Jephthe, David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained the fulfillment of promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, routed foreign armies. Women had their dead restored to them though resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to yield for their release in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others again suffered mockery and blows, even chains and jailings. They were stoned, cut to pieces, put to the question, killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, distressed, afflicted (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, mountains, caves and holes in the ground. And none of these, despite the positive witnessing of faith, received what was promised, for God has something better in store for us, so that they were not to reach their final perfection without us.

Gospel: Sunday Before the Nativity, Matthew 1: 1-25 (Genealogy of Christ)

The book of the origin of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob begot Judah and his brethren. Judah begot Perez and Zarah whose mother was Thamar. Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram. And Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, Nahshon begot Salma. Salma begot Boaz of Rahab. Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, Jesse begot David the King. And David the King begot Solomon of the former wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, Abijah begot Asa. And Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, Joram begot Azariah. And Azariah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, Ahaz begot Ezechiah. And Ezechiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, Amon begot Josiah. And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren at the time of deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. And Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, Eliakim begot Azor. And Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, Achim begot Eliud. And Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of her was born Jesus, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations. And from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations. Now the origin of Christ was like this. When Mary His mother had been betrothed to Joseph, she was found, before they came together, to be with child by the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a just man and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was thinking of putting her away privately. But while he was considering these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." Now all this came to pass that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel;" which is interpreted, "God with us." So Joseph, arising from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took Mary to be his wife. And he did not know her till she brought forth her firstborn son. And he called His name Jesus.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BISHOP'S APPEAL

As we prepare our hearts and our homes to receive the greatest gift in human history—Christ our God—let us not forget our Melkite Catholic Church by which Christ comes to our families and loved ones. **Please give a special end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church** to support all the vital works of our Church in America.

FROM THE DIOCESE: SUNDAY BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST: "THEOTOKOS – SHE WHO BORE GOD"

CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIANS of many traditions are displaying Nativity scenes this season. All of them will include an image of the Virgin Mary, although there are serious differences in how these Christians view her. The historic Churches, Eastern and Western, reverence her as blessed and ever-virgin and ask her to intercede with God for us. Most Protestants do not, in the view that there is no warrant in the Bible for such activity.

Reverence for the Virgin Mary arose in the early Church in view of its growing belief that her Son, the Lord Jesus, is truly God and Man. The story of the annunciation – which is in the New Testament (Lk 1:26-38) – depicts Him as "*Son of the Most High*" and "*Son of God*," conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit of a woman who has "*not known a man*." His conception in Mary's womb was a sign of His true divinity, and reverence for His mother was a way of proclaiming Him as God.

By the second century thinkers like St Justin the Philosopher were describing Mary as the "new Eve," in much the same way that St Paul spoke of Christ as the new Adam: "Eve, who was a virgin and undefiled, having conceived the word of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary conceived faith and joy, when the angel Gabriel announced the good tidings to her that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her, and the power of the Most High would overshadow her" (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 100). As Eve took part in Adam's sin, Mary was seen as somehow taking part in Christ's reversal of Adam's fall.

Stories of Mary's Birth

As the Eastern Churches continue to do today, early Christians revered oral and other written traditions as well as the Scriptures as ways in which the Holy Spirit reveals the things of God to us. The second-century *Protoevangelium of James* is one of the most revered of these non-Biblical texts. It speaks of Mary's own conception in the womb of St Ann, her birth and her presentation in the temple at Jerusalem. This work also teaches Mary's virginity before giving birth, the miraculous way in which she gave birth, and her physical virginity even after giving birth. The *Protoevangelium* would influence, not only subsequent theology, but also the prayer-life of all believers. Our feasts of the Maternity of St Ann (Dec. 9), the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept. 8) and her Entrance into the Temple (Nov. 21) are all based on this work.

"Theotokos" and "Aeiparthenos"

During the second- and third-century controversies about the divinity of Christ two terms describing the Virgin Mary came into use to support the position that Christ was fully both God and man by nature. The term *Theotokos* (she who bore God) had been in use in the Church of Alexandria at least from the time of the Arian controversy. They had concluded that, since Jesus Christ is "true God from true God" as the Council of Nicaea (325) declared, His Mother can rightly be said to have borne God in her womb. Churches in the tradition of Antioch, however, expressed doubts about adopting this title. The ensuing Council of Ephesus (431) affirmed the use of *Theotokos* and deposed the patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorios, who had banned its use. By identifying Mary as the Mother of God the Word, the council underscored the teaching that Christ was indivisibly God and Man. Devotion to the Virgin Mary and the use of prayer for her intercession spread after this council throughout the Churches.

All the historic Churches, except for the Assyrian Church of the East, refer to Mary as Theotokos while the Assyrian Church uses the title "Mother of Christ our God." In the 1994 Agreed Statement between their two Churches the Pope of Rome, John Paul II, and the Catholicos of the Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV, affirmed: "We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety."

The term *Aeiparthenos* (ever-virgin), widely used in our liturgy, was also popularized at this time, although it did not carry the same weight as Theotokos. The idea that Mary was not only a virgin when she conceived and gave birth but ever after was taught as early as the second century, notably by St. *Irenaeus* of Lyons, and became increasingly popular in the fourth century. St Epiphanius of Salamis in Cyprus attests to its widespread acceptance at that time, even while minimizing its importance: "Now how could Joseph dare to have relations with the

Virgin Mary whose holiness was so great? But even if she had sexual relations – and perish that thought! – what good would it do us to inquire into this? Which is the better choice, to leave the matter to God, or to insist on what is bad? Plainly, Scripture has not told us that we may not have eternal life, but will go to Judgment unless we believe that Mary had relations again" (Sect 780).

St *John Chrysostom* (347-407) defended the perpetual virginity of Mary on a number of grounds, one of which was the Gospel affirmation that, after the crucifixion, "*from that hour that disciple took her to his own home*" (Jn 19:27). This was seen to imply that, after the deaths of Joseph and now Jesus, there was no one else to look after Mary and she had to be entrusted to St John.

Whose Children Were They?

The New Testament includes several mentions of Jesus' brothers and sisters, such as this one: "*Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary and His brothers James, Joses,*

Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did He get all these things?" (Mt 13:54-6) The Gospels depict Jesus' relatives as resisting His ministry during His earthly life. St Paul reports that the risen Christ appeared to James (see 1 Cor 15:7); subsequently he and other family members became active disciples, with James leading the Church in Jerusalem. The New Testament includes epistles of James and Jude, showing the esteem in which the apostolic Church held them.

The *Protoevangelium of James* affirmed that Jesus' "brothers and sisters" were Joseph's children from a previous marriage. Eastern writers such as Origen took up this view and it is the most commonly held opinion among Eastern Christians. Thus James is often depicted in icons of the flight into Egypt as a boy walking alongside Joseph. St Jerome, the fourth-century Illyrian monk and Biblical interpreter, held that "brothers and sisters" was a way of saying "relatives" and that James and the others would have been Jesus' cousins. This is the generally accepted position among Western Catholics.

Many Protestants today teach that Mary was a virgin only until the birth of Christ because nothing beyond that is mentioned in the Scriptures. They might be surprised to learn that Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and other leaders of the Reformation all agreed that the Virgin Mary did not have other children. They did not deny the traditional teachings, but rejected those excessive devotions that exalted Mary at the expense of Christ.

Some Anglicans and Lutherans have revived veneration of the Holy Virgin, careful that that "any interpretation of the role of Mary must not obscure the unique mediation of Christ" and that "any consideration of Mary must be linked with the doctrines of Christ and the Church" (Anglican-Roman Catholic International Consultation).