

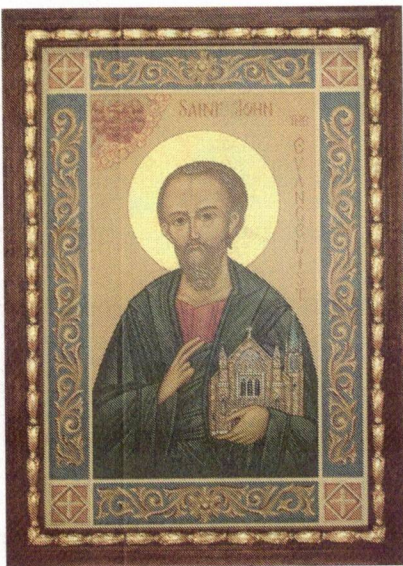
--: Holy Forefathers --:

Abraham, Isaac & Jacob



They lived in hope & with
the promise of God's Faithfulness

December 15, 2024



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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WWW.SAINTJOHNCHURCH.ORG

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SABA , ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK
AND

METROPOLITAN OF ALL NORTH AMERICA

HIS GRACE BISHOP THOMAS, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND , AND MID-ATLANTIC

REVEREND FATHER SERAPHIM MOSLENER

Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (John 16:23)
When a new person is baptized or Chrismated we say to that person, "Welcome Home!" The Church is where each person voluntarily belongs as one who believes in and belongs to Christ .

We take this opportunity to welcome those guests worshiping with us.

Anyone wishing to request prayers for Health and Well-being, or a Trisagion prayer, please contact Fr. Seraphim

The Orthodox Church understands that the sacraments we experience are a fundamental part of the sacred life of a worshiping community that shares in "one body...one faith". (Eph. 4:5). Thus, we can only share Communion with those who are Orthodox and who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and Confession. If you are not Orthodox, or are not properly prepared, you are welcome to come forward and receive a blessing and then to take a piece of the blessed bread.

DIVINE LITURGY FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024

TONE 8 / EOTHINON 3

HIEROMARTYR ELEUTHERIOS, BISHOP OF ILLYRIA &

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS (ANCESTORS) OF CHRIST

MARTYR ANTHIA, MOTHER OF ELEUTHERIOS; VENERABLE PAUL OF LATRA

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFATHERS IN TONE TWO

Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and it was she who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. ELEUTHERIOS OF ILLYRIA IN TONE FIVE

*(**Let us worship the Word**)*

Being comely adorned in thy sacred priestly robes * and newly drenched with the streams of thy pure and sanctified blood, * thou didst soar aloft to stand before thy Master, Christ; * hence never cease to intercede * for those honoring with faith thy mighty and blessed contest, * thou overthrower of Satan, O wise and blessed Eleutherios.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

O beloved Apostle of Christ God, Come quick and save a people with no recourse. He who let you rest your head on his breast, will not reject your pleas on our behalf. Beseech him then, O wise and holy theologian. Dispel from us the dark and ominous clouds of disbelief. Grant us all of his peace and great mercy.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

*(**The original melody**)*

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.

THE EPISTLE

(For St. Eleutherios)

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saint.

What shall we render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto us?

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy. (1:8-18)

Timothy, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit Who dwells within us. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

THE GOSPEL

(For the Holy Forefathers)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

WELCOME YOUR GRACE,
BISHOP THOMAS
AND CONGRATULATIONS
ON CELEBRATING YOUR
20TH YEAR
AS OUR BISHOP.

GOD GRANT YOU
MANY YEARS

DECEMBER SERVICES

December 14th Saturday — Great Vespers 5PM

December 15th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

**BISHOP THOMAS WILL BE PRESIDING OVER DIVINE LITURGY
ADVENT MEAL TO FOLLOW IN HALL**

****December 18th Wednesday—6PM Compline Prayers and
A Light Meal & Time of Study & Fellowship***

**December 21st Saturday —Community Breakfast 8:30-10:30am
Great Vespers 5PM**

December 22th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

**DECEMBER 24th Tuesday— Royal Hours 9AM / Matins 9PM /
Divine Liturgy 10:00 PM / Fellowship to follow in Hall /
All are invited for our Christmas meal.**

December 28th Saturday — Great Vespers 5PM

December 29th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM

December 31st Tuesday — Divine Liturgy 6PM

Prayers are offered for the health and well-being of:

Fr. Steven, Kh. Paraskeva, Ann, Carol, Debbie, Shannon, Aiden, Justin, Sassic Family, Harriet, Jan, Fr. Andrew, Frank, Charlene, Cindy, Joann, Marlene, Julianna, Ray, Lori, Dionisia and Labrini.

Catechumens Breana, Jessica, Nicholas

For Thou are the Resurrection, the Life, and the Repose of Thy servants who have fallen asleep especially:

Prayers are offered in memory of Infant Micah, Eleanor and ND Charlie.

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

**“Prayer, fasting, vigil and all other Christian activities, however good they may be in themselves, do not constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as indispensable means of reaching this end.” “The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.”
(St. Seraphim of Sarov)**

THE HOLY FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST

The Sunday before our Lord's Nativity is a unique day in the liturgical life of our Orthodox Church. We look AHEAD to the great Mystery that is about to occur: GOD BECOMING MAN. At the same time, we look BACK over the centuries, remembering the patriarchs, prophets and other devout people who eagerly awaited the coming of the Messiah. This day is commonly referred to as the SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS.

As we contemplate the hymns and readings prescribed by the Church for this day, one word is placed before us again and again: FAITH. The Epistle lesson for today is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews. In it, St. Paul skillfully traces the history of the Hebrew nation, pointing out the great faith possessed by their prominent leaders of the past. "By FAITH, ABRAHAM, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. By FAITH, ISAAC, blessed Jacob and Esau. By FAITH, JACOB, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph." Others are mentioned such as Moses, David and Samson.

The message on this day is a clear one. We are about to celebrate the culmination of centuries of anticipation. The faith of the Holy Forefathers is about to be rewarded. Soon, we will rejoice along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as we bear witness to the Birth of Christ. We will ". . . run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our FAITH." (Hebrews 12:2)

The spirit of this jubilant day is captured wonderfully by today's Troparion: "Through faith, You justified the patriarchs, and through them, You made a commitment to a church with gentiles. The saints in glory rejoice, because from the seed of these forefathers has come forth the blessed fruit which gave birth to You without seed."

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

CHECK WEBSITE FOR FEAST DAY SERVICES
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OFFICE HOURS
By Appointment Only