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We sincerely thank our parishioners who mail their donations when they are unable to come to Divine Liturgy. If you are financially able, please continue to support our church. You may mail your donations to PO Box 2735, Manassas VA 20108

YOUR OFFERINGS

Collection: -12/13-

Sincere thanks to all for your kindness and generosity to our Holy Church!

Dear Parishioners,

In just a few days, we will once again gather to celebrate that great moment when “the Word of God leapt from heaven, when half-spent was the night.” This celebration brings back so many memories to all of us and yet there is always a newness to it. As we celebrate this Solemnity of

the Lord's Nativity with the Eucharist, we realize that this isn't historical reminiscence, but rather, the altar becomes the manger, the bread and wine become that same Lord who first took flesh among us in the infant of Bethlehem. We hear in the proclamation of the Gospel that the Magi made a long journey to the Christ, but when the star came to rest over the place where He was, they opened the door, beheld the Lord with their own eyes and fell down and worshipped Him. Each week, we endure a difficult journey of life. Each Sunday, we are supposed to come to the house where Christ is, with Mary, His Mother, and all the saints, and we



are supposed to walk in the door and fall down and worship Him. Today's verse about the arrival of the Magi is something we should be experiencing on a weekly basis. May the same faith and trust that sustained them in their journey to Christ sustain us in our journeys. Leave time for worship this (and every) week! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Sincerely yours,

Fr. Alexander - Pastor



Sunday before the Nativity

Today's Gospel according to St. Mathew chapter 1 verse 1-25 is read ones a year, every Sunday before the Nativity of Our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

More then a century years ago, Church Fathers have prescribed exactly this Gospel to be read a week before the Feast of the Nativity. Though, why did they decided to pick especially this passage of the Gospel of Mathew?

It is important to mention here that this Gospel passage consists of two parts. The first one is the genealogy or family tree of Jesus Christ. The second part is description of actual birth of Jesus from

Virgin Mary. Well it's understandable why they included the second part the scene of Jesus Birth. We are right before the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, therefore it tells us a lot about what we are going to celebrate pretty soon. However why did they include the first part, the Christ's family tree? Do we rally need to hear all of those names today. Priests most probably mispronounce quite a lot of them, reading the passage. Was it so important for us and all the other Orthodox faithful of the Church to hear all those names in the Churches on the Sunday before the Nativity?

In order to find the answer, we have to figure this out first of all why it was so important for the Saint Evangelist Mathew to include these names in the Gospel, before the account of Jesus Christ's Birth.

I have to mention here that Mathew did not just set down and made up those names, took it strait from his imagination. They are all real people. This is the actual family tree of Jesus Christ. As all of us do, Jesus Christ had his human family tree.

It wasn't easy for Evangelist Mathew to put together this genealogy. He had to have a research done on this issue, and he did it well.

We may think he did that for historical purposes. It is a good thing to leave behind for next generations. Nice thoughtful idea, but not the main purpose for writing down Christ's family tree.

There are two main reasons why it was so important for St. Mathew to put together Christ's family tree. He did that in order to prove to certain unbelievers that Jesus Christ is indeed long promised Messiah. As we

know in the Old Testament God communicated with His chosen people through prophets and through them God promised to send a Savior, who would be born from the knee of King David.

In the book of prophet Jeremiah 23:5 we read “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.”

Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.” And this genealogy proves that Jesus Christ (his human person) indeed came out from the knee of King David. Born in Bethlehem, from virgin and the star appeared above the place where He was born. All of this is from the Old Testament promise about coming of Messiah. Jesus Christ truly has fulfilled the prophesy.

Moreover, St. Mathew put together Christ’s lineage in order to show to us faithful, the reality of family tree from which Jesus Christ was born. As I have mentioned before, all of those name were real people. What is taken into consideration here is that they were all different people. Some were rich and royal as King David some were poor as Joseph and Mary. Some were holy and some were sinful, very sinful people; adulterers and murders.

Different people. A whole bouquet of personalities. Question is why? Couldn’t God pick a better family tree for His Son to be born? A family tree that would fit His image as Messiah, as Savior of the world. No! This family tree with all the holy people and the worse sinners, rich and poor fits perfectly. Christ comes among sinful people for sinful people. He comes among the sick with sin and heals them all. “Healthy do not need the doctor, but who are sick.” Mathew 9:12

Jesus Christ comes to the world as the savior as healer not as conqueror of humanity. He puts upon Himself human flesh in order to cleanse it from corruption of the sin of Adam and Eve. This is why He becomes man, actual human to purify human body. He comes to the earth bringing peace and love, bringing freedom from sin. Before His coming the humanity was doomed for eternal death, but He changes that by bringing light into the darkened human souls. By coming out from the family of sinful people, He comes to save them as well as all the others. Does not matter if they are rich or poor, faithful to God or sinful, He offers healing, He offers salvation to all of them, giving them peace, giving them love, giving them forgiveness and a second chance.

Fr. Vasyl Sendeha

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

(Sunday of the Holy Fathers)

Troparion and Kontakion:

Troparion (4): When the disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the glorious news of the resurrection and cast off the ancestral condemnation, they proudly told the apostles: Death has been plundered! Christ our God is risen, granting to the world great mercy.

Troparion (2): Great are the deeds performed with faith: three youths rejoiced in the flaming furnace as if they stood in refreshing waters; and Daniel the Prophet faced lions as though they were sheep. Through their prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls.

Troparion (4): Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all. Ephrathah, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth from the virgin in the cave. Her womb has become a spiritual paradise wherein the divine Fruit was planted, and if we eat of it we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and for ever and ever: Amen. Kontakion (6):

You did not worship a man-made image, O Thrice-blessed Youths, but were glorified in the test of fire, protected by a power beyond description. From the searing flames you cried out to God, saying: Hasten to help us, O merciful Lord, for, in Your greatness, You can do whatever You will.

Prokimenon (4): Blessed are You and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and glorious forever is Your name. **Verse:** In all that You have done Your justice is apparent.

Prokimenon (4): Blessed are You and praiseworthy, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and glorious forever is Your name.

Epistle: Reading of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (Heb 11,9-10:17-23:32-40) Brethren: By faith Abraham sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol. By faith regarding things still to come Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and "bowed in worship, leaning on the top of his staff." By faith Joseph, near the end of his life, spoke of the Exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his bones. By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that he was a beautiful child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. What more shall I say? I have not time to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, did what was righteous, obtained the promises; they closed the mouths of lions, put out raging fires, escaped the devouring sword; out of weakness they were made powerful, became strong in battle, and turned back foreign invaders. Women received back their dead through resurrection. Some were tortured and would not accept deliverance, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others endured mockery, scourging, even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, sawed in two, put to death at sword's point; they went about in skins of sheep or goats, needy, afflicted, tormented. The world was not

worthy of them. They wandered about in deserts and on mountains, in caves and in crevices in the earth. Yet all these, though approved because of their faith, did not receive what had been promised. God had foreseen something better for us, so that without us they should not be made perfect.

Alleluia Verses: Verse: We heard with our own ears, O God, and our fathers have told us of the things You did in their time. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Verse: You saved us from our foes; You put our enemies to shame. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel: (Mt 1,1-25) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers. Judah became the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar. Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab. Boaz became the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth. Obed became the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David the king. David became the father of Solomon, whose mother had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon became the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asaph. Asaph became the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah. Uzziah became the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah. Hezekiah became the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amos, Amos the father of Josiah. Josiah became the father of Jechoniah and his brothers at the time of the Babylonian exile. After the Babylonian exile, Jechoniah became the

father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abiud. Abiud became the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok became the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, Eliud the father of Eleazar. Eleazar became the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah. Thus the total number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile, fourteen generations; from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, fourteen generations. Now this is how the birth of Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means "God is with us." When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home. He had no relations with her until she bore a son, and he named him Jesus.

Communion Verse: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Exult, you just, in the Lord: praise from the upright is fitting. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

First Antiphon:

I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with all my heart; I will declare all Your wondrous deeds.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us. In the company and assembly of the just, great are the works of the Lord.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us. Majestic and glorious are His works, His justice stands firm forever. Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Third Antiphon:

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Troparion: Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshiped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to recognize You as the Orient from on high. Glory be to You, O Lord.

The Lord will send you from Zion a scepter of power; rule in the midst of all your foes.

Troparion: Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshiped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to recognize You as the Orient from on high. Glory be to You, O Lord.

Yours is princely power from the day of Your birth, in the splendor of holy ones.

Troparion: Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshiped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to recognize You as the Orient from on high. Glory be to You, O Lord.

Entrance Hymn: Before the daystar, like the dew, I have begotten You. The Lord has sworn and He will not repent: You

are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. **Troparion (4):** Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshiped the stars have learned from a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to recognize You as the Orient from on high.

Glory be to You, O Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and for ever and ever: Amen. Kontakion (3): Today the Virgin gives birth to Perfect Essence and the earth offers a cave to the Inaccessible. The angels sing His glory with the shepherds; the wise men journey with the star, for there is born for us an infant Child, God Eternal.

Instead of Holy God: All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia. All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia. All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia. Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen. Have put on Christ. Alleluia. All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Prokimenon (8): Let all the earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name. **Verse:** Shout joyfully to the Lord, all you on earth; sing praise to His name; give to Him glorious praise. **Prokimenon (8):** Let all the earth worship and sing praise to You, sing praise to Your name.

Epistle: Reading of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (Gal 4,4-7) Brethren: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. **Alleluia Verses:** Verse: The heavens proclaim the glory of God and the firmament shows forth the work of His hands.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Verse: Day unto day takes up the story, and night unto night makes known the message. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel: (Mt 2,1-12) When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the* child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

Instead of It is truly right... O my soul, extol Christ the King born in a cave. Hirmos: I contemplate a divine and marvelous mystery: heaven has become a cave, the throne of Cherubim - a virgin, and the manger - an honorable place in which lies Christ God, the Incomprehensible. Let us praise and extol Him.

Communion Verse: The Lord has sent deliverance to His people. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.