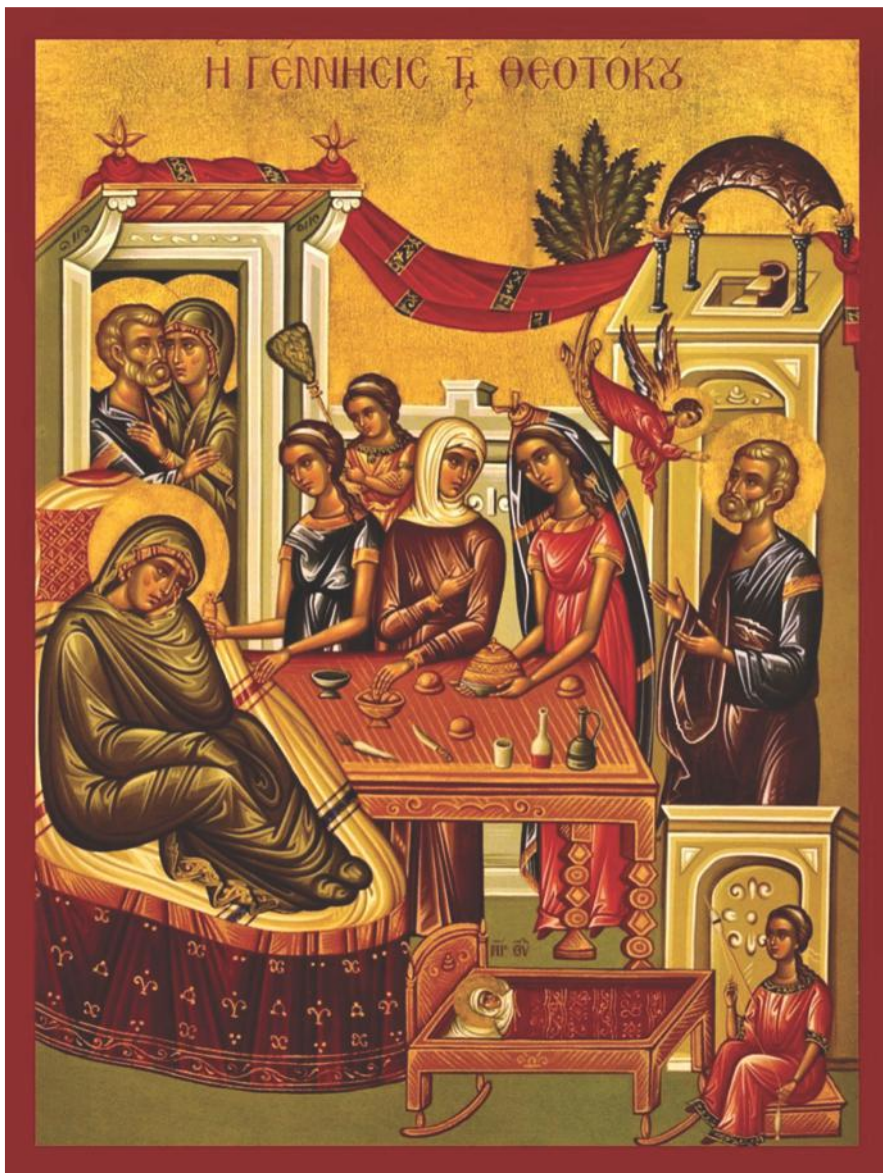


# HOLY ANGELS BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



September 8, 2024

Nativity of the Theotokos;  
Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross

# September 8, 2024

## Schedule of services for the week of September 9 – September 15

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Friday, September 13   | – Commemoration of the Dedication of the Church of the Holy Resurrection of Christ our God in Jerusalem; Prefeast of Exaltation of the Cross. The Holy Hieromartyr Cornelius the Centurion |
| 6:00 PM                | – Great Vespers with Litija  |
| Saturday, September 14 | – The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (Solemn Feast)  |
| 9:00 AM                | – Divine Liturgy; + Audrey Washicko - req: Paul Washicko   |
| 4:00 PM                | – Confessions  |
| 5:00 PM                | – Great Vespers  |
| Sunday, September 15   | – Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; The Holy Great Martyr Nicetas, the Goth; Catechetical Sunday  |
| 7:30 AM                | – Matins   |
| 9:00 AM                | – Divine Liturgy   |

“Certainly, God did not send his Son into the world to judge world, but so that the world should be saved through him.” Christ is truly the salvation of the world. As Christians, we are little Christs. Each of us can bring salvation to the world by living the life of Christ. Is God calling you to show his salvation to the world by a life of prayer and repentance as a priest, deacon, monk or nun? To learn more, contact the Vocations Office at 206-329-9219 or email:

[vocations@ephx.org](mailto:vocations@ephx.org)

### O Physician of Souls and Bodies, we pray for:

Pope Francis, Barbara Alexander, Maria Amaro, Peter Andre, Fr. Christopher Andrews, Harry and Virginia Bowden, Kim Camplisson, Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, Julia Camberos, Dennis Cline, Amy Cohn, Vivian Corr, Maria Cruz, Joe Danscuk, Fr. Daniel Dozier, Gabriel Espedal, Ana Fandrey, Karen Foto, Christine Galgano, Janet Greenwell, Deborah Harris, Michael Havens, Martha Hill, Doris Huber, Rebecca Huber, Melissa Hunter, Taylor Kessler, Jamie Kohanyj, Juan Lopez, Pauli Martin, Mila Mina, Linda Moffit, Maryann Nagrant, Julia Ohnysty, Genevieve Paquette, Sylvia Pasnak, Fr. Lee Perry, Anthony Porrello, Nina Porrello, Peter Porrello, Margaret Raya, Maha Salazar, Gretchen Sharpe, Karen Simonich, Debbie Stark, Tava Tomc, Hong Truong, Pat Walsh, Maria Zhukova, Gianna, Nicole, Subdcn Eddie and his wife Viane.

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## THE GREATEST CONQUEROR IS CONQUERED

September 14th is the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.

There are two events in history to which this feast takes us, as Eugen J. Pentiu writes in his book "The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition" (Oxford University Press 2014). The first took place in the year 335, when the church built by Constantine over the traditional site of Christ's tomb was consecrated in Jerusalem. It was named the Church of the Resurrection; it is now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The second event occurred in 629, fifteen years after the Persians had sacked and looted the church, taking as part of their spoils a relic of the True Cross. In 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius was able to recover the relic, and to bring it to Constantinople. There he carried it into the great church of Hagia Sophia, and elevated it as a sign of victory.

Father Pentiu notes that one of the readings for the Great Vespers of the feast is Exodus 15: 22-16: 1. This is the account of Moses leading the people of Israel on from the Red Sea, after the exodus from Egypt, into the wilderness of Shur. They come, thirsty and tired, to the waters of Marah, only to find that the water is too bitter to drink. As so often, the people complain and "murmur against" poor Moses.

He, in turn, cries out to God. The Lord shows him a tree, which he flings into the water. At once the water becomes sweet enough to drink. Soon the people come to Elim where they encamp under seventy palm trees, surrounded by twelve springs and buoyed by God's promise that if they will keep His statutes, He will spare them the diseases He has used to chastise the arrogant, heedless Egyptians.

Reading this passage reminds us that the Old Testament often prepares us for what happened to Jesus Christ. The tree at Marah is like the wood of the Cross, which sweetens everything bitter because it gives us eternal life. The crucified Christ rises from the dead, "upon those in the tomb bestowing life."

One of the stikhera for the festal Great Vespers speaks about another tree: "Come, all you nations, let us worship the blessed Tree through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he who by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam is himself ensnared by the Cross." Here the blessed Tree is the cross, but the tree with which Satan beguiled Adam is the tree in the Garden.

Saint John Chrysostom also makes reference to Satan, as the one who conquered Adam by tempting him to eat of the forbidden tree in Paradise. But the conqueror is conquered by the Resurrection, which robs Satan of his fatal power over humankind.

The tree in the Garden, the tree at Marah, and in fact the whole Old Testament, lead us to the Tree by which Jesus Christ will conquer death once and for all.

### **Kontakion - Tone 4**

*Christ our God, who were willingly raised up on the cross, grant your mercies to the new people who bear your name. By your power grant joy to the Church. Give her victory over evil with your invincible trophy, the weapon of peace, as an ally.*

## NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

In addition to the celebration of the Annunciation, there are three major feasts in the Church honoring Mary, the Theotokos. The first of these is the feast of her nativity which is kept on the eighth of September.

The record of the birth of Mary is not found in the Bible. The traditional account of the event is taken from the apocryphal writings which are not part of the New Testament scriptures. The traditional teaching which is celebrated in the hymns and verses of the festal liturgy is that Joachim and Anna were a pious Jewish couple who were among the small and faithful remnant—"the poor and the needy"—who were awaiting the promised messiah. The couple was old and childless. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child, since among the Jews barrenness was a sign of God's disfavor. In answer to their prayers, and as the reward of their unwavering fidelity to God, the elderly couple was blessed with the child who was destined, because of her own personal goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah-Christ.

Your nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe.

The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos. By annulling the curse he bestowed a blessing. By destroying death he has granted us eternal life (Troparion).

*By your nativity, O most pure virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life (Kontakion).*

The fact that there is no Biblical verification of the facts of Mary's birth is incidental to the meaning of the feast. Even if the actual background of the event as celebrated in the Church is questionable from an historical point of view, the divine meaning of it "for us men and for our salvation" is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born into the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, therefore, is a glorification of Mary's birth, of Mary

herself and of her righteous parents. It is a celebration as well of the very first preparation of the salvation of the world. For the “Vessel of Light,” the “Book of the Word of Life,” the “Door to the Orient,” the “Throne of Wisdom” is being prepared on earth by God Himself in the birth of the holy girl-child Mary.

The verses of the feast are filled with titles for Mary such as those in the quotations above. They are inspired by the message of the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. The specific Biblical readings of the feast give indications of this.

At Vespers the three Old Testamental readings are “mariological” in their New Testamental interpretation. Thus, Jacob’s Ladder which unites heaven and earth and the place which is named “the house of God” and the “gate of heaven” (Gen 28.10–17) are taken, to indicate the union of God with men which is realized most fully and perfectly—both spiritually and physically—in Mary the Theotokos, Bearer of God. So also the vision of the temple with the “door ‘to the East’” perpetually closed and filled with the “glory of the Lord” symbolizes Mary, called in the hymns of the feast “the living temple of God filled with the divine Glory” (Ezek 43.27–44.4). Mary is also identified with the “house” which the

Divine Wisdom has built for himself according to the reading from Proverbs 9.1–11.

The Gospel reading of Matins is the one read at all feasts of the Theotokos, the famous Magnificat from Saint Luke in which Mary says: “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Lk 1.47).

The epistle reading of the Divine Liturgy is the famous passage about the coming of the Son of God in “the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man” (Phil 2.5–11) and the gospel reading is that which is always read for feasts of the Theotokos—the woman in the crowd glorifies the Mother of Jesus, and the Lord himself responds that the same blessedness which his mother receives is for all “who hear the word of God and keep it” (Lk 11.27–28).

Thus, on the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, as on all liturgical celebrations of Christ’s Mother, we proclaim and celebrate that through God’s graciousness to mankind every Christian receives what the Theotokos receives, the “great mercy” which is given to human persons because of Christ’s birth from the Virgin.

## On reading Holy Scripture

### **St. John Chrysostom:**

I exhort you, and I will not cease to exhort you to pay heed not only to what is said here, but when you are home also you should occupy yourselves attentively with the reading of Holy Scripture. Let no one say to me such cold words-worthy of judgment---as these: 'I am occupied with a trial, I have obligations in the city, I have a wife, I have to feed my children, and it is not my duty to read the Scripture but the duty of those who have renounced everything.' What are you saying?! It is not your duty to read Scripture because you are distracted by innumerable cares? On the contrary, it is your duty more than those others, more than the monks; they do not have such need of help as do you who live in the midst of such cares. You need treatment all the more, because you are constantly under such blows and are wounded so often. The reading of Scripture is a great defense against sin. Ignorance of the Scripture is a great misfortune, a great abyss. Not to know anything from the word of God is a disaster. This is what has given rise to heresies, to immorality; it has turned everything upside down.

### **Martyrius, The Book of Perfection:**

Truly great and mighty is the power of God's word. For the word of God has changed "the offspring of vipers" into children of God. So let us constantly sow it within the hard soil of our heart, waiting for it to soften it so that the wheat-ear of life may sprout up in it. For the word of God is at the same time the seed and the water; and even though we have a heart like stone, it will be softened and split up by the water of the Spirit, so that it can bring forth holy fruit that is pleasing to God.

## **How to Read the Bible Ten Principles of Scriptural Exegesis**

adapted from Bishop MICHAEL (Dahulich)

1. Christ - God is real and is incarnate in Jesus Christ; He is the Key to the Scriptures.
2. Life - One's ability to interpret depends upon one's spiritual state; one must live it in order to fully understand it.
3. A Love Letter - We read scripture to fall deeper in love with God and put on the Scriptural Mind.
4. *Theosis* - We read Scripture to become by grace what God is by nature.
5. Tradition - Only within the Church and her Tradition (the consensus of the Fathers) is there full and correct interpretation.
6. Scripture is a witness to the truth, the pinnacle of Holy Tradition; it is not an exhaustive manual of church life.
7. We must interpret the Bible as the Church has handed it, not try to reconstruct the canon of Scripture.
8. Personal - Ask yourself not only: what does the text mean, but what does it mean for me?
9. Humility - As many Church Fathers, consider your understanding of difficult texts as provisional.
10. Use secondary knowledge (history, literary criticism, archeology) to illuminate our understanding, not redefine dogma.



## PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND

If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James is more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

“There are several ways to avoid loving God: Deny that you are a sinner. Pretend that religion is for the ignorant and the superstitious, but not for the learned such as yourself. Insist that the sole purpose of religion is social service. Judge religion by whether or not it is accepted by the important people of the world. Avoid all contemplation, self-examination, and inquiry into the moral state of your soul.”

- Venerable Fulton J. Sheen  
(God Love You)

*“But I wonder whether people who ask God to interfere openly and directly in our world quite realise what it will be like when He does. When that happens, it is the end of the world. When the author walks on to the stage the play is over. God is going to invade, all right: but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else—something it never entered your head to conceive—comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. There is no use saying you choose to lie down when it has become impossible to stand up. That will not be the time for choosing: it will be the time when we discover which side we really have chosen, whether we realised it before or not. Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last for ever. We must take it or leave it.”*

— C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)

## Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church

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Fr. Deacon Jonathan A. Deane

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**Facebook:** [Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church](https://www.facebook.com/HolyAngelsByzantineCatholicChurch)

### Parish Advisory Council:

Bruce Bitsko, Nelson Chase, Fr. Deacon Jonathan Deane, Joel Espedal, Janet Greenwell, Daniele Laman, Olena Bankston

### Finance Council:

Al Aparicio, Fr. Deacon Jonathan Deane, Bob Greenwell, Paul Washicko

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### **Bless, O Lord, the worship and Stewardship of your faithful servants:**

Adult tithes: \$1017.00; Loose Change: \$61.25; Non-Parishioner: \$55.00; Church Usage: \$400.00;

Renovation Fund: \$725.00; **Total: \$2258.25**

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**Vocation Icon:** This week: Washicko Family

Next week: Chase Family

**Please sign up in the narthex to host the vocation icon.**

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PHOENIX

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*For additional information regarding the eparchial Safe Environment Program or to report any incidents of concerns, please contact:*

*Fr. Dcn. Michael Hanafin*

*Victim Assistance Coordinator*

*Cell: (480) 307-5182 -- email: [vac@ephx.org](mailto:vac@ephx.org)*

*- or -*

*Sbdcn. Paul F. Kilroy*

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