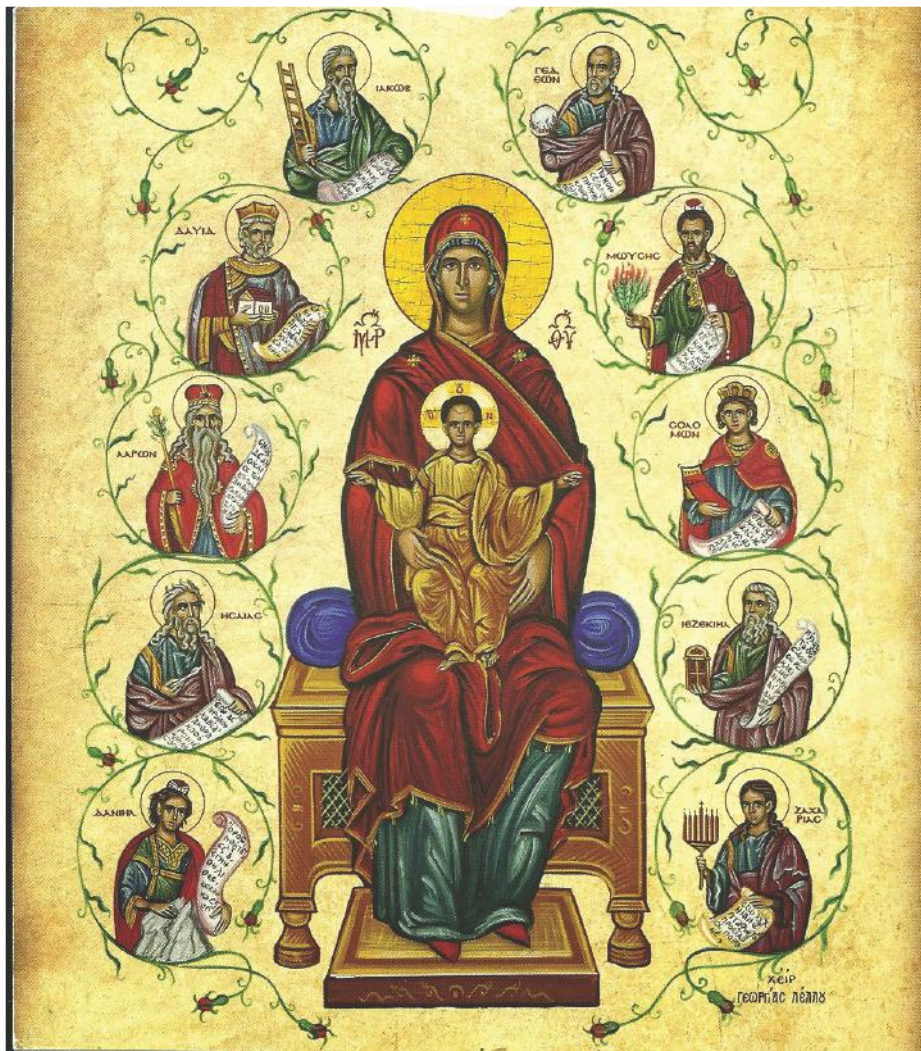


HOLY ANGELS BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



The Holy Ancestors of Christ

December 22, 2024

Sunday before the Nativity – of the Ancestors;
The Holy Great Martyr Anastasia

December 22, 2024

Schedule of services for the week of December 23 – December 29

Tuesday, December 24 - *Paramony (Vigil) of the Nativity; The Holy Venerable Martyr Eugenia*

9:00 AM – Royal Hours

4:30 PM – Christmas Carols

5:00 PM – Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil followed by “God is with us” Great Complines

Wednesday, December 25 – *The Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ*

7:30 AM – Festal Matins

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy For all parishioners

Thursday, December 26 – *Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos;*

The Holy Hieromartyr Euthymius, bishop of Sardis

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

Friday, December 27 – *The Holy Apostle, Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen;*

Our Venerable Father and Confessor Theodore the Branded, brother of St.

Theophanes the Hymnographer

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 28 – *Saturday before the Nativity; The Holy Twenty Thousand Martyrs Burned in Nicomedia*

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy & Pahahida; +Charles Porrello, req: Anthony Porrello

4:00 PM – Confessions

5:00 PM – Great Vespers

Sunday, December 29 – *Sunday after the Nativity – David, Joseph, and James; The Holy Fourteen Thousand Infants Slain for Christ’s Sake in Bethlehem of Judea by Herod; Our Venerable Father Marcellus, hegumen of the Monastery of the Sleepless Ones*

8:40 AM – 3rd Hour

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy For all parishioners

Save the Date!

With Kyr Artur’s blessing, the 2025 Alive in Christ Camp will be held July 10-13 at Palomar Christian Conference Center in San Diego County, California.

This ascetical boot camp is for boys aged 7-17 and for dads/guardians, with an emphasis on vocational discernment and growth in the life in Christ.

More details to come.

Please check out the Sunday Social Donor sheet in the hall. We are seeing a possibility of only coffee/juice at some socials without donors. We still need weekly Hosts. Please see Janet.

O Physician of Souls and Bodies, we pray for:

Pope Francis, Barbara Alexander, Maria Amaro, Fr. Deacon Craig Anderson, Janice Andre, Peter Andre, Fr. Christopher Andrews, Harry and Virginia Bowden, Kim Camplisson, Patrick Carmack, Noah Chase, 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, Jacob, 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, Fr. Robert Rankin, Margaret Raya, Michael Raya Jr. Maha Salazar, Gretchen Sharpe, Karen Simonich, Debbie Stark, Tava Tomc, Hong Truong, Pat Walsh, Maria Zhukova, Gianna, Nicole, Subdcn Eddie and his wife Viane.

Dear Beloved Parishioners and Friends of Our Parish,

Each Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of the Son of God in the flesh, we exchange gifts with one another as a token of our love and brotherly affection. This is an age old practice recalling the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, offered to the Christ Child by the wise men who had traveled from afar to Bethlehem in order to pay homage to the newly born King and Savior of the world.

As we know, not long after the wise men presented their gifts, St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, wrote in his Epistle to the early Christians that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17) As descendants of these first Christians, and joint heirs with them of God’s rich bounties, we not only share these same sentiments of St. James but we also recite these exact same words at every Divine Liturgy. Likewise, we also acknowledge with him that of all the good and perfect gifts of the Lord there was none so great or so perfect as that of the Only-Begotten Son – the One who was given by the Father because He so loved the world, and the One who gave Himself up on the Cross so that we might share in His divine life and kingdom.

And so, as we rejoice in the gift of divine life offered to us by Jesus Christ through His Incarnation, let us also resolve to offer back to God a gift of like kind and value. As He has given His life to us and for us, let us also commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Him. There is no greater gift that we can offer to God for the One great and perfect gift He has given to us – His Only-Begotten Son.

Finally, I extend to you my heartfelt prayers and best wishes for the festive season and New Year. May the Lord bless you, your families, and friends with peace, good will, and love!



With prayerful best wishes,

And with love in Christ,

Fr. James

Fast Free Period

The celebration of Christmas begins on Christmas and concludes on February 9, with the leave taking of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. At the center of this longer celebration is not a mere one day observance, but a twelve day celebration of the fact that God has become man for us men and our salvation. During these twelve days of Christmas we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Fridays. A one day fast is observed on January 5th, the Eve of Theophany.

“They shall call his name Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” The presence of God is seen through the salvation foretold in the Old Covenant, and is revealed through the Birth of Our Lord Jesus, Emmanuel. Our own lives can manifest the presence of God when we live according to our vocations. Are you being called to show God’s presence as a priest, deacon, subdeacon monk or nun? Contact the Vocations Office at 206-329-9219 or email:

vocations@ephx.org

Carpatho-Rusyn Christmas *Svajtyj Večur (Holy Supper)*

The Christmas celebration for Carpatho-Rusyns, an East Slavic people hailing from the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe, is steeped in ancient tradition. The customs are a mystical blend of old pagan Slavic customs honoring ancestors and family with the revelations of Eastern Christianity.

The celebration's main time is actually Christmas Eve, when the Holy Supper (*Svajtyj Večur, Velija*) is served. Many customs are associated with this solemn meal, and these customs can vary from village to village and county to county.

In many Carpatho-Rusyn villages, the head of the household takes some of the food first and feeds it to the animals, since the animals in the stables were the first to witness the coming of the Savior when He was born in a manger. This gesture is to help assure a prosperous year for all of the family's animals. Peas are thrown out to the chickens to assure their fertility (and that of the household's) for the coming year.

In the middle of the table rests three key items – the icon of the Nativity of Christ. The *Kracun* or Christmas bread, and a triple candle stand. The icon proclaims the mystery of the Nativity; the bread – that the coming Christ is the bread of life; and the candles – that through Christ's coming the Trinity was revealed to us. The *kracun* is then broken, passed around the table and shared together. Then garlic cloves and honey are shared by all. This must happen so that the family will stay together for the coming year. In some Rusyn villages, the legs of the table are bound by chains to "Keep the family together."

Christmas Eve for Rusyns is a strict fast day. Therefore, all foods served must be free of meat and dairy products. Twelve dishes are served and these too vary from village to village. However, some of the more common include mushroom, pea or bean and sauerkraut soup, *pirohy* (dough stuffed with potatoes, kraut or prunes) *bolbalky* (bread balls with kraut or honey and poppy seeds), *holubky* (cabbage stuffed with rice or barley and mushrooms), fish, and prunes.

The décor is also meant to remind the Carpatho-Rusyn peasant of the mysteries of God becoming man and dwelling with us. The table is covered with a

decorated white cloth, symbolizing that Christ came without sin; hay is scattered on the table and floor, reminding Rusyns that He came in humility, born in a stable; and an extra place is set at the table for Christ, symbolizing the Eastern Christian belief that Christ comes each year—ever present in the Eastern Christian home. Originally, however, this place was set in pagan times for the ancestors to join the family.



After the meal, the family goes to church for Christmas Eve Matins, leaving the food on the table and sometimes the windowsill "for the ancestors." Children awake the next morning and see the food and drink gone, consumed by "their ancestors."

Each Carpatho-Rusyn home is also visited by the *Jaslickari*, or Bethlehem carolers, a custom that can be traced to the blending of pre-Christian caroling customs and the medieval passion plays. The *Jaslickari* are young men from the village dressed as shepherds and angels, who witnessed the miraculous birth of Christ. They come into each home to enact a play with song, about their visit to the manger and their coming to grips with the mystery of Christ's birth and their own human failings. The *Jaslickari* are a genuine folk expression and were a vital piece of the peasant's education in his or her faith.

The *Jaslickari* enter the home carrying a replica of the parish church or a stable. Some are in the role of angels, wearing white robes and tall, stovepipe hats. Others are the shepherds. Among the shepherds is a particularly colorful character, *Guba*, who dressed in sheep's wool and sporting a beard and mask, represents mankind's human tendency towards evil, chasing and frightening many a Carpatho-Rusyn child in the home.

Christmas Day is spent feasting while groups of carolers go from home to home proclaiming the Good News. And Carpatho-Rusyns greet one another with the exchange:

Christ is Born! *Hristos Razdajtsa!*
Glorify Him! *Slavite Jeho!*

© John J. Righetti, 2001

A Peanuts Christmas

In 1965, Charles Schulz, a devout Christian and creator of the Peanuts comic strip, was asked to create a Christmas special for CBS featuring the Peanuts Characters. He agreed with one requirement, that they allow him to include the story of the birth of Jesus. Although the stations executives were hesitant and tried to convince him otherwise, Schulz was insistent. As a result, for the past 50 plus years, millions of people have watched and “A Charlie Brown Christmas” and heard the story of Jesus and “what Christmas is all about.”

It wasn't until a few years back that I realized a “hidden message” in the film. Linus, a child who seems to have some insecurities as he carries a security blanket with him at all times. In fact, Linus NEVER drops his blanket, except once....

While sharing the message of “what Christmas is all about,” Linus drops his blanket at the exact moment he says the words, “fear not!”

In this seemingly innocent moment, Linus delivers a powerful reminder of the true meaning of Christmas. We are to “fear not”, for Jesus is born. We needn't rely on material things for

security, we have God with us, “Immanuel”, (Matthew 1:23) Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior - the true meaning of Christmas.

Awhile back, someone informed me, indignantly so, that Linus picks up his blanket at the end of the speech so my interpretation must be wrong. Well, he was right, Linus does pick up his blanket at the end of his speech. However, he “drops” it again later...

Amid big, bright, colorful, shiny artificial trees, Charlie Brown chose

the least of these, a little, wooden tree with just a few branches. Shortly thereafter, Linus uses his blanket to wrap about the base of the tree and says, “Maybe it just needs a little love”. In that moment, the tree “awakens”, stands tall and firm. A reminder that no matter who we are, how many mistakes we've made, a “little love” can make all the difference.

Let's strive to “fear not” (Luke 2:10) and “love one another” (John 13:34), not just at Christmastime, but the whole year through.”

Borrowed from Charlene M. Speer & ‘Christian Life Ministry’ on Facebook...



St. John Chrysostom's Christmas Homily

BEHOLD a new and wondrous mystery. My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech.

For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon

the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit, that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been ;in planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infant's food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and for ever.

Amen.

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Employment Opportunity: Director, Mary Undoer of Knots Byzantine Catholic Shrine, Mt. Lemmon AZ Do you want to be at the service of Mary the Theotokos? We are looking for a mature Catholic with passion for evangelization and a desire to share God's love as the Director or Mary Undoer of Knots Byzantine Catholic Shrine located atop the forested mountains of the Coronado National Forest overlooking Tucson, Arizona. The Director of the Byzantine Catholic Shrine is responsible for the overall management, strategic direction, and operational success of the Shrine. This includes collaborating with the Shrine's Board, the Eparchy of Phoenix, staff, volunteers, and the broader community to uphold the Shrine's mission, promote its spiritual and cultural significance, and ensure its long-term sustainability. If this sounds like you, then answer the call and apply today! Full details can be found on the website of the Eparchy of Phoenix. In your browser, simply type: Eparchy of Phoenix. Then choose to view the website and you'll see the announcement under *Eparchial Announcements*. Choose the 'Apply Today' blue link which will take you to the job description

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Parish Advisory Council:

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

Finance Council:

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

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

Adult tithes: \$2812.00; Loose Change: \$236.35; Renovation Fund: \$50.00; Non-Parishioner: \$460.00;
Church Usage: \$200.00; **Total: \$3758.35**

Vocation Icon: This week: Bankston Family
Next week: Washicko Family

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

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PHOENIX

SUBSCRIBES TO THE
*Charter for the Protection of
Children and Young People*

adopted by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.

The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and vulnerable adults that conforms to the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People.

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

*Fr. Dcn. Michael Hanafin
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- or -

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