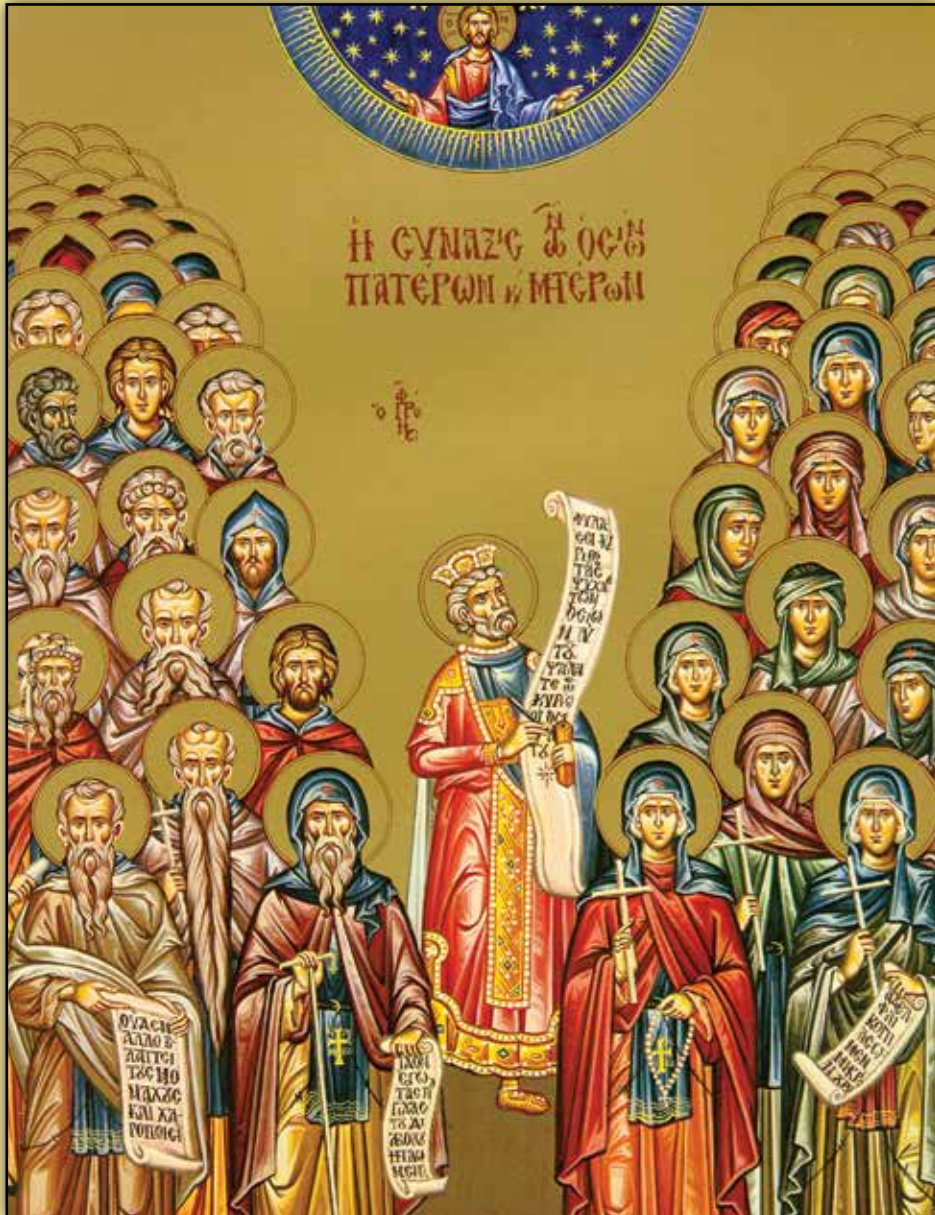


SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS



*Icon of the Holy Ancestors*

## December 24, 2023: Sunday Before Christmas

Epistle: Heb. 11: 9-10 & 32-40

Gospel: Mt. 1: 1-25

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|------------------------|---|
| <b>This Weekend</b>    | 4:00 + Roman Kushner (Margaret Lennon)<br>10:30 For Our Parishioners<br>10:00 pm For Christmas: For Vocations |
| <b>Mon., Dec. 25</b>   | <b>Christmas: Birth of Our Lord</b><br>10:30 For Our Parishioners   |
| <b>Tues., Dec. 26</b>  | <b>Synaxis of the Mother of God (Solemn Holy Day)</b><br>9:00 + Dorothy Chezik (Chezik Family)                |
| <b>Wed., Dec. 27</b>   | <b>Protomartyr Stephen (Simple Holy Day)</b><br>9:00 + Msgr. Stephen Hrynuck (Legate)                         |
| <b>Thurs., Dec. 28</b> | 9:00 + Fr. John Wysochansky (Howard Smith)  |
| <b>Fri., Dec. 29</b>   | 9:00 + Roman Kushner (Dolly Daniels)  |
| <b>Sat., Dec. 30</b>   | <b>No Morning Divine Liturgy</b><br>2:00 <b>Confessions</b><br>4:00 pm For Our Parishioners                   |
| <b>Sun., Dec. 31</b>   | 10:30 + Michal Bojko (Michael & Theresa Vacendak)   |



## CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM! ХРИСТОС РОЖДАЄТЬСЯ! СЛАВІМО Його!

Another Christmas is here. Let us reflect on the true meaning of this celebration. We will receive gifts, many will receive more than others. But we will receive one gift equally. That is the gift of the Incarnate God. Let us acknowledge this unique gift by participating in as many of

the special Christmas Services as possible and remembering the real reason for the season, and to pray for Peace on Earth!

May the Incarnate Christ, be with each and everyone of you during this holiday season and throughout the year 2024. My prayers for your

continued health and happiness.

Christ is Born! -- Glorify Him!  
Христос Рождается! Славимо  
Його!

*Father Nestor*

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## **CHRISTMAS PASTORAL OF THE HIERARCHS OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

“There is no fear in love, but perfect  
love drives out fear”.  
(1 John 4:18)

**Dear brother and sisters in Christ!**

On this blessed, glorious day, we embrace you with words of hope, peace, and solidarity.

**Christ is born!  
Glorify Him!**

In the joy of the Nativity, let us raise our prayers to the Prince of Peace, beseeching Him to bestow His peace, one that heals, restores, and makes whole.

Peace, healing, and renewal is

what we all need: Ukraine, torn by the devastating war, which brings untold pain and suffering; our schools and cities agonized by mass shootings and violence; refugees stuck on our borders who try to flee from destitution and menace; our families and communities enduring internal discords and external pressure; our hearts tormented by doubts, fears, uncertainties, and anxieties.

The Lord comes to all of us and says: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.”  
(John 14:27)

In the midst of severe trials and personal challenges, we assure you

that God is with you, and God's truth will prevail. Cherish your spiritual resilience, examine the depth of your heart. It is our God-given dignity, our true identity, that Jesus comes to restore.

When we understand who we truly are and live our identity and vocation, the enemy – both internal and external – has no power over us. Everything falls into place. We receive inspiration to persevere and we become authentic instruments of the God's truth. "Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Today's feast tells us precisely who we are. We are the ones to whom the Lord comes. We are the ones for whom the Almighty becomes a defenseless Child. We are the magi who try to comprehend God's Providence. We are the shepherds who are on the margins of society yet the first to hear the Good News of salvation.

We know clearly who the bloodthirsty Herod is. Together with Rachel, we mourn the death

of our children, of our warriors, our destroyed houses, Churches, cities, and villages. We journey with the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph who are forced to flee their home. Follow their example and learn how to accept the Son of God into our hearts and lives and walk together in the full trust in God's Providence.

We are the ones who hear the voice "This is my beloved Son" and are reassured in our belovedness. This is the cornerstone of our identity. We are with Christ.

Let us be mindful of our heart as it needs protection against evil, hatred, and despair. "Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7)

In the Nativity, let us gaze into the eyes of the loving God, who comes into our turbulent world. God is where it hurts, God is near, God is with us.

Let this joyful news resonate in our hearts and homes! We wish you a blessed Christmas and happy New Year!

**Christ is born!  
Glorify Him!**

+ **Borys Gudziak** (Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia)

+ **Paul Chomnycky** (Bishop of the Eparchy of Stamford)

+ **Benedict Aleksiychuk** (Bishop of Saint Nicholas Eparchy of Chicago)

+ **Bohdan Danylo** (Bishop of Saint Josaphat Eparchy of Parma)

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## COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS!

We all know family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or school friends, who are Catholic and no longer attend the Divine Liturgy. Christmas is a great time to invite them to come home to the Church. Think about it, pray about it, and invite someone to come to Church with you during the Christmas Season. There is always a chance that you will be rejected or your invitation



will fall on deaf ears. Just remember that Jesus experienced the same kind of rejection and He did not give up. So if your invitation receives no response or a negative one, just wait a few weeks and ask again. In the meantime, pray for that person, but don't give up on them no matter how long it takes. It is hard to persevere and it is hard to be rejected, but just be patient and kind and trust in



the Lord.

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## **PROPERLY RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION**

When approaching to receive Holy Communion, do not be afraid to approach the Priest. Father's arms are only so long and when you stand too far away, it is difficult to distribute Holy Communion.

We also remind everyone to tilt your head back and open your mouth WIDE. Please keep your tongue in your mouth. Please do not bite down on the communion spoon. There is no need to say anything since the priest says the prayer. There is no need to say AMEN as is done in the

Roman Catholic Church.

For those faithful who are a little unsteady on your feet, please feel free to use the first pew in front of the icon of the Mother of God. We don't want anybody to get hurt. Father will come up and give you Communion.

Now finally, a little about the red Communion Cloth. Simply lift it up to your chin. The purpose of the Communion Cloth is to help prevent accidents.

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## **SINGING IN CHURCH**

There are many who would say "I don't have a good voice" or "I'm not a singer." To them I would say -- We are God's greatest creation -- and within each of us is the voice God gave us. It is the only musical instrument created by God for all

others are the invention of man. Who are we to judge, to decide that the voice inside each of us is good or bad? Remember, God also created the birds -- and each, including the crow, SINGS!

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## **ANDREW'S PENCE**

The Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) has decided to hold a

collection, called Andrew's Pence, to support faithful of UGCC abroad where there is no permanent

ecclesiastical structure.

More than 100 years ago Ukrainians started to leave their native land in search of a better life, material welfare, and freedom. Many settled on another continent, where church buildings of the UGCC are not everywhere, so that the faithful could not attend services in their native Church. Wishing to provide all faithful of the UGCC

with spiritual care, the bishops call upon all to support the faithful of the UGCC abroad in prayer and financially, collecting the so-called Andrew's Pence.

According to the Protocol of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, the "Andrew's Pence" collection is to be taken in all parishes each year in the month of December.

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## **2023 PARISH DUES**

With the end of 2023 quickly approaching, we offer this gentle reminder to make sure that your 2023 Parish Dues are paid. Also, we

remind our Parish Family Members that Parish Dues are now \$50.00 per adult per year.

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## **2024 CHURCH CALENDARS**

The 2024 Church Calendars are available in back of the Church. The

Calendars are free, but any donations will be appreciated.

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## **COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...**

We ask ALL of our Collection Processing Teams to gather on Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> following the 9:00 Divine Liturgy to

process the Sunday and Christmas Collections. We thank all of you for all your efforts throughout this year.

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**Sunday Collection for December 16 & 17, 2023: \$**

## Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church



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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

### *The Story of the Origin of Jesus Christ, Son of David, and the Rest of the Names*

Matthew's genealogy is extraordinarily comprehensive in his theology of the roots of Jesus' story in the Old Testament. But that is only one part of the story of Jesus Christ. The story has a sequence as well; and the continuing sequence is what makes the genealogy "good news" for Matthew's audience and for us. Human being have been empowered to preserve, proclaim, and convey the salvation brought by Jesus Christ throughout history. The God who wrote the beginnings with crooked lines also writes the sequence with crooked lines, and some of those lines are our own lives and witness.

A God who did not hesitate to use the scheming as well as the noble, the impure as well as the pure, men to whom the world hearkened and women upon whom the world frowned – this God continues to work through the same melange. If it was a challenge to recognize in the last part of

Matthew's genealogy that totally unknown people were part of the story of Jesus Christ, it may be a greater challenge to recognize that the unknown characters of today are an essential part of the sequence. The proclamation of that genealogy in the Advent liturgy is designed to give us hope about our destiny and our importance.

By stressing the all-powerful grace of God, the genealogy presents its greatest challenge to those who will accept only an idealized Jesus Christ whose story they would write only with straight lines and whose portrait they would paint only in pastel colors. If we look at the whole story and the total picture, the Gospels teach us that Jesus' ministry was not thus; the history of the church teaches us that the sequence is not thus. God's grace can work even with people like us.

*Father Raymond E. Brown, S.S.*