

## COME BACK

We hope to see you next week.

Each Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ with our morning Matins service at 8:45am followed by the main Sunday service, Divine Liturgy at 10am. Sunday School for the Children follows Communion.

Fr. Elia would love to speak with you and answer any questions you may have.

Please fill out our Guest Form.

There's also a place where you can let us know any specific needs or concerns and we will lift them up in prayer.

We welcome everyone who would like to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith.

Please contact Fr. Elia either by E-Mail  
([elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com))  
or on his cell phone (305) 812-4940.



### ABOUT COMMUNION

We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the "unity of the Faith" for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.

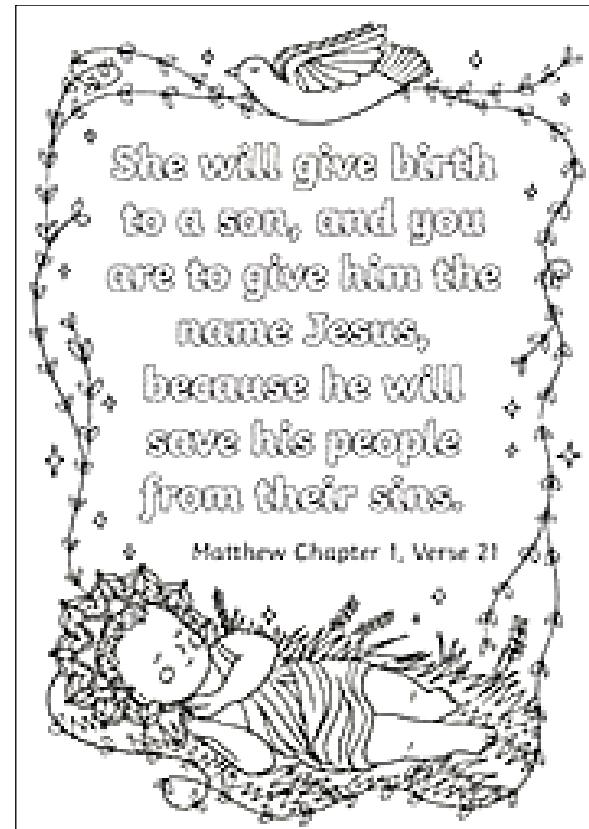
If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.



# Welcome to St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church

DECEMBER 21, 2025

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)



4031 Aurora Rd., Melbourne, Florida 32934

Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor & Dean of South Florida Deanery  
Phone: (305) 812-4940 , E-Mail: [elia\\_shalhoub@yahoo.com](mailto:elia_shalhoub@yahoo.com)

## WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community. We are glad you are worshipping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Eminence Metropolitan SABA

within Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table. We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally.

Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

Please support our sponsors



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## DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025 TONE 3 / EOTHINON 6; FOREFEAST OF & SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST (THE GENEALOGY)

VIRGIN-MARTYR JULIANA OF NICOMEDIA; MARTYR THEMISTOKLES OF MYRA IN LYCIA

~ During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..." After the Little Entrance, sing these hymns in the following order:

### RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

### APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

(\*\*Joseph was amazed\*\*)

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. \* Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life \* hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. \* Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, \* wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, \* and as we eat thereof we shall all live, \* and shall not die as did Adam. \* For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

### APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

Great are the accomplishments of faith; for the three holy youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though at waters of rest. And the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. Wherefore, by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

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# Hope

The Order of St. Ignatius Supports

IOCC International Orthodox Christian Charities  
Syrian Relief Fund  
Project Mexico  
Treehouse Ministries



Hope is the “real” gift you give that provides a needed “hand up” to the lives of those struggling to provide the basic necessities for their children and families.

## The 3 Tenets Of The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

### Act Of Faith Rooted In Love & Compassion

All the way back to our earliest years as a child we are taught to share with others, especially those less fortunate. When we share, we give up what we believe to be control in our lives. We put our faith in God that He will provide for our needs in abundance. Through your financial commitment, you are allowing God to work through you for the benefit of others. Your gift to the Order is an expression of love and compassion for countless lives and most importantly ... it is an act of Faith.

### A Sacrifice Immeasurable In Its Capacity

To sacrifice for one another is to love. Deciding to “do without” for the benefit of someone you don’t know is the beginning of a true sacrifice. Your sacrifice helps a struggling family send their children to camp enabling them to experience God’s world if only for a few days. It provides reassurance to a new parish, that it can meet its monthly financial obligations and continue its ministry. As a member of the Order you may consider your sacrifice to be small, but it is immeasurable in its capacity to change people’s lives.

### Infinite In Its Effect Making A Difference Together

Your annual gift, less than the cost of your daily cup of coffee, is merely a drop of water in a vast ocean of need. However, the ripple from your gift never ends. It expands to enrich the lives of our youth by strengthening their hearts and minds as future leaders of the Faith. It multiplies to help care for our retired clergy and our devoted seminarians. The ripple from your annual or lifetime gift touches the lives of so many that you would never have been able to reach alone.

### APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah in his condition, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. Becoming a dweller in the wilderness, and an establisher of the universe by thy prayer O Father Anthony. Wherefore intercede thou with Christ our God to save our souls.

### 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

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.  
For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.*

### The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

### THE GOSPEL

#### The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father

of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ were fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His Name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His Name Jesus.

## Upcoming Events

<b>This Week</b>		<b>December Birthdays and Anniversary</b>
<b>Sunday, 12/21</b>	<b>8:45 am:</b> Matins Service, <b>10:00 am:</b> Divine Liturgy <i>followed by coffee hour</i>	<b>14:</b> Subdeacon Zac <b>19:</b> JouJou Najjar
<b>Tuesday, 12/23</b>	<b>5:30 pm:</b> Pre -Nativity Vesperal Divine Liturgy	<b>21:</b> Fr. Stephen Adili Ethan Packey Heidi Carroll
<b>Wednesday 12/24:</b>	<b>10:00 am:</b> The Nativity Hours <b>5:30pm:</b> Nativity Matins & Divine Liturgy	<b>23:</b> Kathy Hopper Jeff Bellinger <b>25:</b> Jesus B-day <b>30:</b> Marco Lieberman
<b>Saturday, 12/27</b>	<b>4:00pm:</b> Catechism class <b>5:30pm</b> Vespers, <i>followed by confession</i>	<i>May God Grant You Many Years!</i> If we missed your birthday, please let Yuliya know <3
<b>Sunday, 12/28</b>	<b>8:45am:</b> Matins Service, <b>10:00am:</b> Divine Liturgy, <i>followed by coffee hour</i>	

\$98.22	Administrative Expense
\$294.64	Youth Programs & Camp Scholarships
\$15.04	Project Mexico
\$15.04	IOCC
\$21.32	Projects & Grants
\$7.52	SOYO Special Olympics
\$6.40	Clergy Symposium & Convention Support
\$15.49	Seminarian Assistance
\$116.54	Archdiocese Departments
\$18.80	Parish Development & Missions
\$97.75	Missions & Evangelism
\$15.03	Archdiocese House of Studies
\$75.19	Internet Ministry
\$203.02	Retired Clergy Fund



The Order of  
Saint Ignatius  
of Antioch

Let no man's place, or dignity, or riches, puff him up; and let no man's low condition or poverty abase him. For the chief points are faith towards God, hope towards Christ, the enjoyment of those good things for which we look, and love towards God and our neighbor.  
- Saint Ignatius of Antioch

## How Your Annual Gift Is Allocated

Based On A **\$1,000** Knight &/or Dame Commander Level Annual Gift

**61.41%**

## Of Annual Order Gifts

**29.46%**

Youth Programs & Camp Scholarships

**20.30%**

Retired Clergy Fund

**11.65%**

Missions & Evangelism & Parish Development

\*Only **9.82%** In Administrative Expense

\*\*Based On Fiscal Year 2024

Teach us, O Lord, to gaze upon Your manifest poverty, so that we may cast off our deadly desires and taste the joy of liberation from enslavement to them.

Grant, O Lord, our hearts a tranquility that makes them independent of the allurements of this world, so that they may find true peace.

We yearn for peace on this feast day. O Lord, guide our steps to Your true path, so that when we experience Your peace, we may, by Your grace, share it in deed, not just in word.

The shepherds bowed down to You, possessing nothing but their need for You. O Lord, help us to cast aside to whatever we cling when we come to You.

Grant us the courage, O Jesus, to accept that we cannot truly open our hearts to You unless we come to You with empty hands.



## An Invitation

"Christianity is not a matter of persuading people of particular ideas, but of inviting them to share in the greatness of Christ. So pray that I may never fall into the trap of impressing people with clever speech, but instead I may learn to speak with humility, desiring only to impress people with Christ himself."

- Saint Ignatius of Antioch

### The Ribbon & The Cross Is An Invitation To Become Part Of A Ministry

#### An Invitation Not Recognition

When you become part of the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, you become part of a ministry. The Order is not a club that you join. It is not a secular status symbol for recognition. The Cross and the Ribbon that Order supporters wear is an invitation to become part of a ministry. It serves as an invitation to share with one another in the greatness of Christ by giving in a manner that is unconditional and quiet. Supporting the Order's projects, Archdiocese Departments and numerous programs as one group, with Christ in our minds and hearts, should be how we **invite** the world to become part the Order's ministry.

#### Initiate the Questions of What? & How?

When those supporting the Order wear their ribbon and cross, it is meant to initiate others to inquire about the Order and how they can help strengthen its ministry. When people see the red ribbon and Cross that we wear, it helps begin the conversation to share what the Order does and provide the initial welcome to help expand its ministry. It provides an opportunity to ask, "What does the Order do and how can I help?"

#### The Order Provides A Lesson In Giving

When you give to the Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch, you are giving in a way we are all called to give ... unconditionally. Your gift is not individually recognized. You are not able to designate your gift to a specific need you select. You are giving without recognition, without conditions, without direct gratitude of the Order's recipients. This is the manner in which a "true gift" is made. A gift made in the way Christ directs us.

### The Order Teaches Us How To Give

... the Order is teaching us how to share, the Order is teaching us how to give, the Order is teaching us how to sacrifice, and how to reach out for Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike. This is the miracle of The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch."

- His Eminence Metropolitan Philip of thrice blessed memory, Founder of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch

## Announcements

### Epistle Readers



December 21st  
December 24th  
December 28th

Issac Vaughn St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:9-10, 32-40)  
Kh. Odette  
Subdeacon Adrian St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)

SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT ORTHODOX CHURCH 321-428-4819 -->

### Stewardship 2026

The 2026 Pledge Form is available as the Stewardship Committee is preparing for another fruitful year. Please fill one ASAP we need all the pledges in by the end of November, so we can plan our budget.

Thank you.



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### THANK YOU FOR TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR

PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE CALENDAR IN THE NARTHEX FOR A FUTURE DATE,  
TO PREPARE AND SERVE FOOD FOR OUR COFFEE HOUR.

**WE NEED SPONSORS FOR DECEMBER 28 AND JANUARY 4 PLEASE**

### Fasting Calendar

Abstain from meat ,dairy, eggs, fish 12/21.

Strict Fast 12/22-12/24

Fast Free 12/25—1/4

View calendar at <https://tinyurl.com/AOCfast2025>



They are here with beautiful iconography inside.

Special thanks to this year's sponsors: Skewers and Flames Mediterranean Grills, who helped to cover the cost. You can leave a \$5 Donation to Sunday School, when you get yours.

Give one to the friend or family so they know about our Church.



### 2026 Parish Calendars

If you are on Parish Council, serve in the altar (adults), Sunday School teacher/sub, or an officer of the organization, please complete the Silver Volunteer background and training. When done, hand the certificate to our Youth Protection Coordinator Adrian Matos. We appreciate all of our volunteers, so if you need any assistance in this, please contact Fr. Elia or Adrian Matos. This is to comply with the Archdiocese' new Youth Protection Policy.



Please pray for the healing of Georgia Davis, Laney Ricketts, Michealle Carey, Debbie Thieme, Adriana Theodoropoulos, Beverly Delida, Alix Hall, Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula, Susan Moran, Susan Perers, Ceara Jacobs, William Snell, Vasilika Yardines, Faouzi Najjar, Marie Williams, and His Grace Bishop Nicholas



December is dedicated to The Order of St. Ignatius

**ADVENT: PREPARING FOR HIS COMING AGAIN**  
**The Incarnation and the Fruits of Repentance**

**What, then, is the divine commandment now laid upon us? It is repentance, the essence of which is never again to touch forbidden things. We were expelled from the land of divine delight, we were justly shut out from God's paradise, and we have fallen into this pit where we are condemned to dwell together with dumb creatures without hope of returning - in so far as it depends on us - to the paradise we have lost. But**

**He who initially passed a just sentence of punishment or, rather, justly permitted punishment to come upon us, has now in His great goodness, compassion and mercy descended for our sake to us. And He became a human being like us in all things except sin so that by His likeness to us He might teach us anew and rescue us; and He gave us the saving counsel and commandment of repentance, saying: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near' (Matt. 3:2). Prior to the incarnation of the Logos of God the kingdom of heaven was as far from us as the sky is from the earth; but when the King of heaven came to dwell amongst us and chose to unite Himself with us, the kingdom of heaven drew near to us all.**

Since the Logos of God through His descent to us has brought the kingdom of heaven close to us, let us not distance ourselves from it by leading an unrepentant life. Let us rather flee the wretchedness of those who sit 'in darkness and the shadow of death' (Isa.9:2). Let us acquire the fruits of repentance: a humble disposition, compunction and spiritual grief, a gentle and merciful heart that loves righteousness and pursues purity, peaceful, peace-making, patient in toil, glad to endure persecution, loss, outrage, slander and suffering for the sake of truth and righteousness. For the kingdom of heaven or, rather, the King of heaven - ineffable in His generosity - is within us (cf. Luke 17:21); and to Him we should cleave through acts of repentance and patient endurance, loving as much as we can Him who so dearly has loved us.

**St Gregory Palamas, Philokalia, Topics of Natural and Theological Science and on the Moral and Ascetic Life.**

**In Christ,**  
**Fr. Elia Shalhoub**  
**Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor**

+++  
Silence was not only at Your birth, but You willed it to be Your constant companion throughout the years You spent among us. Did You not conceal your Messianic mystery, choosing to reveal it only on the Cross?

And in performing miracles, did you not ask those whom You healed not to spread the news of their healing, but to simply thank God?  
You asked no thanks from anyone.

You sought neither praise nor glorification. Even Your glorious Resurrection, O Lord, was accomplished in silence. It was not accompanied by clamor or noise. There was an earthquake, yet no one felt it. We learned of Your Rising from the women who brought spices, who found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

And Mary Magdalene did not recognize you until you called her by name, for she mistook You for the gardener!

Silence, my Lord, is a language understood only by those freed from the noise of their passions. It is the language of the age to come, as your saint, Isaac the Syrian, said.

+++  
You deign to lower Yourself, though You are the Most High Lord. You become humble, though You are the Almighty God. You take on flesh and blood, though You are the Holy of Holies!

You become poor so that we may become rich. You empty Yourself so that we may be filled. You die so that we may live. You distribute Yourself to us so that we may be nourished.

And because You alone are the Compassionate One, You saved us without fanfare. Yes, O Christ, for compassion is born of a full heart, and the full heart needs no adornment.

If we were truly captivated by You, we would no longer seek life from anyone else, our very beings would be filled with Your presence, and we would never again drink water that does not quench our thirst.

If we were to prostrate ourselves at Your feet this feast day to behold Your unique beauty, then the "good portion" would be ours.

+++  
You saw us floundering in pain and misery, so You pitched Your tent in our neighborhood, and it remains there, to open for us the door to true life.

You came to us in absolute simplicity to tell us, through action and not just words, that You are all we need.

You taught us, from your humble manger, that we cannot find You unless our souls are emptied of all worldly glory. How can we know Your worth unless we experience that "money is ashamed to be gathered in the presence of your poverty?"

Strengthen us so that we do not run from confronting ourselves, but rather that we may present ourselves to You as we are, so that Your silence may purify us, and we may join Your angels in praise.

Strengthen us so that we do not flee to what makes us forget our reality, but rather face it armed with Your gentle strength, so that we may find the security we lack and yearn for at the same time.

Be with us, O Almighty and Compassionate Jesus, so that we may not throw ourselves into the noise of the flesh, or money, or pride, or any of the deceptive noises of this world.

+++  
You neither argued nor disputed nor engaged in debates to prove that You are the truth. You simply said, "I am the truth, I am the way, I am the life." And those who believed You discovered the truth of what You said. As for us, Your followers, it is ours to take refuge in the shadow of Your humility, confident in Your power at work within us.

+++  
Teach us, O Lord, on this day of Your birth, to kneel and be silent, so that we may be filled with You.

## Church Attendance

by Abbot Tryphon

What happens in the temple cannot be duplicated in the home. Over the years many people have chosen not to join a church, choosing, rather, to "worship" at home. Some have convinced themselves church is a waste of time, and feel they can be close to God while staying home on a Sunday morning. Others believe none of the churches teach the bible according to their own interpretation, and choosing to worship in the privacy of their own home. Some people have chosen to stay away from church because of past conflict with a clergyman, or perhaps got tired of hearing pleas for money, and have convinced themselves that giving to a charity is money better spent (in reality, church goers tend to out-spend non-church goers in charitable giving). Some are even allowing fear of the pandemic to keep them from receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, as though doing so would expose them to the Covid-19 virus. Ignoring the fact that communion brings about healing of body and soul, in their lack of faith, they worry this may not be the case. In truth, God has given us the Church as the very place wherein we can grow spiritually, while enjoying the protection, and the blessings, of being in weekly contact with other believers. Just like an earthly family, we don't always enjoy the presence of other members, but it is often those difficult and uncomfortable moments that help us grow the most. In Luke 4:16, we read that Our Lord Jesus Christ was regularly in the temple, for "He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom." It was Christ's regular practice to go to church, "As he always did on the Sabbath, he went to the meeting place." If Our Lord Jesus made it a priority to meet together with other believers, how can we excuse ourselves from doing the same. Perhaps the most important reason for weekly church attendance lies in the fact that it is only in the church where we can receive Holy Communion, for Our Lord went so far as to say that unless we eat of His flesh, and drink of His blood, we will have no life in us (John 6:53). It is in the reception of the Holy Mysteries where we receive the grace needed to grow spiritually, and where we are empowered to live in all holiness and truth.

(The Very Reverend Abbot Tryphon is Igumen of All-Merciful Saviour Orthodox Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington.)

## Silent Hands

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

I am struck by the silence in which You entered our wretched world, my sweet Jesus. You came to us, my Lord, with awe-filled humility. You did not appear in glory and splendor. You turned toward us with a veiled majesty and stillness. You were born in the flesh on a quiet night, in a desolate place where no people dwell. And a great multitude of men was not present at Your birth. You wished to tell a few shepherds who, in the stillness of the night, were beginning to rest from the day's toil. You sent Your angels to announce to them, with great joy, "Unto you is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And You encouraged them with a multitude of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

" Did You choose them alone, above all others, because You knew that the simplicity of their lives

## TODAY'S FEAST SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

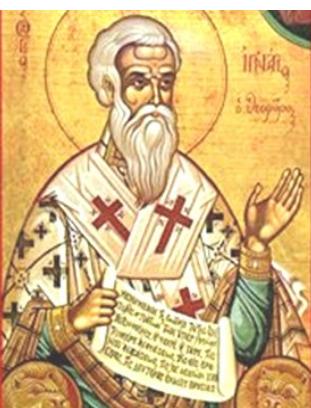
### FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST



On the Sunday that occurs on or immediately after the eighteenth of this month, we celebrate all those who from ages past have been well-pleasing to God, beginning from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as the Evangelist Luke hath recorded historically (Luke 3:23-38); we also commemorate the Prophets and Prophetesses, and especially the Prophet Daniel and the Holy Three Children.

### JULIANA OF NICOMEDIA & HER 630 COMPANION MARTYRS

Saint Juliana, who was from Nicomedia, lived during the years of Maximian and was the daughter of wealthy parents. They were pagans, but she was secretly a Christian. Without consulting her, her parents betrothed her to an idolater named Eleusius, who was a member of the Senate. She, not wishing to marry him, told him that unless he became eparch, she would not marry him. When he had obtained this position, she told him that unless he renounced the religion of the idols and became a Christian, she would have nothing to do with him. Eleusius then told Juliana's father of this. He attempted to turn her from the Faith of Christ, but when he saw that she could not change her constancy, he gave her up to the Eparch, Eleusius her betrothed, to be tried according to the law. When he could not persuade her to do his will, he subjected her to the most inhuman tortures and after imprisoning her, cast her into a furnace. But by the grace of God, the furnace was marvellously quenched. Seeing this, some five hundred men and one hundred and thirty women believed in Christ and were beheaded for His sake. After further torments, she was beheaded, in the year 299.



### IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH

Saint Ignatius was a disciple of Saint John the Theologian, and a successor of the Apostles, and he became the second Bishop of Antioch, after Evodus. He wrote many epistles to the faithful, strengthening them in their confession, and preserving for us the teachings of the holy Apostles. Brought to Rome under Trajan, he was surrendered to lions to be eaten, and so finished the course of martyrdom about the year 107. The remnants of his bones were carefully gathered by the faithful and brought to Antioch. He is called God-bearer, as one who bare God within himself and was aflame in heart with love for Him. Therefore, in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. 4), imploring their love not to attempt to deliver him from his longed-for martyrdom, he said, "I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found to be the pure bread of God."

## SIXTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*The candle is Red to signify Holy Communion.*

The service begins with the lighting of the six candles.

**FATHER:** The sixth candle reminds us that Christ, Who came in Bethlehem and who will come again at the end of time, comes to us now in the great Sacrament of His Presence, i.e., Holy Communion. The reason He was born in Bethlehem was that we might allow Him to come and be born in the manger of our hearts.

**VERSE:** *The color this Sunday is Communion red, To prepare us for the taking of wine and bread, To remind us that God gave us his only son, So that we may be saved when our days are done.*

**SCRIPTURE:** The Coming of the Logos (St. John 1:1-18).

His coming today in the Eucharist (St. John 6:52-58).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

**CAROL: "The First Noel"**

**PRAYER:** Lord, we thank You that You not only came in Bethlehem but that You continue to come in every Eucharist. Amen.

**DISCUSSION:** Talk about Holy Communion. Refer to the chapters on Holy Communion and the liturgy in this book.

## The First Noel

The First Noel, the Angels did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the East beyond them far  
And to the earth it gave great light  
And so it continued both day and night

Noel, Noel  
Noel, Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!