The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

The gospel reading for the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday before Christmas is "the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," taken from the gospel according to St. Matthew. This genealogy lists the generations of people from Abraham to David, to the Babylonian captivity of the people of Israel, to the birth of Jesus. It is a selected genealogy, ending in the appearance of "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ" (Mt 1:16). It differs from the genealogy presented in St. Luke's gospel which begins with Jesus "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph," and goes back all the way not simply to Abraham but to Adam (Lk 3:23-38).

There are many purposes for presenting the genealogy of Jesus in the gospels, chief among which is the affirmation that Jesus, being in truth the Son of God, as all the gospels testify, has come "in the flesh" as a real human being. This affirmation was critically important in the time of the apostles and the first Christian generations because, unlike today, the temptation of the early period of Christianity was not to deny Jesus' divinity, but to deny His real and authentic humanity.

As a matter of historical fact, the first Christian heretics were those who said that Jesus was some sort of divine being (how this was explained had many variations and versions) who only appeared to be a true man, but was not really one since "flesh and blood" were taken to be intrinsically degrading if not downright evil. Thus the apostle Paul had to insist that in Jesus, who belongs to the Jews "according to the flesh" (Rom 9:5), the "whole fulness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9), and that it is the same Jesus who died and was buried and raised in the flesh as a real man, who is Messiah and Lord.

The genealogies in the gospels of Saints Matthew and Luke are made to and from Joseph. This is not to give the impression that Jesus came from Joseph's seed. Both gospels are absolutely clear on this point. Jesus is born from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. The point is rather that Joseph is Jesus' father according to the law, and it is from the father that one's lawful descent is to be traced. Jesus' legal father is "Joseph, son of David," the legal husband of Mary (Mt 1:20).

One other important point is made in listing the human generations which led to the birth of Jesus. This is the fact that God is faithful to His promises even though His chosen people are often not faithful. Among the people from whom Jesus came are both sinners and heathens. This affirmation was critically important in the time of the apostles and the first Christian generations because, unlike today, the temptation of the early period of Christianity was not to deny Jesus' divinity, but to deny His real and authentic humanity.

For use during the service, if you desire one. We hope you will join us for brunch following this morning's service.
Troparion for the Sunday before the Nativity (Tone 2)
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 pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

Kontakion for the Nativity (Tone 3):
Today the Virgin cometh unto the cave to give birth to the Word Who was born before all ages, begotten in a manner that defies description. Rejoice therefore, O Universe, if thou should hear, and glorify with the angels and the shepherds, glorify Him Who by His Will shall become a newborn Babe and Who is our God before all ages.

Troparion of All Saints (Tone 4):
Adorned in the blood of Thy martyrs, throughout all the world as in purple and fine linen, Thy Church through them doth cry unto Thee. O Christ God: Send down Thy compassion upon Thy people; grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls.

Prokeimenon Psalm:
Blessed are Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers. For Thou art justified in all that Thou hast done for us.

Epistle Reading: the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40
Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:1-25

This Week at All Saints

Tuesday, December 24: The Nativity of Christ – 11:00 PM

Saturday, December 28: Vespers, 7:30 PM (Confession available before and after)

News and Announcements

March for Life Chicago: Please consider attending the March for Life on Saturday, January 11, 2020, at 1 PM at Daley Plaza at 50 W. Washington, Chicago. Join thousands who come to march to support the unborn! For more information please go to the March for Life Chicago website at https://prolifeaction.org/event/mflc2020/

"Lift up and stretch out your hands, not to heaven, but to the poor; for if you stretch forth your hands to the poor, you have reached the summit of heaven, but if you lift up your hands in prayer without sharing with the poor, it is worth nothing."

—St. John Chrysostom

Volunteers

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<th>Flowers</th>
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<td>Sunday Dec 22</td>
<td>Polycarp</td>
<td>Carmen C.</td>
<td>Sarah K.</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Robert H.</td>
<td>L - P</td>
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<td>Wednesday Dec 25</td>
<td>Joseph L.</td>
<td>Debbie K.</td>
<td>Nancy L.</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Gabriel &amp; Domitille N.</td>
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<td>Sunday Dec 29</td>
<td>Doug J.</td>
<td>Pat K.</td>
<td>Hal O.</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Eric &amp; Cristina P.</td>
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<td>Sunday Jan 5</td>
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<td>Domitille N.</td>
<td>Roberta P.</td>
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<td>Sunday Jan 12</td>
<td>Joseph L.</td>
<td>Cristina P.</td>
<td>Azizheh C.</td>
<td>Polycarp &amp; Gosia G.</td>
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<td>Sunday Jan 26</td>
<td>Polycarp</td>
<td>Sandy A.</td>
<td>Ofelija I.</td>
<td>Paul &amp; Elizabeth K.</td>
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