

# ALL SAINTS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

*Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America*  
4129 W. Newport Ave., Chicago, IL 60641  
773-231-6177 • [www.allsaintsorthodox.org](http://www.allsaintsorthodox.org)

**Sunday, December 15, 2024**

Sunday of the Forefathers of our Lord Jesus Christ  
Hieromartyr Eleutherios, Bishop of Illyria

Saturday Vespers, 7pm • Sunday Orthros & Divine Liturgy, 8:30am



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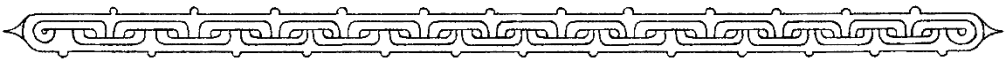
**Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 8):** From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate one, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion. Thou art our life and our resurrection; O Lord, glory to Thee!

**Apolytikion of the Forefathers (Tone 2):** Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and it was she who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

**Apolytikion for St. Eleutherios (Tone 5):** Being comely adorned in thy sacred priestly robes and newly drenched with the streams of thy pure and sanctified blood, thou didst soar aloft to stand before thy Master Christ. Hence never cease to intercede for those honoring with faith thy mighty and blessed contest, thou over-thrower of Satan, O wise and blessed Eleutherios.

**Kontakion for the Nativity Fast (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!

**Apolytikion 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.



## THE EPISTLE

*For St. Eleutherios*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

What shall we render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto us?

### **The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy (1:8-18)**

Timothy, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the Gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. For this Gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesus.

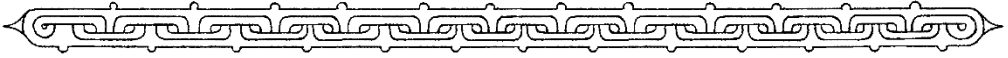
## THE GOSPEL

*For the Holy Forefathers*

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (14:16-24)**

The Lord spoke this parable: A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.'

And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen.



## THE NATIVITY AND ALMSGIVING, PART ONE

His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Ispër)



The hymn of the angels at the Nativity of Christ is the key verse to the practical meaning of this feast. The angels of heaven sing: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men' (Luke 2:14). God is always glorified in the highest, and through His presence, peace is achieved on earth and goodwill enters the hearts and souls of mankind.

If the glory of God in the highest, the peace on earth, and the goodwill among men are interconnected, then the responsibility for achieving them falls primarily on the believers. The incarnation of the Lord Jesus teaches us to be messengers of peace and apostles of joy. This great responsibility is not fulfilled by excessive concern for the appearances of the holiday, but by working seriously to make the Lord ever present in and directing our lives.

Hence, this feast gains priority among believers in knowing how Jesus Christ was born in their souls. If they remain during the feast and after it as they were before, this means that the feast has not achieved its goal inside of them. Church feasts are stations for self-examination, and new beginnings to a more advanced extent in the life of virtue and the fruition of the Holy Spirit.

Today, Christmas is an essential moment to think about bringing joy to the hearts of despondent, sad, displaced and suffering people all around us. Unfortunately, their population is on the rise. The most important question is: How do we bring them joy? The answer is simple: by giving – morally, spiritually, emotionally and materially. Reviewing the customs

associated with this feast is necessary and essential for all believers. On this feast, let us invite each other to activate our participation in bringing joy to our brothers and sisters in God.

How do we return the customs of this feast to their origin? Consider the popular tradition of exchanging gifts and distributing alms to the needy on this blessed holiday. The origin of this tradition goes back to the Christian belief that God has presented humanity the greatest gift at Christmas, the second person of the Holy Trinity, His Word, His Son, in order to save it. Therefore, believers offer gifts to one another as a token of gratitude to God for His greatest gift: Jesus Christ.

Like everything transcendent, the concept of giving is distorted by sinful humans and diverted from its original meaning. In like manner, this tradition has become disfigured with excessive consumerism where exchanging gifts is now a mere imposed seasonal tradition. Anyone can see the excess in this area. Gifts should not be exchanged between people just because "it is Christmas," regardless of the receivers and their needs. Nevertheless, it remains a beautiful custom, although it needs more spirituality and personalization.

Believers first present themselves as pure offerings to the Lord. The Lord came to us to save us, so we, in turn, present ourselves to Him pure and clean with sincere repentance and a noticeable change for the better.

Then, we present to our brothers, sisters, loved ones and friends a simple, thoughtful and joyful offering. Hence, it has become customary on the eve of this feast for all family members to gather for Christmas dinner.

The most important thing is for believers to visit the grieving, the needy, and the neglected, bringing whatever they can provide them during the Nativity Fast.

This feast is an occasion to practice giving. God gave us Himself, so we give Him ourselves. God visited us with His great mercy, so we visit others with our love derived from His love.

# Announcements and Upcoming Events

*For a full calendar of events and services at All Saints, see our website [www.allsaintsorthodox.org](http://www.allsaintsorthodox.org)*

## **Today: Sunday, December 15**

- Orthros & Divine Liturgy, beginning 8:30am
- Coffee hour provided by families A-F
- Church school play practice for grades K-8 in the church; other classes meet as usual
- Adult church school will be downstairs, led by Joseph Letendre
- Christmas tree decorating. All are welcome to stay and help if you wish!

## **Tuesday, Dec. 17:** Morning prayers, 9am

## **Wednesday, Dec. 18:**

- Morning prayers, 9am
- Vespers, 7pm

## **Thursday, Dec. 19:** Morning prayers, 9am

## **Friday, Dec. 20:**

- Morning prayers, 9am
- Pan-Orthodox Christmas concert, 7:30pm at St. George Church in Cicero.

## **Saturday, Dec. 21:**

- Teen SOYO neighborhood caroling & potluck dinner, beginning 4pm
- Nativity Vespers with Old Testament prophecies, 7pm

## **Next Sunday, Dec. 22:**

- Orthros & Divine Liturgy, beginning 8:30am
- Coffee hour provided by families G-K
- Church school Nativity play, upstairs following coffee hour

**ADVENT FOOD DRIVE.** Again we are blessed to be able to participate in our Advent food drive for the poor in our city. Beginning Saturday, November 16, please bring your donations of non-perishable foods. These will be given to individuals living on the street who visit the drop-in center of Northside Housing. In particular, they are asking for items that don't need cooking, heat and serve containers, or cans with pop-tops (there is a microwave available at the center). A list of suggested items is on the greeter table. Please place your

donations in the back of the church on or near the table. The deadline is Sunday, December 22. Monetary donations are also accepted, please write 'food drive' on the memo line.

If you have any questions, please call or email Sandy Abraham. God blesses those who remember the poor!

**THE NATIVITY FAST.** The Orthodox Nativity Fast (Advent) began Nov. 15, and lasts until Christmas Eve, Dec. 24. Let us dedicate ourselves to prayer, fasting, and generosity during this time. If you are able, abstain from meat and dairy products, but please see Fr. Andrew if you have any questions or concerns about keeping the fast. All Orthodox Christians should also make it to confession during this holy season. If you desire to confess to another Orthodox priest outside of our parish, that is generally fine, but let Fr. Andrew know.

## Volunteer Schedule

Date	Reader	Prospora	Greeter	Coffee	Food
<b>Sun., Dec 15*</b>	Richard C	Pat K	JoAnne T	Zach C	A-F
<b>Sun, Dec 22*</b>	Michelle C	Domitille	Azizeh C	Alina S	G-K
<b><u>Tues, Dec 24</u></b> <i>Nativity</i>	Sdn Joseph	Cristina P	Nancy L	n/a	n/a
<b>Sun., Dec. 29</b>	Christy K	Sarah S	John O	Domitille	L-P
<b><u>Tues., Dec. 31</u></b> <i>St Basil</i>	Jim K	Dn Walid	JoAnne T	n/a	Potluck

*For Sunday coffee hour, the last names of our church members have been divided into four parts alphabetically (A-F, G-K, L-P, and R-Z). On your assigned week, please bring something simple to share with everyone for coffee hour.*

*\*Shaded dates indicate fasting. No meat or dairy should be served in the church on these days.*

*If you have children, monitor them as they go through the coffee hour line, and make sure they don't take more than they can eat. Please also help your children clean up after themselves.*

*Weekly clean-up will be the responsibility of those providing coffee hour, but of course, things go faster when we all pitch in and help!*



# DAILY BIBLE READINGS

DECEMBER 15-21, 2024

ADAPTED FROM THE  
LECTIONARY OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE

*This week's Old Testament readings: Monday's and Tuesday's readings have been chosen to honor the prophets commemorated on those days. The others come from the services of our Lord's Nativity.*

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15: HOLY FOREFATHERS OF OUR LORD**

Mark 16:9-20 / Colossians 3:4-11 / Luke 14:16-24

### **Monday, Dec. 16: Holy Prophet Haggai**

Haggai 2:1-9 / 2 Thessalonians 3:1-9 / Luke 21:20-33

### **Tuesday, Dec. 17: Holy Prophet Daniel & the Three Holy Youths**

Daniel 1 / 2 Thessalonians 3:10-18 / Luke 21:34-38

### **Wednesday, Dec. 18: Martyr Sebastian of Rome**

Numbers 24:2-18 / Hebrews 11:32-12:2 / Luke 1:57-66

### **Thursday, Dec. 19: Martyr Boniface of Tarsus & Aglaia of Rome**

Malachi 3:1-4 / 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 / Luke 1:67-80

### **Friday, Dec. 20: Ignatius the God-Bearer, Bishop of Antioch**

Daniel 7:9-14 / Colossians 1:15-20 / John 1:1-18

### **Saturday, Dec. 21: Virgin Martyr Juliana of Nicomedia**

Daniel 2:31-45 / Galatians 3:8-12 / Luke 13:18-29

**ALL SAINTS IS A PARISH OF THE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE**

**WWW.ANTIOCHIAN.ORG**

**HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SABA, ARCHBISHOP OF NORTH AMERICA  
ARCHIMANDRITE JEREMY DAVIS, VICAR FOR THE DIOCESE OF TOLEDO & THE MIDWEST**