

From the Front Cover

In the remaining days before the Nativity of our Lord, we must prepare to be judged by how we respond to our Savior's birth. We must get ready to enter into the deep mystery of the Son of God becoming a human being. He does so for our salvation, to invite us to share in the heavenly banquet of His Kingdom. As members of His Body, the Church, we have no excuse not to be prepared. We have no excuse not to accept this great blessing. He calls us. And if we do not accept, we will judge only ourselves.

During the remaining days of the Nativity Fast, we should each recognize that we are preparing ourselves for a kind of judgment that will reveal our true spiritual state. At Christ's first coming at His birth, He does not come as our judge. No, we judge ourselves by how we respond to Him. Contrary to popular opinion, there is much more at stake here than whether we have warm, sentimental feelings about a baby born long ago or the cultural trappings of the season. If that were the standard of judgment, we would need no preparation at all. But if the standard of judgment is whether we will be prepared to turn away from all that distracts us from being united with Christ in holiness, it is an entirely different matter. For just like the people in today's parable, we routinely become so burdened and obsessed with daily cares that we disregard prayer. Instead of mindfully turning our attention to Christ, we become paralyzed by worry and fear. Instead of making our marriages icons of the fulfillment of the man-woman relationship for the salvation of the world, we so easily fall prey to resentment, selfishness, and neglect. Instead of living within our means so that we can share generously with the poor and support the ministries of the Church, we become addicts to desire for more and more possessions that will never satisfy us.

The good news is that Christ is born to restore us to the blessedness for which He breathed life into us in the first place. He calls us all through His birth, but now we must choose to lay aside our obsession with earthly cares in order to accept the invitation to His great banquet. He is coming, and we will judge ourselves by how we respond to Him.



The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

Saint Mary Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach

*A Parish of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast of the
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America*

The Very Reverend Father Peter Shportun, Priest /Pastor

Church Address: 1317 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
(561) 965-5007 (Church Office) (561) 632-7066 (Fr. Peter's Cellular)

Email: stmaryschurch@bellsouth.net Website: stmaryschurchwpb.org

Church Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM, by appointment
Banquet Hall Rentals: Maribel Perez - (561) 721-5696

Welcome!

Whether you are a parishioner or a visitor, we are glad you have chosen to pray with us at Saint Mary's. As a friendly reminder, please observe the following upon entering the church for prayer.

- If you arrive after the services begin, try to enter the Church quietly and observe what is happening. Try not to interrupt the service by your entrance.
- Please silence your cellular telephones.
- Please place your offerings in the basket on the table in the Church Narthex (Entrance), or the Offering Tray when passed.
- You are invited join us in the Banquet Hall for coffee and refreshments following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.



"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

Schedule of Services for Theophany

Friday, January 5th

Great and Royal Hours for Theophany at 9:00 AM

Saturday, January 6th

Festal Orthros at 8:45 AM

Festal Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

Great Sanctification of Waters follow the Divine Liturgy





Church Services at Saint Mary

- ♦ Sunday: Matins at 8:50 AM; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM
 - ♦ Wednesday: Vespers at 6:30 PM
- ♦ Confessions: Sunday 8:30 to 8:50 AM; Wednesday 6:00 to 6:30 PM; or by appointment with Fr. Peter

Tuesday, December 19th

Feast of Saint Ignatius of Antioch
Vesperal Divine Liturgy at 6:30 PM



Schedule of Services for the Feast of the Nativity

Friday, December 22nd

Great and Royal Hours for the Nativity at 9:00 AM

Sunday, December 24th

(Morning – Sunday before the Nativity)

Matins at 8:50 AM; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

(Christmas Eve - Feast of the Nativity of our Lord)

Festal Matins at 6:45PM; Festal Divine Liturgy at 8:00 PM

Traditional Christmas Carols will follow the
Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy

No Church Services on Christmas Day

Monday, January 1st

Feast of Saint Basil the Great and the Circumcision of our Lord
Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great at 9:00 AM

Sunday of Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ
+Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths Ananias, Azarias and Mishael;
+Dionysios of Zakynthos, the Wonderworker

Divine Liturgy Variables for December 17th

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated on this day. The service text may be found beginning on page 91 in the Red Service Book in the pews.

- Sung during and immediately following the Entrance of the Gospels

Resurrectional Apolytikon in Tone 3

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 Forefathers in Tone 2

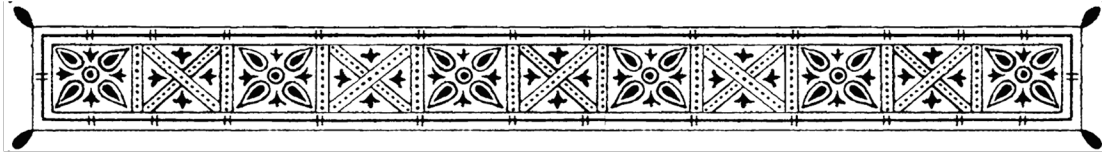
Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and it was she who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore,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

Apolytikion of the Church (Dormition) in Tone 1

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world; for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

Kontakion for the Preparation of the Nativity of Christ in Tone 3

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 glad-some 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 AND GOSPEL READINGS

The Epistle (For the Holy Forefathers)

Verse: 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 Colossians. (3:4-11)

Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

الرسالة (للأجداد)

مُبَارَكٌ أَنْتَ يَا رَبُّ إِلَهَ آبَائِنَا.
لَأَنَّكَ عَمَلٌ فِي كُلِّ مَا صَنَعْتَ بِنَا.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى كُولُوسِيِّ.

يَا إِخْوَةُ، مَتَى ظَهَرَ الْمَسِيحُ الَّذِي هُوَ حَيَاتُنَا، فَأَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً تَظْهَرُونَ حَيْنَئِذٍ مَعَهُ فِي الْمَجْدِ. فَأَمِيتُوا أَعْضَاءَكُمْ الَّتِي عَلَى الْأَرْضِ: الزَّنى، وَالنَّجَاسَةَ، وَالْهَوَى، وَالشَّهْوَةَ الرَّذِيَّةَ، وَالطَّمْعَ الَّذِي هُوَ عِبَادَةٌ وَتَن. لِأَنَّهُ لِأَجْلِ هَذِهِ يَأْتِي غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَبْنَاءِ الْعِصْيَانِ. وَفِي هَذِهِ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً سَلَكَتُمْ حِيناً إِذْ كُنْتُمْ عَائِشِينَ فِيهَا. أَمَّا الْآنَ، فَأَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً اطَّرَحُوا الْكُلَّ: الْغَضَبَ، وَالسَّخَطَ، وَالْخُبْنُ، وَالتَّجْدِيفَ، وَالْكَلامَ الْقَبِيحَ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِكُمْ. وَلَا يَكْذِبْ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضاً، بَلِ اخْلَعُوا الْإِنْسَانَ الْعَتِيقَ مَعَ أَعْمَالِهِ. وَالْبَسُوا الْإِنْسَانَ الْجَدِيدَ الَّذِي يَتَجَدَّدُ لِلْمَعْرِفَةِ عَلَى صُورَةِ خَالِقِهِ. حَيْثُ لَيْسَ يُونَانِيٌّ وَلَا يَهُودِيٌّ، لَا خِتَانٌ وَلَا قَلْفٌ، لَا بَرْبَرِيٌّ وَلَا اسْكِيثِيٌّ، لَا عَبْدٌ وَلَا حُرٌّ، بَلِ الْمَسِيحُ هُوَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَفِي الْجَمِيعِ.



For less than a daily cup of this.



You can be a part of supporting ...

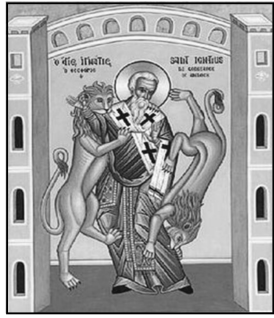
... This, The Order Ministry



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

Today is The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch Sunday
For more information about The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch,
please speak with Fr. Peter.



Vespertine Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Saint Ignatius of Antioch

Tuesday, December 19th

Confessions at 6:00 PM;

Vespertine Divine Liturgy at 6:30 PM

- *For those who wish to receive Communion, please abstain from food and drink following your noon meal.*

Weekly Spiritual Discussion

Thank you to everyone who have participated in the Spiritual Discussions led by Fr. Peter on Wednesday's following the Vespers Service. Join us this coming Wednesday, December 20th, as we discuss the topic of 'The Meaning of the Nativity.'

Online Donations

Thank you for your continued donations to your Saint Mary's Church. In addition to giving by Sunday Offering Envelopes, or by mail, the church offers Zelle as an online means of fulfilling your 'Annual Pledge.' To use Zelle, please access it through your online bank to: stmarywpbfinance@gmail.com.

In addition to making donations toward your annual pledge to the church, you may also donate towards our ongoing church facilities renovations, and various ministries.

Paypal continues as an option for those who wish to donate online.

*****NOTE: To receive 2023 credit and a donation letter for filing you taxes with the IRS, all donations must be received by December 31, 2023.**

For questions and information, please speak with our Parish Council Treasurer Sam Pasley.

**** Annual Parish Meeting of Saint Mary's ****
Sunday, January 21st, 11:45 AM.

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.' And 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."

الإنجيل (للأجداد)

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لَوْحِ الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ.

قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ: إِنْسَانٌ صَنَعَ عَشَاءً عَظِيمًا وَدَعَا كَثِيرِينَ. فَأَرْسَلَ عَبْدَهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعَشَاءِ يَقُولُ لِلْمَدْعُوعِينَ: نَعَالُوا فَإِنَّ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قَدْ أُعِدَّ. فَطَفِقَ كُلُّهُمْ وَاحِدًا فَوَاحِدًا يَسْتَعْفُونَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ الْأَوَّلُ: قَدْ اشْتَرَيْتُ حَقْلًا، وَلَا بُدَّ لِي أَنْ أَخْرُجَ وَأَنْظُرَهُ، فَاسْأَلْكَ أَنْ تَغْفِيَنِي. وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ: قَدْ اشْتَرَيْتُ خَمْسَةَ فِدَادِينَ بَقَرٍ وَأَنَا مَاضٍ لِأَجْرَبِهَا، فَاسْأَلْكَ أَنْ تَغْفِيَنِي. وَقَالَ الْآخَرُ: قَدْ تَزَوَّجْتُ امْرَأَةً، فَلِذَلِكَ لَا أَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ أَجِيءَ. فَأَتَى الْعَبْدُ وَأَخْبَرَ سَيِّدَهُ بِذَلِكَ. فَحِينَئِذٍ، غَضِبَ رَبُّ الْبَيْتِ، وَقَالَ لِعَبْدِهِ: أَخْرُجْ سَرِيعًا إِلَى شَوَارِعِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَأَرْقُفْتِهَا وَأَدْخِلِ الْمَسَاكِينَ وَالْجُدَعَ وَالْغُمِيَّانَ وَالْعُرْجَ إِلَى هُنَا. فَقَالَ الْعَبْدُ: يَا سَيِّدُ، قَدْ قَضَيْتُ مَا أَمَرْتَ بِهِ، وَيَبْقَى أَيْضًا مَحَلٌّ. فَقَالَ السَيِّدُ لِلْعَبْدِ: أَخْرُجْ إِلَى الطَّرِيقِ وَالْأَسْجَةِ وَاصْطَرِّهُمْ إِلَى الدُّخُولِ حَتَّى يَمْتَلِئَ بَيْتِي. فَإِنِّي أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَا يَذُوقُ عَشَائِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ أَوْلِيكَ الرِّجَالِ الْمَدْعُوعِينَ. لَأَنَّ الْمَدْعُوعِينَ كَثِيرُونَ وَالْمُخْتَارِينَ قَلِيلُونَ.

- *The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom continues as usual.*

After receiving Communion, please read the 'Prayers of Thanksgiving After Holy Communion' on pages 128-131 in the Red Service Book in the pews.

The Nativity Fast

From November 15th until December 24th, the Orthodox Church observes the Nativity Fast in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. During this period, we are called to do our best to fast, increase our daily prayers, and remember those in need in our almsgiving.

This Sunday (December 17th)

Weekly Altar Candle

- ◊ In glory of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ◊ For the health of the Priest George and Gabriel. Offered by Elena Sora.

Holy Bread Offered:

- ◊ By Fr. Peter Khouryia Myriam for the good health of their son Jonathan on the occasion of his feast day (Sunday of the Holy Fathers).

If you would like to offer a Weekly Altar Candle, or Holy Bread for a Divine Liturgy, please speak with Fr. Peter.

Sunday School Classes

No Sunday School Classes today due to the Christmas/Nativity Pageant.

Christmas ~ Nativity Pageant

Today is the Christmas ~ Nativity Pageant featuring our Sunday School Children. The pageant will be held in the church immediately following the Divine Liturgy.

Sunday Coffee Hour

Hosted by the Sunday School Parents.

Coffee Hour Hosts are needed for 2024. If you would like to host a Sunday Coffee Hour, please speak with Jane Pasley.



Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who took an Angel from this year's Angel Tree. Over 30 Angels have been sponsored this year. Please remember to return your Angel affixed to the gift wrapped toy no later the SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH. This will ensure that the gifts are distributed to children in need prior to Christmas.

Please Remember in Your Prayers

For the Living

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5: 14

For the Good Health of the Servants of God: Archpriest Michael & Matushka Annette Zaparyniuk, Michael, Priest Andrew Short, Sub-Deacon William Hall, Jodet Rae, Leon & Judy Chalhoub, Johnny & Joyce Chalhoub, Raouf Saballeil, Sabah Shalhoub, Craig Miller, Emma, George Matouk, George, Alice Kelly.

For the Shut-ins of our Church Community: Gloria Yedlinsky, Lidia Pawlcuk, Zakia Salloum.

For peace in the Middle East and the Ukraine.

For all Christians and people suffering from violence, war, persecution, captivity, hunger, and homelessness throughout this world.

For those serving in our armed forces here and abroad: Christopher Smith, Jonathan Shportun, Alexios Gavrilos.

For the Departed

"With the spirits of the righteous made perfect, give rest O Lord to the souls of Thy servants..."

Florence Esper (*newly departed 12/8/23*), Lama Chalhoub (*newly departed 12/6/23*), Gail Camileri (*6/26/23*), Angie Smith (*6/23/23*), Archdeacon Joseph Harb (*3/8/23*).

Seven Day Prayer Candles

***When offering a Seven Day Prayer Candle, please list only the names that you are praying for, and are asking the church community to pray for. Please do not include greetings, birthday and anniversary wishes, etc.*

Memory Eternal!

It is with sadness, yet in the hope of the Resurrection of our Lord, that we inform you of the falling asleep in the Lord of Florence Esper, age 90, in Norwood, MA, on December 8. Florence was a long time winter parishioner of Saint Mary's. May her memory be eternal!