



SAINT MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26)

6330 W. 127th St., Palos Heights, IL 60463

Phone : (708) 239-0004, Fax : (708) 221-6449

www.stmaryoc.org (office@stmaryoc.org)

Church Office Hours : Monday - Friday 10:00am-3:00pm

St. Mary Parish Clergy

V. Rev. Fr. Mousa Haddad, Pastor

V. Rev. Fr. Malek Rihani

Rev. Archdeacon Saed Rihani

Subdeacon Matthew Sweis

Subdeacon Ameer Tadros

Parish Council

Luai Sweiss - Chairman

Abdullah Tadros - Vice Chairman

Jason Haddad - Treasurer

Ramiz Sweiss - Financial Secretary

Fabiola Sweis - Secretary

Nidal Al-Farah

Constantin Kari

Abeer Khouri

Faris Samawi

Bassam Shaheen

Feras Sweis

Parish Ministries

Sunday School - Philip Riske

SOYO - Murad Salman

Fellowship - Fabiola Sweis

Antiochian Women -

Magida Abudayyeh

Handmaids - Mansoura Khouri and

Lina Haddad

Humanitarian - Shireen Salman

OCLife - Nancy Cannon

Fishers of Men - John Eannace

Athletics - Melad Qodsi

Choir - Michael Rascia

Chanters - Khaled Salman and

Faris Samawi

Webmaster - Sana Sweis

Ushers - Jamal Swais, Louis Sweiss

Office

May Sweis

administrator@stmaryoc.org

Church Hall Rental

Call the church office or email our

Office Administrator

December 13th, 2015

Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ



Weekly Schedule of Services

Saturday: 5:00p.m. -- Great Vespers

Sunday: 8:45 a.m. Matins -- 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. Matins -- 10:30 a.m. Bible Study
(Confessions by Appointment)

Welcome to St. Mary Orthodox Church! We extend our warmest and heartfelt greetings to you and your family. If this is your first time with us, we pray that you feel at home. After all, we are gathered together in our Father's house. For more information, please see one of the ushers at the end of the service for a "Welcome Packet." May God bless you and give you many healthy years in His service.

Changes in the Liturgy

Entrance Hymn

O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.
Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to thee: Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (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 became the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

Troparion of the Forefathers (Tone Two)

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 she it was who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of the Dormition (Tone One)

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 of the Fore-feast of the Nativity (Tone Three)

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 shouldst hear and glorify with the Angels and the shepherds. Glorify Him who by His will shall become a new-born Babe and who is our God before the ages.

Epistle for the Sunday of the Forefathers

Blessed are thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers!

For Thou are just in all that Thou hast done to us!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Letter 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.

Gospel for the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

The Reading is 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."

Advent Fast & Christmas Reminder!

The Nativity Fast (Advent) begins Sunday, November 15th and will end December 24th (after Christmas Eve Liturgy). We are to fast from meat and dairy. In order for fasting to be effective, it must be accompanied with prayer and acts of mercy and love. St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "What good is it to fast from meat and dairy, if we devour and eat one another." Please remember to love and forgive in this special time in which we prepare for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Important: Mark your Calendars for Christmas Liturgy

Important! Please mark your calendars for the Christmas Liturgy. Matins will begin at 5pm followed by Liturgy at 6pm, Thursday December 24th. How can we truly celebrate Christmas if we skip out on Christmas Liturgy? The Christmas season is a very busy time, & we have plans to be with friends & family. But, we must learn to set our priorities straight, so schedule your gatherings around the Christmas Liturgy. Can you imagine having a birthday party without the birthday boy?! That's exactly what we do when we don't attend Christmas Liturgy. Let us begin to change the secularization of Christmas & bring Christ back into the picture by remembering the reason for the season. We look forward to seeing you all at Christmas Liturgy. God bless!

PARISH NEWS



Honoring your loved ones: Please consider signing up for one or more Sundays to provide Holy Bread and Coffee hour. It's this gift of Holy Bread that we use to prepare communion and to share with our parishioners at the end of the service. *What better way to honor your loved ones on their birthday, anniversary, graduation or memorial.* It takes minimal effort, and it encourages fellowship among our community.

Holy Bread and Coffee Hour

12/13: Joseph and Muna Makri & Family

12/20: Jamal and Kholoud Swais & Family

12/27: Ziad and May Sweis & Family



3rd and 9th Day Memorial

Fadwa Fakhoury

May her memory be eternal!



Newborn

Sebastian

Parents: Billy & Angela James
(Grandparents: Fr. Malek & Kh. Dina)

Congratulations!

Epistle Reading

12/13: Maram Salman & Faris Samawi

12/20: Marian Fahmy & Rima Sleiman

Bible Study verse of the week (from the Orthodox Study Bible).



In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus reminds us to always be prepared. He uses the following parable:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Explanation: Our initial reaction to the response of the wise virgins is that they are mean and selfish for not sharing their oil, but the Orthodox Study Bible provides the following interpretation:

This parable illustrates preparedness, or lack of it, while the bridegroom was delayed. The OT prophets portray the covenant between God and Israel as a marriage covenant. The marriage will finally be consummated when the Bridegroom returns at the end of the age and the righteous form a wedding party to go forth to meet Him. The Bridegroom represents Christ in His Passion, who dies out of love for His Church. That the wise virgins also slumbered and slept suggest that once prepared, a person rests as needed. Their refusal to give oil to the foolish ones is not lack of love. It portrays the fact that spiritual preparedness cannot be conveniently given or borrowed. This parable encourages the proper use of God's gifts: to bear fruit. Some interpreters say lamps indicate the gift of purity and holiness, and oil, works of mercy – the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Traditionally, virginity has been considered a special "lamp," and almsgiving or help to the poor a special "oil"

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

December 13, 2015

Choir and Chanter Appreciation Sunday

*"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful
noise to the rock of our salvation" Psalm 95:1-2*

Beloved in Christ,

Each year in the month of December we remember our choirs and chanters. This sacred ministry of the Church is essential to the beauty of our divine services. Oftentimes, a person's first experience of our Holy Orthodox Church is witnessing one of our beautiful services. This experience can either be enhanced by a beautiful and well-prepared choir, or diminished by an unprepared one. We are grateful to all of our choir directors, chanters and singers for their dedication, effort and commitment to making the divine services in their respective parishes beautiful to both God and the faithful.

Because of the need for all of our choirs to be provided with as many resources as possible and the importance of this sacred ministry, we recently created a full-time position for the chairman of the Department of Sacred Music. After many years of dedicated service on a part-time basis, Mr. Christopher Holwey stepped down as the chairman of the Department of Sacred Music earlier this year. As a result, I appointed Mr. Paul Jabara of Montreal, Canada as the first full-time chairman of the department. We are thankful to Chris and his dedication and we welcome Paul.

With this recent "upgrade" of this ministry in the Archdiocese, we hope to achieve more interaction between the department and the parishes with programs such as the Choir Outreach Program and Youth Music Ministry. We also intend to provide improved resources on our website, and coordination with the Department of Liturgics and the Department of Translations so there is consistency across the board with regard to translations of hymns, etc. Completing these changes will take time; however, you the faithful should begin noticing some of these improvements in the near future.

Wishing you all a blessed remainder of the Nativity Fast and, in advance, a joyous feast of our Lord's Nativity, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Joseph' written in a stylized, cursive script.

+JOSEPH
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

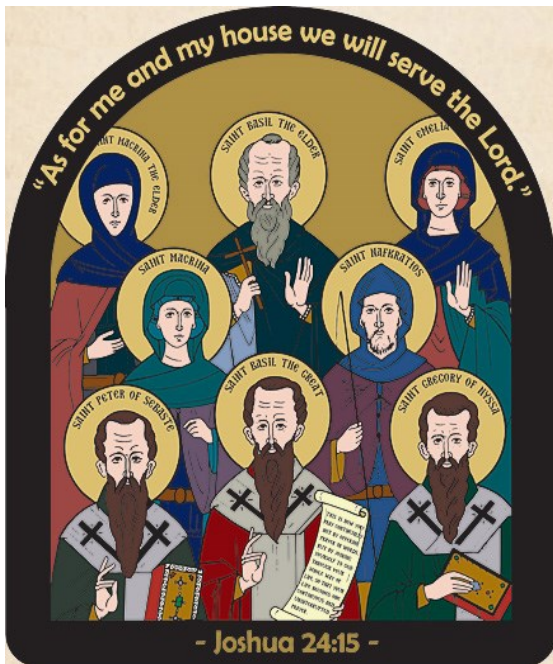
358 Mountain Road, P.O. Box 5238, Englewood, NJ 07631-5238
(201) 871-1355 T Archdiocese@antiochian.org (201) 871-7954 F

Sunday School

Online registration is at www.StMaryOC.org/sunday_school.html

OR

Register on a computer outside of the Church Gym.



December

- 12th: Christmas Pageant Rehearsal
- 13th: Sunday School Christmas Presentation at the end of Liturgy
- 21st-23rd: Creative Projects Camp
9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- 27th - Jan 3rd, Christmas Break

January

- 2nd - Creative Projects Mini Camp (10-2pm)
- 3rd - Creative Projects Mini Camp (1-3pm)
- 16th-18th Creative Projects Mini Camp (1-3pm)

Tenth Annual High School Retreat Reminders!!!

- Chaperone/Teen/Parent **Mandatory** Meeting-
Sunday, December 20th
 - Final Payment Due Sunday, December 20th
- Please see one of the officers or their advisors to register for this memorable event!***



SOYO Officers

Murad Salman-President
Jacky Tadros-Vice President
Simon Tadros-Treasurer
Jenna Riadi-Secretary
Lily Tadros-Public Relations
Rima and Milad Sleiman-Advisors

St. Philothea Project



This year St. Mary's Teen SOYO will be participating in the St. Philothea Project. This Christmas Season we will be putting together 50 small School Supply Packages. These packages will be going to support Saint Constantine and Elena Parish in Rombo Kenya and Saint George School in Kibera Slum, Kenya. Your generosity is appreciated. Please drop off donations in the marked bin placed outside of the gym.

Supplies needed:

150 pens

250 pencils

50 boxes of 12 Crayola crayons

50 erasers

Additionally, a \$100 donation is needed to purchase 50 small crosses and 50 small icons to be placed in each package

For any questions or to make a monetary donation, please contact:

Kh. Delia Haddad at kh.delia@gmail.com

Or

Rima Sleiman at rima.saigh@gmail.com

Open Gym Schedule

Volleyball Open Gym - 7pm

Tuesday, December 15th



Basketball Open Gym - 4 pm

Sunday, December 13th

Sunday, December 20th

**Looking for the perfect Christmas gifts?
Stop by our bookstore and check out our new arrivals, gifts and cards.
We have all your Christmas shopping needs!**

Keep *Christ*
in
Chr **stmas**

A wooden cross is the central focus, decorated with a large, colorful ribbon bow in shades of pink, yellow, and red. Green pine branches are wrapped around the base of the cross. The background is a warm, golden-brown color with a subtle floral pattern and sparkling light effects.

MENTION THIS AD AND RECEIVE A FREE GIFT WITH YOUR PURCHASE!

TEEN SOYO NIGHTS



We welcome all teens to attend our Wednesday, Teen SOYO Nights

Every Wednesday from 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM

The first Wednesday of each month is a bible study.

We enjoy fellowship, open discussions, time in the gymnasium
& homework time as well!

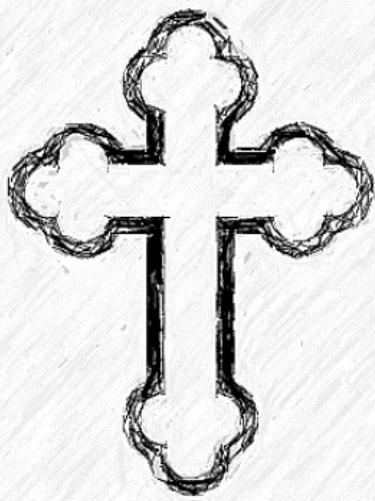
For more information, please contact:

Deacon Saed Rihani, Milad Sleiman, or Rima Sleiman

Deacon Saed: saedrihani6@gmail.com/ (773) 454– 2191

Milad: milad.s.sleiman@gmail.com/ (630) 632 –6747

Rima: rimsaigh@gmail.com/ (708) 590– 9559



IN DEFENSE
OF CHRISTIANS

National Day of Action and Ecumenical Prayer Service
Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015 at 7 p.m.
St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
1220 S. 60th Ct., Cicero, IL 60804

IDC, in coordination with local communities across the country, including prominent clergy and politicians, is hosting a National Day of Action to help raise awareness of persecuted Christians in the Middle East and the humanitarian/human rights crisis in the region. We are launching a campaign of solidarity through personal and community prayer, political action, and charitable giving.

IDC will also celebrate the one-year anniversary of its Chicago chapter at this event.

Visit www.indefenseofchristians.org or contact IDC Chicago Chapter Chairman George Kourieh at (773-848-3500) or Co-Chairman Robert Sweiss at (708-945-6969) for more information.

PRAY. ACT. GIVE.

*The Fellowship of St. John the Divine
cordially invite you to a*

Christmas Gathering

Saturday, December 19th
5:30 p.m. in the Nadi

It is finally that time of year!
Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater &
bring your favorite Lenten dish to share.

The FSJD is hosting a Christmas
Gathering filled with fun activities &
a session given by St. Mary's clergy.

If you would like to participate in a grab
bag, please bring a gift within the
amount of \$20.

The person with the ugliest
Christmas sweater will be awarded a
prize!

Questions? Please contact
Marram Salman (708)-307-7473
Reem Sweis (708)-522-9477

6330 W. 127th St. Palos Heights, IL | StMaryFSJD



St. Mary Orthodox Church of Palos Heights

We need **YOU** to become future Leaders of our
FELLOWSHIP for 2016!

ELECTIONS

Saturday, December 19th
(during our Christmas Gathering)
St. Mary's Nadi

If you're interested in taking a position of leadership in our Fellowship of St. John the Divine, please see Fabby Sweis or Dn. Saed with a self-nomination or recommendation of others to run for Office.

We are looking for nominations for the offices of President,
Vice President, PR and Treasurer.

Deadline to submit nominations is **Sunday, December 13th.**

"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17



ATTENTION ALTAR SERVERS!



There will be a mandatory training on **Sunday, December 27th or Sunday, January 17th.**

You must attend one of the sessions.
A light lunch will be served.

Teams will be created and a schedule will start in January 2016.

We are in **NEED** of new Altar Boy robes. We are asking for each family to donate 2 robes (1 gold and 1 purple) for each child serving.

Continuous trainings will be held for the Altar servers.

Please see Subdeacon Matthew (mrsweis@hotmail.com) or Deacon Saed (saedrihani6@gmail.com) with any questions.



Winter Food Drive 2015

November 8th - December 27th



1 out of 6 families are struggling with hunger

Remember...42 lbs of food will feed a family of 4 for 3 days!

Food Drive Grocery List:

Beans, Chili, Cereal, Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Jelly, Peanut Butter, Rice, Shelf Stable Milk, Soup, Tuna, Stew, Canned Vegetables Canned Fruit, Mac & Cheese.

Remember to bring items for the Food Drive this Sunday. Each Sunday School class will compete to raise the most food.

The winning class will receive a Pizza Party!

Sunday School Students should drop off their food items in one of the carts just outside of the Sunday School's main entrance (in the large hall way). Each cart will be labeled by grade.

Remembering the words of St. John Chrysostom: "It is a better thing to feed the hungry than to raise the dead."

SOYO 10TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS RETREAT



“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO JOIN SAINT MARY’S SOYO AT OUR TENTH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS RETREAT!

Come get inspired and reconnected with your faith. Special sessions with Fr. Malek Rihani, Fr. Mousa Haddad, and Dn. Saed Rihani!

- What:** Christmas Retreat 2015
Where: St. Iakovos Retreat Center, Kansasville, WI
When: December 28th - December 30th, 2015
Who: All High School Students are welcome
Cost: \$100 per teen

For Information Contact: Rima Sleiman at (708) 590-9559

" For Scholarships or Financial Assistance, please contact Fr. Mousa Haddad directly."

DEADLINE: December 20, 2015

\$50 DEPOSIT REQUIRED

Space is Limited



*St. Mary Church and the
Fuheis American Association
Proudly Host*



New Year Hafleh

December 31st, 2015 at 7:00pm

St. Mary's Gymnasium (North Entrance)

6330 W. 127th St., Palos Heights, IL

Tickets:

Adults - \$75

12yrs & younger - \$40

Appetizers - Dinner - Sweets - Live Band - Open Bar

Music by:

Nabil Nemeh & Doris Farhat





Save 3 Lives & Help Syrian Refugees!!!

January 3, 2016

8:00AM – 2:00PM

St. Mary Orthodox Church

Here's your chance to start your new year out right!

Sign up for St. Mary's blood drive.

We will be able to donate \$10 to the IOCC Syrian Relief fund for every presented donor.

Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity!

Sign up today!!!

[Angela Haddad @ 708.715.9057 or angelahaddad14@gmail.com](mailto:angelahaddad14@gmail.com)

Annual General Assembly Meeting and Parish Council Nominations



If you are interested in nominating yourself or another person for St. Mary's Parish Council, please let Fr. Mousa or Luai Sweiss know by Sunday, December 20th. Nominations will not be considered after that date.

Our Annual General Assembly Meeting will take place Sunday, January 10th immediately following the Divine Liturgy. Mark your calendars and make every effort to attend.

Please make sure your 2015 pledge is paid in full by Sunday, December 27th, so that you can participate in the General Assembly.

Thanks and God bless!

18th Annual Midwest Diocese Basketball Tournament Canton, Ohio January 15-17, 2016

Division I: Ages 12-15 / Division II: Ages 15-18 / Division III: Ages 19-26

Friday, January 15

7 pm: Registration begins (Hotel Lobby)

8 pm: Pizza (Registration area)

8:30pm: Retreat (Hotel Ballroom)

Saturday, January 16

**7 am: Morning prayers/Light Breakfast/Tournament Brackets
(Hotel Ballroom)**

8 am: Basketball Tournament begins

12 pm: Lunch (at Basketball locations)

6 pm: Great Vespers (St. George Serbian)

7 pm: Banquet/ Awards Presentation/Hafli (St. George Serbian)

Sunday, January 17

8:45 am: Matins (St. George Antiochian)

10 am: Hierarchal Divine Liturgy (St. George Antiochian)

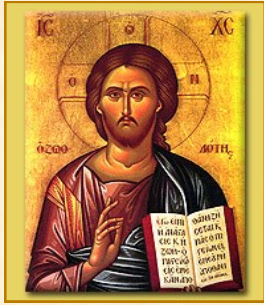
Brunch and Farewell (St. George Antiochian)

**Early Registration: \$50 by January 8 Registration: \$60
(Includes all meals and events)**

**St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
1118 Cherry Ave. NE Canton, OH 44704
330-455-8482 stgeorgecanton@sbcglobal.net**

**Hotel Information: Courtyard by Marriott
4375 Metro Circle NW N. Canton, OH 44720 330-494-6494
Group Rate: \$85/night (mention St. George Canton)
Our block of rooms will be reserved for us until Jan. 3**

Please Contact Nidal Haddad at (708) 691-8849 or at Haddadnidal24@yahoo.com.



Weekly Synaxarion



On December 13 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate our righteous father Herman of Alaska, enlightener of the Aleuts; the Martyrs Eustratios, Auxentios, Eugene, Mardarios, and Orestes at Sebastia; Virgin-martyr Lucia of Syracuse; and Hieromartyr Gabriel, patriarch of Serbia. On this day we celebrate the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Ancestors) of our Lord Jesus. We remember all the holy Patriarchs of the Old Testament who prefigured or foretold Christ: Adam the first Father, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abraham, the friend of God, Isaac, the fruit of the Promise, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs. We then commemorate those who lived under the Law: Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, David, and the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; the twelve minor prophets; Elijah, Elisha, Zachariah, and John the Baptist; and finally the Virgin Mary, the intermediary between mankind and her divine Son. Indeed, the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to redeem humanity which bemoaned the weight of evil since Adam; to realize the promise made to Abraham; to change the Law of Fear into the Law of Love; and to give Resurrection and Life to mankind. This feast prepares us for the Nativity of Jesus Christ, placing before us the anticipation and hope for His coming among us. By the intercessions of Thy Saints, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.