



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 27th, 2015

*Proto-Martyr Stephen the Archdeacon
Sunday after the Nativity of Christ*

The Commemoration of Joseph the Betrothed,
David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



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.

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop ANTHONY



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Toledo and
The Midwest

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
December 25, 2015

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! المسيح وُلِد! فمجدوده!

Love swings back and forth between hope and hurt. The Father in heaven had high hopes for His son on earth to rescue His creation for Him, returning it to its original meaning and destiny. The Little One who lay in a manger outside the comfort and crowd of the Inn, as baby and from then on to the Cross, from cradle to Cross, would, in the deepest sense, always be alone, on His own, and never at home anywhere. This prophet was not welcome in the town He grew up in. So He wandered as a homeless person. The Father would feel the hurt of this homelessness and hear the Blessed One say He had nowhere to lay His head.

I had thought there were two dramatic moments in Christ's life when He truly could rest and lay His head down in peace; one is when He was born and His mother held Him, the other was in the quiet tomb while the crowds were gone and the noise of darkness stopped. He rose from the sleep of death, folded His cloth pillow neatly, and left resurrected and triumphant.

Christmas has me pray for and hurt for all of the little ones now, outside the comfort of warm homes, away in the wilderness of foreign places, traveling in the night to Egypt, far from the Bethlehem of their birth. The Father hurts for them who are made in the image of His son and so are made for Him.

Let us give them a home somewhere and show them there is love in every city, in the City of Peace.

Christ changed the hurt of the Cross into the help of the Father through His obedience, as a good Son always is, for the hope of us all. He saved us to become saviors, even when it hurts.

May He who was born in a cave and lay in a manger for our salvation bless you always.

+ Bishop Anthony

+Bishop ANTHONY

**Bishop of Toledo
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**

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

2635 Manchester Blvd., Toledo, OH 43606-2825
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bpanthonymichaels@gmail.com

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

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Christ is born, glorify Him! Christ hath come from the heavens, receive Him!
Christ is on earth, elevate Him! Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; and ye nations,
praise Him with joy; for He hath been glorified!

Changes in the Liturgy

First Antiphon

I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will speak of all Thy marvelous works. In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation, the works of the Lord are great.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us.

They are sought out according to all His purposes. His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endureth forever.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us.

Second Antiphon

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; that delighteth greatly in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!

Glory and riches shall be in His house, and His righteousness endureth forever.

Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: He is gracious, full of compassion and righteous.

Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

O only-begotten son and word of God...

Third Antiphon

The Lord said unto my Lord: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send thee a rod of strength out of Zion. With thee is dominion in the day of thy power, in the beauties of thy saints.

Thy Nativity O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn there from to worship thee, O Sun of justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest thou didst come, O Lord, glory to thee!

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 Five)

Let us believers praise and worship the Word coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For he took pleasure in ascending the cross in the flesh to suffer death and to raise the dead by his glorious resurrection.

Troparion of the Nativity (Tone Four)

Thy Nativity O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn there from to worship thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Troparion for the Sunday after the Nativity (Tone Two)

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child. With the shepherds thou didst give glory; with the Magi thou didst worship; and by the angel it was revealed to thee.
Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

Troparion of St. Stephen (Tone Four)

O First of strivers among the Martyrs, thy head was crowned with a kingly crown, through the struggles that thou didst endure for the sake of Christ God; for thou didst reproach the folly of the Jews, and therefore, didst see thy Saviour on the right hand of the Father. Wherefore, to him continuously plead for 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 Nativity (Tone Three)

Today, the Virgin giveth birth to the transcendent in essence; the earth offereth the cave to the unapproachable One; the angels with the shepherds glorify Him; and the Magi with the star travel on their way; for a new child hath been born for our sakes; God before the ages.

Epistle for St. Stephen

His voice has gone out into all the earth.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (6:8-7:5, 47-60).

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What house will you build for Me', says the Lord, 'or what is the place of My rest? Did not My hand make all these things?' You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom

you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Gospel for the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (2:13-23).

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.” But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

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

12/27: Ziad and May Sweis & Family

1/03: Ghaleb and Rita Sweis & Family

1/10: Hana Sweis & Family

Epistle Reading

12/27: Reem Sweis & Nour Swaiss
01/03: Lana Sweis & Lily Sweiss



Please make sure you pick up your 2016 St. Mary Calendar after Liturgy. One per family. God bless!

Reminder

If you did not place your donation in the pledge box when you walked in, please remember to do so as you leave.

Thank You!

Annunciation Bookstore
Sharing the Good News of the Gospel
St. Mary Orthodox Church of Palos Heights, IL

Open every Sunday after Liturgy
Monday -Friday
11:00am - 2:00pm
Please email Nader Haddad at naderemile3@yahoo.com with any requests.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!



Merry Christmas from Teen SOYO

Congratulations to the newly elected officers for the Fellowship of St. John the Divine:



President - Sally Sweis
Vice President - Natalie Salman
Treasure - Chuck Samawi
Public Relations - Josephine Tadros

We would also like to thank the outgoing officers for all of their hard work and dedication in 2015:

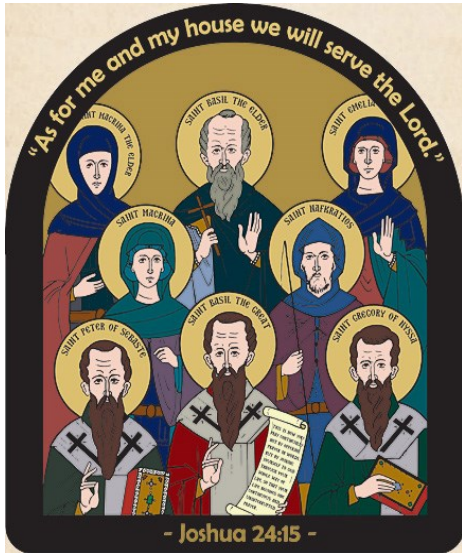
President - Fabiola Sweis
Vice President - Reem Sweis
Treasurer - Chuck Samawi
Public Relations - Marram Salman



The swearing in of the newly elected officers will take place on Sunday, January 3rd, 2016.

Sunday School

Online registration is at www.StMaryOC.org/sunday_school.html
OR
Register on a computer outside of the Church Gym.



December

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)

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.sleiman@gmail.com/ (630) 632 -6747

Rima: rima.saigh@gmail.com/ (708) 590- 9559

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 and Receive a Free Flu Shot!!!

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.

Plus you can receive a free flu shot.

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.



LOVIN' LIFE IN CHICAGO

JANUARY 17, 2016, 2-4PM

MarchForLifeChicago.com
marchforlifechicago@gmail.com

JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL
MARCH FOR LIFE CHICAGO

STARTS AT FEDERAL PLAZA (50 W ADAMS)

— SPEAKERS —

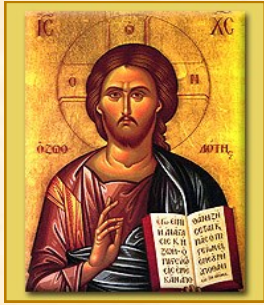
Melissa Ohden, *Abortion Survivor*
Archbishop Blase Cupich
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Chicago

Bishop Paul of Chicago
Orthodox Church of America

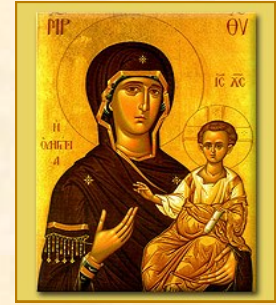
Pastor Wilfredo De Jesús,
New Life Covenant Church in Chicago

→ SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS ←

ILLINOIS RIGHT TO LIFE • ORTHODOX CLERGY ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO • L.E.A.R.N. (LIFE EDUCATION AND RESOURCE NETWORK) CATHOLICVOTE.ORG • LAKE COUNTY RIGHT TO LIFE • AID FOR WOMEN ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO • ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO RESPECT LIFE OFFICE • STUDENTS FOR LIFE OF ILLINOIS • CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF ILLINOIS • COUPLES FOR CHRIST • FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY AND LIFE • PRO LIFE ACTION LEAGUE • RENOVACIÓN CARISMÁTICA CATÓLICA HISPANA • SPIRIT JUICE STUDIOS • PRO-LIFE WISCONSIN • DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD • ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE • RELEVANT RADIO • THOMAS MORE SOCIETY • THE WOMEN'S CENTER • FAMILIES IN CHRIST JESUS



Weekly Synaxarion



On December 27 in the Holy Orthodox Church, the second day of the After-feast of the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the Venerable-confessor Theodore the Branded; and the holy Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen, one of the Seven Deacons. Stephen was the first and archdeacon of the seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. Among the Proto-martyr's persecutors was his kinsman Saul, who became the Apostle Paul. At that time, the Most-holy Theotokos, standing at a distance with John the Theologian, witnessed the martyrdom of this first martyr for the truth of her Son and God. Gamaliel, a prince of the Jews and a secret Christian, clandestinely took Stephen's body and buried it on his own estate. On the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, we commemorate the holy and just Ancestors of God: Joseph the Betrothed of the Holy Virgin, our Lady the Theotokos; James the Brother of the Lord and the First Bishop of Jerusalem; and David the Prophet and King. David committed adultery and murder, yet God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel. He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers (the Psalms) and to prophesy the coming of Christ. God designated Joseph to protect the Most-holy Virgin, and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. The Apostle James is called the "Brother of the Lord" because he was the son of the righteous Joseph the Betrothed. James greatly loved Jesus and, according to tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph when Herod sought to slay the newborn King. By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.