

Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015: The Sunday before the Lord's Nativity (The Lord's genealogy)

Epistle reading: Hebrew 11: 9-10, 32-40:

By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Gospel reading: Mat. 1:1-25:



This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the

father of Uzziah, Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon. After the exile to Babylon: Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, Zerubbabel the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Akim, Akim the father of Elihud, Elihud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah. Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah. Joseph

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

On major Feastdays, it is customary in the Orthodox Church, to have the event announced the Sunday before and then to conclude it the Sunday after. Such is the case with the Feast of the Lord's Nativity. The gospel is, first of all, establishing the historic reality of Christ's existence, according to His human nature, by presenting the book of genealogy, starting with prophet David all the way down to Joseph and the Virgin Mary.

In the second part, the gospel is relating to us the way the birth of our Lord and Savior actually took place. The mystery of Christ's conception, which caused confusion in the mind of Joseph, is revealed by the angel of the Lord who explains to him that he is part of the divine plan: "*Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

In the incarnate Son of God, all the prophesis of the Old Testament are fulfilled: *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").*

Let us give thanks to our loving God for being faithful to His promise to send us a Savior, His only-begotten Son, the greatest gift, as the ultimate manifestation of His providence and infinite love for mankind!

Merry Christmas to all!

Fr. George Bazgan

THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

The traditional annual Christmas Party will be held this year on December 20 in the main Hall, following the Divine Liturgy and regular fellowship.

All children are welcome!

The fellowship for this Sunday is going to be a Pot-luck.
Please bring a covered dish!

Special Thanks!

We extend our special thanks to Mrs. GEORGETA APOSTOL, GABRIELA DINCĂ and ADRIANA MOCANU, who donated again, for the 3rd year year, the goodies for the children!

NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Would you like to celebrate the arrival of 2016 at the Romanian Center, in a traditional Romanian atmosphere?

Then contact Viorel Ciocan, on Sundays, at the church.

This is a sold out event.

Thank you for your support!

MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership as soon as possible. This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations for the rest of the year.

As of January 2016, the membership fee is \$150/person (\$300/couple), based on the decision of the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR MESSAGE

The Board of Directors and the Ladies' Auxiliary of our parish extend to all members and supporters of our Church their best wishes for a **MERRY CHRISTMAS** and a healthy, peaceful and **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

HOUSE BLESSING

On January the 6th we celebrate the Epiphany (Theophany), the Baptism of our Lord and Savior. Following the Divine Liturgy and the Greater Blessing of Water, Fr. George will begin the blessing of homes. Those who are interested, please sign in the sign up sheet or call Fr. George at 780-473-0029.