



Please remember to pray for the health and protection of our Bishop Nicholas and his reverend clergy, the faithful in this city of Utica and every surrounding country place, the government and the armed forces that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, the parish community of St. Basil the Great Melkite Greek Catholic Church, and for all of the intentions of her faithful, for Dillan, Doreen Gigliotti-Balls, Jordan Barahmeh, Maryangela Fiorentino, Mary Nassimos, Rose Shaheen, and Robert Zaloom.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, please visit www.melkite.org or www.godwithusonline.org.

God With Us Online Presents:
A Live Webinar
ORTHODOXY & HETERODOXY
The History of the Ecumenical Councils

Wednesdays: January 12-26 & February 9-16 at 8-9 PM ET

Join us as Rev. Christiaan Kappes leads us through the breathtaking story of the battle of the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils to preserve the integrity of the faith against heresy in the decisive first centuries of Church history.

Register at: www.Godwithusonline.org

Let us continue to keep in our prayers the departed handmaid of God Lorraine Stamboly Tedesco who fell asleep in the Lord on November 13, 2021
“With the Saints grant rest, O Christ God, to the soul of your servant, in a place where there is no pain, no grief, no sighing, but only everlasting life.”
May his memory be eternal.

St. Basil the Great
MELKITE GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

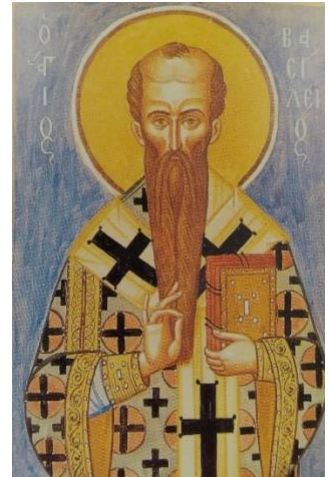
901 Sherman Drive, Utica, NY 13501
Telephone Number: 1 (315) 732-4662
Email: fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com
Website: stbasilutica.org

PARISH ADMINISTRATOR

Rev. Thomas A. Moses

WEEKEND VISITING CLERGY:

Rt. Rev. Philip Raczka Rev. James Koury Rev. Oliver Black
“Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge. Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins.”
- St. John Chrysostom



Christmas Bulletin: December 2021

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

*Maryann Astour (Chair), Albert Casab, Janet George,
Robert Lalli, Michelle Roth, Anthony Showa, Robert Zaloom*
Parish Secretary: Marcia Reesh

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;
HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the pastor in advance to arrange for the required baptismal preparation and formation;
HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding date, please contact the pastor to arrange for the required interview and sacramental preparation and formation;
HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed. The pastor will make attempt to provide himself or arrange for another priest to provide the sacrament of anointing;
HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive the Eucharist in their home or in a local hospital. Please advise the pastor when the sacrament is needed.
FUNERALS AND MEMORIAL SERVICES: Please contact the pastor to plan arrangements to provide a proper burial and honor the memory of our beloved departed.
Please remember to contact the pastor if a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from the priest. The hospitals do not always notify the church!



**Feast of the Nativity According to the Flesh
Of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ
December 24/25, 2021 (Please see Music Insert):**

Troparion of the Nativity (Tone 2) x3

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed the light of knowledge upon the world. Through it, those who had been star-worshippers learned through a star to worship You, O Sun of Justice, and to recognize in You the One Who rises and Who comes from on high. O Lord glory to You!

Hypacoi of the Nativity, (Tone 8)

O Little Child lying in a manger, by means of a star, heaven has called and led to You the Magi, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, astounded to behold, not scepters and thrones, but extreme poverty. What, indeed, is lower than a cave? What is humbler than swaddling clothes- and yet the splendor of your divinity shone forth in them resplendently. O Lord, glory to You!

Kondakion: The Nativity of our Lord (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin gives birth to the One Who surpasses all essences, and the earth offers a cave to God, the Inaccessible One. Angels sing His glory together with the shepherds: for to us is born a Child, God in all eternity!

THE PROKIMENON (Christmas Eve):

The just shall rejoice in the Lord and place his hope in Him.

All those with an upright heart shall be praised.

O God, hear my voice when I pray to You; save my life from the dreadful enemy.

Readings on Christmas Eve: Hebrews 1:1-12 and Luke 2:1-20

THE PROKIMENON (Christmas Day):

The heavens declare God's glory,

and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands.

Day pours out the word to day, and night to night imparts knowledge.

Readings on Christmas Day: Galatians 4: 4-7 and Matthew 2:1-12

HIRMOS

O my soul, magnify the One Who is more honorable and glorious than the heavenly powers! Behold a mystery, a strange and wonderful mystery: the cave has become heaven, the Virgin a throne of the Cherubim, and the manger a noble place where Christ our God reposes. Wherefore let us praise and exalt Him!

Word Find and Reading for the Feast of the Nativity

Luke 2:1-20

Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition

2 And it came to pass, that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled.² This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria.³ And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city.⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David,⁵ To be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child.⁶ And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered.⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.⁸ And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flock.⁹ And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear.¹⁰ And the angel said to them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people:¹¹ For, this day, is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of ;David.¹² And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying:¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.¹⁵ And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us.¹⁶ And they came with haste; and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.¹⁷ And seeing, they understood of the word that had been spoken to them concerning this child.¹⁸ And all that heard, wondered; and at those things that were told them by the shepherds.¹⁹ But Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart.²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

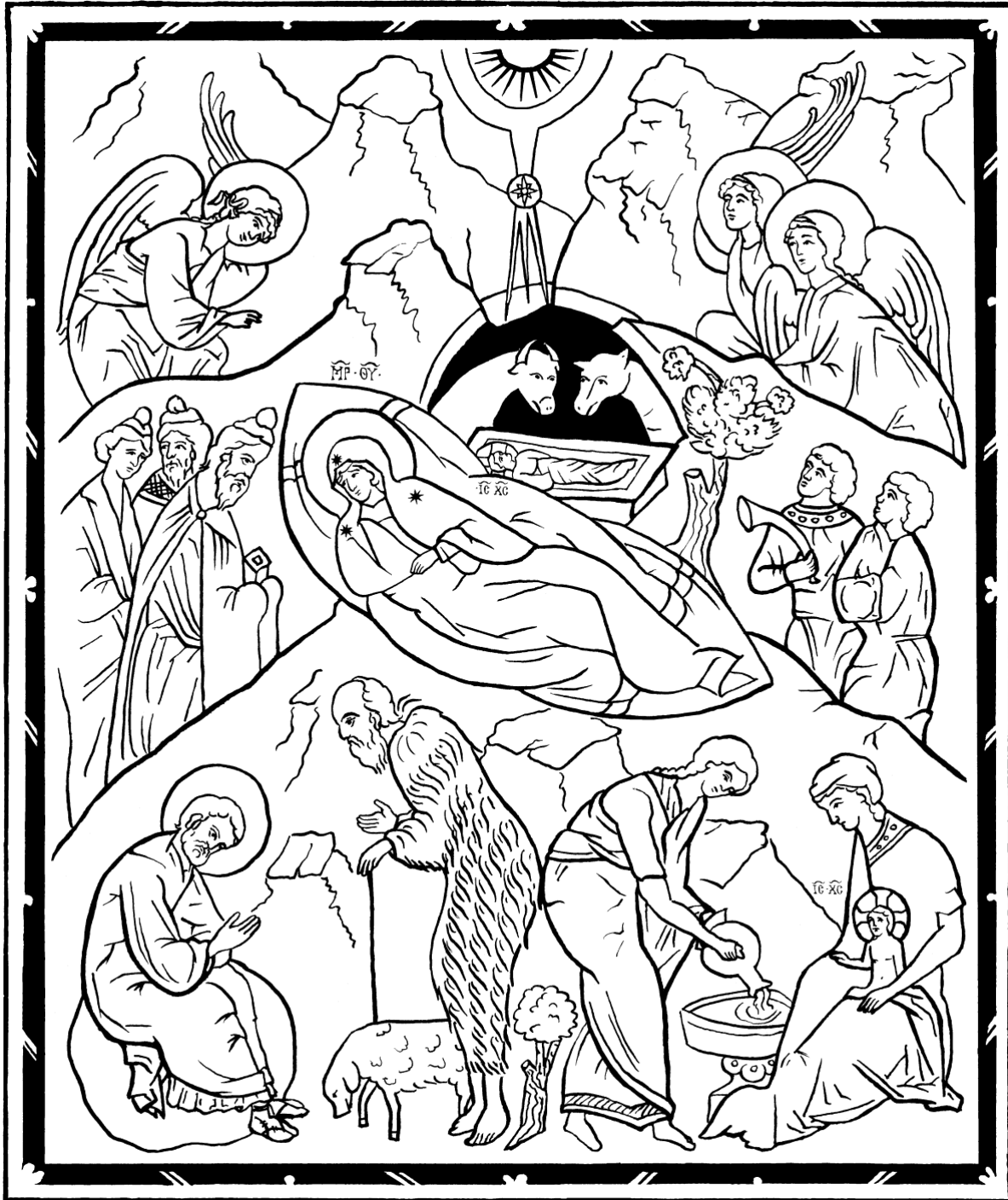
WORDS TO FIND

U O L H G L O R Y M
I F K R A J V O E J
S N F U E S S H Y O
H A N S O G E V R S
E O U N M L N V A E
P S H K H L Y A M P
E N F T P E A Z M H
R Q E W Q G I P N L
D B R O F N I Z B P
S L P K R A X Y O J

ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
GLORY
INN
JESUS
JOSEPH
J MARY
SHEPERDS
SON

Icon Coloring Page

For Adults and Children!



Sunday After the Nativity of our Lord

December 26, 2021:

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6)

The angelic Powers were around Your tomb, and the guards became as dead; and Mary stood at the tomb seeking Your spotless body; then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it, and You met the Virgin, O Bestower of Life. O Lord who rose from the dead, glory to You.

Troparion of the Nativity (Tone 2)

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed the light of knowledge upon the world. Through it, those who had been star-worshippers learned through a star to worship You, O Sun of Justice, and to recognize in You the One Who rises and Who comes from on high. O Lord glory to You!

Troparion of St. Joseph (Tone 2)

O Joseph, proclaim to David, the ancestor of Christ our God, the great miracles you have witnessed: you have seen the Virgin with child, given praise with the shepherds, adored with the wise men, and an angel of the Lord has appeared to you. Intercede with Christ God that He may save our Souls.

Kondakion: The Nativity of our Lord (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin gives birth to the One Who surpasses all essences, and the earth offers a cave to God, the Inaccessible One. Angels sing His glory together with the shepherds: for to us is born a Child, God in all eternity!

THE PROKIMENON:

Awesome in His saints is God, the God of Israel.

In the churches, bless God, the Lord out of Israel's wellsprings.

Readings: Galatians 1:11-19 and Matthew 2:13-23

It is a great joy for priests and other clergy to work in company with Christ and see Him restore life to others in so many ways through their ministry, as we can imagine in the case of His disciples in the early Church. We are in great need for dedicated priests, deacons, subdeacons and readers to continue this same apostolic ministry and to be fathers and servants to the people of our parishes. Please pray for vocations and encourage any potential candidates you may notice.

November's Collection: \$2,670.00

The average Sunday envelope donation for November \$28.28

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Please, email Fr. Thomas at fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com
to request memorial services or prayer intentions for your beloved living or deceased.

Friday (Dec. 24) Christmas Eve 4:30 PM:

For the repose of the souls of:

Deceased members of the Astour & Szczepanski families

By Mary Ann Astour

Albert & Margaret Casab

By Shirley Casab

Raymond & Bahia Chanatry & their deceased children

Anthony & Mary Hallak & their sons

Deceased members of the Ghariba family

By Doris Hutchinson

Jeanette Farewege

By Peter & Hana Farewege & grandson Peter

Deceased members of the George & Kakaty families

Dr. John George & Dr. John Kakaty

By David & Janet George

Julia Nassimos & John Gazzal

By Mary Nassimos

Deceased members of the Reesh & Marchio families

By Cheryl Kopyt

Joseph & Sally Showa

By Anthony & Sandra Showa

Saturday (Dec. 25) Christmas Day 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Jeanette Farewege

By Melenie Meyers

Sunday (Dec. 26) 11:00 AM:

For the repose the souls of:

Liam James Bascle

By Rev. Thomas & Rebekah Moses

Robert Zalatan

By Michelle Roth



UPCOMING SERVICES:

Thurs. Dec. 23	6:00 PM	Small Compline
Fri. Dec. 24	4:30 PM	Christmas Eve: Divine Liturgy: Fr. Thomas Moses
Sat. Dec. 25	11:00 AM	Christmas Day: Divine Liturgy: Fr. Thomas Moses
Sun. Dec. 26	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: Fr. Thomas Moses
Fri. Dec. 31	6:00 PM	Great Vespers: Feast of St. Basil the Great
Sat. Jan. 1	4:30 PM	Vigil Divine Liturgy: Fr. Thomas Moses
Sun. Jan. 2	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy with Memorial Prayers: Fr. Thomas Moses For Lorraine Stamboly Tedesco
Sat. Jan. 8	4:30 PM	Vigil Divine Liturgy with Blessing of Water: Fr. Oliver Black
Sun. Jan. 9	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: Fr. Oliver Black

*Below: a photo of the spot within the Cave (manger) where tradition holds that Jesus was born.
Located in Bethlehem in modern day West Bank, Palestine beneath a beautiful Church.*



Christ's Return Will Transform Us

“Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tm 4:8). St. his hope in the final transformation of “all who have loved His appearing.” Like St. Paul we await our ultimate transformation at Christ’s return. As the Church celebrates Christ’s appearing in the flesh (the Nativity) and His appearing in power at the Jordan (the Theophany), we are reminded that Christ’s first coming would find its ultimate fulfillment only in His second coming. “In His first coming He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger. In His second coming He is clothed with light as with a garment. In His first coming He bore the cross, despising its shame; He will come a second time in glory accompanied by the hosts of angels. It is not enough for us, then, to be content with His first coming; we must wait in hope of His second coming. What we said at His first coming, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,’ we shall repeat at His last coming...” *From the Catechesis of St. Cyril of Jerusalem*



Announcements:

Please, email Fr. Thomas to request prayer intentions and memorials or to discuss information and “thank you” notes to be included in future bulletins: fatherthomasmoses@gmail.com.

New Divine Liturgy Books Printed

With permission from Fr. Philip, we were able to print temporary Divine Liturgy books. Note that some of the music has changed. With a little practice we can slowly incorporate the new music. Please visit <https://www.steliasmelkite.org/music/> to access recordings! Call Fr. Thomas at the parish phone line if you need help navigating the recordings.

2022 Offertory Envelopes Available Soon

In the back of the Nave (main space of the Church) please look for the offertory envelope box with your name on the label. Thank you for your generosity and your support for the parish! If you would like to contribute using the envelope system, but don't see your name, please email Fr. Thomas to make arrangements for a box of envelopes.

2022 Melkite Wall Calendar Available

The wall calendar for the Melkite Church that includes all the feast days and daily readings of the liturgical year are available. If you don't see any left on the tables in the entrances and would like a calendar, please email Father Thomas to make arrangements to receive a calendar.

Memorial Gift for Fr. Saba

Father Thomas would like to commission an icon for the adornment of the baptistry, and Mary Ann Astour is arranging for a memorial plaque to be included with St. Basil's departed pastors, both in memory of Fr. Saba Shofany. Please contact Fr. Thomas for more information.

Thank You:

Wael Barahmeh for patching a pot hole in the Church parking lot before Fr. Saba's Memorial Divine Liturgy on November 20th.
Janet George, Michelle Roth and many others who organized, set up, and served the luncheon for Fr. Saba's Memorial Divine Liturgy and Bishop Nicholas Samra's visit.
Dr. Angela Elephante for her generous donation of Christmas flowers.



Reading Corner:

Prepare a Place for Him: Remembering by Fr. Thomas: A reflection on Christmas and the Christmas season, written for a Blog called Catholic Exchange:

<https://catholicexchange.com/prepare-a-place-for-him-remembering>

Fasting and Giving with Saint Nicholas by Fr. John R.P. Russell: A reflection of fasting and almsgiving by a seminary classmate of Fr. Thomas,' written for a Blog called Catholic Exchange:

<https://catholicexchange.com/fasting-giving-with-saint-nicholas>

The Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

December 25

Galatians 4:4-7 – Matthew 2:1-12

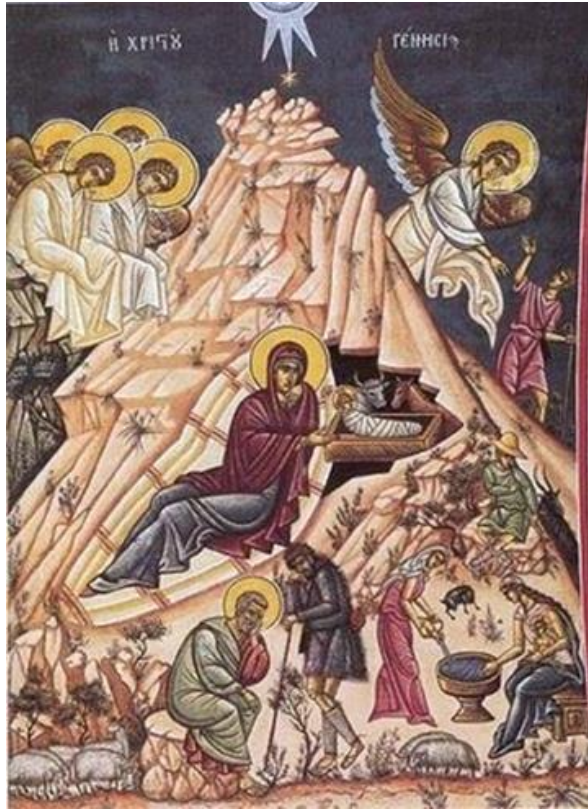
Christ is Born – Glorify Him!

OUR NATURE HAS BEEN

TRANSFORMED IN CHRIST...our nature is being transformed in Christ... our nature will be transformed in Christ. At first glance this may seem like a grammar exercise about verbs. In fact, it is a summary of theology: exploring the magnitude of the mystery which is Christ in us.

Christ's Coming Has Transformed Us

The focus of our Christmas celebration is most often on the Gospel narratives of Matthew and Luke. They speak of the trip to Bethlehem, the angels and shepherds, the magi and the star. But from the earliest days of the Church believers have seen the birth of Christ containing, as it were, the whole life and death of Christ as a seed. His acceptance of our human nature necessarily includes His acceptance of the cross and death, and His renewal of mankind by His resurrection. In the same way our decision to have children must include the decision to accept the Terrible Twos, the Traumatic Teens, and all that follows. For many religious people, when something holy comes into contact with something profane the holy thing becomes defiled. This principle is found in Judaism and Islam and accounts for the ritual washings and similar practices in these religions. The message of the Gospel, however, is that when the Holy One, the Son of God, comes into contact with something profane it is the profane thing which is changed. It is sanctified by contact with the holy. God is not defiled by His fallen creation; His creation is transformed when He enters into it in Christ. As described by St Gregory of Nyssa,



“The Word in taking flesh was mingled with humanity, and took our nature within Himself, so that the human should be deified by this mingling with God: the stuff of our nature was entirely sanctified by Christ, the first-fruits of creation” (Against Apollonarius, 2). By taking on our humanity the Word of God assumes all that we are, except sin, so that we can become by grace what He is by nature, children of the Father. Our nature is transfigured in Him. It is divinized or deified. As St Gregory the Theologian boldly expressed it, “He took our flesh and our flesh became God, since it is united with God and forms a single entity with Him” (Third Theological Oration). Our society, and contemporary culture in general, is committed to the value and freedom of the individual. We recognize that each person has worth in himself or herself and this is good. But a stress on individualism inevitably leads to the separation of peoples from one another. At worst, people are alienated from society, from God, from one another. At the least, we find it hard to see the communal dimension to the incarnation: that the entire human race is irrevocably changed because the Son of God has come into it.

Christ's Presence Transforms Us

“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). These final words of Christ to His disciples before His ascension affirm His continuing presence with us. His physical presence was limited in time; His spiritual presence will last as long as time itself will last. The focus on Christ's spiritual presence is His Body, the Church. It is the mystery or sacrament of the risen Christ, which – like all sacraments – reveals His presence behind a veil. The Church is the world being transformed in Christ; at the same time, it is Christ transforming the world. The faithful, insofar as they are living a life of repentance, seeking to model their lives on Christ's, are the world being transformed. The faithful, insofar as they celebrate Christ's presence in the Scriptures, in baptism, the Eucharist and the other mysteries – including the mystery of love for others – are Christ transforming the world. The saints are those who witness by their lives that we can be transformed and transform others in Him. Christ's presence in the Scriptures was at first practically limited to its public reading in the assembly. People would listen carefully so as to memorize what they heard. Only the wealthy could afford hand-copied Scriptures for their personal use. In addition, Books of Scripture, particularly the Gospels, would be richly adorned, carried in procession and offered for veneration, reminding believers that Christ was truly in them. Since the invention of printing, the Scriptures have become increasingly available; as a result, we may not be as quick to recognize the divine presence in a paperback Bible as in the Gospel on the holy table. What enables us to experience the presence of Christ when we read the Scriptures – or, for that matter, when we assist at the Liturgy or other mysteries? St Isaac the Syrian offers the following advice: “Never approach the words of the mysteries that are in the Scriptures without praying and asking for God's help. Say, ‘Lord, grant me to feel the power that is in them.’ Reckon prayer to be the key that opens the true meaning of the Scriptures” (Ascetical Treatises, 73). Even more hidden to us is the presence of Christ in others. This presence calls silently for us to acknowledge Him, a call that we often are too deaf to hear. Some, like Mother Teresa and others like her, can hear that call and they become the light and salt of the Gospel sayings. The presence Paul expresses here of these saints with their acute hearing of Christ's voice is one of the signs that Christ is transforming the world even now.