

ST BASIL GREEK MELKITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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SUNDAY 13TH AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE CROSS
Saturday, December 7 & Sunday, December 8, 2019

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**WEEKLY SERVICES**

**Daily Liturgy:** Monday-Friday at 8:30AM  
**Holy Liturgy:** Saturday at 4:30PM, Sunday at 11:00AM  
**Matins/ Orthos:** Every Sunday at 9:00AM  
**Holy Confession:** Every Monday at 4-6PM  
**Vespers:** Every Saturday at 3:00PM  
**Holy Rosary:** Every Sunday at 10:30AM

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SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yany, Wael and his son Jordan Barahmeh, Michael Klockowski, Eugene Hutchinson, Maggy Attalah, Nancy Gazzal, Rose Pawlinga, Jean Benoit and Fouad Marji. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

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**WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!**

**Weekly Collection Nov. 30/Dec. 1: \$ 390.00**  
**Fuel Donation: \$ 335.00**  
**Cheese Sale: \$ 60.00**  
**Memorial Offering: \$ 10.00**

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† **MEMORIAL MASSES** †

THIS SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

† **Kathleen Southworth**, By Robert Lalli

NEXT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

NEXT SUNDAY DECEMBER 15

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**2019 ST. BASIL CHRISTMAS GIFTS PARTY- SATURDAY DECEMBER 14, 2019**

**SAVE THE DATE**

Parents, Gidos & Sitos, Aunts, Uncles, the holidays are fast approaching... St. Basil Community is looking forward to coming together to celebrate St. Nicolas Activity and the Birth of Jesus Christ. The celebration will be held in the Auditorium, immediately following Saturday Liturgy. There will be Sunday Liturgy offered, December 15, 2019. Hot Coffee/tea will be offered with sweets/cakes. Santa and his Elf will be joining us; please bring a wrapped/labeled gift for your child with a value of \$20 or less. More details to follow...

**CELEBRATING OUR SPIRITUAL ANCESTORS**

EACH MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL may be said to have three dimensions: the past, the present and the future. To see the “past” of the Incarnation, we look to the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the New Covenant. For its “present,” we look to the fruits of the incarnation in our experience today. Its “future” shows the completion of this mystery in the life of the world to come.

As we approach the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, our Church “celebrates the past,” by commemorating the forefathers, the spiritual and physical ancestors of Christ, the holy prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament. To some of them, the Scripture specifically attributes particular prophetic texts which point to Christ. Others, simply by their place in the Genealogy of Christ, point to the reality of His human nature and His connection to the people of Israel: “Son of David, son of Abraham.”

Finally, our celebration of the Nativity, built around the imagery of the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke, takes us back to the time of His coming in the flesh, the event to which the Old Testament pointed. As we sing on the Sunday before Christmas, “O Mary, unwedded Mother, in your virginal womb you bore Christ, whom the prophets had once foretold in contemplation. By His Nativity He now makes the Fathers exult with joy!” (canon, ode 6).

**Celebrating the Present Theosis:** While the secular celebration of Christmas, with its crèches and carols, is often content to focus only on the past, the tradition of our Church is more interested in the present: the meaning of Christ’s coming for our life today. Our Byzantine hymns continually connect Gospel events from the past to the present by affirming that “*Today* the Virgin is on her way to the cave...” – “*Now* the prophecy is about to be fulfilled...” and “*Christ is born...*” Christ’s nativity – and all the mysteries of the Church year – are not a matter of looking back in time; we celebrate them because they are affecting us now. The purpose of Christ’s coming in the flesh – His incarnation – is to change our life. The early Fathers expressed that purpose in this way: “Christ became human so that man might become divine.” As we sing at every Divine Liturgy, the “only-begotten Son and Word of God” took flesh, became incarnate, assumed our human nature. He took up our nature, becoming like us in all things, except sin, in order to give us a share in His divine nature. The fruit of His incarnation is our deification.

*Theosis*, the Greek term for deification, means that, because God has become one of us, we can become like Him. He is the only truly Holy One, yet we can become holy by sharing in His life. Because of the incarnation, the impossible has become possible: we can become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. Our celebration of Christ’s Nativity proclaims Theosis as the very purpose of the incarnation. During the week leading up to Christmas, we sing this troparion which portrays the Incarnation as fulfilling the original purpose of creation: “Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all... Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.” This reflects the Genesis story of creation, in which “*God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’... so God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*” (Gen 1;26, 27). In the teaching of the Church Fathers, this “image” of God in us means the spiritual side of our nature, which distinguishes us from the lower orders of creation. They explained the “likeness” to mean the ability to act in a holy, godlike manner. With the fall, the Fathers teach, we lost that likeness. We retained the image of God in us, but it was scarred, unable to function as God intended.

With the Incarnation, this likeness was restored to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus. He was a “new Adam,” the man that God intended. Christ communicated a share in this restored likeness to others after His death and resurrection. By being united to Him in baptism, we could become by God’s grace “*partakers of the divine nature*” (2 Pt 1:4). We no longer relate to God simply as creature to Creator, but as sharers in His own life. (*DecLeaflets*2019)