



The Messenger

Sunday, January 1, 2023
Κυριακή, 1η Ιανουαρίου

The Circumcision of our Lord
Περιτομή του Ιησού Χριστού

Weekly Worship Guide

The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation • Atlanta, GA

Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia Emmelia, Mother of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Makrina, and Peter of Sebaste Gregory, Bishop of Nanzianzos, Father of Gregory the Theologian, Peter the New Martyr of the Peloponnesos Theodotos the Martyr, Righteous Theodosios of Triglia, Telemachos the Martyr, Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe

St. Basil the Great



Saint Basil the Great was born towards the end of the year 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia, to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. He studied in Constantinople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where also he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "the Theologian." Through the good influence of his sister Macrina, he chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career. He visited the monks in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, and upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and his sister Macrina were already treading the path of the ascetical life. It is at that hermitage that he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, when the bishop of his country reposed, he was elected to succeed to the throne and was entrusted with the Church of Christ, which he tended for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and strict asceticism, having no other care than to defend holy Orthodoxy as

a worthy successor of the Apostles. The Emperor Valens, and Modestus, the Eparch of the East, who were of one mind with the Arians, tried with threats of exile and of torments to bend the Saint to their own confession, because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia, and preserved it from heresy when Arianism was at its strongest. But he set all their malice at naught, and in his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. Modestus, amazed at Basil's fearlessness in his presence, said that no one had ever so spoken to him. "Perhaps," answered the Saint, "you have never met a bishop before." The Emperor Valens himself was almost won over by Basil's dignity and wisdom.

When Valens' son fell gravely sick, he asked Saint Basil to pray for him. The Saint promised that his son would be restated if Valens agreed to have him baptized by the Orthodox; Valens agreed, Basil prayed, and the son was restored. But afterwards the Emperor had him baptized by Arians, and the child died soon after. Later, Valens, persuaded by his counselors, decided to send the Saint into exile because he would not accept the Arians into communion; but his pen broke when he was signing the edict of banishment. He tried a second time and a third, but the same thing happened, so that the Emperor was filled with dread, and tore up the document, and Basil was not banished. The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labors, at the helm of the Church, departed to the Lord on the 1st of January, in 379 at the age of forty-nine.

His writings are replete with wisdom and erudition, and rich are these gifts he set forth in the doctrines concern the mysteries both of the creation (see his Hexaemeron) and of the Holy Trinity (see On the Holy Spirit). Because of the majesty and keenness of his eloquence, he is honored as "the revealer of heavenly things" and "the Great."

Excerpt from "A Family Full of Saints" by Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars

Order of Hymns Following The Small Entrance

Ἀναστάσιμον Ἀπολυτίκιον. Ἦχος δ'.

Τὸ φαιδρὸν τῆς ἀναστάσεως κήρυγμα, ἐκ τοῦ Ἀγγέλου μαθοῦσαι αἱ τοῦ Κυρίου Μαθήτριάι, καὶ τὴν προγονικὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀπορρήψασαι, τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις καυχώμεναι ἔλεγον· Ἐσκύλευται ὁ θάνατος, ἠγγέρθη Χριστὸς ὁ Θεός, δωρούμενος τῷ κόσμῳ τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τῆς Ἑορτῆς. Ἦχος α'.

Τοῦ λίθου σφραγισθέντος.

Μορφὴν ἀναλλοιώτως ἀνθρωπίνην προσέλαβες, Θεὸς ὢν κατ' οὐσίαν, πολυεὐπλαγχνε Κύριε· καὶ Νόμον ἐκπληρῶν, περιτομὴν, θελήσει καταδέχῃ σαρκικὴν, ὅπως παύσης τὰ σκιώδη, καὶ περιέλῃς τὸ κάλυμμα τῶν παθῶν ἡμῶν. Δόξα τῇ ἀγαθότητι τῇ σῆ, δόξα τῇ εὐσπλαγχνίᾳ σου, δόξα τῇ ἀνεκφράστῳ Λόγῃ συγκαταβάσει σου.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τοῦ Ἁγίου. Ἦχος α'.

Εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος σου, ὡς δεξαμένην τὸν λόγον σου, δι' οὗ θεοπρεπῶς ἐδογματίσας, τὴν φύσιν τῶν ὄντων ἐτράνωσας, τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἦθη κατεκόσμησας, Βασιλεῖον Ἱεράτευμα, Πάτερ Ὅσιε, Χριστὸν τὸν Θεὸν ἰκέτευε, δωρήσασθαι ἡμῖν τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀλεξίου. Ἦχος δ'.

Ταχὺ προκατάλαβε.

Ἐκ ῥίζης ἐβλάστησας, περιφανοῦς καὶ κλεινῆς, ἐκ πόλεως ἠνθησας, βασιλικῆς καὶ λαμπρᾶς, Ἀλέξιε πάνσοφε, πάντων δ' ὑπερφρονήσας, ὡς φθαρτῶν καὶ ῥεόντων, ἔσπευσας συναφθῆναι, τῷ Χριστῷ καὶ Δεσπότη. Αὐτὸν οὖν ἐκδυσώπει αἰεὶ, ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν.

Ἀπολυτίκιον τοῦ Ναοῦ. Ἦχος δ'.

Σήμερον τῆς σωτηρίας ἡμῶν τὸ Κεφάλαιον, καὶ τοῦ ἀπ' αἰῶνος Μυστηρίου ἡ φανέρωσις, ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, Υἱὸς τῆς Παρθένου γίνεται, καὶ Γαβριὴλ τὴν χάριν εὐαγγελίζεται. Διὸ καὶ ἡμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ τῇ Θεοτόκῳ βοήσωμεν· Χαίρει Κεχαριτωμένη, ὁ Κύριος μετὰ σοῦ.

Κοντάκιον. Ἦχος γ'.

Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον.

Ὁ τῶν ὅλων Κύριος, περιτομὴν ὑπομένει, καὶ βροτῶν τὰ πταίσματα, ὡς ἀγαθὸς περιτέμνει δίδωσι τὴν σωτηρίαν σήμερον κόσμῳ χαίρει δὲ ἐν τοῖς ὑψίστοις καὶ ὁ τοῦ Κτίστου, Ἱεράρχης καὶ φωσφόρος, ὁ θεῖος μύστης Χριστοῦ Βασίλειος.

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Mode 4.

When the women Disciples of the Lord had learned from the Angel the joyful message of the Resurrection and rejected the ancestral decision, they cried aloud to the Apostles triumphantly: Death has been despoiled, Christ God has risen, granting His great mercy to the world.

Apolytikion of the Feast. Mode 1.

The stone had been secured.

In essence being God, most-compassionate Master, * You assumed human nature without transmutation. * Fulfilling the Law, of Your own will * You accepted circumcision in the flesh, * to bring an end to the shadow, and to remove the passions that cover us. * Glory to Your benevolence, O Lord; * glory to Your compassion; * glory to Your inexpressible condescension, O Word.

Apolytikion for Saint. Mode 1.

Your proclamation went forth into all the earth, for it accepted your word, through which you taught the dogmas befitting God, you expounded on the nature of all that is, and you arranged the morals of society. A royal priesthood! Devout father Basil, intercede with Christ our God, to grant us His great mercy.

Apolytikion for Saint Alexios. Mode 4.

Come quickly.

Though you did bud forth from a renowned and notable root, * and though you did blossom from a city famed for her great imperial dignity, * yet did you scorn all things as corruptible and fleeting, * striving to be joined to Christ Your Master forever. * Entreat Him, O Alexios most wise, fervently for our souls.

Apolytikion of the Church. Mode 4.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the mystery which was hidden from eternity. The Son of God becomes the Virgin's Son, and Gabriel announces the grace of this Good News. Let us also join with him, calling to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O Woman full of grace; the Lord is with you.

Kontakion. Mode 3.

On this day.

As the Master over all * has undergone circumcision, * so He cuts away the sins * of humankind in His goodness. * On this day, upon the world He bestows salvation. * And on high * does the Creator's hierarch Basil * now rejoice, for he is known as * a most divine and light-bearing mystic of Christ.

Readings

Epistle

St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:8-12

Luke 2:20-21, 40-52

PROKEIMENON: My mouth shall speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart shall bring forth understanding

VERSE: Hear this all you nations

Brethren, see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Gospel

At that time, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

DIVINE LITURGY CONTINUES ON PAGE 51 OF THE DIVINE LITURGY BOOK

Reminders for Receiving Holy Communion

Holy Communion is offered in the Orthodox Church only to those individuals baptized and/or chrismated (confirmed) in the Orthodox Faith. To participate in Holy Communion one must be in good standing with the Church spiritually (for example, married people must have had their marriage blessed in the Church; and, all must be without grave sin on their hearts). For all Orthodox Christians, the proper preparation for Holy Communion must be observed: that is, examination of conscience, confession, reading the prayers for Holy Communion, and the proper fasting. If you have any further questions about this, please speak with the clergy. Women should remove all lipstick when approaching for Holy Communion. Please let parents with their babies and the elderly approach first. Thank you.

Support our Cathedral

Welcome, everyone!

We extend a warm welcome to our visitors worshipping with us today in our Cathedral. You are invited to join us for our fellowship following the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in Carlos Hall next to the Church. Thank you for your visit! Please stop by our hospitality table and sign the register in the Narthex.

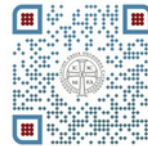
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Toni Taggart
Stacie Nefos
Athanasios Tiliakos

Contact us

2500 Clairmont Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

office@atlgoc.org
(404) 633-5870
Fax (404) 633-6018

Rev. Fr. Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean
Rev. Fr. Christos P. Mars, Protospesbyter
Theodore Mantzikos, Pastoral Assistant
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