



Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

The Genealogy of our Lord January 3, 2021

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is in our midst! He is and every shall be!

Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way (Matthew 1: 16-18))

These words of St. Matthew, who precedes the account of our Lord's birth with a full, detailed genealogy of His human ancestry, are a welcome contrast to the beginning of this new year, filled as it is with uncertainty, expectation, fear and hope. St. Matthew places the Incarnate God, Jesus Christ, firmly in the midst of our human history, our human story. It was common in the ancient world to introduce famous people with such detailed genealogies, so St. Matthew in the spirit of his time and place, does likewise. He begins with the first Patriarch of the faith, Abraham, and traces the lineage of our Lord's humanity down to the time of His birth. What I find so interesting about St. Matthew's account is that he breaks from the common tradition of his patriarchal faith and ends not with Joseph, our Lord's guardian, but with Mary, our Lord's

mother. This was something unexpected, for genealogies of that time and place would only focus on a famous person's male ancestors, not on his female ones. St. Matthew clearly knew that our Lord Jesus Christ was different than any other famous person whose ancestry could be traced; our Lord was truly God, the expected Messiah, the Son of Man expected in the end times; but, He was also human, and His very humanity was taken from the flesh of the Most Holy Theotokos, Mary. Divine, yes; but, not pure spirit in His Incarnate humanity; He was also true man. The importance of this Christological dogma cannot and must not be underestimated. In the Lord Jesus Christ we have One Who came among us, Who knows us as only a man, a human being, could know us; and, Who shows us the way that we too may follow, the way of love for God the Father through the Holy Spirit, the way that leads us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

This message is my hope and my prayer for all of you this New Year Day: Because He loves us unconditionally, with a true and perfect love, we love Him. Our faith, you see, is not a collection of do's and don'ts, regulations and laws. Our faith is faith in the One Who poured Himself out for us, Who condescends and "bows the heavens" as we pray in Great Vespers every week; Whose love leads us to love of Him and shows itself in our lives for love of one another. This, Brothers and sisters, is why we are Orthodox: to live a life of that love and to share it freely with all.

Remember that we will gather together to celebrate the beginning of that Great Story, the Story of our Lord's Nativity, on Thursday evening this week for the Divine Liturgy on the eve of the Feast. I will write again as the week progresses with updated times and details.

Soon we will say: ***Christ is born! Glorify Him!***

Fr. Elias

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