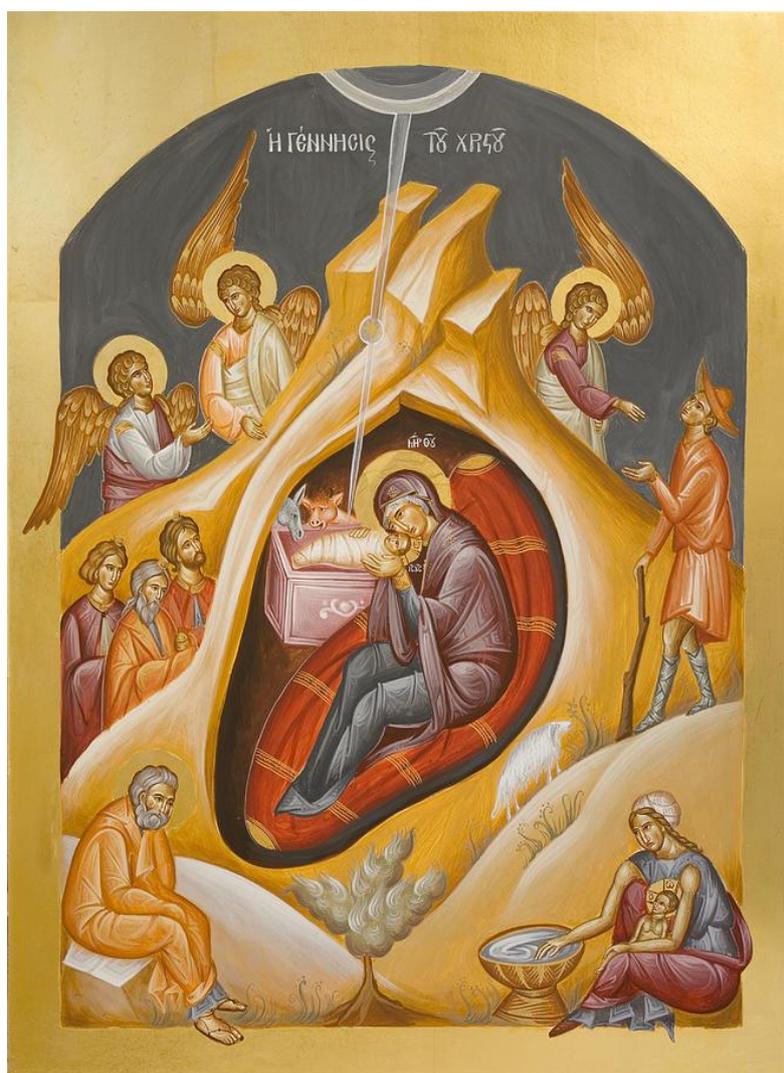


GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE
PARISH OF ST. PARASKEVI, ST. BARBARA &
ST. JOHN THE MERCIFUL
22 Marsden Crescent, St Albans
Tel. 9367 2860

Parish Priest. Rev. Fr. Demosthenes Nicolaou: 0421 704 806
Email: frdemos@stparaskevi.org.au website: www.stparaskevi.org.au

PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2018



THE NATIVITY OF OUR SAVIOUR AND LORD JESUS CHRIST (Troparion)

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, Has shone to the world the Light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, Were taught by a Star to adore You, The Sun of Righteousness, / And to know You, the Orient from on High. O Lord, glory to You!

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR!

CHRIST IS BORN – GLORIFY HIM!

PROGRAMME DECEMBER 2018

Every Thursday Evening the program is as follows:

7pm: Paraklesis service to the Theotokos (in English)

7.45: Bible study group (for all ages), led by Fr Demosthenis (church) and the St Ignatius children's group and choir (primary school age and up) in the hall

SUNDAY 2nd DECEMBER: **St Porphyrios of Kavsoalyvia**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am

MONDAY 3rd DECEMBER: **Evening: Vespers for St Barbara the Great Martyr, 7.00-8.00pm**

TUESDAY 4th DECEMBER: **St Barbara**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.30am

WEDNESDAY 5th DECEMBER: **Saint Savvas the Sanctified**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

THURSDAY 6th DECEMBER: **Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am.

SUNDAY 9th DECEMBER: **The Conception by St Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am

WEDNESDAY 12th DECEMBER: **St Spiridon the Wonderworker**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

THURSDAY 13th DECEMBER: **EVENING: ENGLISH DIVINE LITURGY, 7.30-9.00PM**

SATURDAY 15th DECEMBER: **St Eleftherios the Hieromartyr**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

SUNDAY 16th DECEMBER: **11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am

MONDAY 17th DECEMBER: **St Dionysius of Aegina**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

THURSDAY 20th DECEMBER: **St Ignatius the God-Bearer**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am

SUNDAY 23rd DECEMBER: **SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY**, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am

MONDAY 24th DECEMBER: **CHRISTMAS EVE, the Service of Vespers, The Great Hours, Matins and Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great, 5.00-10.00am**

TUESDAY 25th DECEMBER: **THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 6.00-9.00am**

WEDNESDAY 26th DECEMBER: **Synaxis of the Holy Theotokos, Matins and Divine Liturgy at the Church of Our Lady The Merciful, Bacchus Marsh, 8.00-11.00am**

THURSDAY 27th DECEMBER: **St Stephen the First Martyr, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-10.00am**

SUNDAY 30th DECEMBER: **SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY, Matins and Divine Liturgy, 7.30-11.00am**

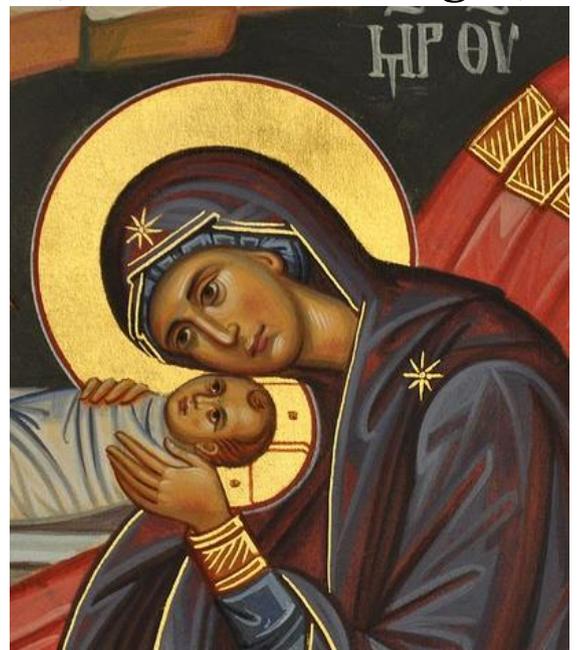
St John Chrysostom: On the Virgin Birth and the Creation of Woman

“It was fitting that the Giver of all holiness should enter this world by a pure and holy birth. For He it is that of old formed Adam from the virgin earth, and from Adam without help of woman formed woman. For as without woman Adam produced woman, so did the Virgin without man this day bring forth a man. For it is a man, saith the Lord, and who shall know him [Jer. 17:9]. For since the race of women owed to men a debt, as from Adam without woman woman came, therefore without man the Virgin this day brought forth, and on behalf of Eve repaid the debt to man.

That Adam might not take pride, that he without woman had engendered woman, a Woman without man has begotten man; so that by the similarity of the mystery is proved the similarity in nature. For as before the Almighty took a rib from Adam, and by that Adam was not made less; so in the Virgin He formed a living temple, and the holy virginity remained unchanged. Sound and unharmed Adam remained even after the deprivation of a rib; unstained the Virgin though a Child was born of her.”

St. John of Kronstadt on the Nativity of Christ

“The Nativity of Christ.—He has come upon earth, He Who in the beginning created us from earth and breathed His Divine breath into us; He has come Who “giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts xvii. 25.); He has come, He Who by a single word called all things visible and invisible from non-existence into existence, Who by a word called into being birds, fishes, quadrupeds, insects, and all creatures, existing under His almighty providence and care; He has come, He Whom the innumerable hosts of Angels continually and joy. And in what humility has He come! He is born of a poor Virgin, in a cave, wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Riches, honours, glory of this world! fall down, fall down in humility, tearful devotion, and deep gratitude before the Saviour of men, and share your riches with the poor and needy. Do not pride yourselves on your visionary, fleeting distinctions, for true distinction can only be found in virtue. Glory of this world! learn here, before the manger, your vanity. Thus, let us all humble ourselves; let us all fall down in the dust before the boundless humility and exhaustion of the Sovereign of all, of God, Who has come to heal our infirmities, to save us from pride, vanity, corruption, and every sinful impurity.”



A Word on the Life of St Porphyrios

"Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel." (Phil.1:27)

"The Elder (St Porphyrios) taught that the basic element of the Spiritual life in Christ, the great mystery of our faith, is unity in Christ. It is that sense of identifying with our brother, of carrying the burdens of one another, of living for others as we live for ourselves, of saying "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon ME" and for that "ME" to contain and to become for ourselves the pain and the problems of the other, of suffering like they suffer, of rejoicing like they rejoice, their fall becoming our fall and their getting up again becoming our getting up again.

This is why his last words, his last entreaty to God, his last prayer, his greatest desire was that we "become one." That was what he ached, wished and longed for.

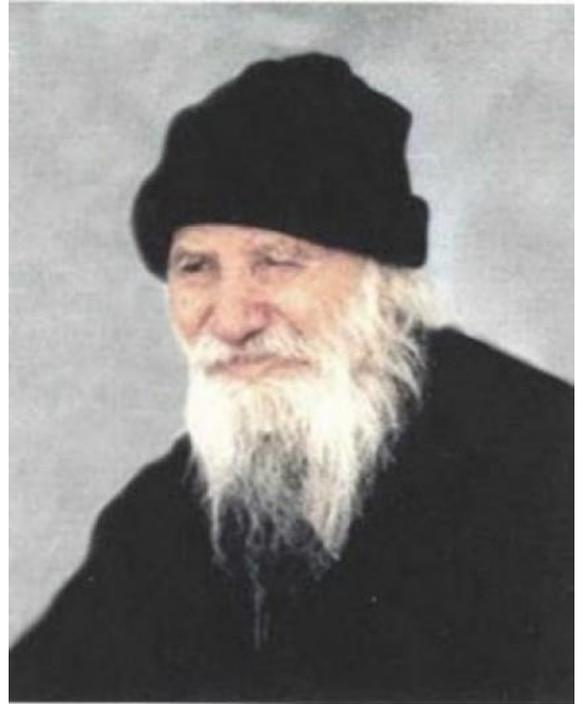
In this wonderful and simple way, how many problems were solved and how many sins were avoided. Did my brother fall? I fell. How can I blame him since I am at fault? Did my brother succeed? I succeed. How can I envy him since I am the winner?

The Elder knew that because it's our weakest point, it is here that the evil one does greatest battle. We put our own interests first. We separate ourselves. We want to flee the consequences of our actions for ourselves only. However when such a spirit prevails, there is no salvation for us. We must want to be saved along with everyone else. We should, together with God's saint, say, "If you don't save all of these people, Lord, then erase my name from the book of Life." Or, like Christ's apostle, wish to become accursed from Christ, for the sake of my fellow man, my brothers and my sisters.

This is love. This is the power of Christ. This is the essence of God. This is the royal way of spiritual life. We should love Christ who is EVERYTHING, by loving His brothers and sisters, for whom the least of which Christ died."

From: Elder Porphyrios: Testimonies and Experiences, by Klitos Ioannidis

On December 2 the holy Orthodox Church commemorates the recently-glorified God-bearing elder of our times, St. Porphyrios of Kavsoalyvia, who reposed on this day in 1991. He was known as a humble ascetic with the gift of foresight who always served the Divine Liturgy with compunction. In his memory we offer below his final letter, as well as an audio recording of his heartfelt serving of the Divine Liturgy.



While at the Holy Skete of Kavsoalyvia on Mt. Athos, the Elder Porphyrios had given orders for his grave to be dug. Through a spiritual child of his, he dictated a farewell letter of advice and forgiveness to all his spiritual children.

Here is the letter as it was sent to the site [Orthodox Outlet for Dogmatic Enquiries](#) from the Holy Convent of the Transfiguration of the Savior. It was found amongst the monk's garments that were laid out for his burial on the day of his departure. This letter is a profound example of the humility of the saints who have acquired the likeness of God through their humble ascetic offerings.

* * *

My dear spiritual Children,

Now that I am still in charge of my faculties, I want to give you some advice.

Ever since I was a child, I was always in sin. When my mother sent me to watch the animals on the mountain, (my father had gone to America to work on the Panama Canal for us his children, because we were poor), there, where I shepherded the animals, I slowly read, word by word, the life of St. John the Hut-dweller and I loved St. John very much. I said a lot of prayers, like the young child that I was, twelve or fifteen years old, I don't remember too well. I wanted to follow his example. So, with a lot of difficulty, I secretly left my

parents and came to Kavsokalyvia on the Holy Mountain. I became obedient to two elders, the true brothers, Panteleimon and Ioannikios.

They happened to be very devout and full of virtue, I loved them very much and because of that, with their blessing, I gave them absolute obedience. That helped me a lot. I also felt great love for God and got along very well.

However, because of my sins, God allowed me to become ill, and my elders told me to go to my parents in my village of St. John, Evia. Although I had sinned a lot from when I was a small child, when I returned to the world I continued to commit sins which, today are very many. The world, however, thought highly of me, and everyone shouts that I'm a saint.

I however, feel that I am the most sinful person in the world. Of course, whatever I remembered I confessed, and I know God has forgiven me. But now I have the feeling that my spiritual sins are very many and I ask all those who have known me to pray for me, because, for as long as I lived, I humbly prayed for you, too. Now that I'm leaving for heaven, I have the feeling that God will say to me, "What are you doing here?" I have only one thing to say to him, "I am not worthy of here, Lord, but whatever your love wills, it'll do for me." From then on, I don't know what will happen. I however, wish for God's love to act.

I always pray that my spiritual children will love God, Who is everything, so that He will make us worthy to enter His earthly uncreated Church. We must begin from here. I always made the effort to pray, to read the hymns of the Church, the Holy Scriptures and the Lives of the Saints. May you do the same. I tried, by the grace of God, to approach God and may you also do the same.

I beg all of you to forgive me for whatever I did to upset you.

Hieromonk Porphyrios

Kavsokalyvia, June 4/17 1991

St Porphyrios Quotes

“...This is the way we should see Christ. He is our friend, our brother; He is whatever is good and beautiful. He is everything. Yet, He is still a friend and He shouts it out, "You're my friends, don't you understand that? We're brothers. I'm not...I don't hold hell in my hands. I am not threatening you. I love you. I want you to enjoy life together with me.”

“...Love Christ and put nothing before His Love. He is joy, He is life, He is light. Christ is Everything. He is the ultimate desire, He is everything. Everything beautiful is in Christ.”

“It is a great art to succeed in having your soul sanctified. A person can become a saint anywhere. He can become a saint in Omonia Square (the commercial center of Athens, also synonymous with vice and corruption), if he wants. At your work, whatever it may be, you can become a saint through meekness, patience, and love. Make a new start every day, with new resolution, with enthusiasm and love, prayer and silence — not with anxiety so that you get a pain in the chest.”

“Our religion is perfectly and profoundly conceived. What is simple is also what is most precious. Accordingly, in your spiritual life engage in your daily contest simply, easily, and without force. The soul is sanctified and purified through the study of the Fathers, through the memorization of the psalms and of portions of Scripture, through the signing of hymns and through the repetition of the Jesus Prayer. Devote your efforts, therefore, to these spiritual things and ignore all the other things.”

“The Lord Himself will teach us how to pray. We won't learn prayer on our own, nor will anyone else teach us it. Don't let's say to ourselves, 'I have made such - and-such a number of prostrations, so now I have secured divine grace,' but rather let us make entreaty for the pure light of divine knowledge to shine within us and open our spiritual eyes so that we may understand His divine words. In this way, without realizing it, we love God without contorting ourselves and without exertion and struggle. What is difficult for man is easy for God. We will love God suddenly when grace overshadows us. If we love Christ very much, the prayer will say itself. Christ will be continually in our mind and in our heart.”

COLOURING IN CORNER



