



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor

RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. THEOPHAN LEONARCZYK, Eparchial Chancellor

"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)

December 24, 2017

THE SUNDAY OF THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, JOHN CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, TIM ERMATINGER, KEN KOMISAREK, MARYLOU LAZOS, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JOE NEHME, MAURICE PARE', PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (4th Tone) Page 52

The Troparion the Holy Ancestors of Christ (2nd Tone)

Faith can accomplish great things. Through it the three holy young men rejoice in the flames as if they had been in refreshing water, and Daniel in the midst of lions is like a shepherd among his sheep. Through their intercession, O Christ God, save our souls.

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 16

The Kontakon of the Preparation of the Nativity of the Lord (3rd Tone)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word of God in an ineffable manner. Rejoice therefore, O universe, when you hear this news, and glorify, with the angels and the shepherds, Him who shall appear as a new child, being God from all eternity.

THE PROKIMENON:

**BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, GOD OF OUR FATHERS,
AND YOUR NAME IS WORTHY OF PRAISE AND GLORIOUS FOREVER!**

*For You are just in all You have done to us,
and all Your works are true and Your ways right!*

Today's Readings: Hebrews 11: 9-10, 32-40 and Matthew 1: 1-25

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, (December 23) 4:30 PM:

**For the repose of George Kessop (23rd),
and Adma Solomon (14th)**

Sunday, (December 24) 11:00 AM

**For the repose of Nassim Sleiman (2nd Anniversary),
by the Moussoba Family**

**For the repose of Elizabeth Freije (5th Anniversary),
by her sister Grace Freije**

Next Saturday, (December 30) 4:30 PM:

**For the repose of Louise Samara (29th), Frederick Solomon (15th),
Margaret Marpes (40th), Eva Abood (27th), and George Abood (46th)**

Next Sunday, (December 31) 11:00 AM

**For the repose of Ethel Steinmetz (23rd Anniversary)
by her son Fr. Tom, and Family**



Can you give a Christmas gift to help support your parish?

I am asking that each family prayerfully consider making a gift of \$100 to the church between now and Jan. 6. If you cannot afford a gift of \$100, then I ask you to give according to your means. If you can afford more than \$100, then I ask you to please be more generous.

When you make out your check to Our Lady of the Cedars Church please write: "*Parish Christmas Gift*" in the memo of the check. You may mail the check to the church or include it in the Sunday collection. So far we have raised \$11,900 towards our goal of \$17,000.

Thank you for your generosity.

- Fr. Tom



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

The Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ will be commemorated with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, at 7:30 PM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, at 11:00 AM

Sunday School will not be held on Sunday, December 31.
Classes will resume on Sunday, January 7

Christmas Carols: 7:00 PM on Christmas Eve!

Get in the spirit of the season! Come to church early tonight join in the singing of traditional Christmas carols. The caroling will begin at 7:00 PM and conclude at 7:30 PM, when the Divine Liturgy begins.



The 2018 offering envelopes will (hopefully) be available next weekend. If you are not receiving envelopes and would like to receive envelopes for 2018, please tell Fr. Tom.

Attendance - Last Sat. 4:30 PM: 26 Last Sun. 11:00 AM: 64

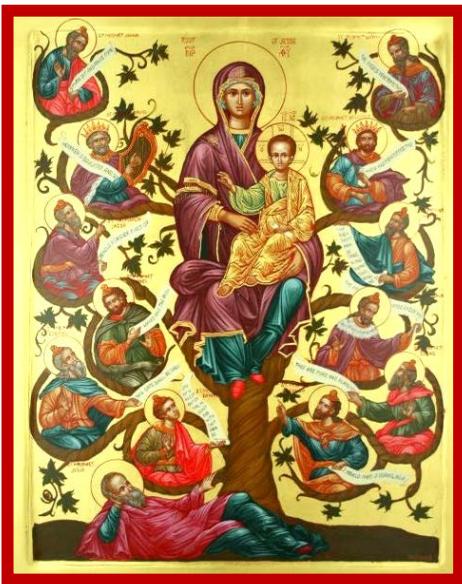
Last Weekend's Collection: \$ \$1,141.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$36.⁰³

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$76,504.³²

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Sun., Dec. 24	7:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord
Mon. Dec. 25	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord
Wed., Dec. 27	7:00 PM	Vespers
Sat., Dec. 30	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord
Sun., Dec. 31	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Dec. 31	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday after the Nativity of the Lord



The Sunday of the Genealogy of Christ

The Sunday before Christmas is known as the Sunday of the Holy Genealogy. On this day the Church commemorates the ancestors of Christ from Adam to Joseph the Betrothed. Christ's full humanity meant not just that he possessed a human nature but that he had blood relatives, and that he came from a long family line. One of the shortcomings of modern culture is the tendency to leave the past behind and focus on the now. This has resulted in people feeling rootless and incomplete.

In our Byzantine tradition we remember our ancestors because they are part of us. To remember our family and our family roots is to affirm our humanity;

likewise, to overlook our family connections is to diminish our humanity. To remember is an act of love and faithfulness. We all came from somewhere. Our family heritage is a source of blessing and sometimes a source of pain. As Christians we have both a biological and a spiritual family lineage. Salvation in Christ extends to both family lines.

St. Paul writes in Ephesians 3:14-15: *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the **whole family** in heaven and on earth is named....* Here Paul is looking to the future when all of humanity and creation become one family under the fatherhood of God.

This Sunday before Christmas provides us an opportunity to reflect on the way God works mysteriously and sometimes obscurely in our family history. It also reminds to have faith that God is working redemptively in human history. Sin might be present but God's grace even more so (Romans 5:15).

This Sunday also reminds us that Jesus was a real historical person and not some mythical figure. This means that Christian theology is ultimately grounded in the empirical events of the birth of Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, His crucifixion under Pilate and His third day resurrection. Interestingly, the first Christian heretics did not deny that Jesus was a divine being. They denied His humanity and claimed that he only appeared to be a true man, but was not really one since "flesh and blood" were taken to be intrinsically degrading if not downright evil. Thus the apostle Paul had to insist that in Jesus, who belongs to the Jews "according to the flesh" (Rom 9:5), the "whole fullness of deity dwells *bodily*" (Col 2:9), and that it is the same Jesus who died and was buried and raised in the flesh as a real man, who is Messiah and Lord.

There is a hunger among many for a historically grounded Christianity. The Sunday of the Holy Genealogy is also a reminder just such a Church can be found here, in the Melkite Church, which has a historical lineage that reaches back to the original Apostles.



O people, let us celebrate the forefeast of the Nativity of Christ. Raising our minds on high, let us go to Bethlehem in spirit. With the eyes of the soul, let us gaze upon the Virgin as she hastens to the cave to give birth to our God, the Lord of all. When he beheld this wonder, Joseph thought he saw a mortal wrapped in swaddling clothes; but from all that came to pass, he understood it was the true God, who grants the world great mercy.

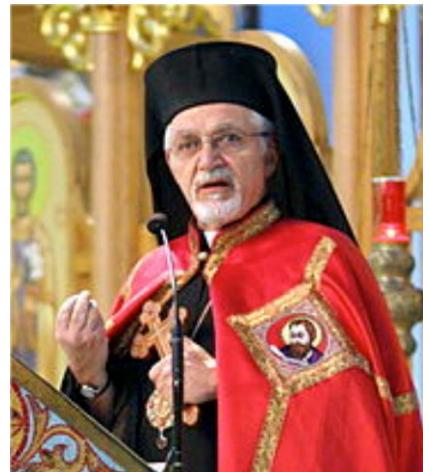
Make ready, O Bethlehem! Throw open your gates, O Eden! For He who exists forever comes to be that which He was not; and He who formed all creation now takes a form, granting the world great mercy.

Make ready, O cave, to receive the Mother who bears Christ within her womb. O manger, receive the Word who destroyed the sins of mankind. O shepherds, keep watch and then bear witness to the awesome wonder. O Magi, come from Persia and bring your gifts to the King. For the Lord has appeared from a Virgin Mother, yet she bowed to Him as a servant and spoke to Him within her heart saying, “How were You conceived in my? How did You grow in me, O Jesus, my Savior and my God?”

— *From Vespers for the Paramony of the Nativity of the Lord*

The Bishop’s Appeal

Give thanks to God for the Gift of His Divine Son born for us, and give back to the Lord in return for all the blessings He has bestowed upon you and your families in 2017: Give a generous gift to support our Melkite Eparchy in America. Your gift pays a tribute of honor for the labor and sacrifice of our forebears in the faith who have gone before us, and helps assure our Church continues in to promote their tradition. Offer thanks to God by giving a generous gift to the Bishop’s Appeal. Your gift means so much to so many! Our Father and Shepherd, Bishop Nicholas thanks you for your generous support and asks God’s abundant blessings upon you and all your family on this Feast of the Holy Nativity of Christ and throughout the New Year! Extra Appeal donation slips are available in the back of the church.



Walking in the Midst of the Fire

Our secular society uses the word *economy* for financial matters exclusively; the term has other meanings in the Church, particularly in the East. “Divine economy” is the traditional way we refer to the way God interacts with the world, particularly in achieving the restoration of humanity to communion with Himself. Sometimes the term is paraphrased as *plan of salvation* or *dispensation*. The creation itself, and all the events connected with our redemption in Jesus Christ are included in the Church’s term *economy*. They are the way God “manages” His creation.



The highpoint of God’s plan for us is the Incarnation of the Word. Everything in the divine economy leading up to the coming of Christ is in some way a preparation for this event. The saga of Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites in Egypt, their exodus to the promised land and their subsequent history are all aspects of this plan which St Paul calls “*the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ*” (Eph 3:9).

One particular moment in the story of Israel figures prominently in our celebration during the Nativity Fast: the exile of the Jews to Babylon and the experience of three of them in the fiery furnace. These three young men are remembered along with the prophet Daniel on December 17 each year. They are also specifically invoked on the two Sundays before the Nativity because of the accomplishments of their faith.

The Babylonian Exile

In 605 BC the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and made its king a vassal. Responding to several rebellious incidents the Babylonians pillaged the city in 597 BC and destroyed the temple built by Solomon. The Jewish king, his court and many prominent Jews were taken captive and deported to Babylon. Their exile would end in 538 BC when the Persian king Cyrus the Great defeated the Babylonians and allowed the Jews to return home.

The Book of Daniel

The story of the exile and captivity of the Jews forms the background of the Book of Daniel. Its present form, written in Hebrew and Greek, dates to the mid-second century BC, but contains some original Aramaic tales dating from the exile as well. It is generally considered an apocalyptic book, offering its readers consolation that their present troubles (Greek and Roman occupation) would one day end as the Babylonian exile had ended: with the liberation of the Jews and the restoration of true worship.

Daniel was a highly placed Jew, highly regarded for his faithfulness to the Law in an era when the Law was largely neglected. The prophet Ezechiel, who lived through the Babylonian exile, puts Daniel in the highest company in this prophecy: *“The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: ‘Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,’ says the Lord GOD”* (EZ 14:14).

The first part of the book includes three dramatic and prophetic scenes concerning Daniel and three other young Jewish nobles. When they were taken captive, they were impressed into their captor’s service and given Babylonian names. *“Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king’s descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king’s delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego”* (Dan 1:3-7). The book uses these names indiscriminately, which sometimes confuses readers.

From the first these young Jews refused to violate the Law. They would not eat the meats given them and would only eat vegetables. Nevertheless they rose to positions of responsibility in the Babylonian Empire.

When Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden idol on the plain of Dura, the three young men refused to worship it as the king had commanded, even though he had stipulated: *“whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace”* (Dan 3:6).

When confronted by the king the three Jews insisted, *“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up”* (Dan 3:17-18). They knew that God could deliver them and believed that He would. But if that was not His will, they would not lose faith: they still were not going to worship the idol.

“And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ ‘Look!’ he answered, ‘I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like a Son of God’” (Dan 3: 23-25).

The angel of God who protected these young Jews is seen by the Church as a type of Christ, the One who walks among His people at all times, in the midst of every circumstance, even when God seems absent. It is He whose coming in the flesh we are about to celebrate.

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Donna Andruskiewicz, Olivia Aragon, Paul Archambeault, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Sarah Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Sarah Dagher, Bishop John Elya, Sher Farrow, Mary Fregeau, Christine Freitas, John Gallagher, Marguerite Ganem, Mary Ann Garvey, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Laurice Haddad, Nick Haddad, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Eileen Kennedy, Leila Khoury, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Diana Label, Haley Lesmerises, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, John MacArthur, Sr., Ramona Matias, Susan Merrill, Maria Moser, Joanne Nader, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Raymond Nehme, Samira Nehme, Blaise Notter, Steve Notter, Steven O'Leary, Ellen Osgood, Josephine Paquette, MaryJo Pond, Sheila Quinn, Susan Quintal, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Kara Salvas, Matthieu Sherburne, Raymond Sherburne, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, George Webber, Martha Webber, Marilyn Whitmore, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

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 by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.





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Today's Readings:

A reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews (11: 9-10, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith, Abraham lived in the Land of the Promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the co-heirs of the same promise, for he was looking for the city with fixed foundations, of which city the architect and builder is God. And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barac, Samson, Jephthe, David and Samuel and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained the fulfillment of promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, routed foreign armies.

Women had their dead restored to them though resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to yield for their release in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others again suffered mockery and blows, even chains and jailings. They were stoned, cut to pieces, put to the question, killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, distressed, afflicted (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, mountains, caves and holes in the ground.

And none of these, despite the positive witnessing of faith, received what was promised, for God has something better in store for us, so that they were not to reach their final perfection without us.

الرسالة (عبرانيين 11: 9-10 و 32-40)

يا أخوة، بالآيمان نزل إبراهيم الى ارض الميعاد نزوله في بلاد غربة، وسكن في أخبية مع اسحق ويعقوب الوريثين معه للموعد نفسه، لأنه كان ينتظر المدينة ذات الاسس، التي الله صانعها وبارئها. وماذا أقول أيضاً؟ انه يضيقُ بي الوقتُ ان اخبرت عن جدعون وبارق وشمشون، ويفتاح وداود وصموئيل والانبياء، الذين بالآيمان قهروا الممالك وعملوا البر، ونالوا الموعد وسدوا افواه الاسود. وأطفأوا قوة النار ونجوا من حد السيف، وتقوا من ضعف وصاروا أشداء في القتال، وكسروا معسكرات الاجانب، واسترجعت نساء أمواتهن بالقيامة، وآخرون قد عُذّبوا بتوتير الاعضاء والضرب، ولم يقبلوا النجاة ليحصلوا على قيامة أفضل. وآخرون قد ذاقوا الهزة والسياط والقيود أيضاً والسجن. رجموا، نشروا، امتحنوا، ماتوا بحد السيف، ساحوا في جلود الغنم والمعز، مُعوزين، مُضايقين، مجهودين. ولم يكن العالم مستحقاً لهم، تائهيين في البراري والجبال والمغاور وكهوف الارض. فهؤلاء كلهم المشهود لهم بالآيمان لم ينالوا الموعد، لان الله قد سبق فنظر لنا شيئاً أفضل، لكي لا يكملوا بمعزلٍ عنّا.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (1: 1-25)

The book of the origin of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, Jacob begot Judah and his brethren. Judah begot Perez and Zarah whose mother was Tamar. Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram. And Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, Nahshon begot Salma. Salma begot Boaz of Rahab. Boaz begot Obed of Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, Jesse begot David the King.

And David the King begot Solomon of the former wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, Abijah begot Asa. And Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, Joram begot Azariah. And Azariah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, Ahaz begot Ezechiah. And Ezechiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, Amon begot Josiah. And Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brethren at the time of deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. And Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, Eliakim begot Azor. And Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, Achim begot Eliud. And Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of her was born Jesus, Who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations. And from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations.

Now the origin of Christ was like this. When Mary His mother had been betrothed to Joseph, she was found, before they came together, to be with child by the Holy Spirit. But Joseph her husband, being a just man and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was thinking of putting her away privately. But while he was considering these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins."

Now all this came to pass that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son; and they shall call his name Emmanuel;*" which is interpreted, "God with us." So Joseph, arising from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took Mary to be his wife. And he did not know her till she brought forth her firstborn son. And he called His name Jesus.

الانجيل (متى 1:1-25)

كتاب ميلاد يسوع المسيح ابن داود ابن ابراهيم. فإبراهيم ولد اسحق، واسحق ولد يعقوب، ويعقوب ولد يهوذا وإخوته. ويهوذا ولد فارص وزاراح من تamar، وفارص ولد حصرون، وحصرون ولد آرام. وأرام ولد عميناداب، وعميناداب ولد نحشون، ونحشون ولد سلمون، وسلمون ولد بوعز من راحاب، وبوعز ولد عوبيد من راعوت، وعوبيد ولد يسى، ويسى ولد داود الملك. وداود الملك ولد سليمان من التي كانت لاوريا. وسليمان ولد رحبعام، ورحبعام ولد آبيا، وآبيا ولد آسا. وآسا ولد يوشافاط، ويوشافاط ولد يورام، ويورام ولد عزيا. وعزيا ولد يوثام، ويوثام ولد آحاز، وآحاز ولد حزقيا، وحزقيا ولد منسى، ومنسى ولد آمن، وآمون ولد يوشيا، ويوشيا ولد يكنيا وإخوته في جلاء بابل. ومن بعد جلاء بابل يكنيا ولد شالتيئيل، وشالتيئيل ولد زربابل. وزربابل ولد أبيهود، وأبيهود ولد ألياقيم، وألياقيم ولد عازور. وعازور ولد صادوق، وصادوق ولد آكيم وأكيم ولد أبيهود. وأبيهود ولد ألعازر، وألعازر ولد متان، ومتان ولد يعقوب. ويعقوب ولد يوسف رجل مريم، التي منها ولد يسوع الذي يدعى المسيح. فكل الاجيال من ابراهيم الى داود أربعة عشر جيلاً، ومن داود الى جلاء بابل أربعة عشر جيلاً، ومن جلاء بابل الى المسيح أربعة عشر جيلاً. أما مولد يسوع المسيح فكان هكذا: لما خطبت مريم أمه ليوسف ووجدت من قبل أن يسكنها معاً حبل من الروح القدس. وإذ كان يوسف رجلاً صديقاً ولم يرد ان يشهرها، عزم على تخليتها سراً. وفيما هو يفكر في ذلك إذا بملاك الرب قد تراءى له في الحلم قائلاً: يا يوسف ابن داود، لا تخف أن تأخذ امرأتك مريم، فإن المولود فيها هو من الروح القدس. وستلد ابناً فتسميه يسوع، لأنه هو الذي يخلص شعبه من خطاياهم. وكان هذا كله ليتم ما قال الرب بالنبى القائل: ها إن العذراء تحبل وتلد ابناً ويسمى عمانوئيل، الذي ترجمته الله معنا. فلما نهض يوسف من النوم فعل كما أمره ملاك الرب، فأخذ امرأته. ولم يعرفها حتى ولدت ابناً بكر، فسماه يسوع.