

The Nativity of Christ Kontakion

Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Transcendent in essence. The earth offereth the cave to the unapproachable One. Angels with shepherds glorify, and magi journey with a star; for a new Child hath been born for our sakes, the pre-eternal God.

St Joseph the Betrothed

The holy and righteous Joseph the Betrothed was the foster-father of Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament. Not much is known of Joseph except that he was “of the House of David” and lived in the town of Nazareth. His date of death is unknown, though he was still living when Jesus was 12 years old.

He was betrothed to the Virgin Mary at the time that Mary conceived Jesus. Luke says that he lived at Nazareth in Galilee; however, according to Matthew, it was only after the return from Egypt that he settled in Nazareth. He is called a “just man”. He was by trade a carpenter. He is last mentioned in connection with the journey to Jerusalem, when Jesus was twelve years old. It is probable that Joseph died before Jesus entered on his public ministry because only Mary was present at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, and he is not described at the crucifixion along with Mary. In addition, St. Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Jesus, a duty that would have fallen to St. Joseph had he been alive.

Jesus Christ is described as being the brother of James, Justus, Jude, and Simon, and several sisters. A tradition at least as early as the second century, explains that these “brothers and sisters” were from Joseph’s marriage to Salome who left him a widower before he was betrothed to Mary and so making them step-brothers and step-sisters. That Jesus commended Mary to the care of John the Evangelist while on the cross has been interpreted to also suggest that Joseph had died by that time, and that Joseph and Mary did not have any other children who might care for Mary.

In many icons of the Nativity, Joseph is shown being tempted by the Devil (depicted as an old man with furred wings) to break off his betrothal, and resisting that temptation (cf. Nativity Icon).

St Joseph is commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity.

Source: Orthodox Wiki

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Tone 4.

**Commemoration of Joseph the Betrothed; David the Prophet
and King; James the Brother of God**

Epistle Reading Galatians (1:11-19)

Prokeimenon in Tone III

God is wondrous in His saints.

Verse: Bless God in the congregations.

Brethren, I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man; for neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me by revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my manner of life in time past in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and destroyed it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age within my nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me, even from my mother’s womb, and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the nations, immediately I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord’s brother.

Alleluia.

Verse 1: In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be put to shame for ever.

Verse 2: Be Thou unto me a God to defend me!

Gospel Reading
Matthew (2:13-23)

At that time, after they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise! Take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.” So Joseph arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. They remained there until the death of Herod, so that what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I have called my son. When Herod saw that he had been outwitted by the wise men, he became extremely angry. He dispatched [his men] and killed all the male children who lived in Bethlehem and all the surrounding countryside, two years old and under, according to the exact time which he had learned from the wise men. And so, what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping and great mourning: Rachel weeping for her children. She would not be comforted, because they are no more. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream when he was in Egypt, saying: “Arise! Take the young child and his mother, and return to the land of Israel; those who were trying to kill the young child are dead.” Joseph arose and took the young child and his mother, and they came into the land of Israel. However, when Joseph heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in the place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee. He thus arrived and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Troparion of the Resurrection. Tone 4.

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection; they cast away the ancestral curse and

elatedly told the apostles; Death is over thrown! Christ our God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

The Nativity of Christ
Troparion

Thy 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 Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on High. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Holy Righteous Ones
Troparion

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, to David, the ancestor of God; thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; and thou didst give glory with the shepherds; thou didst worship with the Magi, and didst receive the news from the Angel. Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

St Martin the Merciful
Troparion

In signs and in miracles thou wast renowned throughout the land of Gaul. By grace thou art a light for the world, O Martin, Bishop blessed of God. Deeds of mercy and compassion filled thy life with their splendours, teaching and wise counsel were thy riches and treasures, which still thou dost dispense freely to those who honour thee.

St Helen
Troparion

We behold thee, glorious Helen, with thy God-inspired son, in the joys of the kingdom of Heaven, and we magnify Christ, for he hath revealed to us thine honoured festival, giving light more brilliant than the sun. Therefore we cry in faith: O People, exalt Christ above all forever!

