

THE ROCK

"The Lord is My ROCK." (Psalm 18:2)



St. Mary & St. Joseph Coptic Orthodox Church
11308 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4S 1K9
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+ NATIVITY SERMON BY SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Behold a new and wondrous mystery.

My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. **He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.**



Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. **For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.**

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been in planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. **He became Flesh. He did not become God.** He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.

+ Saint: Abouna Yostos El-Antony

Abouna Yostos was a Monk in St-Anthony Monastery. He was known for his strict asceticism; he lived only eating bread and salt, he prayed all day long living in the spirit and not researching bodily comfort. He was also remarkably loving and gentle but above all, he lived a silent contemplative life. **He only said two things around visitors; "Thank God" and "What time is it?" to remind people of how short is our life on Earth and that the end is near. Meaning**

that we should focus on our responsibilities and spiritual life not being worried about insignificant things. He is a contemporary (/new) saint as he departed in 1976. May his prayers be with us.



+ VERSE REFLECTION

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)

"As there is a fullness in things, so there is in times. **For each thing has its fullness in a full and copious perfection that abounds in everything. Christ is the fullness of things.** The fullness of times is the consummation of freedom. So that his fullness may be whole and perfect Christ collects his members who are scattered, and in this way his fullness is achieved. So in the same way the fullness of times was achieved when all had become ripe for faith and sins had increased to the utmost, so that a remedy was necessarily sought in the judgment of all things. Hence Christ came when the fullness of time was completed."

- Saint Gaius Marius Victorinus

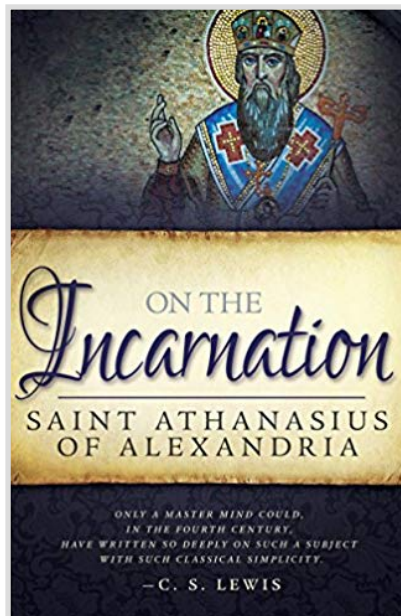
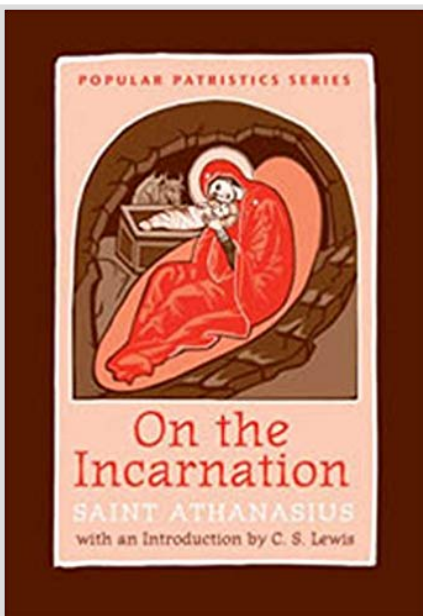


+ Book Recommendation: *On the Incarnation*

On the Incarnation was written in the fourth century by the widely known and revered church father: St. Athanasius of Alexandria. It wonderfully paints the theme of Incarnation and logically illustrates its necessity. St. Athanasius affirms and explains that Jesus Christ was both God and Man. **This book expounds with simplicity the theological vision defended at the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople: that the Son of God himself became "fully human, so that we might become God."**

C. S. Lewis observes: "When I first opened *On the Incarnation* I soon discovered by a very simple test that I was reading a masterpiece, for only a master mind could have written so deeply on such a subject with such classical simplicity."

This book is highly recommended in this season of the church as we prepare for the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.



SMSJ YOUTH MEETINGS



- Graduates/Young Adults Fellowship Meeting - Mondays from 8:00 PM to 10:00 PM
- Midnight Praises for gr. 9 & up - Thursdays from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
- Youth English Choir - Fridays from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM
- High School Youth Fellowship Meeting - Fridays from 8:00 PM to 10:30 PM
- University/College Youth Fellowship Meeting - Fridays from 8:30 PM to 11:00 PM
- Youth for God - Topical Bible Study Meeting - Saturdays from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- Servants Preparation Program for gr. 9-12 - Sundays from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM
- Deacons School - Saturdays & Sundays
- Sports on Sundays for High School Youth - Sundays 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

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TheRock@smsj.ca



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