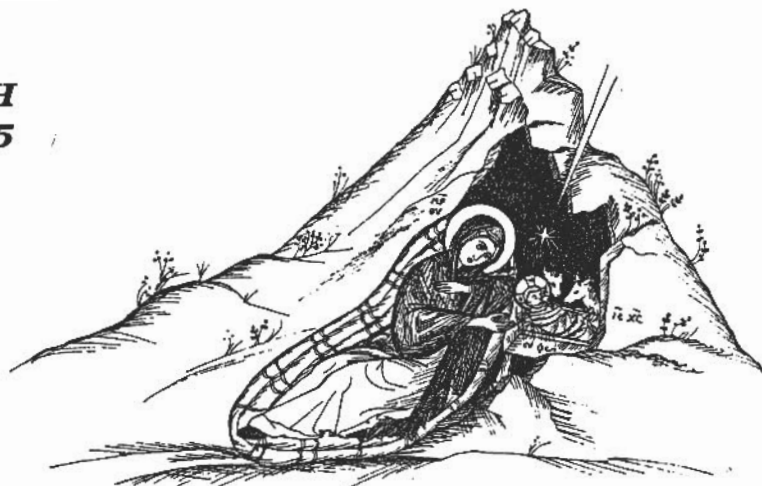


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December 24, 2006



SUNDAY/DEC. 24th (Wine & oil)
Sunday Before the Nativity and Eve of the Nativity (Tone 3); St. Eugenia of Rome

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Vigil

MONDAY/DEC. 25th
The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ
(One of "the 12 Great Feasts of the Year")
The 40 Day Nativity Lent ends today

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Vespers

MONDAY/DEC. 26th
Syanxis of the Holy Theotokos

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY/DEC. 30th
Postfeast of the Nativity

9:30a.m. Akathist to the Nativity; Confession
5:30p.m. Vespers & Compline; Confession

SUNDAY/DEC. 31st
Sunday After the Nativity & Before Theophany (Tone 4); Leave-Taking of the Nativity

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Vespers and Blessing of St. Basil's Bread

MONDAY/JAN. 1st
Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil the Great of Cappadocia

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
6:30p.m. Compline & Akathist to
St. Seraphim of Sarov (Jan. 2nd)

CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR

During the early Christian centuries the Nativity and Theophany were celebrated together. The liturgical tradition concentrated on Theophany which marks the Baptism of Jesus and the beginning of His adult ministry as the initial great event revealing Jesus' significance to humanity.

During the 4th century, the Church of Alexandria observed both the Nativity and Theophany on January 6th. In due time the Nativity began to be celebrated separately – first in Rome (354), then Cappadocia (380), Antioch (386), Constantinople (400) and gradually everywhere – on December 25th.

By choosing the date of December 25th, the Church wished to Christianize the "feast of the Invincible Sun," a popular observance marking the shift in the sun's cycles in late December when the days again become longer. For the Church Fathers Christ was the only Invincible Sun of Righteousness Who by His birth illuminated the world and inaugurated the dawn of a new age.

In the liturgical year it is still natural to observe the period from the Nativity to Theophany as a continuous celebration of Christ's coming to the world. On the Nativity we celebrate the incarnation of Christ while on the Theophany we remember His public appearance as the Son of God.

What happened long ago in Bethlehem and at the Jordan River, needs to be realized today in our own lives.

Fast Free Season

During the period from Dec. 25th thru Jan. 4th, in celebrating the postfeast of the Nativity and the Prefeast of the Theophany, we do not fast on any day. In keeping with the festal character of these days, kneeling and prostrations are forbidden.

2007 Offering Sheet

For special offerings for flowers, wine or olive oil may be found on the vestibule stand. Please make your offering at the time you sign up and mark your envelope with the date and product.

The January Monthly Calendar and Home Blessing Schedule

May be picked up on the vestibule stand.

Winter Storm Cancellations

Will be posted on the parish website at least one hour before the scheduled service, event or class. You may also call the rectory.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Dec. 24, 1946 Steven Holovach
Dec. 24, 1947 Catherine Hriniak
Dec. 24, 1961 Sophie O'Connell
Dec. 24, 1978 Anna Martinchuk
Dec. 25, 1990 Alexander Kuntzevich
Dec. 25, 1991 Helen Wislosky
Dec. 26, 1980 Jerry Russo
Dec. 26, 2004 Douglas Rose
Dec. 27, 1989 Mary George
Dec. 28, 1927 Joseph Ribsky
Dec. 28, 1927 Olga Solodiuk
Dec. 28, 1983 John Grishkevitz
Dec. 28, 1987 Edmund Kornacki
Dec. 29, 1977 Alice Susko
Dec. 29, 2002 Edna Kalenik
Dec. 30, 1934 Adam Gromako
Dec. 30, 1989 Michael Barna

Namesday Greetings

St. Eugenia/Dec. 24th: Joan Bongiorno
St. Stephen/Dec. 27th: Stephanie Kachek
Many Blessed Years!

Offerings for the Week of Dec. 24th

Olive Oil - in memory of Emilia; in memory of Michael; for the health of Liam (birthday); for the health of Anna (birthday); for the health of Liliana and Laurentiu.

Wine - in memory of Galina; in memory of Joan.

Flowers - in honor the Lord's Nativity.

Holiday Party - Dec. 29th - Trenton

Sponsored by St. Vladimir's Church, 6:30-10:30p.m. at the church hall. Fun and Fellowship for all ages. See posted flyers for details.

Winter Dance Party - Jan. 21st - Manville

At our parish hall. Reserve the date. Open for all ages, especially the young. More information to follow.

Parish Choir Director Search

Is currently underway. Any suggestions and recommendations may be addressed to Father James or Deacon Paul Sokol.

2007 Parish Wall Calendars

May be found on the vestibule stand. One per household please.

Greetings on the Feast from the Rector

Extending to all of our parishioners and friends of our parish and to their families, the grace and joy that this Great Feast brings. May the Lord Jesus Christ dwell in the Bethlehem of your souls! May this feast bring to each of us, a spiritual renewal, that our lives become ever more Christ-like.

- Christ is Born!

Fr. Jones



Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Make glad, O righteous! Greatly rejoice, O heavens! O mountains, dance for joy! Christ is born, and like the cherubim the Virgin makes a throne, carrying at her bosom the Word made flesh! Shepherds glorify the new-born Child! Magi offer the Master gifts! Angels sing praises, saying: "O Lord, beyond all understanding, glory to Thee!"

– Nativity Matins

Dearly beloved in Christ,

The beautiful liturgical hymns we sing in celebration of the birth of Our Savior, Jesus Christ, resound with a single theme: joy.

They proclaim the joy all creation shares as its Creator takes on the human flesh. They invite us to rejoice with the angelic hosts in praising the Word made flesh, dwelling amongst us. And they challenge us to look beyond the cares and concerns, the worries and woes of this world in anticipation of the new life the Savior offers us – a life that, while beyond all understanding, is already revealed to us and experienced by us in the life of His Body, the Church.

The era in which we live has little appreciation for mystery, less capacity for rejoicing in that which it cannot understand rationally. Mired as we are in global conflict, political and financial uncertainties, and the constant questioning of everything from the role of the family to planning for retirement, we often make little time to delve into the things that are not of this world. The dream of the "good life" eludes us. The threat of terrorism chills us. If we find little in God's creation in which to delight and rejoice, how can we possibly find joy in a mystery beyond all understanding, a mystery that points us to the Kingdom in which all will be fulfilled, perfected, and revealed?

Indeed, the birth of Our Savior is filled with great mystery. The virgin gives birth, yet she remains a virgin. God takes on our human nature, yet He remains that which He is from all eternity. The King of All reigns from a cave, rather than a sumptuous palace. The manger becomes His throne; simple shepherds, His court. The angels serve as His messengers; the powerful of the world, His enemies. The Messiah comes unto His own; despite centuries of anticipation, they fail to recognize Him as the Living Word the written word joyously reveals.

Beyond the externals, beyond the world's inability to grasp this mystery, lies a joyful reality beyond all understanding and earthly wisdom. The love God offers us through the incarnation of His Son transcends all understanding, yet it is real, freely offered as a gift to all who accept it and share it and delight in it. Through the eyes of faith alone do we discover that which is beyond all understanding and rejoice in the reality of God's love for us, sinful as we are.

With great joy I greet you on this glorious and radiant feast. May the understanding of the incarnation renew us and refresh us now, in the new year to come, and in every moment of our lives.

With love in the New-Born Savior,



+ HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada



**THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN
LETTERS TO GOD**

Dear God, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is this ok? Neil

Dear God, I think the stapler is one of your greatest inventions. Ruth M.

Dear God, I would like to live 900 years like the guy in the Bible. Love, Chris

Dear God, If you watch in Church Sunday, I will show you my new shoes. Mickey D.

Dear God, Please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there now. Ginny

Dear God, I am an American. What are you? Robert

Dear God, Thank you for the baby brother but what I prayed for was a puppy. Joyce

Dear God, Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones why don't you just keep the ones you got now? Jane

Dear God, I bet it is very hard to love all of Everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it.

Nan



Dear God, in Bible times did they really talk That fancy? Jennifer

Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying. Elliott

Feast of the Nativity

As man was born to live
The Son of Man is born to die
Wrapped in burial clothes He lies
In the dark of starlit night

The angels cry out amazed
Singing Holy, Holy, Holy
The eternal Lord enthroned
Is born of a virgin woman in a cave

Blessed are you o mankind
The Light has come in darkness
And the Bridegroom Himself appears
As a baby boy

David Jennings, St. Paul Orthodox Church, Brier, WA

**THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
A PERSONAL APPROACH TO THE FEAST
- by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafaktos**



First. The cave in which Christ was born is a type of the Church. St. Athanasios the Great speaks graphically. That small room where the Panagia awaited the birth has been accepted as the type of the Church. The manger is seen as the altar, Joseph is the server, the magi are the Clergy, the Shepherds are the deacons, the angels are the priests, the Lord is the Bishop, the Virgin is the throne, the craters are the chalices, the incarnation is the vestment, the Cherubim are the fans, the Holy Spirit is the paten, the Father Who overshadows all things with His power is the veil covering the paten.

The Church is the Body of Christ the Godman, that which was borne in the womb of the Theotokos, was born, was transfigured, suffered, was crucified, rose again and was taken up into heaven. In the divine Liturgy this great mystery is celebrated and we are given the ability to partake of the grace of Christ. The Church is not a human organisation, nor is the divine Liturgy a rite of commemoration and satisfaction of our feelings.

Second. The divine and human natures are always united with the human nature in the hypostasis of the Logos without change, confusion, division or separation. This means that they have never been separated and they never are separated. Since the human nature remains inseparable from the divine nature, since the Godman always exists for all time, we can even now partake of the deified flesh of the Lord. In partaking of the deified Body and Blood of Christ we become one body and one blood with Christ.

Third. Since we bow before this great mystery of the incarnation, and especially since we commune of the Body and Blood of Christ, we must deceive Herod as the magi did. The Evangelist Matthew says of the magi: "being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way" (Matt. 2, 12).

The word 'Herod' in the Hebrew tongue means 'of leather'. Therefore St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite says that we must delude the thought and pleasures of the flesh. Moreover, we must mock the devil of the mind, who prevents us from walking the path of salvation. We must return by another way, by the virtues, to our native land, which is Paradise.

This means that we are required to live a sacramental and ascetic life. All who live ascetically are granted to be united

with Christ, in the sacraments.

Fourth. When a person lives sacramentally and ascetically, in harmony with the spirit of the Orthodox Tradition, then he is experiencing spiritually the events of the divine incarnation in his heart, and more generally in his whole being. Then he does not perceive events outwardly, but inwardly. St. Symeon the New Theologian says that when a man purifies his heart and is illuminated, then he receives Christ within himself and understands His infant-like leaps. Christ is conceived as an infant in him and is born through the virtues, and now the man is living all these events in his being. To be sure, it is only in Christ that the divine was united with the human nature hypostatically. But the deified person also receives God's energy in his nature and becomes a member of the Body of Christ. Thus he comprehends how the grace of God works in his nature, what kenosis is, what deification of human nature is.

The incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was aimed at the deification of human nature. However, the hypostasis of each one of us must also be deified. If we do not anticipate deification, then for us it is as if Christ had not become man.

