

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN DECEMBER 27, 2009

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 27

Sunday After Nativity & St. Stephen

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour & Christmas Carols

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 29

6:00p.m. Parish Family Evening in Lower Hall
Pizza and Movie – All Are Invited!

THURSDAY/DECEMBER 31

6:30p.m. Vespers and Blessing of St. Basil's Bread

FRIDAY/JANUARY 1, 2010

Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY/JANUARY 2

St. Seraphim of Sarov

9:30a.m. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with
Metropolitan Jonah at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in
Jersey City and Visitation of the Kursk Icon
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/JANUARY 3

Sunday before Theophany

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour

MONDAY/JANUARY 4

7:00p.m. Royal Hours of Theophany

TUESDAY/JANUARY 5

Eve of Theophany – Strict Fast Day

7:00p.m. Matins
8:00p.m. Great Blessing of Waters

WEDNESDAY/JANUARY 6 – No Fast

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
7:00p.m. Compline



Christ is Born; Glorify Him!

Christ is from heaven; receive Him!

Christ is on earth; be lifted up

Sing to the Lord, all the earth and

praise him with joy all the people,

For He has been glorified!

To the Son, who before all time

Was born immortal of the Father.

And in these latter days became

incarnate without seed of a virgin.

Let us cry out to Christ our God

Thou hast raised our horn.

Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Jan. 26, 40th	Day Archbishop Job
Dec. 27, 1989	Mary George
Dec. 28, 1927	Jospeh 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, 2006	Anna Wasitowski
Dec. 30, 1989	Michael Barna
Dec. 31, 1942	Tikhon Yakovlev
Dec. 31, 1950	Nicholas Chmelik
Dec. 31, 1962	Jacob Hriniak
Jan. 01, 1963	Peter Romanowski
Jan. 01, 1995	Michael Emilianov
Jan. 02, 1947	Chariton Kucher
Jan. 02, 1966	Mary Knaff
Jan. 02, 1989	Charles Specian

Winter Weather Changes in the schedule

Due to weather conditions, it may be necessary to postpone or cancel services, meetings, classes or other events. The parish website will provide this information at least one hour before the scheduled event. You may also call the rectory, if in doubt.

Namesday Greetings

St. David/ Sun. after Nativity: David Peterson
St. Stephen/Dec. 27: Stephanie Kachek
St. Melanie/Dec. 31: Mildred Mock
St. Basil/Jan. 1: Basil Kulick, Charles Kachek,
William Kuzemchak, William Neudachin
St. Juliana/Jan 2: Juliana Bakaletz
Many Blessed years!

Blessing of Homes

Will take place January 6th thru February 6th.
To schedule your home blessing please make arrangements with Fr. James.

The Miraculous Kursk-Root Icon

On Jan. 2 Sat. at 9:30a.m. Metropolitan Jonah will celebrate the Divine Liturgy before the Icon at Ss. Peter & Paul Church in Jersey City. All are invited!

Fast Free Period

There is no fasting or kneeling in this festal period between Dec. 25th and Jan. 3rd. The next fasting day is the Eve of Theophany, Tues. Jan. 5th.

Movie & Pizza Dec. 29th, Tues. at 6:00p.m.

Everyone in our parish family is invited for Pizza and a viewing of a comedy film, "Up". Reserve the evening and join us! A sign-up sheet is on the vestibule stand. A free will donation may be made at the time of the film to cover food costs.

Facebook – Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

This forum is for everyone to post on, exchange ideas, make comments and share information. You are encouraged to use the site.

2010 Parish Wall Calendars

May be picked up in the church vestibule. Please, only one calendar per household, as there are no extras ordered. Please note that shaded red days on the calendar are fasting days. Plan accordingly.

Offerings for the week of December 27

Olive Oil – in memory of Vaschen and Emilia; in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Joan; for the health of Lian (birthday); in memory of Floarea, Gheorghe, Father Theophil, Eugenia, Mary, Kathleen and Maria.

Wine – in thanksgiving to God, health and protection of Mariana, Simon, Gabriela and Gabriel; for the health and salvation of Anna (birthday).

Flowers for Melanie.

Church Attendance on Dec. 20th (Snow Day)

Was 17 persons and innumerable angels.

Bishop-Elect Hieromonk Michael

Has been appointed Administrator of the Diocese of NY-NJ effective January 1, 2010. While his Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah remains locum tenens for the Diocese, Hieromonk Michael will begin administrative duties not directly requiring the actions of a hierarch.



Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah for the Nativity of Christ 2009

Posted 12/22

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy,
Monastics, and Faithful of
The Orthodox Church in America

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

We rejoice in the coming of the Savior, the Advent of the Son of God into this broken world. His Nativity anticipates and prefigures His Second and Glorious Coming again in the flesh, not clothed in the swaddling bands of humility, for but a few years; but in the radiant vesture of the Kingdom to reign forever.

For us Orthodox Christians, the Nativity of Christ is the Winter Pascha, and our celebration is rooted in the liturgical life of the Church; the world's "Xmas" hymns go on and on, oblivious, rather intentionally, to the point of the celebration. While we enjoy the worldly celebration, the family time, the gifts and giving, these are empty if we miss the central celebration itself: the services of the Nativity, culminating in receiving the Holy Mysteries. We can have Christmas without the Nativity, as does the world; but for Christians the Feast of the Nativity is Christmas!

We pray and fast to prepare ourselves for forty days before Christmas not only to be



obedient to the Church, but to prepare ourselves to receive the Mystery of Communion. Will this Christmas be unto salvation, discerning and receiving His Body--that same Body born of Mary and laid in the Manger, the Son of God who has taken flesh and likened himself to us, so that He might liken us to Himself? Or do we judge ourselves, unaware or oblivious to the Mystery of Christ's assumption of our nature. We pray and fast to open our spiritual eyes, so that we can see Christ, discern Christ, know Christ--not just as a historical figure who taught nice things, but as God who has come and will come again.

The traditional Christmas carols talk about Baby Jesus lying in the manger. Let us contemplate this mystery during this season, a mystery that at that time only His Mother really understood: that this little infant, no different than any other, would become the Savior of the world, and redeem mankind, indeed all of creation, from death. What infinite potential, the potential of a man fulfilling the Divine Likeness, and manifesting God in His flesh, was invested in that little child. Who would have thought that a child born in the most destitute poverty and anonymity would become the criterion of judgment for the whole world?

We can also contemplate this same mystery in the life of every child. Who knows what the destiny of that child will be? Who can tell if he or she will become a point of hope for the whole world? That same infinite potential, the potential for deification, the potential for a life transfigured by God, the potential for a life that will bring joy and peace, or beget such a child?

The Feast of the Nativity is not only the contemplation of God taking human flesh. It is also the great celebration of humanity, that God so loved as to become one of us, that through that One, joy and peace and salvation may be given to the whole world. Let us treasure the life of every child, who is the image of Christ born of the Virgin, and remember the great calling which he or she, and each of us, has in God. Let us also remember that the ultimate fulfillment of that calling is found in the transformation of our very flesh, in which God became incarnate, that having become man for our sake, He enables us to partake of His Divinity on that glorious day of His coming again in the flesh.

With love in the Newborn Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and the name 'Jonah' in a cursive script.

+JONAH
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

In Defense of the Christmas Tree | OBL Articles



By Father Daniel Daly

Several years ago during the Christmas season, a religious program on television caught my attention. The program featured a discussion on the dangers of cults, especially to young people. I found myself agreeing with the panelists as they warned young people about the hazards of involvement in occult or “new age” spirituality.

During the interview, however, one participant made a statement that shocked me. “...and the Christmas tree is pagan too...,” he asserted. The Christmas Tree? Pagan? Could it be that something most of us enjoy so much might be actually pagan in origin? Despite its growing commercialization, the Christmas tree is still associated with the fondest memories of our early childhood. Who does not remember approaching the tree on Christmas morning? Today people are so captivated by it that some even put it up in November! It finds a place in the homes of believers and unbelievers alike.

Most people are aware that the Christmas tree came to America with immigrants from Germany, but just where did the Christmas tree originate? Are its origins to be found in paganism, as the speaker suggested?

The Christmas tree does not date from early Germanic times. Its origins are to be found in a tradition that has virtually disappeared from Christianity, the Liturgical Drama. In the Middle Ages liturgical plays or dramas were presented during or sometimes immediately after the services in the churches of Western Europe. The earliest of these plays were associated with the Mysteries of Holy Week and Easter. Initially they were dramatizations of the liturgical texts. The earliest recorded is the *Quem quaeritis* (“Whom do you seek?”) play of the Easter

season. These plays later developed into the Miracle and Morality plays. Some were associated with events in the lives of well-known saints. The plays were presented on the porches of large churches. Although these liturgical dramas have now virtually disappeared, the Passion Play of Oberammergau, Germany is a recent revival of this dramatic form.

One mystery play was presented on Christmas Eve, the day which also commemorated the feast of Adam and Eve in the Western Church. The "Paradise Play" told the well-known story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise. The central "prop" in the play was the Paradise Tree, or Tree of Knowledge. During the play this tree was brought in laden with apples.

The Paradise Tree became very popular with the German people. They soon began the practice of setting up a fir tree in their homes. Originally, the trees were decorated with bread wafers commemorating the Eucharist. Later, these were replaced with various kinds of sweets. Our Christmas tree is derived, not from the pagan yule tree, but from the paradise tree adorned with apples on December 24 in honor of Adam and Eve. The Christmas tree is completely biblical in origin.

The first Christmas tree dates from 1605 in Strasbourg. By the 1700s the custom of the Christmas tree was widespread among the German people. It was brought to America by early German immigrants, and it became popular in England through the influence of Prince Albert, the German husband of Queen Victoria.

The use of evergreens at Christmas may date from St. Boniface of the eighth century, who dedicated the fir tree to the Holy Child in order to replace the sacred oak tree of Odin; but the Christmas tree as we know it today does not appear to be so ancient a custom. It appears first in the Christian Mystery play commemorating the biblical story of Adam and Eve.

How legitimate is it to use a fir tree in the celebration of Christmas? From the very earliest days of the Church, Christians brought many things of God's material creation into their life of faith and worship, e.g., water, bread, wine, oil, candles and incense. All these things are part of God's creation. They are part of the world that Christ came to save. Man cannot reject the material creation without rejecting his own humanity. In Genesis man was given dominion over the material world.

Christmas celebrates the great mystery of the Incarnation. In that mystery God the Word became man. In order to redeem us, God became one of us. He became part of His own creation. The Incarnation affirms the importance of both man and the whole of creation. "For God so loved the world..."

A faith which would seek to divorce itself from all elements of the material world in search for an absolutely spiritual religion overlooks this most central mystery of Christmas, the mystery of God becoming man, the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Enjoy your Christmas tree.