

# SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Face Book: Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

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## *BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 24, 2017*

### **SUNDAY/DECEMBER 24**

**Eve of the Nativity of our Lord**

**Fast Day – no meat, dairy or fish**

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

4:00p.m. Vigil of Nativity

### **MONDAY/DECEMBER 25**

**NATIVITY OF OUR LORD**

**(One of “the 12 Great Feasts”)**

9:30a.m. Liturgy; 6:30p.m. Vespers

### **TUESDAY/DECEMBER 26**

**Synaxis of the Theotokos**

9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

### **SATURDAY/DECEMBER 30**

9:30a.m. Akathist to Nativity; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

### **SUNDAY/DECEMBER 31**

**Leave-Taking of Nativity of our Lord**

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

Coffee Hour with Christmas Carols

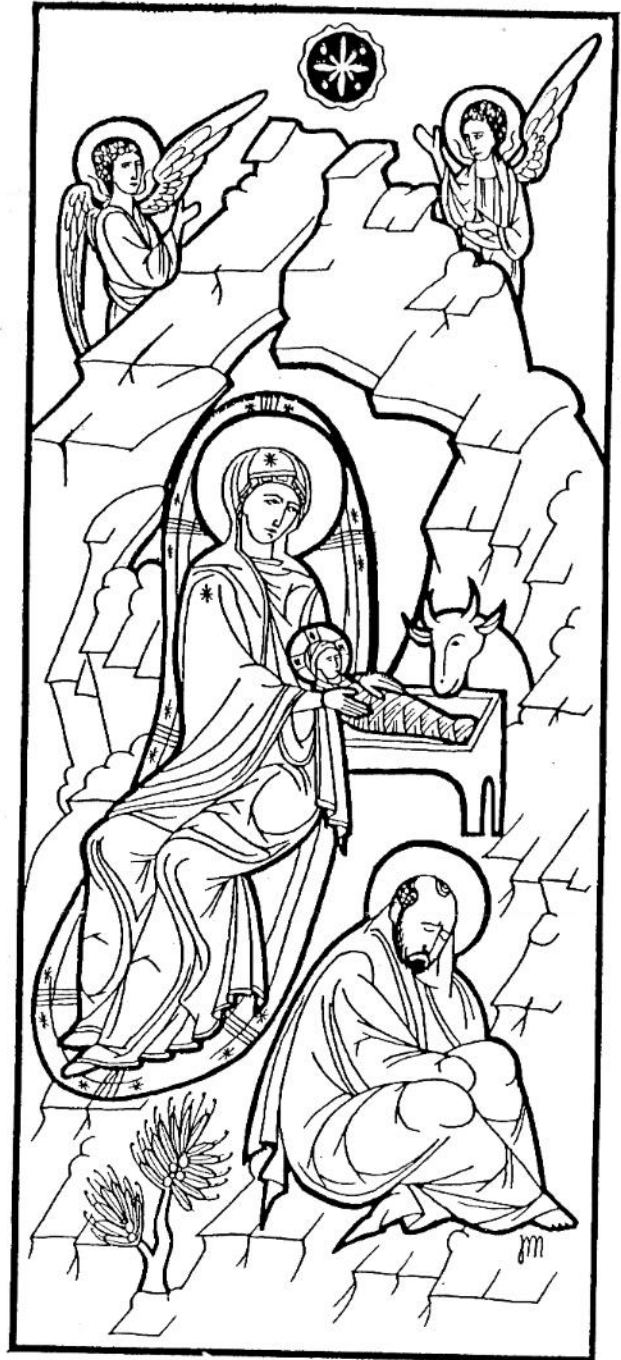
5:30p.m. Vespers & St. Basil's Bread

### **MONDAY/JANUARY 1, 2018**

**Circumcision of our Lord**

**St. Basil the Great**

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



### **Offerings Week of December 24**

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalia, Anastasia, Anna & Ivanna; in memory of Bocai and Sarchisian families; for the health of John (birthday) for the health of Liam (birthday).

Wine: for remission of sins and healing of soul, mind, body and will of Mariana, Stefan, Simona, Gabriel, Tabitha, Kurt, Kathyrn, Constantin, Cristina, Maria, David and Ira-Crista; for the health of Kulick family.

Flowers: for the health of Turri family; for Melanie, Dimitrios, Evdokia, Spyridon, Ekaterini and Fotini.

Litya Breads: for the health of Ekaterina.

### **Synodicon: Memory Eternal!**

Dec. 24, 1946 Steven Holovach  
Dec. 24, 1947 Catherine Hriniaak  
Dec. 24, 1961 Sophie O'Connell  
Dec. 24, 1978 Anna Martinchuk  
Dec. 25, 1990 Alexander Kuntzevich  
Dec. 25, 1991 Helen Wislosky  
Dec. 25, 2014 Julia Galida  
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  
Dec. 30, 2006 Anna Wasitowski

### **Coffee Hour Schedule**

Coffee Hour Hosts please prepare foods that are simple enough, so you are not absent from the Divine Liturgy. It is only after Communion, that we should leave the church and attend to food preparations.

Dec.24: Peterson, Bakaletz, Mattei, Erkman & Stone

Jan. 07: Kita, Nevitt, Keller, Turri, Torrisi & Kachek

Jan. 14: Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona

### **Counters Schedule**

Dec. 24 Larissa M. & Paulina N.  
Jan. 07 Rebecca O. & Ekaterini M.  
Jan. 14 Ciprian C. & Jill P.

### **Ushers Schedule**

Dec. 24 Edward S. & Khaka K.  
Jan. 07 Timothy S. & Peter B.  
Jan. 14 Jerome S. & Adrian M.

### **Sunday Readers Schedule**

Dec. 24 Daniel T. / Dec. 31 Peter G.

### **The 40 Day Nativity Lent**

The Nativity 40 Day Lent ends after the Divine Liturgy on December 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **The Nativity Greeting**

From the Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> thru Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, the festal greeting is "Christ is Born!" "Glorify Him!"

### **The 2018 Parish Wall Calendars**

Each family ought to secure one per household (there is a limited number.)

### **Fast Free Season: Dec. 25- Jan. 4**

In this period of time we do not fast, kneel or make full prostrations. Aside from a Funeral Service, Memorial Services are not held, nor or Marriages permitted. All this is due to the festal character of these days.

### **Winter Weather Alert**

If it is necessary to make changes in the schedule, they will be posted via 1) Parish E-Mail; 2) Parish website [www.ssppoc.org](http://www.ssppoc.org) ; 3) Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Face Book.

### **Names Day Greetings**

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

### **Blessing of Homes Season 2018**

The Blessing of Homes Season will take place between January 8<sup>th</sup> – February 17<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to schedule your home blessing as early as possible.



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**Archpastoral Letter for the Feast of the Nativity 2017**

Protocol Number 01-008/2017  
The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

Dearly Beloved of Our Diocesan Family:  
*Christ is Born! – Let us glorify Him!*

*He lost nothing of the Godhead  
and yet became my salvation.  
The Healer stooped down to my unbearable pains.  
He was mortal, yet God;  
of the race of David, yet the maker of Adam;  
He wore flesh, yet was beyond bodily form;  
He had a Mother, yet she was a Virgin;  
He was circumscribed, yet had not limit . . .  
He came to the contest as a mortal,  
but as the unconquerable One  
He vanquished the Tempter. . .  
He was sacrifice and celebrant,  
sacrificial priest and God Himself.  
He offered blood to God to cleanse the entire world.  
The Cross lifted Him up  
but it was the trap that nailed sin fast.  
And yet how can I speak of all His works?*

-- Poem 1.1.2., "On The Son," by St. Gregory Nazianzen

The coming of Our Lord into the world was not like the coming of a sightseer to a strange city. Rather, it was like an artist visiting his own studio, or an author paging through the books he himself has written. For in becoming incarnate, in taking on human flesh ... the Divine Word – the Second Person of the Holy Trinity – was tabernacling Himself in His own creation. As we read in the Gospel of Saint John: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).

Christ, in becoming human, had all the experiences that we have, except for sin. He experienced growing up: He had a Mother and a foster father, who watched Him take His first steps and heard Him say the alphabet and count and pray as a child. As a boy He played with other children and learned carpentry from St. Joseph, and participated in the services in the synagogue and in the Temple. As an adult He had the joys of helping others, casting out their demons and doubts, healing their bodies and souls of sickness, forgiving their sins, and even raising their dead.

On the other hand, in His life He experienced being hungry and thirsty, feeling fatigue and the need for rest. He felt the misery of people's pain and suffering and mourned the death of someone He loved. He was tempted by the evil one and rejected by men. He was criticized for the unique way He did things. He was called names and lied about, mocked and rejected and hated. He was dismissed from people's homes, cast out of synagogues, and expelled from cities. Ultimately He was betrayed and brought to unjust trials. He was imprisoned, scourged and crucified. He suffered the agony of death on the Cross. He experienced His body being laid in a tomb and His soul descending to Hades. To all of this, He surrendered Himself in order to be victorious over sin, the devil, and death – all for our salvation.

The message of Christmas is that the Incarnation of the Son of God, born this day in the flesh for our salvation, is as important for us today as it was for the world two thousand years ago. Ours is the God Who fully lived the human experience, such that when we pray to Him, especially in our trials and tribulations – our sicknesses and suffering – in the face of loneliness or pain, or death itself – He does not have to imagine what we are going through ... He only has to remember. And in remembering, He extends to us the healing, the forgiveness, the promise of eternal life that His love for mankind brought about when He became incarnate.

This Christmas, my prayer for you is that you and your loved ones will receive from Him all of the blessings and the joys that come from His hands ... and that you, in turn – by your improved prayer life, in more faithful reading of the Scriptures and attendance at divine services, and by your more regular reception of the Holy Mysteries – will come ever closer to the Incarnate God Who loves us more than we love ourselves.

With love in the Newborn Savior,

*+ Michael*

Archbishop of New York and the  
Diocese of New York and New Jersey



## ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

*By Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos*

The Birth of Christ is a historical event, because it took place at a specific moment in history, when Caesar Augustus was Emperor in Rome and Herod was ruler of Judea. The Evangelists insist on emphasizing the historicity of the event, because they want to say that Christ is a historical person. This means that Christ assumed real human flesh, and the Incarnation was not merely seeming or imagined.

In spite of its historicity, this event remains a mystery. We know that the Godman, perfect God and perfect man, exists, but it remains a mystery how the divine nature united with human nature in the person of the Logos. Moreover, what happened to the person of Christ, that the divine nature was united hypostatically with human nature, happened just once. Therefore St. John of Damascus said that Christ is "the only new thing under the sun." This means that since the creation of the world and man, nothing new has happened in the world. Everything is repeated [according to the natural order and rules which govern the universe]. The [successive] birth of human beings is a consequence and result of God's words: "Let us make man in our image and likeness", and "Be fruitful and multiple; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:26-28). The only new thing is the Godman Christ.

Thus the fact that the event is historical does not remove the mystery, but also the mystery does not do away with the historicity. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Christ, but at the same time we experience mysteriously in our hearts all the events connected with it, for when we are alive in the Church, we are participating in and experiencing all the stages of the divine Incarnation.



### **Troparion (Tone 4)**

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!

### **Kontakion (Tone 3)**

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels with shepherds glorify Him! The wise men journey with a star! Since for our sake the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!

### **A MEDITATION: YEAR OF THE LORD, VOLUME 2**

During the Christmas season God's love and His message of new hope comes to us through the beauty and peace of the incarnate Christ. Yet the Good News of God's love may be entirely missed, and Christmas may be an unfulfilled dream, amidst the hectic bustle of cleaning, shopping, writing, calling, decorating, banking and visiting. The basic reason for an unfulfilled Christmas is that we focus on ourselves, how to please each other, how to feel good and how to secure happiness with all the things we regard necessary. Yet only Christ can give us a true Christmas. Only His presence in our hearts can bring happiness, peace, joy, warmth and security. Cling to Christ ever more closely during the Christmas season. Take time to pray and to establish your spiritual and practical priorities. Let Christ come with you from home to school, from kitchen to shopping center, from Church to business office.





**"OUR SAVIOR, BOTH GOD AND MAN"**  
*By Saint Ephraim the Syrian – 4<sup>th</sup> Century*



We confess one and the same individual as perfect God and perfect man. He is God the Word Which was flesh.

For if He was not man, why was Mary chosen? And if He is not God, whom does Gabriel call Lord?

If He was not man, who was laid in a manger? And if He is not God, whom did the angels who came down from heaven glorify?

If He was not man, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes, And if He is not God, in whose honor did the star appear?

If He was not man, whom did Simeon hold in his arms? And if He is God, to whom did Simeon say, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace?

If He was not man, whom did Joseph take when he fled into Egypt? And if He is not God, who fulfilled the prophecy: Out of Egypt have I called my Son?

If He was not man, whom did John baptize? And if He is not God, to whom did the Father say: This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased?

If He was not man, who hungered in the desert? And if He is not God, unto whom did the angels come and minister?

If He was not man, who was invited to the marriage in Cana of Galilee? And if He is not God, who turned the water into wine?

If He was not man, who took the loaves in the desert? And if He is not God, who fed the five thousand men and their women and children with five loaves and two fish?

If He was not man, who slept in the ship? And if He is not God, who rebuked the waves and the sea?

If He was not man, with whom did Simon the Pharisee sit at meat? And if He is not God, who forgave the sins of the harlot?

If He was not man, who wore a man's garment? And if He is not God, who healed the woman with the issue of blood when she touched His garment?

If He was not man, who spat on the ground and made clay? And if He is not God, who gave sight to the eyes of the blind man with the clay?

If He was not man, who wept at Lazarus' grave? And if He is not God, who commanded him to

come forth out of the grave four days after his death?

If He was not man, whom did the Jews arrest in the garden? And if He is not God, who cast them to the ground with the words: I am He?

If He was not man, who was judged before Pilate? And if He is not God, who frightened Pilate's wife in a dream?

If He was not man, whose garments were stripped from Him and parted by the soldiers? And if He is not God, why was the sun darkened upon His crucifixion?

If He was not man, who was crucified on the cross? And if He is not God, who shook the foundation of the earth?

If He was not man, whose hands and feet were nailed to the cross? And if He is not God, how did it happen that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened?

If He was not man, who hung on the cross between the two thieves? And if He is not God, how could He say to the thief: Today thou shalt be with me in paradise?

If He was not man, who cried out, and gave up the ghost? And if He is not God, whose cry caused many bodies of the saints which slept to arise?

If He was not man, whom did the women see laid in the grave? And if He is not God, about whom did the angel say to them: He is arisen, He is not here?

If He was not man, whom did Thomas touch when he put his hands into the prints of the nails? And if He is not God, who entered through the doors that were shut?

If He was not man, who ate at the sea of Tiberias? And if He is not God, on whose orders were the nets filled with fishes?

If He was not man, whom did the apostles see carried up into heaven? And if He is not God, who ascended to the joyful cries of the angels, and to whom did the Father proclaim: sit at My right hand?

If He is not God and man then, indeed, our salvation is false, and false are the pronouncements of the prophets.

