

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 23, 2018

SUNDAY/DECEMBER 23

Sunday Before Nativity

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hours; Church School
5:30p.m. Compline; Confessions

MONDAY/DECEMBER 24

Eve of the Nativity – Strict Fast Day

9:30a.m. Royal Hours
4:00p.m. Vigil

TUESDAY/DECEMBER 25

Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ Nativity Lent Ends after Divine Liturgy

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
6:30p.m. Vespers

WEDNESDAY/DECEMBER 26

Synaxis of the Theotokos

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

SATURDAY/DECEMBER 29

10:00a.m. Baptism of Luke Parsells
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

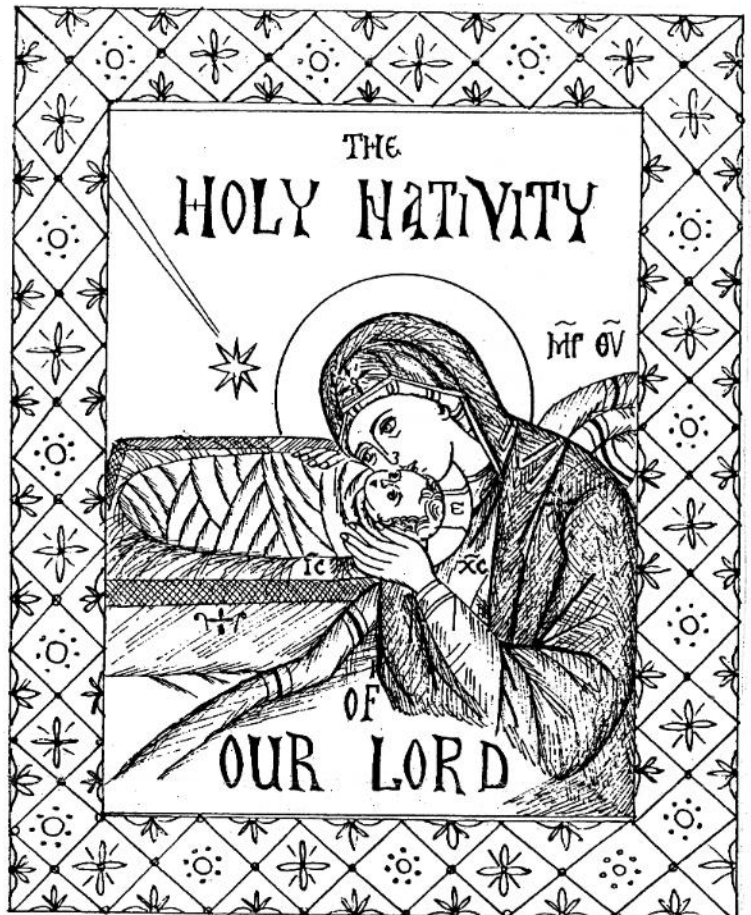
SUNDAY/DECEMBER 30

Sunday after Nativity

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

Fast Free Period: December 25 thru
January 4th.

Eve of Theophany: January 5th, Saturday
Strict Fast Day



Offerings Week of December 23

Relics Candle: in memory of Ivanna; in memory of Michael, Anna, Justina, Rosalia, Anastasia and Ivanna; for the health of Vera and salvation of John; for all of our parishioners.

Olive Oil: in memory of Sarchisian & Bocai families; for the health of John (birthday) and for Liam (birthday); for the health of Mark; in honor of the Holy Theotokos.

Wine: for salvation, illumination and thanksgiving to God for Mariana, Stefan, Simona, Gabriel, Tabitha and Kurt.

Flowers: in honor of the Holy Nativity of our Lord.

Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Jan. 25, 2019 (40th Day – Helen Lapchuk)

Dec. 24, 1946 Steven Holovach

Dec. 24, 1947 Catherine Hriniaik

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

Coffee Hour Schedule

Dec. 23 *No fish, meat or dairy*

Dec. 23 Sokol, Nasledysheva, Staina & Sarchisian

Dec. 30 Chirnoaga, Moldoveanu, Sue & Vajda

Counters Schedule

Dec. 23 Larissa M. & Paulina N.

Dec. 30 Jill P. & Peter B.

Ushers Schedule

Dec. 23 Edward S. & Kahka K.

Dec. 30 Edward S. & Kahka K.

Readers Schedule

Dec. 23 Zachary S. / Dec. 30 Peter G.

Scrip Fund-Raising Program

Is on-going. Speak with Pam Stone for cards.

Names Day Greetings – Many Years!

St. David/Dec. 30 – David Peterson

St. Stephan/Dec. 27: Stephan Varney, Stephanie Kachek

Forth-Coming Calendar – Dates to Mark Check On-Line Calendar on website

Dec. 31/Mon. Blessing of St. Basil Bread

Jan. 01/Tues. Circumcision & St. Basil Feasts

Jan. 06/Sun. Theophany & Blessing of Waters

Jan. 08-Feb. 28 Blessing of Homes Season

Jan. 18/Fri. March For Life in DC

Jan. 24/Thurs. Parish Council Meeting

Feb. 03/Sun. Scout Recognition Day

Feb. 03/Sun. Souper Bowl of Caring

Feb. 10/Sun. Annual Parish Meeting 12:00p.m.

Mar. 11/Mon. Great Lent Begins

Apr. 21/Sun. Western Easter

Apr. 28/Sun. Holy Pascha (Orthodox Easter)

June 1-2 Sat/Sun. Archbishop Michael Visitation

The Blessing of Homes Season for 2019

The season is from Jan. 7th thru Feb. 28th. Homes are blessed by appointment with Fr. James. You are requested to have your home blessed earlier rather than later in the season. You can make your appointment presently.

Memory Eternal! Newly-departed

On Dec. 17th, Helen Lapchuk, a long time parishioner reposed. Our sympathy to all her family members, and Argyra Lapchuk (daughter-in-law) and Alexandra Lapchuk (granddaughter).

Inclement Weather Changes to Calendar

If it is necessary to cancel or change something on the parish schedule, this will be indicated through 1) the Parish E-Mail; 2) Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church Face Book; 3) and on the Parish Website – www.sspoc.org

Christmas Cookie Walk - \$1,793 Profit

Many thanks to bakers and buyers!



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.





CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF RECEIVING THE BODY AND BLOOD OF OUR LORD

There are at least four major benefits which may be expected after partaking of Christ's Body and Blood, namely:

1. Intimate union with Christ through His love.

Through this union we mingle with God and share with Him. As God is love, when we partake of Him through Holy Communion we become partakers of His love. It should be added that these Gifts from God are truly free. He compels no one to accept, just as in true love there is no compulsion, but absolute free to either accept or reject.

2. Strengthening of the body and soul.

Eating ordinary food only nourishes a person's body; but eating Christ's Flesh and Blood strengthens and nourishes both the body and soul. When the soul is nourished, a person is better able to live, grow and develop spiritually. This means that the ability to resist sin is greatly increased, thus enhancing the desire and capacity to be more virtuous, righteous, compassionate and considerate. We can be sure that this is so since Christ said: "I am the bread of life, he who comes to Me shall not hunger and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (Jn 6:35), and then: "For My Flesh is true food and My Blood is true drink" (Jn 6:55).

With these statements Christ expounded the eternal nourishment value of His Flesh and Blood. Unlike ordinary food which only temporarily strengthens the body, true Divine food strengthens the soul eternally.

The strengthening effect of these Gifts, is another indicator of Christ's great love for us. Christ gave us certain Commandments to follow if we are able to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Scripture teaches that evil is spread through man by various demonic powers (Eph 6:12). Without Divine intervention man does not have the strength to fight these extremely powerful, fleshless creatures – as Christ said: "...for without Me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). Man alone does not have the strength to become perfect. Not wishing man to be condemned to hell, Christ nourishes us with His Body

and Blood – giving us a Perfect Food with which to become perfect.

3. Preparation for eternal life with God.

Partaking in Communion prepares us to share with God, an eternally joyful life after the resurrection of the dead. Christ is God and therefore lives forever – by eating His Body and Blood, we are blended with Him and will likewise live forever. This is Christ's promise when He said: "He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day" (Jn 6:54).

This "life" that Christ refers to is not related to the life here on earth, since it is obvious that all men "live" here, even non-Christians. Nor does He refer to "life" of the general resurrection. Rather,

Christ refers to the glorious life which some Christians will inherit as a reward for righteous living. How necessary it is for us to partake in Christ's Body and Blood; by being with Him, our souls are washed and transformed – made beautiful – then, after death, we would not expect punishment and hell, but the unspeakable rewards of the Heavenly Kingdom.



4. Unity through love with other Christians.

Christ has only one Body, by partaking of It, each and everyone of us also becomes united into one body – the Body of Christ. Christ's love for us is made perfect in unity, since not only is it reciprocated between ourselves and Christ, but amongst ourselves as well. This is what Christ meant when He established the Church.

The Church is not a building where people pray, it is the Body of Christ – a living organism, in which we all unite in love with Him and amongst ourselves, when we partake of Holy Communion (1 Cor 10:17). Christ is the head of His Body, the Church (Col 1:18), and not some bishop, patriarch, theologian or other mortal man. The Orthodox Church is thus infallible, since Christ being God, is infallible; we can then be sure that our Divine nourishment can never be false or corrupted, even if those who perform this Sacrament are themselves imperfect or unworthy.



"OUR SAVIOR, BOTH GOD AND MAN"
By Saint Ephraim the Syrian – 4th 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?

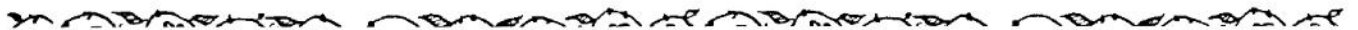
If He was not man, whom did the women see laid in the grave? And if He is not God, about whom did the angel say to them: He is arisen, He is not here?

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.



Appeal of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to the Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and Faithful, as of December 17

Your Eminences and Graces,

Beloved in the Lord Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

On December 15, 2018, at the Sophia of Kiev National Preserve, the so-called uniting council was held to declare the establishment of a new church organization called 'The Orthodox Church'. Its emergence resulted from the unification of the two uncanonical structures: 'The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church' and 'The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate'.

Thus, this gathering represents a union of schismatics and has nothing to do with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. For our Church, nothing has changed as the schismatics have remained in schism while the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has remained the true Church of Christ in Ukraine. Nobody in the world questions the validity of the episcopal and priestly ordinations of the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the gracefulness of the Sacraments celebrated in our Church – the fact that cannot be said of the newly created structure.

We inform you with grief that the Holy Synod has had to relieve the Most Rev. Metropolitan Simeon of Vinnitsa and Bar of the administration over the diocese and to suspend the Most. Rev. Metropolitan Alexander of Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky and Vishnev from his ministry. We call upon all of you, dear Eminences and Graces, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters, to

Pitifully, among the initiators of today's trials of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which argues for its right to interfere in our church affairs by asserting that our Church was once in its jurisdiction. In this connection, we would like to remind you that the Russian Orthodox Church had to declare its autocephaly because of the Patriarchate of Constantinople's betrayal of the Orthodox faith by signing union with Rome at the Ferrara-Florence Council in 1439. This spiritual betrayal of the Orthodox faith became the principal reason for the Metropolis of Kiev, too, to separate itself from Constantinople. The *unia* caused a break in the church relations and distrust to aggravate later by the fact that for centuries the Church of Constantinople failed to provide appropriate pastoral care and help in the gravest times of trial for Orthodoxy in our lands. Exhausted by the religious confrontation with the Uniates, devastated by wars, especially after the 1596 Union of Brest, the Metropolis of Kiev joined the Russian Orthodox Church in the late 17th century with the aim to preserve the Orthodox faith. That is why today the Patriarchate of Constantinople has no moral and canonical rights to interfere in the internal affairs and spiritual life of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Moreover, the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople have already led to the situation in which the possibility for unity of the Orthodox in Ukraine has been thrown away for long, if not forever.

Dear Bishops, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters! We appeal to you with love to preserve also in future the purity of the holy Orthodox faith, to cherish the spiritual unity in our holy Ukrainian Church, the canonical heiress of the old Metropolis of Kiev, which appeared through the intercession of St. Andrew the First-Called and efforts of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles and in which our glorious ancestors lived and pleased God.

We thank the hierarchs, clergy, monastics and all the laity who have withstood pressure in these hard times and re-affirmed their faithfulness to the holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church. 'Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown' (Rev. 2:10), as Holy Scriptures teaches us.

We call upon all the faithful children of our Church to pray for those who, without the awareness of it, hate us and our Church. May the Lord forgive them. And love your Church, love our Motherland Ukraine and do everything possible so that in our land and among our people there may be peace, patience, harmony and genuine Christian love.

On behalf of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church,

+ Onufriy

Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine

Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church