



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



**Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church Bulletin
And Holy Transfiguration Chapel**
A Parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
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We would like to welcome all of our visitors and friends to Saint Nicholas Orthodox Parish. We would like to ask all of our new visitors to please sign our register so that we might be able to keep in contact with you about Parish celebrations and events. Through the intercession of Saint Nicholas we hope and pray that our community might continue to grow in numbers and in service to the Lord. Through your prayers and dedication of time, talents and donations, this can become a reality in all faith and in love.

In case of an emergency, please call Father Stephen day or night at the above telephone number.

January 7, 2024
Volume 17: Number 01
Celebrating our 17th Year of Serving the Lord
Schedule of Services and Activities

Sunday, January 7 – Nativity of Our Lord – Tone 6
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Sunday, January 14 – Sunday after Nativity – Before Theophany – Tone 7
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

Sunday, January 21 – Sunday after Theophany – Tone 8 – Blessing of Water
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Stephen

Sunday, January 28 – 34th Sunday after Pentecost – Tone 1
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for the Faithful – Father Gus

SCRIPTURAL READINGS

Nativity of Our Lord: Matins: Matthew. 1:18-25; Liturgy: Galatians 4:4-7; Matthew. 2:1-12

Monday - Synaxis of the Mother of God: Matins: John 20:11-18; Liturgy: Colossians 3:12-16; Luke 18 35-43; Sunday after Nativity: Galatians 1:11-19 Matthew 2:13-23

Tuesday – Feast of St. Stephen – Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15, 7:1-5, 47-60; Matthew 21:33-42; Day: James 3:1-10; Mark 11:11-23

Wednesday – James 3:11-4:6; Mark 11:23-26

Thursday – James 4:7-5:9; Mark 11:27-33

Friday – 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10; Mark 12:1-12

Saturday after Nativity & before Baptism: (Nativity: 1 Timothy 6:11-16; Matthew 12:15-21; Baptism: 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5; Matthew 3:1-11; Day: 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23; Luke 17:3-10

Circumcision and St. Basil the Great – Matins: John 21:1-14; Liturgy: Colossians 2:8-12; Luke 2:20-21, 40-52; St. Basil: Hebrews 7:26-28, 8:1-2; Luke 6:17-23; Sunday before the Baptism: 2 Timothy 4:5-8; Mark 1:1-8



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

We would like to express our wishes for a most blessed and joyous Nativity to His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, to His Eminence, Metropolitan Antony, to His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel, to Father Constantine and Pani Dobrodyka Georgia and their family, to Father Charles and Pani Dobrodyka Melania Sanderson and their family, to all the members of the Clergy, to the members of the Consistory, to all of our Seminarians, to Vonnie Perrine and our Church Choir; our Subdeacons Marc and Kevin and their families; to all of the faithful Parishioners of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Orthodox Church and to their families, to all Orthodox faithful celebrating this great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord today and to all men, women and children of good will for

Christ is Born!

Let us Glorify Him!

Father Stephen Hutnick

The Parish Board



**Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox
Church of the USA
Archpastoral Letter for the Feast of the
Nativity of Our Lord**



CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

**CHRIST IS BORN!
GLORIFY HIM!**

Dear and Beloved Clergy and Faithful of our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, South America, Western Europe and Australia-New Zealand and all our Brothers and Sisters in Ukraine,

CHRIST IS BORN! LET US GLORIFY HIM!

Once again by the Grace of God, the Great Feast of the NATIVITY – INCARNATION of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, is upon us. Even though it comes in wintertime, the joy it brings into our lives is much more like the joy we experience in spring when we witness the all the budding of nature's beauty. The Nativity fills us with joy without limits. "For there is born to us this day in the City of David (Bethlehem), a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11)

He is the promised One prophesized throughout the Old Testament, the One Who sustains all. He is born of the Ever-Virgin Mary as a humble infant so that He might make us children of God. He is the Son of God Who descends from Heaven in order to lift all humanity up to Heaven – to grant us eternal life "for it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself". (Colossians 1:19-20) Today Angels and all mankind proclaim the spiritual song of the Nativity Canon: "Christ is born! Glorify Him! Christ has come from the Heavens! Welcome Him! Christ is on Earth! Exult Him!

It is sad to observe throughout this, our earthly world, a loss of relationship with God in the Holy Trinity. We have, however, another opportunity to change this estrangement into fullness of reconciliation with Father, Son and Holy Spirit – by opening our hearts, minds and souls to the Good News of the Nativity. We have the opportunity to relate to Emmanuel – "God with us" and to follow His lead into Heaven! We who live in the great democracies of the world, have the opportunity

to witness to the never-ending power of God, manifested to us in fullness of love – through the incarnation of His Son.

In Ukraine, however, and too many other nations around the world suffering invasion, repression and domination from beyond their borders, our brothers and sisters struggle each day to also witness - even at the darkest of times. They struggle to hear the Nativity Carols sung in their churches, their neighborhoods and in their own homes, but often the loudness of the bombs that rain down upon those homes, neighborhoods and churches drown out the beautiful carols glorifying the Christ Child, filling their lives with fear and pain.

As we gather together on the Eve of Nativity with all our loved ones present, we **MUST** remember in our prayers before Holy Supper, along with our family ancestors, all those who have suffered and perished over the last two years – simply because of greed and covetousness in those who have attempted for centuries to usurp our spirituality, our history, our culture and our very identity. We **MUST** also pray for those who still suffer under daily threats to their very existence, beseeching that the comfort and Love of the Christ Child will fill and warm their hearts even under the worst of circumstances.

We assure you, our spiritual children, of our continued prayers for each and every one of you during these holy Nativity days. May the Love of the Christ Child fill your homes and your lives in such an abundance that it cannot be contained but spread through you into the lives of all who need that Love – and you – to make their lives whole.

In our Lord's All-Encompassing Love,

+ ANTONY

By the Grace of God, Metropolitan

+ JEREMIAH

By the Grace of God, Archbishop

+ DANIEL

By the Grace of God, Archbishop



PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL FOR CHRISTMAS

+ BARTHOLOMEW

By God's Mercy, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

to All the Plenitude of the Church

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from the Savior Christ Born in Bethlehem

Most honorable brother hierarchs, Beloved children in the Lord,

With the grace of God, we are once again this year celebrating in chant, hymn, and spiritual song the Nativity according to the flesh of the pre-eternal Son and Word of God, namely the manifestation of the mystery of God and humankind. According to St. Nicholas Cabasilas, what occurs in the Divine Liturgy is "the mystagogy of the Lord's incarnation," while its introductory acclamation "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" is evidence "that it is through the Lord's incarnation that people first learned that God is three persons."^[1] The same saintly Father proclaims that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was the first and only to demonstrate the authentic and perfect human being, concerning His ethos, life, and everything else."^[2]

The assumption of human nature in the person of the Son and Word of God, along with the opening of the way of human deification through grace, add unsurpassable value to humankind. Forgetting this truth leads to the diminishment of respect for the human person. The denial of the supreme destiny of human beings does not only liberate them, but also leads to diverse reductions and divisions. Without being conscious of their divine origin and their hope for eternity, humans struggle to remain human and are unable to handle the contradictions of the "human condition."

The Christian perception of human existence provides a solution to problems created by violence, war, and injustice in our world. Respect for the human person, peace, and justice are gifts from God; however, establishing the peace that comes from Christ demands the participation and cooperation of human beings. The Christian view on the struggle for peace lies in the words of Christ our Savior, who proclaims peace, addressing His disciples with the greeting "Peace be with you" and encouraging us to love our enemies.^[3] The revelation in Christ is called the "gospel of peace."^[4]

This means that, for us Christians, the way to peace is through peace and that non-violence, dialogue, love, forgiveness, and reconciliation have priority before

other forms of resolving differences. The theology of peace is clearly described in the Ecumenical Patriarchate's document *For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* (2020):

"Nothing is more contrary to God's will for His creatures fashioned in His image and likeness than violence one against another . . . We may justly say that violence is sin *par excellence*. It is the perfect contradiction of our created nature and our supernatural vocation to seek union in love with God and our neighbor. . . Peace is a real revelation of the still deeper reality of creation as God intends it and as God fashioned it in his eternal counsels."^[5]

Peace cannot be taken for granted; it is not self-evident. It is an obligation, an achievement, and an incessant struggle to preserve it. There are no automatic solutions or permanent recipes. In the face of ongoing threats to peace, we need to have vigilance and willingness to resolve problems through dialogue. The great heroes of politics are the champions of peace. As for us, we continue to underline the peacemaking role of religion. This is during a time when religions are criticized for nurturing fanaticism and violence "in the name of God" instead of being forces of peace, solidarity, and reconciliation. However, this indicates an alienation of religious faith and not an integral part of it. Genuine faith in God is the harshest critic of religious fanaticism. Religions are the natural allies of all human beings who strive for peace, justice, and the preservation of creation from human destruction.

This year, the world honors the 75th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (December 10, 1948), constituting a summary of fundamental humanitarian ideals and values, "the shared standard, to which all peoples and all nations should aim." Human rights, whose central point of focus includes the protection of human dignity with its individual, social, cultural, economic, and ecological conditions, are only understood in their original dynamics if they are acknowledged as the basis and criterion of global peace, associating it with freedom and justice. In this sense, the future of human rights and peace is also linked to the contribution of religions in the matter of respecting them and making them a reality.

With these thoughts and festive sentiments, in full conviction that the life of the Church in itself comprises resistance against inhumanity, wherever such inhumanity arises, we invite all of you to the good fight of constructing a culture of peace and solidarity, where people will see in the face of their fellow human beings a brother or sister and a friend, rather than a threat and enemy. Moreover,

we remind you all, dear brother Hierarchs and children, that Christmas is a time of self-consciousness and thanksgiving, of the revelation of the difference between the God-man and "man-god," of the realization of the "great miracle" of freedom in Christ and of the healing of the "great wound" of alienation from God. Finally, we kneel respectfully before Mary, the Mother of God, who bears in her arms the incarnate Word, and we convey to you the blessing of the Mother Holy Great Church of Christ, wishing you an auspicious, healthy, fruitful, peaceful, and joyous new year of the Lord's favor.

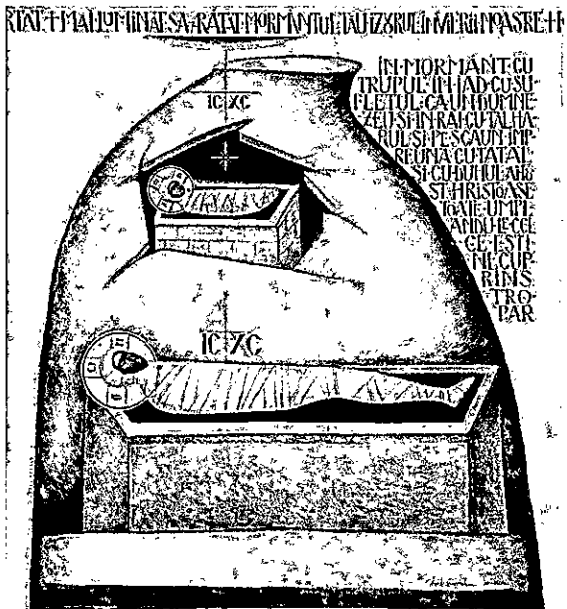
Christmas 2023
+ Bartholomew of Constantinople
Your fervent supplicant of all before God

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- [1] *On the Divine Liturgy XII*, PG 150.392D.
- [2] *On the Life of Christ VI*, PG 150.680C.
- [3] Cf. Mt. 5:44
- [4] Eph. 6:44
- [5] § 42, 43 and 44.

DID YOU KNOW – that our celebration of the Birth of Christ is the foreshadowing of His Death and Burial? Both occur in a Cave. The swaddling clothes remind us of the Burial Shroud. Did you realize that the chopping down of the Christmas

Tree represents the Death of Christ and the putting it up and decorating it is a symbol of the Resurrection. Did you realize that the Wreathes that we hang are never ending circles which represent eternity. Did you know that the candy cane represents the Good Shepherd (Christ Himself) and the staff of the shepherds who visit His birth. Did you know that the gifts that we give and receive are representations of the three gifts of the Magi. Did you know that on that beautiful day we have received the "Perfect Gift", Christ Himself, Who was given to us to remove all of our sins.



+Theodore II

By the Grace of God Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria,
And the entire land of Egypt and all Africa

To the plenitude of the apostolic and patriarchal throne of Alexandria:

Grace and Mercy and Peace from our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ born
in Bethlehem

My dear and blessed children,

Peace according to the eternal and true Word of our Lord journeys together with
righteousness. As long as we human beings commit injustices toward others, we
oppress them, take advantage of them, dishonor them, peace cannot successfully
prosper.

Our illustrious Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa, having the pastoral and
canonical jurisdiction of the entire African Continent, possesses the personal and
bitter experience of the peoples to whom she ministers through the centuries,
witnesses their unjust and atrocious exploitation, and the bleeding of their wealth
producing springs, the provocative clash between them caused by the powerful of
the earth, and the displacement from their birthplaces.

My blessed children:

Peace according to the Christian teaching is a chief gift of God – the fruit of the
All-Holy Spirit. We are at peace when Christ resides in our hearts, when He
guides our steps, and the eternal and unalterable Evangelical Law inspires our
behavior. Peoples and nations coexist peacefully and harmoniously when they
recognize their fellow human beings as living icons of God, if they actually respect
the dignity and rights of other persons and nations. The Word of the Apostle Paul
regarding our Christ: “For He is our peace” (Eph. 2:14), assures us that the entire
Gospel of Christ is in essence the only Science about Peace that exists in the
world.

With these paternal thoughts, we bless you abundantly and we paternally exhort
each of you individually: Open wide the doors of your hearts so they may be filled
with the peace of our Christ “which surpasses all understanding” (Philip. 4:7). With
your presence, with your words and your actions, everywhere, in your family, in

your work place, in your friendly and social circles, become the peaceful people – “walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:7).

“Be at peace,” as Paul the Great Apostle to the Nations commands, “and the God of peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11). And this peace is the consequence of the Nativity and gift of the Incarnate / Inhominable Christ. May the God of peace grant to those who pray and struggle for her: “Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

Joyful and Peaceful Christmas!

May the Dawn of the Year 2024 be Good, Blessed, and Peaceful!

The Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa,
+ Theodoros II
In the Great City of Alexandria Holy Christmas 2023

Special thanks to Father Constantine Christo for translating from the Greek to English

By the mercy of God Almighty
+John X
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East

To My brothers, Pastors of the Holy Church of Antioch and My sons and daughters, all over this Apostolic See

"Bethlehem has opened Eden: come let us see!... come, let us seize Paradise hidden in the cave! ... here the Virgin has borne a child, quenching Adam's thirst..."

With these words, voicing the hymnographer, the Holy Church invites us to contemplate the Nativity of Christ. The Nativity of Christ is the birth of light and the birth of hope in the journey of our lives. His Nativity is the birth of our humanity yearning for the elixir of eternity. His Nativity is the birth of joy dispelling the darkness of worldly preoccupations.

In poor Bethlehem, the humble Enriching-God came to us. A child came to us from a virgin mother to quench the thirst of our hearts and humanity for the Creator.

From a cave beneath the earth, the Inhabitant of the Heavens, the Lord and Master of the Highest, chose to gaze upon humanity, which He loved. He became human to elevate humanity to the heights of His divinity and adorned its weakness to pour upon it the strength of His might. The Virgin was adorned with pure robe, divesting from His heavenly abode onto the soil of the humble land.

In Bethlehem, from the lands of Palestine, south of Jerusalem, adjacent to Jordan, from the cedars of Lebanon and the vicinity of Damascus, and from the expanses of the East, came to us the "East of the East," Christ the Lord. He came to us over a thousand years ago, planting His Gospel in the ears of the apostles and our ancestors. He reigned in souls, ruled the throne of the heart, and dwelled in the manger of the soul, making of this eastern land a manger of His Gospel. This land received Him as a child in the depths of her cave, crucified on her calvary, and rising from the grave of her garden. This East of ours is more than just land; it is identity, existence, and being. This East is baptismal font in Christ for us Antiochian Christians. The bleeding of the migration of Christians from their East is like the bleeding of a spear that pricks, once again, the side of Christ in the Calvary of His passions.

As we approach the celebration of Nativity, we draw near to the cave and lean towards her Child, entrusting Him with our entire lives, beseeching Him—the Lord of mercy and the God of all consolation—for mercy upon those who preceded us to meet His holy face. We ask Him for peace for our beloved East, which He embraced willingly for our salvation. We pray for Palestine and the bleeding Gaza, crucified on the altar of the interests of nations and the condemned silence regarding the atrocities that have occurred and are happening there. We pray for Syria and Lebanon and for the peace of the entire world. We ask Him to instill, with the might of His silence, the strength of peace amidst wars and conflicts and to plant in hearts the seed of His growth and the breeze of His peace. We pray for our brothers, the abducted Metropolitans of Aleppo, Youhanna Ibrahim and Paul Yazigi, who have been missing for more than a decade in international condemnation and outrage, and our prayers are for every abducted person suffering the price of human exploitation in the marketplace of interests.

Many blessed returns to our sons in the homeland and abroad, and to all people. May God bless these days and fill them with grace and blessings from the Child of the cave, the Father of Lights, and the God of all consolation. Amen.

+John X
Patriarch of Antioch and all the East
Damascus, December 20, 2023.

+THEOPHILOS III

By the Grace of God, Patriarch of Jerusalem

"A strange and marvellous mystery do I behold;
the cave is a heaven; the Virgin a cherubic throne;
the manger a space wherein Christ God the
Uncontainable One hath reclined.

Him do we praise and magnify"

(Christmas Canon, Heirmos of Ode 9)

Mankind beheld "a strange and marvelous mystery" indeed, as the hymnographer of the Church writes, at the end of times, during the reign of Caesar Octavianus Augustus. We saw God's condescension manifested in Bethlehem of Judea. Fulfilling His promises to the prophets, God "sent redemption to His people". This redemption is the Only Begotten Son and His Word, "of the same essence" as the Father. Through God the Father, He was blessed to be incarnated, to take on human soul, flesh and body from the Holy Spirit and the Ever-Virgin Mary. "As He willed and as He pleased" and as the Evangelist John says, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us". (John 1, 14). For our sake, He "emptied himself" (Phil. 2, 7), and was "secretly born in a cave". He accepted the ultimate poverty; He was born in a cave and wrapped in swaddling clothes; He lay in a manger. In this poverty "the wealth of His Divinity shone". Because of this, "the heaven through the star brought over to Him the Magi as the beginning of the nations" and "precursors of the Church" according to Saint Chrysostom. An angel revealed Him to the shepherds who kept the night watch and a multitude of angels proclaimed Him from heaven through the hymn, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill among men", announcing that God's goodwill for men is peace. This all-pervading Divine peace is brought to the world by God's Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ; He is "the Angel of great counsel, the Prince of Peace and the Sun of righteousness".

Based on this Divine revelation, as it was witnessed by eye and ear witnesses in the Holy Scriptures, the Church believes and preaches to its members and the whole world, that Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of the human race, not as deified man but as God Incarnate, for the salvation, that is, the deification of man. God came down to earth, to raise man to heaven, because "our conversation remains" (Phil, 3, 20) according to Saint Paul. The Fathers of the Church say incessantly, "God became man and man became divine". And Saint Gregory Palamas proclaims that "the flesh is glorified along with the reception and the glory of the body, which becomes the glory of the Godhead". Through the

Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection from the dead and His Ascension, Christ as God and man, God-man, sat down at the right hand of the Father after assuming His human nature and paved the deification for those believing in him.

Having ascended into heaven, the Incarnate One, the crucified in the flesh and risen from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, left the Church on earth, that is, the holy disciples and apostles, their successors, the hierarchs, priests and the Christ-named congregation, so that it may fulfil His mission unto the ages; the mission of the teaching, the conciliation and the sanctification of people, so that what was heard on the first night of His Nativity, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill among men" prevails on earth.

The Church worldwide, especially the blessed Church of Jerusalem, proclaims this word and performs this work, obedient to its founder, as it ministers in the places of His manifestation in the flesh, the first of which was the city of Bethlehem. In the magnificent Constantinian Basilica of the Nativity and the humble Grotto, the Mother of the Churches will celebrate again this year, starting from Jerusalem, keeping its ancient tradition since the days of the pilgrim Aetheria and our late predecessor Patriarch Sophronios.

Filled with the joy of the Nativity of Christ, we address Our Patriarchal and Fatherly wishes and blessings to "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (Jn.1, 4, 2), to the pious pilgrims, especially to Our reverend flock in Gaza, along with Our prayers, that Saint Porphyrios remains its protector and of all those suffering there under the raging war.

In the Holy City of Bethlehem CHRISTMAS 2023
+THEOPHILOS III
Patriarch of Jerusalem



THE MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS SPEAKS TO US TODAY!

Today Christ Is Born!

Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem. Today He who is without beginning begins to be; the Word is made flesh. The powers of heaven rejoice, and the earth with humanity makes glad. The magi offer gifts, shepherds proclaim the marvel, we cry without ceasing: Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to all!

Hymn from Matins of the Nativity

The above hymn for Christmas celebrates Christ's birth as a contemporary event. **TODAY** Christ is born! **TODAY** the eternal Word of God is made flesh! the Magi offer gifts in the **PRESENT**. The shepherds proclaim the marvel **NOW**. And we join in the celebration by **SINGING WITH THE ANGELS**.

THE SAME FOREVER

How can this all be? The main reason is that Christ and His saving work are of eternal significance. "Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). In His incarnation, He fully embraced our human nature which is now glorified with Him in heaven forever. He also said to His disciples that He would not leave them "orphans" (John 14:18) but promised to them His abiding presence: "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

LIVING FAITH AND PRAYER

Another important reason is that through faith, prayer and Christian living we offer the gift of ourselves to Him - the personal context in which we experience all the mysteries of Christ and His blessings. Our faith unites us with Him spiritually. Our prayers and worship invite His holy presence in the Church and our hearts as a cleansing and transforming experience. Our Christian living strengthens and demonstrates our new life in Him.

ONE LORD AND KING

The incarnate and risen Christ, our one Lord and King, is forever present in the Church and always ready to make every soul His home, filling each person with the peace and joy of Christmas. Invite the heavenly Guest into your Parish, your home, your family, your heart. Celebrate today with the Magi and the Shepherds. Sing with the Angels: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to all."

NATIVITY

S R A T S S T F I G D A E C F G O C
 A B M A R Y C H I U T D S H J J Z X
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- ADVENT** – St. Philip’s Fast; 40 days of fasting in preparation for the Nativity
ANGELS – Angels sang “Peace on earth” the first Christmas morn.
BABY – The Infant Jesus, the Son of God.
BETHLEHEM – The City of David where the Messiah was born.
BIRTH – Mary gave birth to Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.
CAVE – The place where Jesus was born.
CHRIST – The Messiah, the Savior of the world, born on Christmas day.
CHRISTMAS – The holy day of glory and joy because Christ is born.
FRANKINCENSE – One of the gifts of the Wise Men to Jesus the newborn King.
GIFTS – The offerings given to Jesus on Christmas day.
GOLD – One of the gifts of the wise Men to Jesus, the newborn King.
INCARNATION – God became man by taking on our human flesh.
JESUS – Born on Christmas Day, the Messiah, the Son of God.
JOSEPH – Husband of Mary, guardian and protector of Jesus.
KINGS – They were the Wise Men who came to honor Jesus with their gifts.
MANGER – The Crib for the infant Jesus.
MARY – The Virgin Mother of Jesus.
MYRRH – expensive oil: One of the gifts of the wise Men to Jesus, the newborn King.
NATIVITY – Means “birth”
SAVIOUR – Jesus, the Messiah, the Redeemer of the People.
SHEPHERD – came to worship the infant Jesus.
STAR – The Wise men followed the star to the place where Jesus was born.
VISIT – The Angels, Shepherds and Wise Men came to spend time with Jesus.

**Council of Bishop of the UOC of the USA:
Faith in the Face of Genocide!**

Beloved Faithful,

It is with a heavy heart and profound sorrow that we address you during this grievous time in the life of our beloved Ukraine. The inhumane bombing inflicted upon our land by the Russian forces has plunged us into a profound darkness, and our hearts ache for the countless lives affected by this senseless violence.

In the face of such devastation, we, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora, stand united in prayer, solidarity, and unwavering resolve. The sanctity of human life, a cornerstone of our Orthodox faith, is gravely threatened, and our duty to bear witness to the Gospel compels us to speak out against the injustice, brutality and yes, genocide, that have befallen our homeland.

As shepherds of this flock, we condemn in the strongest terms the aggression that has led to the loss of innocent lives, the displacement of families, and the desecration of our sacred land. Our churches, which have stood as symbols of hope and refuge, are now witnesses to the suffering of a people whose resilience has been tested beyond measure.

In this time of darkness, we turn to the Love of the Newborn Christ Child for solace and strength. Let us intensify our prayers for peace, invoking the intercessions of the Holy Birth-Giver of God, the Protectress of Ukraine, and all the saints who have borne witness to faith amidst adversity.

We call upon the global community to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. May the conscience of the world awaken to the urgency of this humanitarian crisis, and may justice prevail over aggression.

To our brothers and sisters enduring the horrors of war, know that our hearts are with you, and our prayers ascend for your protection, comfort, and deliverance from this ordeal. May the mercy of God overshadow our land, bringing healing, reconciliation and the restoration of peace.

As we navigate these dark times, let our love for one another and our steadfast faith be a beacon of hope. In the face of adversity, we, the Ukrainian Orthodox community in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, France, Belgium and Germany stand as a testament to the enduring power of faith, compassion, and the unwavering pursuit of justice.

With heavy hearts and fervent prayers,

+Antony, Metropolitan

+Daniel, Archbishop

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOTE OF THANKS

On behalf of my wife, Pani Dobrodyka Elizabeth and our Family, we would like to thank all of our faithful parishioners for their kind greetings, cards, Christmas wishes, gifts and prayers. May God bless you and keep you, may He always shower you with His tender loving care and may you always grow in His love!

Love and Prayers,
Father Stephen, Pani Dobrodyka Elizabeth,

REDNER FULL SALE SLIPS – are still being collected. Please save the whole slip.

READER MINISTRY: **January 7** - Christina Mentis; **January 14** – Margaret Perkins; **January 21** - Subdeacon Kevin Minnich, **January 28** - Kris Scholl

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE ILL – Metropolitan Antony, Father Geroge Bazylevsky, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Constantine Christo, Father Vasyl Dovhan, Father Oleh Hucul, Father Mark Leisure, Father John Nakonachny, Father James Norton, Father Paul Pappas, Father John Perich, Father Volodymyr Wronskyj, Pani Matka Lilly Lemar, Matushka Laura Odell, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Jamison, Mikey Arntz, Wakako Alexander, Theresa Barnes, Paul Calistor, Joe Chas, Mildred (Myrophora) Christo, Rita Cook, Dmitra Cookson, Davis William Doty; Steve Forte, Thomas Holt, Dot Howell, Norma Husnick, Walter Katolic, Judith Kocinski, Kristina Koutsoudes, Olympia Koutsoudes, Gina Louk, Frederick McCarthy, Bruce McGloan, Patricia McGloan, Stephen McNulty, Chritina Mentis, Connie Mentis, John Moniodes, Olga Moniodes, Margaret Perkins, Barbara Perrigina, Natassia Perrine, Robert Perrine, Michael Previte, Sandra Ramondi,Carolynn Ritter; Jim Saturno, Clay Seman, Gail Sherman, Lorraine Sherman, Gerald Sovinski, Diane Staples, Nicholas Taylor, Kathy Theodorakos, Merryl Trader, Ralph Vurgich, Cheryl Zabowski, Edward Zabowski, Markos Zerefos.



THOUGHTS ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

THE PROPHET ISAIAH: “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His Name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT: “The Feast of the Nativity of Christ reminds us that we are born of God, that we are sons of God, that we have been saved from sin, and that we must live for God and not sin.”

ST. PAUL: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

ST. LUKE: “And Mary brought forth her first-born Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.”

THE PROPHET ISAIAH: “Behold, the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel.”

THE ANGELIC HOSTS: “Behold, I bring to you tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord.”

ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN: “Today the Divine Being took upon Himself the seal of our humanity, in order for humanity to be decorated by the seal of Divinity.”

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