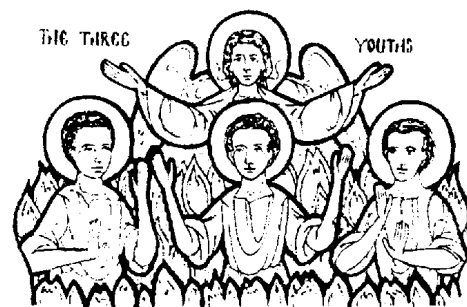


CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 17, 2006

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

HOLY FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

Question / Answer Period

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18TH

7:00p.m. Bible Study

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

7:00p.m. Compline; Confessions

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22ND

7:00p.m. Royal Hours; Confessions

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23RD

6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

6:00p.m. Vigil; Confessions

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

Confessions also heard by appointment.



For Consideration

With the year 2006 coming to a close, we are presented with many last-chance opportunities to close-out the year in a good way; one of which is making a final tax-deductible offering to your church. Why not make a donation to the church or building fund in thanksgiving for the many blessings we've received from the Lord in 2006?

Annual Meeting of the Parish

will be on Sunday, January 21st. All parishioners are encouraged to attend.

Congratulations Father Daniel

on your Namesday today, Sunday, Dec. 17th, (the Prophet Daniel / Sunday of the Holy Forefathers) and your upcoming 80th birthday, Friday, Dec. 29th! May God continue to bless you with good health and many more blessed years!



Service Schedule for the Year 2007

The parish website has the monthly service schedules for the entire 2007 calendar year. Check it out! Please remember though to check the Sunday bulletin for changes to the monthly calendar.

2007 Calendar and Pocket Planners

from St. Tikhon's Bookstore have arrived and may be picked up in the back of the church. If you did not order a calendar or pocket planner and would like one, please don't take one now but instead sign the list in the back of the church and we will order one for you. The total costs of the calendars and pocket planners, including shipping, are \$3.00 and \$2.00 respectively.



Have Something You Would Like to Discuss?

Just let me know. I'd be happy to either meet with you, or speak with you over the phone whenever you would like. If you prefer email, that is okay too. I am not only available but I would also very much like to get to know each and every one of you, hear your thoughts and ideas, as well as try to help answer any questions you may have.



Bible Study on the Nativity of Christ

On Monday, December 18th, from 7:00 - 8:30pm, a Bible Study will be held at the church to consider the Nativity of Christ as told in Biblical Tradition and the film, "The Nativity Story". Participants are encouraged to view the movie in advance but this is not necessary. Refreshments will be served.

All are welcome! Bring your Bible and a friend!





HELPING A NEEDEY FAMILY

In coordination with G.O.L.D. (Giving Other Lives Dignity) our parish will be making a collection to help sponsor a young family this Christmas. Your donation will help bring the joy and love of this great feast to a single mom and her three young children.



CHRISTMAS CARDS

have been generously donation to the Mission by Troika Cards for religious resale. These very beautiful cards may be purchased during the coffee hour for just \$1.50 a piece. All proceeds to benefit the Mission thanks to our kind friend, Ellen M.M..!

ASK FATHER: 3 QUESTIONS / 3 ANSWERS

Q. Why is the Nativity of Christ celebrated on December 25th?

A. There are two main explanations as to why the Church chose to celebrate the Nativity of Christ on December 25th.

The first says that the day was chosen to oppose the great pagan feast of the sun god, which was celebrated near December 22nd at the Winter Solstice, the time of year when the days started to get longer again (at least in the northern hemisphere). It is believed that the Church chose December 25th, because it ensured that Christians would be fasting during the pagan celebration and would therefore not easily be tempted to participate. And also because it would help the pagan peoples to leave off worshipping the false sun god and instead celebrate the coming of the True God, "the Sun of Righteousness".

The second explanation says that the day was chosen in relation to the feast of the Annunciation, which was celebrated on March 25th commemorating the supernatural conception of the Lord in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Annunciation was celebrated on this day because of the belief in the ancient world that great men died on the same day as they were conceived. Since the Lord was believed to have been crucified on March 25th, it also came to be believed that He was likewise conceived on this day. And since it followed that the Lord's birth would be nine months after His conception, the feast of His Nativity was set on December 25th.



Q. What are the Royal Hours? And why are they an important service of Christmas?

A. The Royal Hours combine the 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 9th Hour services into one service which is characterized by special Psalms and hymns, as well as Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel Readings, relating to the upcoming Feast. It was customary during Byzantine times for the Emperor to be in attendance for the entire service, and for this reason it became known as the Royal Hours.

The Royal Hours are an important service of Christmas because in the reading of the prophets (Old Testament), apostles (Epistles), and evangelists (Gospels) we see the Nativity of Christ in its full Biblical context of expectation, preparation, and fulfillment. There is no other service which more beautifully foretells or proclaims the Lord's salvific coming in the flesh.

Q. What is the service of Compline?

A. Compline is the service of prayer before retiring to bed – it is the "evening prayers" of the Church. In Compline we give thanks to God for the day which has just passed and we express hope that He will grant us a restful sleep during the coming night, as well as a peaceful repose after death with all the Saints. This service, which is not lengthy (only about 15-20 minutes), brings a peaceful conclusion to our busy day and can be read at home without a priest, as well as in church with one.



THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

From the Synaxarion

The Holy Fathers, moved thereto by the Holy Spirit and by their pastoral understanding, have appointed the Memory of the Patriarch Abraham, the Father of believers, and of his lineage, the Ancestors according to the flesh of our Lord, to be solemnly observed in these days that lead up to the Nativity of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Come of the stock of the idolatrous Chaldeans, the Patriarch Abraham unhesitatingly left his land, house, family and goods at the call of God, and went forth to go into the land of Canaan, which the Lord gave him as a heritage, promising him descendants without number and an everlasting Covenant. The fruit of Abraham's act of faith was Isaac, whom God granted to him in his old age.

Isaac begot Jacob to whom were born the twelve Patriarchs, the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. In accordance with the Scriptures it was, in the end, from the tribe of Judah that Christ would be born, the fulfillment of the promises, and the fullness of the Covenant and the union between God and mankind.

Through the connection of the holy Ancestors and Patriarchs, our Savior Jesus Christ is Himself also, in a way, the fruit of the faith of Abraham. So, when God makes His voice known to each one of us while we are still in the strange land of the passions and worldly vanities, we must like Abraham unhesitatingly leave all that is ours, and follow the divine calling with faith until we reach the Promised Land where, in

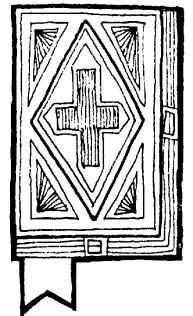
our turn, we shall be able to give birth spiritually to Christ. For, planted in us by faith and Baptism, He has to grow in us through the virtues so as to shine in the light of contemplation. We descendants of Abraham, "children of the promise" as Isaac was, having become "sons of God" through the gift of the Holy Spirit, ought therefore to see Christ form in us (Gal. 4:19,28): For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ... For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29). Let us then for our part, become forbearers of Christ and continue steadfast in the faith, so that we may keep the feast of His Nativity, saying: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Gal. 2:20).



BLESSED THEOPHYLACT ON MATTHEW 1:19

Then Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to divorce her secretly.

The law decreed that the adulteress be exposed and punished publicly. How, then, was Joseph righteous since he intended to cover up her sin and thus transgress the law? The answer is, first, that he was righteous for intending to do this very thing. He did not wish to be harsh, but in his great goodness took compassion on her, showing himself to be above the law, and already living in a manner superior to the decrees of the law. Secondly, since he himself knew that she had conceived not by adultery but of the Holy Spirit. Behold what the evangelist says: "She was found to be with child." Found by whom? By Joseph; that is, he discerned that she had conceived of the Holy Spirit. Therefore he "was minded to divorce her secretly," for he no longer dared to take as a wife her who had been deemed worthy of such grace.





THE MYSTERY OF CONFESSION

Confession is the Mystery in which the believer admits his sins before God in the presence of a priest and receives through the priest forgiveness of sins as if from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ gave to the Apostles, and through them to all priests, the power to forgive sins. *Receive the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained* (John 20:22-23).

Even John the Baptist, preparing people to receive the Savior, preached *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins...* And all were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins (Mark 1:4-5).

Having received this power from the Lord, the Apostles performed the Mystery of Confession: *And many that believed came, and confessed, and disclosed their sinful deeds* (Acts 19:18).

Forgiveness of sins (absolution) by means of confession requires peace with all one's neighbors, sincere contrition for sins committed, confession, firm determination to correct one's life, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and hope in His mercy.

From the Law of God
By Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy

A Note About Confession

Confession may be heard following any church service or at any other time by making an appointment with Fr. John.

CHRISTMAS TREE TRADITIONS

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Traditionally, Christmas trees were not brought in and decorated until Christmas Eve (24 December), and then removed the day after twelfth night (i.e., 6 January); to have a tree up before or after these dates was even considered bad luck. Modern commercialization of Christmas has resulted in trees being put up much earlier; in shops often as early as late October (in the UK, Selfridge's Christmas department is up by early September, complete with Christmas trees). A common tradition in U.S. homes is to put the tree up right after Thanksgiving (the fourth Thursday in November) and to take it down right after the New Year. Some households in the U.S. do not put up the tree until the second week of December, and



leave it up until the 6th of January (Epiphany). In Germany, traditionally the tree is put up 24th of December and taken down 7th of January, though many start one or two weeks earlier. In Australia, the Christmas tree is usually put up on the 1st of December, which occurs about a week before the school summer holidays; except for South Australia, where most people put up their tree after the Adelaide Credit Union Christmas Pageant, which is in early November. Some traditions suggest that Christmas trees may be kept up until no later than the 2nd of February, the feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Candlemas), when the Christmas season effectively closes. Superstitions warn of negative consequences if Christmas greenery is not removed by Candlemas Eve.

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

O Lord Jesus Christ our God: let Thy holy Body be my eternal life; Thy precious Blood, my remission of sins. Let this Eucharist be my joy, health, and gladness. Make me, a sinner, worthy to stand on the right hand of Thy glory at Thine awesome second Coming, through the prayers of Thy most pure Mother and of all the saints. Amen.

