



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
THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30TH
6:00p.m. Vespers; Confessions

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31ST
SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
St. Basil's Bread
Coffee Hour



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 24, 2006

Annual Meeting of the Parish

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

Parish Council Meeting

Sunday, January 14th, following the Divine Liturgy. This special meeting will be extremely brief, with only two items on the agenda in preparation for the Annual Meeting.

Congratulations Father Daniel

on your 80th birthday, Friday, Dec. 29th! May the Lord continue to bless you with many more years of health, happiness, and all things necessary for your salvation in His Heavenly Kingdom!

Fast Free Period

The celebration of Christmas starts with the Nativity fast on November 15, and concludes on February 9, with the leave taking of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. At the center of this celebration is not a mere one day observance, but a twelve day celebration of the fact that God has become man for us men and our salvation. During these twelve days of Christmas we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Fridays. A one day fast is observed on January 5th, the Eve of Theophany.

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 like to get to know each and every one of you, hear your thoughts and ideas, and try to help answer any questions you may have.

Helping a Needy Family

Many thanks to all who helped support the needy family our parish adopted for Christmas this year. Over \$260 was raised (from which clothing, toys, and gift cards were purchased) and food items were offered to help share the joy of the Christmas season. May God bless you for your care for His people!



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?

House Blessings

It is the custom among many Orthodox Christians to have their homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed, please put your name on the sign-up sheet in the back of the church. If you have any questions about house blessings, what is involved, why we bless our homes, etc., please speak with Fr. John.



The Bible Study on the Nativity of Christ

On Monday night we had our first Bible Study, and in addition to excellent attendance (sixteen people) and a good examination of this important topic, we also had a lively discussion. Many thanks to all who participated!



Upcoming Bible Studies

Two more studies are scheduled for January and February, but the dates and topics have not been decided upon. If you haven't yet returned your Bible Study availability form please do so as soon as possible, so we can pick a topic which will be interesting to most people and date on which the most people can attend. Information will be posted on the parish website and the bulletin.

A Parish Directory

will be compiled and distributed sometime after the New Year. Forms for collecting information for the new directory were sent to everyone on the parish mailing list as of December 21st. If you did not receive the forms in the mail, it is probably because we do not have you on our mailing list and we ask that you kindly pick up a copy of the forms from the back of the church. If you have any questions, please speak with Fr. John. Forms should be returned by Sunday, January 21st, at the latest.

Commemoration Lists

All parishioners are asked to update the list of names, both living and departed, they have submitted for commemoration at the Divine Liturgy. Commemoration sheets have been sent home with the forms for the parishioner directory. Please take a moment to submit your new list, as the previous lists are being replaced. Questions? Please ask Fr. John.



Christ is born! Glorify Him!

During the celebration of the Lord's Nativity, it is the custom of Orthodox Christians to greet one another with the joyous exclamation, "Christ is born!", to which the one greeted responds, "Glorify Him!"

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!

SAINT JOHN OF SAN FRANCISCO ON MATTHEW 1:25

And [Joseph] knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called His name JESUS.

The word "until" does not signify that Mary remained a virgin only until a certain time. In the Bible, the word "until" and words similar to it often signify eternity. It is said of Christ: "In His days shall shine forth righteousness and an abundance of peace, *until* the moon be taken away" (Psalm 71:7), but this does not mean that when there shall no longer be a moon at the end of the world, God's righteousness shall no longer be; precisely then, rather, will it triumph. And what does it mean when it says: "For He must reign, *until* He hath put all enemies under His feet?" (1 Cor. 15:25). Is the Lord to reign only for a time until His enemies shall be put under His feet?! The Savior in the Gospel says to the Apostles (Matt: 28:20): "Lo, I am with you always, even *until* the end of the world." Are we to believe that the Lord will no longer be with the disciples in the age to come? While there are plenty more such examples of the use of the word "until", the above are sufficient to prove that Matt 1:25 does not argue against the life-long virginity of the Mother of God.



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
2006



Dear Beloved Parishioners and Friends of Our Parish,
Greetings on the Great Feast of Our Lord's Nativity!
Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Some two thousand years ago, the world experienced the greatest event in its history – "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

As we know, this miraculous, yet historic, event divided world history into BC and AD, and salvation history into the Old and New Testaments, as God through His Son established a new relationship with His people. Yet for us Orthodox Christians, the Incarnation of Christ is an event experienced on the most personal of levels. It is an event which divides our lives into two periods – the time before and after we began to know the Lord, experiencing within ourselves His glory, full of grace and truth.

May this year's celebration of our Lord's Nativity be not only a reminder of our God's entrance into our world, and not only a remembrance of the New and Saving Covenant He has established with us, but also a renewal of His entrance into our hearts and minds, into our relationships with each other, and into all aspects of our lives; for in this way we will truly experience the grace and joy brought by the Savior of the world.

In this holy season, I ask your continued prayers for our Mission, and I assure you of God's enduring blessings upon you all, your families, friends, loved ones, and His entire world.

With love in Christ,

Fr. John

THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN LETTERS TO GOD

Dear God, I would like to live 900 years like the guy in the Bible.
Love, Chris

Dear God, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is this ok? Neil

Dear God, Please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there now. Ginny

Dear God, I am an American. What are you? Robert

Dear God, thank you for the baby brother but what I prayed for was a puppy. Joyce

Dear God, I bet it is very hard to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it.
Nan

Dear God, in the Bible times did they really talk that fancy?
Jennifer

Dear God, instead of letting people die and having to make new ones why don't you just keep the ones you got now? Jane

Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying.
Elliott



NATIVITY OF CHRIST 2006

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

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



Make glad, O righteous!
Greatly rejoice, O heavens! O mountains, dance for joy!
Christ is born, and like the cherubim the Virgin makes a throne,
carrying at her bosom the Word made flesh!
Shepherds glorify the new-born Child!
Magi offer the Master gifts! Angels sing praises, saying:
“O Lord, beyond all understanding, glory to Thee!” – *Nativity Matins*

Dearly beloved in Christ,

The beautiful liturgical hymns we sing in celebration of the birth of Our Savior, Jesus Christ, resound with a single theme: joy.

They proclaim the joy all creation shares as its Creator takes on the human flesh. They invite us to rejoice with the angelic hosts in praising the Word made flesh, dwelling amongst us. And they challenge us to look beyond the cares and concerns, the worries and woes of this world in anticipation of the new life the Savior offers us – a life that, while beyond all understanding, is already revealed to us and experienced by us in the life of His Body, the Church.

The era in which we live has little appreciation for mystery, less capacity for rejoicing in that which it cannot understand rationally. Mired as we are in global conflict, political and financial uncertainties, and the constant questioning of everything from the role of the family to planning for retirement, we often make little time to delve into the things that are not of this world. The dream of the “good life” eludes us. The threat of terrorism chills us. If we find little in God’s creation in which to delight and rejoice, how can we possibly find joy in a mystery beyond all understanding, a mystery that points us to the Kingdom in which all will be fulfilled, perfected, and revealed?

Indeed, the birth of Our Savior is filled with great mystery. The virgin gives birth, yet she remains a virgin. God takes on our human nature, yet He remains that which He is from all eternity. The King of All reigns from a cave, rather than a sumptuous palace. The manger becomes His throne; simple shepherds, His court. The angels serve as His messengers; the powerful of the world, His enemies. The Messiah

comes unto His own; despite centuries of anticipation, they fail to recognize Him as the Living Word the written word joyously reveals.

Beyond the externals, beyond the world's inability to grasp this mystery, lies a joyful reality beyond all understanding and earthly wisdom. The love God offers us through the incarnation of His Son transcends all understanding, yet it is real, freely offered as a gift to all who accept it and share it and delight in it. Through the eyes of faith alone do we discover that which is beyond all understanding and rejoice in the reality of God's love for us, sinful as we are.

With great joy I greet you on this glorious and radiant feast. May the understanding of the incarnation renew us and refresh us now, in the new year to come, and in every moment of our lives.

With love in the New-Born Savior,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herman", preceded by a small cross symbol.

+HERMAN

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada