



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 19, 2010

Please Remember in Prayer

Melvin Woodell (newly-departed), Karen Nichols, Michelle Wilson, Howard Peters, Irene Clenney, Denise Royal, Gabriela Jones, Scott and Maryann, Roman Szwec, Mat. Dunia, Patti Lease, Garrett Cuppels, Bill & Kathy Parrish, Frs Michael & Andrew, Monk Christian, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Nina Gordon, Mirela & Chris, Jaroslav, Troy, Frank & Mary Miranda, Kathy T., Bruce, Julia Plisko & family, Stella.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

Sunday Before Nativity

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23RD

7:00p.m. Vespers

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

Eve of Nativity

11:00p.m. Matins

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25TH

Nativity of the Lord

12:00a.m. Diving Liturgy
12:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26TH

Synaxis of the Theotokos

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

A Prophecy of Isaiah

For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulder. And of His peace there will be no end. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. The Father of the world to come!

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Dec. 26th

Jodi McElwee

Sunday, Jan. 2nd

Kathy Parrish



Schedule of services for Christmas

- Friday, Dec. 24th, 11:00pm – 1:15am:
 - Midnight Service (Matins / Divine Liturgy)
- Dec. 25th, 12:00 noon:
 - Vespers (instead of normal Saturday time at 6pm)

Choir Practice

will be held this Sunday, the 19th, during the coffee hour. We will go over hymns in preparation for Christmas and the visit of Metropolitan Jonah.



Helping a Needy Family

Today is the last day to make a donation to help buy Christmas presents for the family we have adopted this year. If you would like to make a donation, please do so via the special collection basket or by seeing Mike McFarland.

Bookstore

Looking to buy someone a Christmas gift? How about a book from our newly stocked bookstore.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

During the celebration of Christmas, 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!"

Suggestions for Celebrating Christmas

- 1) Give thanks to God by attending Church.
- 2) Seek peace with those we may be at odds with.
- 3) Give an anonymous gift to a stranger in need.



Fast Free Period

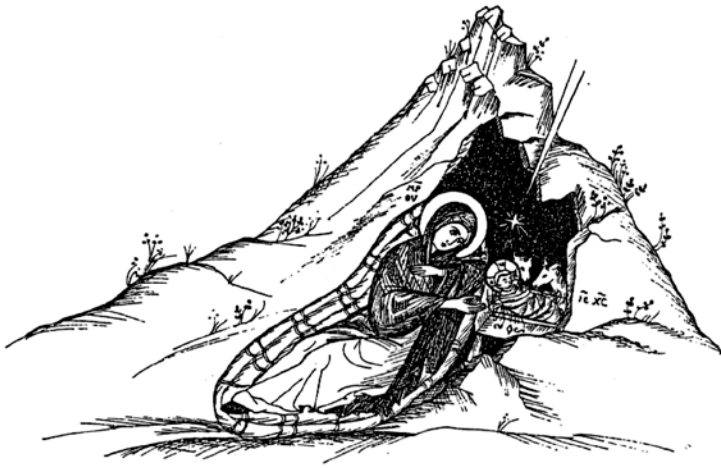
During the twelve days of Christmas, Dec. 25th, through Theophany, Jan. 6th, we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Fridays. A one day fast is observed on January 5th, the Eve of Theophany.

10th Anniversary Celebration – January 1st and 2nd

A letter outlining the events of our 10th Anniversary Celebration with Metropolitan Jonah is available for pick up at the candle stand. This letter was already sent out via email and post to visitors of our Mission.

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 – 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.



ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF HIS BEATITUDE, METROPOLITAN JONAH FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST 2010

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" [Luke 2:14].

The angelic proclamation at the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the good news of the restoration of all things. In Christ, all things are made new, God is made man, and the order of nature is restored. All things are filled with His glory. All creation itself sings with joy, radiating the glory of God, while the angelic hosts join in praise of the One Who has been made manifest to us.

There is no separation between God and us, because God has taken our flesh and been born of the Virgin. He has emptied Himself in order to fill us with Himself. He has drawn us to Himself that He might fulfill every aspect of our lives with His joy, His presence, and His righteousness.

In light of this great mystery, how are we to respond to God?

Our spiritual life involves our every breath -- how we live in this world and conduct ourselves in our neighborhoods, at work and in school, in the midst of our families and communities and parishes. It involves bringing the remembrance of God into every aspect of our lives. During the Nativity Fast, as we prepared ourselves for the coming of the Savior, we were offered the opportunity to repent, to seek renewal, and to recommit ourselves to Christ and His Church. We discerned those areas of our lives in which we turned away from God, once again opening ourselves to His radiant presence, that He might heal and raise us up. Even when things seem dark and dismal, when we struggle to find the light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, we can regain our spiritual focus -- that focus which is once again restored to us through the Incarnation of the One Who, as the "Light of the world," leads us.

Too often, we allow ourselves to be blinded to the light of God's presence. We become preoccupied with anger and pride, lusts and the desire for material things, and -- even worse -- gossip, slander, judgment, criticism, and condemnation of those whom we should accept as our brothers and sisters. These sins must be confronted, confessed, and stopped. It is only by repentance that we can accept Christ back into our lives when we have banished Him by our sins. It is only by forgiving those who have offended us that we can be freed from slavery to the demons of anger and bitterness. And, indeed, it is only through repentance and forgiveness that we come to remembrance of Him as the One Who has come to set us free.

God comes and reveals Himself in the midst of our lives -- if we let him -- just as He came to the obscurity of a cave in Bethlehem. He exposed the envy and hatred of Herod. He was intuitively known to the simple shepherds -- the "pure of heart" -- but those immersed in the bitterness of sin "knew Him not." His Mother was slandered and condemned by those around her; how, then, can we slander? He was adored by the Wise Men of Persia, but those who, in their pride thought they were wise, could not understand.

Giving thanks to God for our healing and salvation, let us join with the angels and the shepherds, and all creation in the song of praise, "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will to men!"

With love in the Newborn Lord,

+JONAH

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Primate of the Orthodox Church in America

