



# CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## BULLETIN OF DECEMBER 24, 2017

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>

#### ***Eve of the Nativity***

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hr  
 7:00p.m. Matins w/ Litiya

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup>

#### ***Nativity of Our Lord***

##### *One of the Twelve Great Feasts*

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 7:00p.m. Great Vespers

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>

#### ***Synaxis of the Theotokos***

9:00a.m. Akathist

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>

5:00p.m. Bible Study  
 6:00p.m. Great Vespers

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>

#### ***Sunday Before Theophany***

8:40a.m. Hours  
 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy  
 Coffee Hr  
 7:00p.m. Great Vespers

### MONDAY, JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>

#### ***Circumcision of Our Lord***

##### ***St. Basil the Great***

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

#### READER SCHEDULE

##### **Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**

Rdr. George Kaloroumakis

##### **Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>**

Daniel Moss



#### **A Warm Welcome!**

We warmly welcome all our visitors. It's good to have you with us!

#### **Clean-Up and Decoration Today – December 24<sup>th</sup>**

Please consider staying after coffee hour to help clean the chapel, hall, and other facilities for Christmas. Many thanks for your help!



#### **It is Not Too Late (Yet)!**

Time for the most important Christmas preparation we can undertake is running out. Let's not forget to prepare our innermost chamber for Christ through a good Confession.

#### **Schedule of services for Christmas**

- Sunday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Eve of Nativity
  - 7:00pm: Matins with Litiya
- Monday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> – Nativity of the Lord
  - 8:40am: Hours
  - 9:00am: Divine Liturgy
  - 7:00pm: Vespers
- Tuesday, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> – Synaxis of the Theotokos
  - 9:00am: Akathist



#### **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!"

#### **Fast Free Period**

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

#### **Reminder: Matching Donation**

**2x** In 2017, we have a matching donation program to build up our operating account. For every dollar we finish the year in the black (the positive), one dollar will be matched by the donor – up to \$12,000. What an opportunity!

#### **St. Basil's Bread**

This ancient tradition will be kept on Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### **2017 Annual Parish Meeting - Save the Date**

Sunday, Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, following the coffee hour. All asked to attend.

#### **Helping a Needy Family**

Many thanks to those who gave \$540 for our Christmas Families!

CASH FLOWS THROUGH 11/30/17					CASH FLOWS IN NOVEMBER 2017					FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT		
OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	OPERATING		OTHER		ALL	AS OF: 12/24		
<i>Income</i>	<i>Expense</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Expense</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Expense</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Expense</i>	<i>Net</i>	<i>Available</i>	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Savings</i>
82,565	79,050	33,728	31,142	+7,100	6,200	15,335	540	540	-9,135	1,641	3,139	0



**"OUR SAVIOR, BOTH GOD AND MAN"**  
*By Saint Ephraim the Syrian – 4<sup>th</sup> 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?

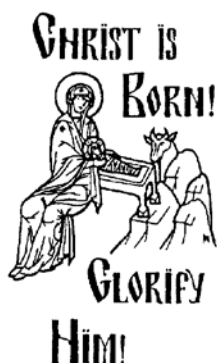
If He is not God and man then, indeed, our salvation is false, and false are the pronouncements of the prophets.



## REFLECTION ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

*From the Prologue of Ochrid by St. Nikolai Velimirovich*

The Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was first worshiped by shepherds and wise men (astrologers) from the east—the simplest and the wisest of this world. Even today, those who most sincerely worship the Lord Jesus as God and Savior are the simplest and the wisest of this world. Perverted simplicity and half-learned wisdom were always the enemies of Christ's divinity and His Gospel. But who were these wise men from the east? This question was especially studied by St. Dimitri of Rostov. He claims that they were kings of certain smaller regions or individual towns in Persia, Arabia and Egypt. At the same time, they were erudite in the knowledge of astronomy. This wondrous star appeared to them, which announced the birth of the New King. According to St. Dimitri, this star appeared to them nine months before the birth of the Lord Jesus, i.e., at the time of His conception by the Most-holy Theotokos. They spent nine months in studying this star, in preparing for the journey and in traveling. They arrived in Bethlehem shortly after the birth of the Savior of the world. One of them was called Melchior. He was old, with long white hair and beard. He offered the Lord the gift of gold. The second was called Caspar, of ruddy face, young and beardless. He offered the Lord the gift of frankincense. The third was called Balthasar, of dark complexion and a very heavy beard. He offered the Lord the gift of myrrh. After their deaths, their bodies were taken to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Milan, and from Milan to Cologne. It can be added that these three wise men were representatives of the three main races of men that descended from Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The Persian represented the Japhethites, the Arabian represented the Semites, and the Egyptian represented the Hamites. Thus it can be said that, through these three, the whole human race worshiped the Incarnate Lord and God.



### 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!

## ST. BASIL'S BREAD

The tradition of Saint Basil's Bread dates to the fourth century, when St. Basil the Great, the father of philanthropy, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he placed gold coins. Thus the poor families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves were pleasantly surprised to find the coins. This custom is kept to this day among Orthodox Christians, who on Saint Basil's Day, January 1st, place gold coins inside a loaf of sweetened bread in honor of the Saint's care for the poor. The one who finds the coin in his or her piece is considered commissioned by St. Basil to carry on his work for the poor, and in exchange he will ask the Lord for whatever is needful for the New Year.



## SAINT JOHN OF SAN FRANCISCO ON MATTHEW 1:25

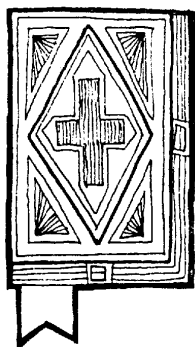
***And [Joseph] knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called His name JESUS.***

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.



## 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.

## 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.

