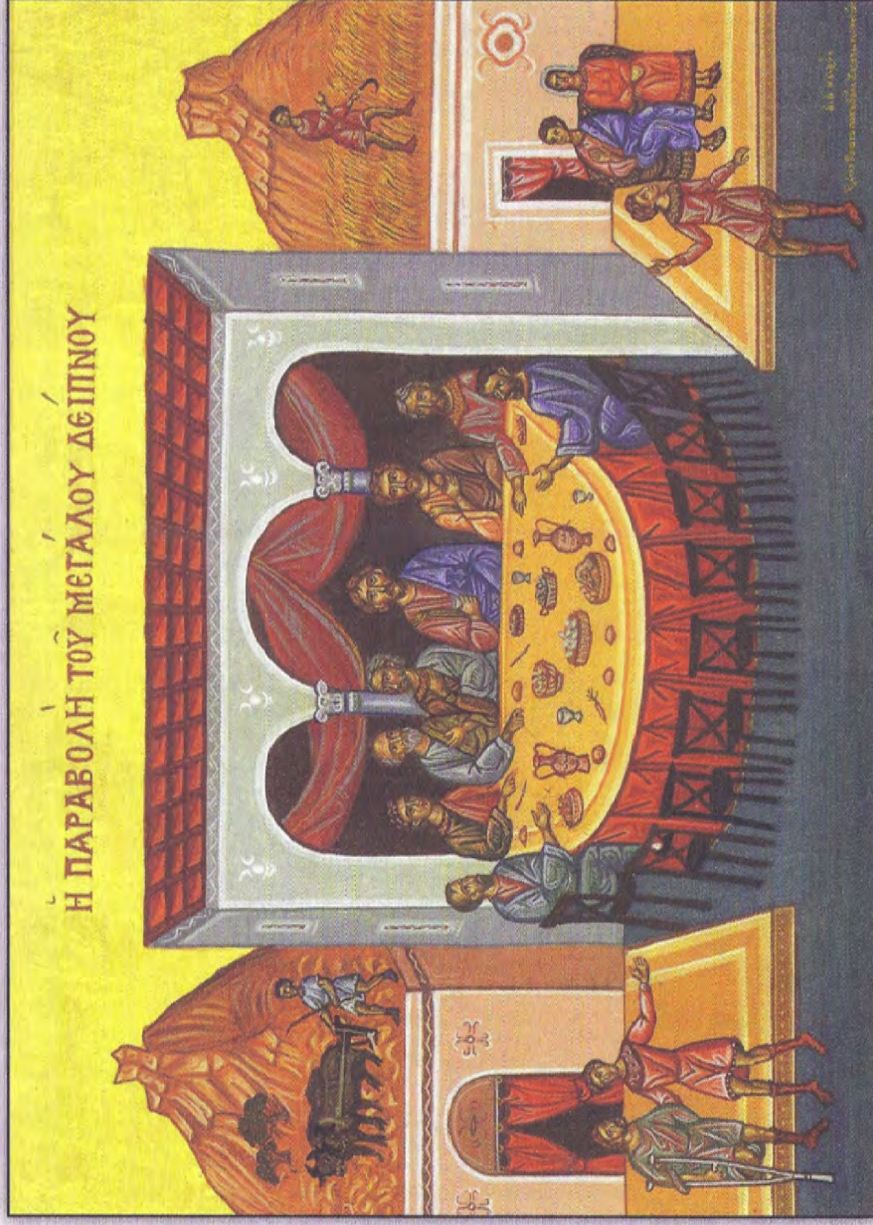


SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS



Icon of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:16-24)

December 16, 2012

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

THE HOLY PROPHET HAGGAI

TONE 4

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 17 – DECEMBER 23

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 – SATURDAY BEFORE NATIVITY; THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR ANASTASIA

6:00 PM – Great Vespers of Sunday

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23 – THE SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY; THE HOLY TEN MARTYRS OF CRETE

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

For All Parishioners



Greeting Cards

Christmas Cards and various other greeting cards are for sale in the Church Hall. Please see Mary Kitt to purchase.

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus

On Saturday, January 19th, our parish will host the monthly Men's Prayer Breakfast. It is open to all men.

The morning will start at 7:30 AM with an Akafist service followed by breakfast and a talk.

Men, please come and join with other Catholic men in fellowship.

Please Note:

When you are away, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

Sunday offering for December 9

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	1
\$16.00	1 (loose)
\$20.00	2
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	2
\$75.00	1
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	2
\$400.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1026.00	15 Parishioners

Parishioner Total: \$1026.00

Visitor Total: \$25.00

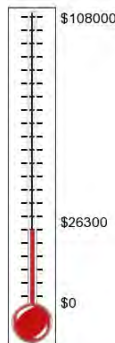
Average / parish household (40): \$24.43

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: (\$1099.00)

Flowers: \$35.00

Other (non-parishioner): \$350.00



Stewardship Pledges

Pledges received: 11

It is impossible to plan any sort of budget until all pledge forms are turned in. If you haven't returned your pledge, please do so.

WHO IS ST. NICHOLAS?

From The St. Nicholas Center, stnicholascenter.org

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara. At the time the area was Greek and is now on the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships.

Under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruthlessly persecuted Christians, Bishop Nicholas suffered for his faith, was exiled and imprisoned. The prisons were so full of bishops, priests, and deacons, there was no room for the real criminals — murderers, thieves and robbers. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. He died December 6, AD 343 in Myra and was buried in his cathedral church, where a unique relic, called manna, formed in his grave. This liquid substance, said to have healing powers, fostered the growth of devotion to Nicholas. The anniversary of his death became a day of celebration, St. Nicholas Day, December 6th (December 19 on the Julian Calendar).

Through the centuries many stories and

legends have been told of St. Nicholas' life and deeds. These accounts help us understand his extraordinary character and why he is so beloved and revered as protector and helper of those in need.



One story tells of a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value—a dowry. The larger the dowry, the better the chance that a young woman would find a good husband. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry. This poor man's daughters, without dowries, were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home — providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting

gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes the story is told with gold balls instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for St. Nicholas. And so St. Nicholas is a gift-giver.

Through the centuries St. Nicholas has continued to be venerated by Catholics and Orthodox and honored by Protestants. By his example of generosity to those in need, especially children, St. Nicholas continues to be a model for the compassionate life.



LET'S GO CAROLING!

ON DECEMBER 29, LET'S GATHER AT THE CHURCH AT 10:00 AM TO GO CAROLING AT THE HOMES OF OUR SHUT-INS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO GO CAROLING UP UNTIL FEBRUARY 2ND - DEPENDING UPON INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING OR YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED OR YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED, PLEASE CONTACT FR. JAMES.

Church Decorating

Please come on Saturday, December 22nd at 10:00 AM to help decorate the Church for the feast of the Nativity of our Lord.

Haven't Seen Someone in a While?

Give them a call. See how they are doing. Let them know that you not only miss them but also care enough to see if everything is okay. A kind word can go a long way.

Saint John Of San Francisco On Matthew 1:25

And [Joseph] knew her not until 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 has 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.

Flower Collection

Special envelopes are available in the back of the church do help with the purchase of flowers for the Feast of the Nativity.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICE FOR THE FEAST OF NATIVITY

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24 - VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY

10:00 AM - Royal Hours

10:00 PM - *З Нами Бог!* Велике Повечір'я "God is with us" Great Complines
Followed by Divine Liturgy

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25 – THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Staying Safe

How to stay safe in the world today:

1. Avoid riding in cars because they are responsible for 20% of all fatal accidents.
2. Do not stay home because 17% of all accidents happen in the home.
3. Avoid walking in the streets because 14% of all accidents happen to pedestrians.
4. Avoid travelling by air, rail or water because 16% of all accidents involve these forms of transport.
5. Of the remaining 33%, 32% of all deaths occur in hospitals. ABOVE ALL ELSE avoid hospitals.
6. You will be glad to hear that only .001% of all deaths occur in worship services, and these are usually related to previous physical disorders. Therefore, logic tells us that the safest place for you to be at any given point in time is at church.
7. Bible study is safe too. The percentage of deaths during Bible study is even less.

For safety's sake—attend Liturgy and study your Bible—it could save your life.



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.

What is tithing?

In Sacred Scripture, tithing is the setting aside of 10% of the “first fruits” of one’s labors. Many Protestant congregations strongly encourage and sometimes even require their faithful to tithe. While we don’t require it, I certainly encourage you to consider tithing. If not 10%, perhaps 5%.

If your monthly income is:

**A 10% tithe would be
per month**

**A 5% tithe would be
per month**

\$1,000
\$2,000
\$4,000
\$6,000
etc...

\$100
\$200
\$400
\$600

\$50
\$100
\$200
\$300

ASK FATHER: 4 QUESTIONS / 4 ANSWERS

from orthodoxdelomarva.org

Question: *In the Gospel two weeks ago, the Lord said that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What does this mean? And do I have to literally give up all my possessions to enter Heaven?*

Answer: While some say that the Lord is speaking here about the physical impossibility of a camel passing through the eye of a sewing needle, the 11th century saint, Theophylact of Bulgaria, says that the Lord here was referring to a certain gate in Jerusalem called the Needle's Eye, that was built so low that a camel could only pass if it entered kneeling and unencumbered with baggage. The lesson would then be that an eternal inheritance awaits those who unburden themselves of sin, and in particular, the things of this world. In the Old and New Testaments there have been many who had riches, yet attained the highest levels of sanctity. Their wealth was not an obstacle to their entrance into Heaven for five reasons: 1) they did not consider their possessions to be their own, instead they saw themselves simply as stewards of the Lord's goods, living only on what was necessary and using the rest to help those in need; 2) while they had wealth and possessions, they were able to use them dispassionately since they had given their heart entirely to the Lord and cared nothing for the world's deceits; 3) they, while grateful for the Lord's blessings, saw themselves unworthy due to their sins, and this allowed them to become "poor in spirit" even though they were given great wealth; 4) they trusted in the Lord alone, not their temporal riches or prosperity; 5) they were ever mindful of their death as the day in which they would have to give an account for what they had received.

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.

You might be Eastern Christian if ...

10. You are still in church more than ten minutes after the priest says, "Let us depart in peace."
9. You forget to change your clock at Daylight Savings Time, show up an hour late, but the service is still going on....
8. ...but there are people in your church who still can't get there on time when the clock gets set back an hour in the fall.
7. You consider an hour long church service to be "short."
6. You buy chocolate bunnies on sale (after Western Easter).
5. When someone says, "Let us pray..." you reflexively stand up.
4. You went to church four or more times in a week.
3. Your priest is married...
2. ...and your vocabulary includes at least three words that describe the wife of a priest.

And the number one sign you might be Orthodox is...

1. You say a prayer before you pray!

God's Extended Hand

FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) has provided us with a special bin for collecting donations of clothing, toiletries, etc. to be distributed at GEH. It is located near the door of the church hall.



Popcorn and a Movie with the Sisters

"Women of Spirit", the untold story of the Sisters of St. Basil in America, will be shown at our parish on Sunday, January 27th after the Divine Liturgy. Sr. Ann Laszok will be in attendance to answer any questions that people might have. We invite everyone to come and celebrate this amazing story with the Sisters.

100 years ago, Bishop Soter Ortynsky, the first Eastern Catholic bishop to come to America, reached out to the Sisters of St. Basil in Yavoriv, Ukraine through Metropolitan Andrej Sheptytsky. Bishop Soter had a congregation of half a million people, and he needed help. "Women of Spirit" is the remarkable story of the 100 years of the Sisters of St. Basil, who answered the call and came to America to minister to the needs of thousands of faithful. Their struggles and challenges are recounted by many of the older Sisters who knew these early pioneers personally.

Interviews by former students, among whom are Bishops, priests, sisters, doctors, lawyers, and teachers, bring this amazing story to life. The documentary chronicles the Sisters' story through a sequence of chapters, starting with Coming to America; Heeding the Call; Ground Breaking; Focus on Life-giving healing ministries; Rebirth of Ukraine; and concluding with Catechesis, Collaboration, and Church, as the Sisters enter their 2nd Century. Archival photos and videos underscore the influence the Sisters had on our Church in the USA and the world, and the crucial role they played in the rebirth of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ukraine. Commentaries by Patriarch Sviatoslav and Patriarch Emeritus Lubomyr attest to the impact of the catechetical and academic education of thousands of children through the leadership of the Sisters. Humorous and deeply personal recollections add to the total beauty and warmth of the movie.

Plan to attend! For further information on the Popcorn and a Movie with the Sisters call Fr James at (619) 905-5278.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
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Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

Do not Seek Special Favors from the Lord

'I sought the Lord and He heard me.' [Ps. 34:4] If someone has not been heard it means he has not sought the Lord.

Pay particular attention to this point. The Psalm does not say: 'I asked the Lord for riches and He heard me. I asked for a long life and He heard me. I begged for this or that and He heard me.' Seeking to obtain something from the Lord does not mean seeking the Lord himself. 'I sought the Lord and He heard me.'

You yourself, when you pray, what do you say to Him?

Maybe you request Him to remove so-and-so whom you detest from the world! If so, you are not seeking the Lord but setting yourself up as judge of your enemy and demanding that God should execute your sentence. Are you sure the person whose death you are requesting is not better than you? In this, at least, he is probably

better than you: he can plead that he is not praying for your death.

When you turn to God, do not seek some favor from Him. Seek the Lord himself and He will hear you.

He will interrupt your prayer saying: 'Here I am. Yes, surely, here I am, here. What do you want? What is your request? Everything I can give you is nothing in comparison to the gift of myself. Accept me, find your joy in me, talk with me. Touch me with the hands of your faith and you will be united to me. I will make all your burdens light. So, when your mortal body is clothed in immortality, you will be able to be united with me also in your body. Then you will continually see my face. You will be full of joy, and no one will take that joy away from you.'

St. Augustine of Hippo