

CHRISTMAS, THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD,
GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST



Icon of the Visit of the Magi



December 25, 2016

THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

FESTAL TONE

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 26 – JANUARY 1

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26 – *SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS; THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR EUTHYMIUS, BISHOP OF SARDIS*

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31– *SATURDAY AFTER NATIVITY; OUR VENERABLE MOTHER MELANIA THE ROMAN*

10:00 AM – PARASTAS; + *ROSTYSLAVA BOHACHEVSKY; REQ: BANKSTON FAMILY*

6:00 PM – GREAT VESPERS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1 – *THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST; OUR HOLY FATHER BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Mark Your Calendars

Sunday, January 15, 2017: 12:00 Noon:
Ukrainian Christmas Dinner
in the church hall.

Cost: Adults: \$25.00 until January 7
\$35.00 after January 7

Children 5-12: \$10.00

Children under 5: free



LET'S GO CAROLING!

BETWEEN DECEMBER 25 AND FEBRUARY 2 LET'S VISIT PARISHIONERS, SHUT-INS, AND NURSING HOMES TO BRING CHRISTMAS CHEER. PLEASE CONTACT FR. JAMES IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED OR KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED.

Fast Free Period

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

Pay attention carefully. After the sin comes the shame; courage follows repentance. Did you pay attention to what I said? Satan upsets the order; he gives the courage to sin and the shame to repentance.

+ *St. John Chrysostom,*
Homily 8, On Repentance and Almsgiving

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A mother was teaching her 3-year-old the Lord's prayer. For several evenings at bedtime she repeated it after her mother. One night she said she was ready to solo. The mother listened with pride as she carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer.

"Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some e-mail, Amen."

Різдво Господа Бога і Спаса нашого Ісуса Христа

Лука 2, 1 – 20

Радість на небі і на землі мир

Нехай цьогорічне святкування Різдва Господа і Спаса нашого Ісуса Христа у Вифлеємі, як і в цілому світі, стане для нас добрим приводом замислитися про своє спасення. Як напевно пережити ту «велику радість» (Лк. 2, 10), що звіщається і дається нам, тоді, коли так мало людей чують і приймають її, коли світ усе більше занурюється в морок?

Так, сьогодні на небі радість «і на землі мир людям Його вподобання» (Лк. 2, 14)..., але люди не дають уподобати, полюбити себе, вони воліють обрати смерть для себе і для інших. Можливо, цього року ми краще розуміємо парадокс різдвяної ночі. Як переживати велику радість, звіщену пастирям, сповнену захопленням мудреців і водночас бути солідарними зі стражданням людства? Чи можна смакувати Божу радість, забуваючи людські біди? У повсякденному житті можна звертати свою увагу то до одного, то до іншого. Але цієї ночі, якщо ми справді свідомі, мусимо тримати в умі і те, й інше. У цьому й полягає парадокс.

Цей парадокс супроводжує Ісуса від самого Його народження. Він напевно Бог, і Він не покинув Отця. Він напевно людина, не вищий від нас, не віддалений. Він поряд з нами, бо зійшов на саме дно нашого людського існування, до самого його фундаменту. Ми ніколи не зможемо збагнути усієї величчї слави Отця, що поширилася на цілий всесвіт, коли, врешті, його Син узяв на себе нашу людську природу! Цю зіпсовану і спотворену людську природу, яка вже не вміє любити, Син любить шаленою любов'ю. Він приймає її такою, якою вона є, і віддає себе їй цілковито й назавжди. Тому та Дитина, яка щойно народилася, пізнає у своєму тілі та своїм серцем, що означає – терпіти усі злидні людського життя.

Чому Отець дає нам свого улюбленого Сина? Щоб зробити нас подібними до Нього. Він хоче зробити нас щасливими назавжди. Ми створені на Його образ, і Він стає людиною, щоб обожествити нас, розділити з нами своє

вічне життя, своє життя у любові. Щоб ми стали подібними до Нього, Він спочатку стає подібним до нас – в усьому, що є людським, окрім наших гріхів, наслідки яких понесе на собі.

Власне цей парадокс радості Отця і страждання Його дітей Ісус бере на себе у своєму різдві і запрошує нас пережити цей парадокс разом із Ним. Хіба можемо ми звіщати людям радість Бога, Який приходить спасти їх, і при цьому не бути уважними до тих бід, які їх мучать, не розділяти цих бід? Щоб принести іншим хоч трохи миру, ми не можемо вдавати, що нічого не бачимо, задовольняючись самими словами, бо існує лише одна дорога правди – це Ісус. Почнімо з того, що наше власне страждання переживатимемо разом з Ним. Навчімося від Нього, як ділити страждання інших. І це не сентименти, а цілком нова реальність, яку отримуємо у ту світлу ніч: Ісус бере на себе біди, беззаконня і смерть усіх людей. Вони стають Його бідами, і це відкриває шлях до життя людям, які прямують до смерті. Якщо ми погодимося бути в єдності з ним, то таїнственным способом розділимо страждання інших людей. Спасення нам запропоноване не ззовні, воно – у Спасителі, Який нині народився.

Тому не лукавимо, переживаючи водночас радість, яка охоплює світ, і горе, яке його наповнює. Любов Христова, що живе в наших серцях, єднає цю радість і горе та відмовляється їх розділяти. Звичайно, завжди існуватиме напруження, бо Божя любов до людей прибіта до хреста. Намагаймося не закривати свого серця перед безмежною радістю Отця, яку Він хоче зіслати на всіх людей, і не запліщувати очей перед стражданням невинних. Тримати разом обидва кінці цієї тайни спасення – означає надіятися. У нинішню святую ніч заструменіло джерело надії, і саме цією надією спасається світ.

Жан Корбон, *Це називається світанком*,
Luke 2 1 - 20

CARING FOR THE LONELY

Written by the Very Rev. John Breck

A woman in the parish recently buried her husband after his long and losing battle with cancer. A thirteen-year old girl still cries herself to sleep each night several months after her parents' bitter divorce. A man off the streets, recently chrismated into the Church, is waging a tentative battle with alcoholism, trying with too little support to keep himself in recovery. The wife and mother, determined to serve everyone's needs but her own, is slipping slowly but surely into depression, overcome by a sense of abandonment. As Christmas approaches, each of these people is anticipating the coming festivities less with joy than with dread. Nostalgia this time of year can be overwhelming. In the experience of these and so many other people, that nostalgia can become a crushing weight of loneliness.

Gluttony, greed, anger, lust: the spiritual literature speaks eloquently to these and other passions, and it offers invaluable advice to those who are waging warfare with these particular demons. The Fathers, however, rarely speak of loneliness, which is one of the most pervasive and pernicious of all the passions. There is much wisdom to be found in their words about *akedia* (despondency), for example, or sloth. Yet as relevant as those words are to the problem of loneliness, it is difficult if not impossible for someone burdened by a sense of abandonment to find solace in them. Words on a page need to be translated into spoken words of grace and gestures of tenderness that will lift the burden of loneliness, and restore to the bereaved and the abandoned a genuine sense of hope.

American pop culture, with a powerful assist from the devil, has turned the

Christmas season (beginning somewhere around Halloween) into a commercial romp, a mad frenzy symbolized most brutally two years ago by the tragic fate of the Wal-Mart employee – on "Black Friday" – who was trampled to death by holiday shoppers. Those who wish to celebrate the birth in the flesh of the eternal Son of God, the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, have an uphill battle on their hands. Everything militates against proper respect and peaceful celebration of the feast. Yet somehow we need to hold fast to its theological and spiritual significance, if anticipation of joyful celebration is not to end in the loneliness of the long-distance runner.

That may not be as difficult as it first seems. Within the parish, as within our circle of friends and acquaintances, we can start simply by looking around. Being attentive to the state and needs of other people, without being intrusive, is basic to our life in Christ. Listening closely to the voices of those we encounter, while observing their faces and body language, provides clues to their spiritual and psychological condition, perhaps especially at this time of year when so many are so vulnerable. It may help us get in touch with our own sense of loneliness and our need to find fellowship and love among those who are closest to us. The most effective care and support we can offer others comes from the depths of our own experience, especially when it involves suffering.

The invitation, then, is simply to care. Care particularly in this Nativity season for those who are going through a period – or a lifetime – of abandonment and consequent loneliness.

A little poem on silence and solitude seems relevant here. It ends,

And solitude, so often faced with dread,
Reveals an unseen Presence that would bless
The solitary with the gift instead
To be alone, yet know no loneliness.

To care adequately and appropriately for those, including ourselves, who suffer the pangs of loneliness, it is perhaps enough to take the advice offered by Theophan the Recluse in his revised version of *Unseen Warfare*.

"Recall also to your mind Christ our Lord, Who, through His immeasurable sufferings

felt Himself abandoned by His heavenly Father in the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, and when you feel yourself as it were crucified in your present position, cry from your heart: 'Thy will be done, O Lord!' 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt' (Matt. xxvi.39).

If you do this, your patience and your prayer will rise on high to God's presence, as the flame of your heart's sacrifice. And you will prove yourself filled with love as strong as death, and ardent readiness of will to shoulder your cross and follow after Christ our Lord on any path, by which He chooses to call you to Himself. This is true life in God!"

Gifts for the King

We all have gifts that we may bring.
We all have songs that we may sing.
We all have kind words we may say.
We all have prayers that we may pray.

We all have love and joy to give.
And what a joy life is to live
if we just scatter everywhere
the things God's given us to share.



If you have a gift—bring it.
If you have a song—sing it.
If you have a talent—use it.
If you have love—diffuse it.

If you have gladness—share it.
If you have happiness—give it.
If you have religion—live it.
If you have a prayer—pray it.

—Author unknown

TRAVELING ICON OF OUR LADY OF POCHAIV

Why is it called the Traveling Icon?

Each week beginning next Sunday immediately following the Divine Liturgy, the Traveling Icon of Our Lady of Pochaiv will be formally passed from one family to the next. The recipient family will display the Icon throughout the week in their home and pray with it, as a family, once a day—total time about 15 minutes per day. The suggested prayers will be provided, along with scripture readings for each day.



Why are we doing this?

The purpose of the Traveling Icon is to recognize and encourage family unity. It is one element of a vibrant parish, and dovetails with the desire of our Bishops to encourage more time spent in prayer. The Icon will help bring the family together at least once each day in prayer, thus allowing the Holy Spirit to be present

daily amongst us. The goal is to encourage and enrich the daily prayer life of each parishioner and their family.

What if I'm single and/or live alone?

By all means, sign up for the Traveling Icon. Venerating the Icon is appropriate for individuals as well as families. Also, Fr. James will deliver the Traveling Icon to those parishioners who are homebound or otherwise unable to attend Liturgy.

How do I participate?

There will be a signup sheet in the back of the Church. Please sign up for a week to ensure there are no blanks. Volunteer for one or more weeks today!



Sunday offering for December 18

Amount	Number
\$6.00	1 (loose)
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	1
\$25.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$85.00	2
\$400.00	1
<hr/>	
\$686.00	

Parishioner Total: \$686.00

Average / parish household (42): \$8.79

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$1288.00

Deficit: (\$602.00)



DO NOT TRUST
THE MINDSET OF
SECULAR PEOPLE.
... DECIDE WHAT
YOU WANT MOST:
THE SYMPATHY OF
THE WORLD OR A
RETURN NEAR TO
GOD?

— ST PAISIOS



PARISHIONERS THAT ARE HOME BOUND



If you or a loved one cannot make it to Church, Fr. James would be more than pleased visit at your home, in the hospital, at a nursing home, or any other place. It is no inconvenience at all.

Please be sure to schedule a visit.

PARISH COMMITTEES FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Myra Heltsley
Stephen Hojsan
Maria Hughes
Bohdan Kniahynyckyj

PASTORAL COUNCIL:

Vladimir Bachynsky
Olena Bankston
Gabriel Espedal
Mark Hartman
Luke Miller

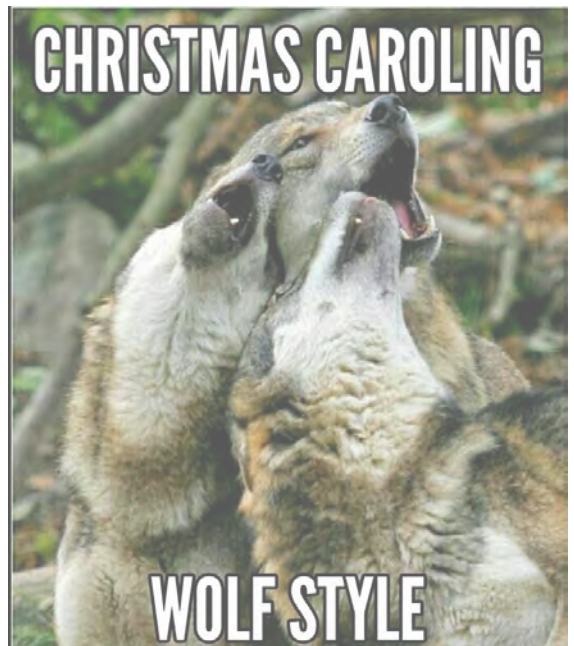
STEWARDSHIP (FUNDRAISING)

COMMITTEE:

Bohdan Knianynyckyj
Susan Avant
John Heltsley (*fundraising consultant*)

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Olena Bankston
Olga Fedunyak
Michael Miller
Olga Miller
Lubomyra Yoldas





**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

The Lord Has Made His Salvation Known to the Whole World

The loving providence of God determined that in the last days He would aid the world, set on its course to destruction. He decreed that all nations should be saved in Christ. A promise had been made to the holy patriarch Abraham in regard to these nations. He was to have a countless progeny, born not from his body but from the seed of faith.

In the persons of the Magi let all people adore the Creator of the universe; let God be known, not in Judea only, but in the whole world. ... As Isaiah prophesied: the people of the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and for those who dwelt in the region of the shadow of death a light has dawned. He spoke of them to the Lord: The Gentiles, who do not know you, will invoke you, and the peoples, who knew you not, will take refuge in you. ...

This came to be fulfilled, as we know, from the time when the star beckoned the three wise men out of their distant country and led them to recognize and adore the King of heaven and earth. The obedience of the star calls us to imitate its humble service: to be servants, as best we can, of the grace that invites all men to find Christ.

Dear friends, you must have the same zeal to be of help to one another; then, in the kingdom of God, to which faith and good works are the way, you will shine as children of the light: through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

St. Leo the Great

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
www.ecpubs.com**