

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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Christ is born! Glorify Him!
ХРИСТОС РОЖДАЕТСЯ! СЛАВИТЕ ЕГО!
ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΓΕΝΝΑΤΑΙ! ΔΟΞΑΣΑΤΕ!
JOYEUX NŌËL! Crăciun Fericit! Selamat Han Natal!
iFeliz Navidad! Դո՞ւստը օծջջո՞ւ՛! Buon Natale!
fröhliche weinachten! クリスマス おめでとう!

Glory to God in the Highest! and on earth peace to men of good will!
Слава въ вышнихъ Богу и на земли миръ во человецехъ благоволеніе!
Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis!

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| December 25, 2010 | Divine Liturgy | 9:30 am |
| The Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ | | |
| The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar. Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem watching their flocks who went to see the Lord | | |
| December 26 | Sunday: 2nd Day of Christmas: Synaxis of the Mother of God | Divine Liturgy 9:30 am |
| January 1 | Saturday: Feast of Saint Basil and of the Circumcision of Our Lord | Liturgy 9:30 am |
| January 1 | Saturday | no Vespers |
| January 2 | Sunday | Divine Liturgy 9:30 am |

DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY ARCHPASTORAL LETTER FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY 2010

Beloved Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of our God-Saved Diocese of New York and New Jersey:

Christ is Born! – Let us glorify Him!

“For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9: 5). These words from the Prophet Isaiah contain the true meaning of the Feast of the Nativity.

A Child is born. In appearance, He is just another of the world’s many children. In the cold of a cave in Bethlehem, He is born in a condition of extreme deprivation: poor among the poorest on the earth.

But there is more: A Son is given unto us. The One Who is born is “the Son” – the Son of God, of one essence with God the Father in Heaven, Who “so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son that whoever believes in Him may not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

What an unfathomable mystery is hidden in the humble coming of Christ! In His simplicity, the Child of Bethlehem teaches us to rediscover the real meaning of our existence. He teaches us “to live sober, upright and godly lives in this world” (Titus 2:12), and beckons us to become “partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4).

In grateful response, let us rededicate ourselves to Jesus Christ, the Son of God Who became flesh for our salvation, and live our lives worthily of God’s unspeakable gift to us that first Christmas night so long ago.

Christ is Born! – Let us glorify Him!

With love in the Infant Messiah,

+ M I C H A E L

Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Saints of the Day: Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, David the King and James, Brother of the Lord. Hieromartyr Euthymius, Bishop of Sardis. Venerable Constantine of Synnada. Venerable Nicodemus of Tishmana, Macedonia. Hieromartyr Constantine the Russian of Lavra, Mount Athos. Saint Isaac II (Bobrikov), Martyr (1938). Saint Tathai of Wales, Hermit of Glamorganshire, Abbot of Llantathan. Saint Amaethlu (Maethlu) of Anglesey, Wales. Saint Jarlath, Bishop of Tuam, Ireland.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Julianne, Michael and Elaine Carrol were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Denise Wolfsheimer.

Please remember in your prayers: Rea, Daniel, Aaron, Archpriest Jason, Archpriest Thomas, Archpriest Jakiw, Archimandrite Raphael, Pani-matka Myroslava, Archpriest Daniel, Nina, Priest Sergius, Nadine, Helen, Anna, Thomas, Archpriest Vincent, Mother Raphaela, John, Catherine, Ron, Albert, Michael, Gregory, Emma, Cathy, John, Mykola, Dan, Wayne, Nina, Dan, Isaiah, Robert, Robert, Kevin, Andrew, David, Warren, Michael, Archimandrite Athanasy, Archimandrite Alexander, Archimandrite Isidore, Archimandrite Pachomy.

THE MYSTERY OF LOVING-KINDNESS - A Sermon by Saint John of Kronstadt on the Nativity of Christ
"Great is the mystery of piety: God is manifested in the flesh." (1 Tim. 3, 16)

It is on this day that, throughout the entire inhabited world, the Holy Church brings to our remembrance and observes that most majestic and sublime of mysteries: the Incarnation of God the Word from a Most-pure virgin through an outpouring of, and an overshadowing by, God's Holy Spirit. Wondrous, inexpressible, and awesome is this mystery, both for the exalted and all-contemplating celestial minds of those who dwell in the heavens: the ranks of the angels, – and for the minds of men, enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Imagine: the unoriginate God from Whom everything received the commencement of its existence: the Angels, and the human race, and the entire world, both visible and invisible, – takes a beginning in His humanity. He Whom the heavens cannot contain – is contained in a virginal womb. God – becomes an infant, and is borne upon the arms of a Mother. He Who nourishes every breath – is nourished by his mother's breasts.

The science of astronomy has learned and affirms that, in the order of creation, our earth is but a barely-noticeable point; that millions of worlds around our own fill up the vastnesses of space. And, lo! this single point, this barely-noticeable globe of God's creation, being inhabited by men, – has been accounted worthy of the inexpressible honour of bearing upon itself God-in-the-Flesh, the God-Man, Who did deign to dwell amongst men, to teach erring mankind the knowledge of God, to work innumerable miracles of good, to preach repentance and complete forgiveness of sins; to suffer and to die as an holy Sacrifice for the sins of the world, to be resurrected through the power of Divinity from amongst the dead, – having vanquished death, which is natural to all men, – and to make a gift of resurrection to the entire human race.

Not a single one of the visible worlds, save the earth, has been deemed worthy of this greatest of all honours: for it was only upon the earth that Jesus Christ, the only-begotten of the heavenly Father, had a Virgin-Mother, and He alone was Her Son by way of humanity. Why was the earth given such preference? Why was it only on earth that God appeared in the flesh? – This is a great Divine mystery, a mystery of immeasurable loving-kindness and of God's condescension to perishing mankind.

Thus, God did appear in the flesh: rejoice and be exceeding glad, O earth; rejoice and celebrate, ye earth-born. The Creator Himself did come to you, in order to create you anew; to restore you, who were corrupted by transgressions. To you did He come: the almighty Physician Himself, – powerful to treat all the inveterate afflictions of sin, – in order that He might heal all the passions of the soul and all the infirmities of the body, – all of the which He truly did do, as we know from the Gospel and from the history of the Church.

Thus, greet Him joyfully – with pure minds and hearts, with bodies chaste and restrained by fasting and abstinence, which the Holy Church has thoughtfully instituted prior to this great feast in order to prepare us worthily to meet the heavenly Tsar', Who comes to us in order to abide in us.

He came to us with the mercy and good will of His heavenly Father, – and from us He demands mercy toward our neighbours; He is the righteous King' – and He demands of us all righteousness; for He, too, as a man, fulfilled all righteousness (Matt. 3,15), showing us an example and providing us with grace and the strength to carry it out. He Himself did suffer for us, having borne the cross; and He taught us to deny ourselves, – or our sins and our passions, – and to follow Him, doing what is holy out of reverence for God (2 Cor. 7, 1).

He came to heal our souls, ailing from sin, and commanded all to repent; let us ever, then, be earnestly contrite, correcting ourselves and striving toward holiness and perfection. The holy Angels, at the Nativity of the God-man, declared peace unto the world; and unto men – the good will of the Heavenly Father. Let us then, ourselves, have within us a peaceful conscience, and let us be at peace with everyone, if possible. Be at peace and be holy with all, says the apostle, – for without this shall none see the Lord. (comp. Heb. 12, 14). Amen.

A word from Saint Nikolai, Bishop of Ochrid and Zhicha. This life is a spiritual struggle. To conquer or to be defeated! If we conquer, we will enjoy the fruits of victory throughout all eternity; if we are defeated, we will endure the horrors of destruction throughout all eternity. This life is a duel between man and all that is contrary to the Divine. God is an Almighty ally to all who sincerely call upon Him for help. "This life is not a joke or a play thing," says Father Saint John of Kronstadt, "but men turn it into a joke and plaything. But the capricious play around with time given to us for preparing for eternity, play around with empty words. They gather together as guests, they sit and chatter and after that they sit and play in this way or the other way; they gather in theatres and there they entertain themselves. All life for them is an amusement. But, woe unto them who are only entertaining themselves."

REMINDERS FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

- **Church Musicians and Singers** - Feb 12 - Spend a day with Bishop Michael and fellow musicians. 11 am, Holy Resurrection Church, 285 French Hill Road, Wayne NJ 07470. No Charge. Exchange ideas and express your needs and concerns as musicians and singers in the diocese. Also mini-workshop, speaker t.b.a. shortly.
- **Saint Philothea Project:** Every year the Saint Philothea Project carries care packages to orphans in Romania. The faithful of Romania supply their orphanages with plenty of food, candy, toys and gently worn clothing. The orphans are constantly in need of socks, underwear. Personal care items like toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant are also helpful. Please send SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR to: Saint Philothea Project, ATTN Socks, 2004 East Whitmer Street, Decatur, Illinois, 62521.

A word from the desert. Let our mind be there where Christ is. Then our prayer will be with Him and there will no longer remain much place for passions. We will get used to living in this way, and by such a peace-filled life we will rebuild our whole being. Archimandrite Sophrony, +1993.