



***The Sunday after
Nativity***

***Troparion of the Resurrection,
Tone 2***

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

***Troparion of the Nativity
Tone 4***

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown 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!

***Troparion Sunday After
Nativity, Tone 2***

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, to David, the ancestor of God; thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; and thou didst give glory with the shepherds; thou didst worship with the Magi, and didst receive the news from the Angel. Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

December 26th , Tone 2, Matt. 2:1-12

It is known that the Romans had on December 25 a feast, the so-called dies natalis Solis invicti, which served to express the idea of the sun's constant return to summer, as if it were renewing itself, and which was a day of unbridled merrymaking among the people, a day of diversion for slaves, children, and the like. Thus in itself this day was better suited than any other for the commemoration of the Birth of Jesus Christ, Who is often called in the New Testament the Sun of justice, the Light of the world, the Salvation of men, the Vanquisher of life and death; and the reprehensible pagan celebration of it was sufficient motive for the Church to ennoble it in the sense of an elevated Christian commemoration.

The Troparion hymn of the Feast emphasizes the point of replacing the Pagan feast of the Sun with the celebration of the Birth of God in the flesh, witnessed to by pagan astrologers, the magi:

"Thy Nativity, O Christ, our God, Has shown 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."

The ancient Church, denying the identity of the two analogous feasts -- the pagan and the Christian -- had already appropriated to the feast of the Nativity of Christ a character of energetic renunciation of pagan superstitions and customs. Affirming our faith in the great mystery of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and accusing all heretics who disfigured this dogma by their sophistry, the Holy Church, in celebrating the Nativity of Christ, represents this feast in its hymns as a day of universal joy, "for unto us is born this day a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord" (Lt. Luke 2:10-11). Let Heaven and earth" exclaims the Holy Church, "this day prophetically rejoice; every creature delights for the sake of the Lord our Saviour born in Bethlehem: for every idolatrous delusion has passed, and Christ reigns forever."

At the same time the Holy Church, by her celebration of the Nativity of Christ, instructs us morally in a holy life worthy of the Lord Who is born. "Today a Saviour has been born to us, Who is Christ the Lord, for us men and for our salvation", and we, celebrating now this Birth of Christ the Lord, naturally must kindle in ourselves a determination to be reborn from a life of sin to a life holy and God-pleasing. Our Lord Jesus Christ has come down to earth and entered into a relationship of grace with us whom He "is not ashamed to call brethren" (Romans 2:11). But in order for us to be worthy of this exalted communion and tie, in order not to reject the Lord come down from heaven, it is necessary for us to withdraw from the darkness of sin and draw near to the light of faith, piety, and good works.

Not in glory and magnificence, but in poverty, wretchedness, and humiliation does the Creator and Lord of heaven and earth appear in the world; not a luxurious palace, but a humble cave, receives the King of those who reign and the Lord of those who rule. By this we are shown the greatness of humility, poverty, meekness, and simplicity, and the ruinousness of pride, riches, vain-glory, and luxury. The first deemed worthy to hear the Good News of the angels concerning the Birth of the Saviour of the world, and the first to bow before Him, were the simple shepherds of Bethlehem, and after them the wise Persian magi; and thus at the manger of the Saviour we see two kinds of people: pastors and magi, i.e., the simplest people and the most cultivated.

By this it is suggested to us that the Lord receives all and everyone: He is pleased by unlettered simplicity, when it is united to faithful fulfillment of one's calling, to purity of conscience and life; and He does not reject human wisdom, when it knows how to submit itself to illumination from above and make use of its learning for the glory of God and the benefit of one's fellow men. This instructs each to be satisfied with his lot in life, and at the same time it shows that there is no calling or condition that prevents one from drawing near to God; that honest and industrious labor, consci-

Christ is Born! Glorify Him Announcements and Activities

Liturgy of St. Basil w/ the cutting of the Vasilopita— Saturday, at 9AM. What better way to begin 2022 than with the attendance at the Divine Liturgy. The traditional cutting of the special bread for the day, with the promise of the blessing of the embedded coin for one person's slice, along with the reading of Photios Kontolglou's tale of St. Basil day, always brings a felt sense of joy to those present. Come join the festivities.

Saturday Great Vespers— on Saturday, at 5:30 PM.

Sunday Divine Liturgy— 10AM.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour is our mini potluck. Next week's Coffee Hour will be sponsored by Madeline and Jason and Michael M.

Church School/Adult Ed.— will next meet on Sunday, January 9th, at 9AM.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—battling cancer. Samir's friend, **Johnny, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight.** **Brian,** Sunday's brother. **George and Alex,** health problems. **All those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic .** **Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor, who reposed. **Our Vladyka Benjamin**— battling on-set parkinsons. **Tsige Roman and Abraham**— I know we are always mindful of Tsige, but please continue to pray for the work and for Ethiopia, torn by civil war, with all the problems that go with a regional terror. **Reposed Jonathan T. George and Alesis,** Brother and Daughter of Peter and Irene S. **Matushka Ioanna R. reposed.** **Matushka Priscilla, ill.** **Anya J**— a long-time friend of the parish who is ill. **Stephen F.**— battling back pain. **John F.**— battling cancer. **Archpriest Anthony**— battling cancer. **Julie**— sister of Kathy M., battling health problems. **Rhoda's requests for Douglas and Kayana.** **Reposed Constance**— the mother of Andrew F. **Will**— reposed, Michael T.'s brother-inlaw,

entious fulfillment of obligations, inspired by faith and hope in God, are always pleasing to God and draw His blessing; that in the eyes of God it is not outward pre-eminence in the world that is precious, but simplicity of heart and conscience, meekness and humility of spirit, submissiveness and obedience to God's law, patience and good-heartedness, hope and devotion to the will of God, kindness and benevolence toward one's neighbor, a walking before God irreproachable in all His commandments and statutes; that these precious qualities do not belong exclusively to any particular class of men; that in every calling and condition a man can be pleasing to God, if he will please Him in word and deed, in wish and thought. In general the manifestation of God in the flesh, so graphically depicted in the Church services of the Feast, with all the accompanying circumstances, is an inexhaustible source for our edification.

Taken from the *Year of Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church

From the Lives of the Saints... A Reflection for the Sunday after Christmas

The Sunday which follows December 25th is dedicated to the commemoration of three members of Christ's earthly family: the prophet David; the Apostle James, "brother" of the Lord; and St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, and foster-father of Jesus.

David is not only and ancestor of Christ. As a shepherd, he prefigures Jesus the Good Shepherd. As King, he mysteriously announces the royalty of Christ. As an adulterer and murderer, he is the type of the repentant sinner. As the author of the Psalms (or at any rate, some of them), he has bequeathed to the Synagogue and the Christian Church a type of prayer, of adoration in spirit and truth, that Jesus Himself used, and in which all generations have found expression for the deepest longings of their souls.

James, "brother" of the Lord, was head of the first Christian community in Jerusalem. His name reminds us of the link which connects us with the Church of Jerusalem, with that of the first century as much as with that of the twentieth century. Antioch and Alexandria, Rome and Constantinople are great and venerable names in the history of the Christian Church; but it is from Jerusalem that we are first descended...

The person of St. Joseph has had less attention and homage paid to him in the east than in the Roman West. We know very few things about Joseph. But the Gospel tells us that he was a just man, obedient to the angelic messages, careful to protect Jesus and Mary. We could, with advantage, grant him a greater place in our devotions. He is the most eminent representative of what one might call the holiness of the layman, which is neither the holiness of an apostle, nor that of a bishop or priest, nor that of a monk— all of whom are so abundantly commemorated in the ecclesiastical calendar— but is that of the head of a family, of the man who plies a trade and earns his daily bread. St. Joseph is the natural protector of Christian families, of workmen, of those whose food is not assured. For he fed Jesus and Mary, as, formerly, the patriarch Joseph, in Egypt, fed his brothers and father in time of famine. Tradition also links the name of St. Joseph with Egypt: the flight into Egypt is the theme of the gospel for this day (Matt. 2:13-23).

This episode is not without its difficulty for historical exegesis, but we can find in it a very clear spiritual teaching for ourselves. The angel commands us, as he did Joseph: "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt". That is to say, renounce your sin and your slackness: take into your soul the Jesus you saw at Bethlehem and Mary, whom you must never separate from her Son; flee the evil and the temptations that surround you; set yourself a hidden retired, silent life, a life of intimacy with the small child and his mother — and also with Joseph.

May the life of the Holy Family, whether in Egypt, or later in Nazareth, become and inspiration and a model for us.

Prologue of Ochrid, edited and written by St. Nikolai

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)