Christ the Saviour Cathedral

"CATHEDRAL JOTTINGS"



Corner of Garfield Street and Butler Avenue
Johnstown, Pa. 15906
Rectory Office – 249 Butler Avenue; Johnstown, Pa. 15906
Cathedral Church of His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa
of the
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
of the
Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople

Cathedral Clergy

Pastor – Very Reverend Protopresbyter Robert A. Buczak, Cathedral Dean
Very Reverend Protopresbyter Frank P. Miloro, Chancellor
Very Rev. John A. Baranik Jr. Very Rev. John S. Brancho

Rectory Phone……814-539-8086
Mobile Phone……412-759-4481
Cathedral Office……814-254-4011
E-mail Address (for Father Robert Buczak)……frbuczak@outlook.com
Diocesan Website: http://www.acrod.org ***Facebook***: https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese
Cathedral: http://www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral ***Twitter***: https://twitter.com/acrodnews
Camp Nazareth: http://www.campnazareth.org ***You Tube***: https://youtube.com/acroddiocese

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Vol. 78 No. 1758 **Sunday, January 3, 2021**



Sunday before the Feast of the Nativity; of the Genealogy

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Sunday, January 3rd, 2021

The Thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday before the Feast of the Nativity; of the Genealogy

The Virgin-martyr Juliana

Divine Liturgy – 9:00 am **Sunday School - 10:20 am**

Panachida for +***Mary Pavlik*** (17th Anniversary) offered by Roger Pavlik; +***Anastasia, John and Andrew Podolak*** offered by family; +***Ronald Koval*** (1st anniversary) offered by Susan Koval and family; +***John Smider*** offered by Anna Smider; +***John Petrick***; +***Alex Stolicza*** ; and +***Matilda Laslo*** offered by Mary Ann Muchesko and family

Resurrection Tone 5 - Tropar & Kondak pages 93 & 129

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 Gospel: Matthew 1:1-25

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Wednesday, January 6th, 2021

The Great Compline of the Nativity of Our Lord - 8 pm

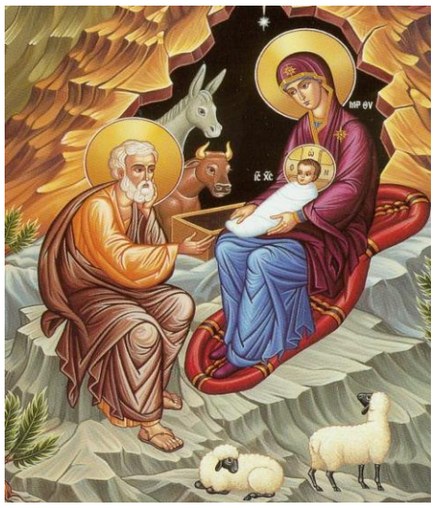
Christmas Carols – 8:45 pm

The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

for the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord – 9:00 pm

Epistle: Galatians 4: 4-7 Tropar & Kondak: pages 132 – 135 Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12

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Thursday, January 7th, 2021

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Tropar & Kondak: pages 132 – 135

Epistle: Galatians 4: 4-7

Gospel: Matthew 2: 1-12

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Friday, January 8th, 2021

The Synaxis of the Theotokos (Birthgiver of God)

Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

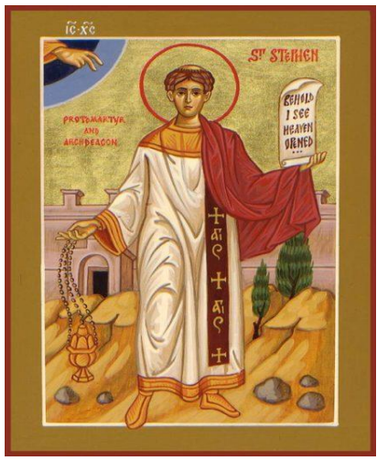
Panachida for + ***the Founders and Benefactors of the Cathedral Parish*** (Perpetual)

Tropar and Kondak pages 132-136

Epistle: Hebrews 2:11-18

Gospels: Matthew 2:13-23

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Saturday, January 9, 2021

Feast of The Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

Divine Liturgy – 9:00 am

Panachida for + ***Stephen Evanisko and the Departed Servicemen of the Cathedral Parish*** offered by the Evanisko Family; +***Mary Radasky Kesselak*** offered by Andrea and Jeff Robel; and +***Helen Krompak*** (Perpetual)

Tropar & Kondak: pages 132-137, 138

Epistle: Acts 6: 8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

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Sunday, January 10th, 2021

The Thirty-First Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord - Commemoration of the Holy and Just Joseph, King David and James, the Brother of Our Lord

20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia

Divine Liturgy – 9:00 am **Sunday School - 10:20 am**

Panachida for **+ *Kay Miloro*** offered by the family***; Anna Toth*** offered by the family; ***+Margaret Mley, and +Helen Dzura*** (Birthday) offered by God-daughter, Pani Kathy Buczak; ***+Departed Kol'adniki of the Cathedral Parish: Andrew Pavlik, Andrew Medvechy Jr., Constantine Mishurda, John Mishurda, John Kurtz, Nicholas Polak, Joseph Evanisko, Andrew Sakmar, Michael Gritzer, John Duray, Stephen Patrick, John P. Duray, Stephen Matolyak, and John Yurosko*** offered by John and Helen Yurosko; and ***Stephen Brudnak*** offered by Louise Brudnak.

Resurrection Tone 6 - Antiphons: Tropar & Kondak: pages 132-135, 138-139

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19 Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

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Wed. 1/13 … ***Vespers for the Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord……...6:00 pm***

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Thursday, January 14, 2021

Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and The Commemoration of St. Basil the Great

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great - 9:00 am

Epistle: Colossians 2:8-12 Tropar & Kondak: pages 140-141 Gospel: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52

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Sat. 1/16 … Great Vespers.....……..6:00 pm

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Sunday, January 17th, 2021

The Thirty-second Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday before Theophany

Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles

Divine Liturgy – 9:00 am **Sunday School - 10:20 am**

Panachida for **+*Ronald Mlinarchik*** offered by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kalinyak;
+*Patricia Pasternak* offered by Anna Marie Mlinarchik;
+*Joseph Kuzmyak Sr*. offered by Pani Kathy Buczak;
+***Joseph, Michael, and Anna Chanda*** offered by Mary Chanda; +***Pani Emily Molchany***;
+Matthew Lazarak offered by Mary Lazarak; ***+Helen Balog***; and ***+Prof. Andrew Panchisin***

Resurrection Tone 7

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-8 Tropar & Kondak: pages 99 & 142 Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

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Services for the week of January 19th

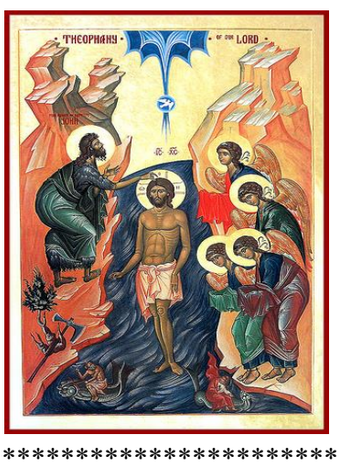
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Monday, January 18th, 2021

Day of Strict Fasting

Vigil Service of Theophany with the Blessing of Water - 7:00pm

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Tuesday, January 19th, 2021

The Feast of the Theophany of our Lord

Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great – 9:00 am

Tropar & Kondak: pages 145-148

Epistle: Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

Gospel: Matthew 3: 13-17

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Wednesday, January 20th, 2021

Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

Divine Liturgy – 9:00 am

Resurrection Tone 1 - Tropar & Kondak: pages 81, 145, 148-150

Epistle: Acts 19: 1-8 Gospel: John 1: 29-34

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Thur. 1/21 ……+David Vreeland offered by Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Vreeland; +Very Rev. John Stefanik offered by the Family; +Rose and John Patrick Sr.; +Betty Ann Lanko Berezonsky offered by John Lanko Jr.; +John Mirilovich offered by Mirilovich family: Rich, Harriet, Richard, Renee, Andrew, Kristen, Michael, Nancy & Marie; and +John & Elizabeth Chrasch offered by John Chrasch (Perpetual).....8:00 am

Sat. 1/23 … Great Vespers…….……...……...…….6:00 pm

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Sunday, January 24th, 2021

Sunday after Theophany

Saint Theodosius the Great

Divine Liturgy – 9:00 am **Sunday School – 10:20 am**

Panachida for ***+Protopresbyter Nomikos Vaporis*** offered by Subdeacon Michael Vaporis; ***+Michael, Mary, Michael, Anna, John, Susanna, Anna & Martha Prokop*** ***+Bethany (Haschak) Schilling*** offered by her family; +***Dolores Muchesko*** offered by Mary Ann Muchesko; ***+Michael and Anna Zahoran*** offered by Joanne Berkey; ***+Peter Knaze*** offered by grandson Steve; and ***+Anna Marie Dudak*** offered by Mr. and Mrs. Charles White

Resurrection Tone 8 - Tropar & Kondak: pages 81, 145, 148-150

Epistle: Ephesians: 4:7-14 Gospel: Matthew 4:7-13

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PRAYERS FOR HEALTH – are requested for Elmer C. Laslo. Please add his name to your prayer-list.

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A PANACHIDA – was served on December 26, 2020 for +***William Ralph Blehi offered by Margaret Blehi and children Patricia Ann White and Pauline Marie Blehi***.

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A PANACHIDA – was served on December 20, 2020 for +***Milan "Mitchie" Saula and Hellen "Cookie" Saula by Michael Kelly and family***.

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THANK YOU – We would like to thank everyone who sent warm wishes, Christmas cards, or special gifts during this festive time of the year. May the Lord bless you for your thoughtfulness and kindness. -*Father Robert and Pani Kathy Buczak*

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BIRTHDAY PRAYERS – are offered for ***Ivan Palaski (1/4), Kurtis Dutko (1/4) Mary Ann Savering (1/4), Zachary Tvarozna (1/10), Melanie Dudak (1/10), Anna Furman (1/11), Luke Tvarozna (1/13), Sydnee Lauren Satkovich (1/13), Jerees Noah Zreigat (1/15), Steve Muchesko (1/17), Jodi Billetdeaux (1/17), Richard Kesselak (1/17), Michael Haschak (1/18), Maria Richards (1/18), Amanda Dutko (1/19)***; ***Katie Abele (1/22), George Evanisko (1/23), Nicholas Benc (1/24), Stephanie Kennedy (1/25), Mary Popovich (1/25), Father Frank Miloro (1/26), Andrea Robel (1/26).*** You were remembered in Proskomedia!

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU – to ***Barry, Julia, and Amanda Gilchrist*** for their generous gift of $400.00 to the Cathedral Special Fund for the needy in memory of their dearly departed mothers and grandmothers Helen Yuhas and Helen Gilchrist and fathers and grandfathers John Yuhas and Robert Gilchrist.

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CATHEDRAL CHARITY BOX - REMINDER

Did you know that the Cathedral has a charity box for the less fortunate of the parish? On the back of the last pew on the "Virgin's side" of the church is a small wooden box in which you may put your offering to help those in need. Thank you for your stewardship of our parish!

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ETERNAL MEMORY FUND – Thank you ***to Randy and Regina Karashin*** for their donation of $25.00 to the Eternal Memory Fund in memory of ***Ronald Mlinarchik***

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SAINT NICHOLAS DAY SEMINARY COLLECTION

Thank you to all who offered funds for our Saint Nicholas Day Seminary Fundraiser. Together we collected $1,785.00 in much needed funds for the education of our future priests. God Bless!

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ROSES ON THE ALTAR - are offered in memory of Sister Nymphodora (Eleanor Dussling) and her beloved mother, Anna Burik-Schober's 112th Birthday by an anonymous donor.

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BULLETIN SPONSOR – The "Cathedral Jottings" Bulletin is sponsored in memory of ***Protopresbyter Nomikos Vaporis*** by his son, ***Subdeacon Michael Vaporis***.

THE ETERNAL LAMP – is offered the week of January 3rd in memory of ***Mary Pavlik by Roger Pavlik***

THE ETERNAL LAMP – is offered the week of January 10th in memory of ***Very Reverend John A. Baranik Jr. by Subdeacon Michael Oleksa***

ALTAR FLOWERS - The Altar is beautified with flowers in memory of ***Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dutko by the family.***

ALTAR FLOWERS - The Altar is beautified with flowers on January 17th in memory of ***Presbytera Mary Vaporis*** by her son***, Subdeacon Michael Vaporis.***

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SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The Coronavirus, Covid 19 has changed the way we held our classes this year. During a Sunday School meeting with Dr. Louise Brudnak, Metropolitan Gregory offered to teach the senior-high class the Book of Revelation; and Father Robert offered to teach the middle-school class. The older students learned many valuable lessons from the Book of Revelation. There is no First Confession Class this year, but we look forward to having two or three students next year. We decided to delay our pre-school and elementary class for one year. We still are in great need of two or three teachers. Please contact Dr. Louise Brudnak if you can offer your services for this important ministry to our children.

In other news, treats were distributed to the students on Halloween, and a Christmas Gift will be given on January 3rd. The Gertrude Hawke Christmas Candy fundraiser went well. Kurtis Dutko was the top seller with great help from his mother. The Sunday School realized an increase of over $500.00 from the sale. Thanks to all who bought or sold the candy. A special "Thank you" to Nancy Kobal for her help in organizing the orders.

It is time for our annual soup collection. Cans of soup, soup products, noodles, crackers and packages of soup may be placed in the blue bin in the vestibule through February 7th or given to any teacher or student. Our "Souper Bowl" project goal is 150 cans of soup. Items are donated to the West End Food Pantry.

The children and teachers of the Sunday School wish all parishioners a blessed celebration of Our Saviour's birth. Even if we cannot be together with all of our family or celebrate all of our traditions, we can never forget the true focus of this blessed season. Our prayers go out to all for health and safety for everyone in 2021. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

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OFFICIAL NOTICE

The Christ the Saviour Educational Center of the People of American Carpatho-Russian Diocese will hold a special annual meeting ***Sunday, January 31st, 2021*** in the Educational Center at 11:00 am. All Cathedral parishioners are encouraged to attend. This is the first official announcement of this meeting.

Proposals for the Annual meeting are being accepted in the Cathedral office in written form until ***Sunday January 24, 2021.***

The Annual Meeting of the ***Christ the Saviour Cathedral Parish*** will be held ***Sunday, February 7th, 2021*** immediately following the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral Auditorium. All parishioners are encouraged to attend. This is the first official announcement of the meeting.

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DEEPEST SYMPATHIES – are extended to the family of the ***Very Reverend John A. Baranik Jr***. who fell asleep in the Lord Sunday, December 20, 2020 and buried from the Cathedral Thursday, December 24, 2020; to the family of ***Thomas M. Kindya*** who fell asleep in the Lord Saturday, December 19, 2020 and was buried Monday, December 28, 2020; to the family of ***William Ryan*** who fell asleep in the Lord Wednesday, December 23, 2020 and was buried from the Cathedral Wednesday, December 30, 2020; to the family of ***Ronald Milch*** – no arrangements made to date.

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THANKS FOR THE CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Father Robert and Pani Kathy Buczak– in memory of Metropolitan Nicholas and in honor of Metropolitan Gregory

Father Robert and Pani Kathy Buczak – in memory of Joseph and Helen Rogel and Bernie Buczak

Ann Melanie Yurcisin– in memory of the Very Reverend Protopresbyter John and Pani Anna Yurcisin

Susan Kalcik and Nick Bocher

Ann Fischbach

Roger Pavlik in memory of Parents and Grandparents (2)

Subdeacon Michael Oleksa – In memory of grandparents Samuel and Brunislava Gzvodich

Subdeacon Michael Oleksa – In memory of great-grandparents Michael and Suzanna Oleksa

Andrew and Luann Dzura – in memory of the departed members of the Dzura family

Andrew and Luann Dzura – in memory of the departed members of the Semivan families

Lynne Hood - In memory of my parents Eli and Betty Gvozdich

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Haschak – In memory of Bethany (Haschak) Schilling

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Haschak – In memory of Mr. and Mrs. John Haschak

Thomas Fultz – In memory of the departed members of the Fultz and Tomchik families.

Diana Gvozdich Smith - in memory of my parents Mila and Stanko Gvozdich

Melissa Kolar - In memory of Amelia Kolar

Melissa Kolar - In memory of John Kolar

Julie Messner – in memory of her husband Leonard F. and parents Michael and Anastasia Pirich

Kristine Bunda – in memory of parents, Stephen and Margaret Herko

Kristine Bunda – in memory of sister, Peg Ryan and brother, George Stephen Herko

Gaynell Shrift – in memory of Frank & Bernadine Evanisko and Wilber & Mary Shrift

Rich and Harriet Mirilovich – In memory of John Mirilovich, Mary Mirilovich and Nancy Horvath (3)

The Tvarozna Family – In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dutko

The Tvarozna Family – In memory of George Tvarozna

Donna Zizan – in memory of husband John Zizan

Lynn Brudnak-Kelly, Michael and Conner Kelly – in memory of Robert and Evalyn Brudnak, and the Departed members of the Brudnak, Kovalik and Kelly families

Louise Brudnak – in memory of Stephen and Anna Brudnak, Dolores Brudnak, Robert and Evalyn Brudnak & Joseph Kuhar

Halee Karashin – In memory of Frank and Elizabeth Zahoran, Alice Joann Berkey and Julia Holko

Colleen Parlock

Paulette Parlock

George Kohan- in memory of his parents



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Christmas Customs

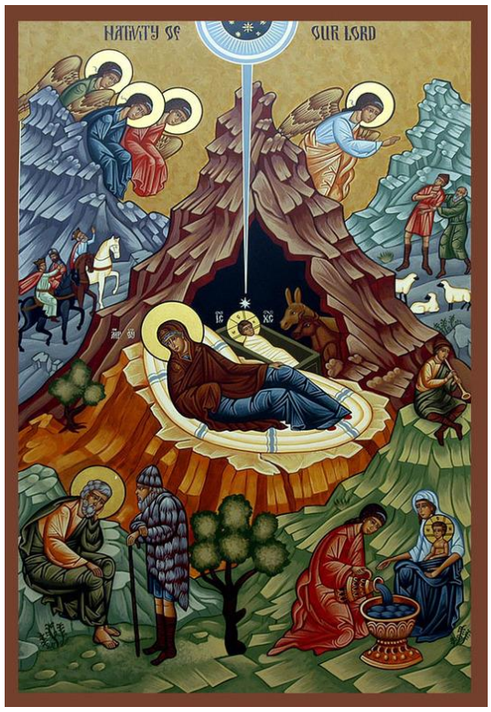


As the first star of the evening appears, the festivities begin. The father comes into the room, extends Christmas greetings and spreads hay over the floor. Next he places a sheaf of wheat and other farm products (a sample of each) on the table. With a prayer, he ties the four legs of the table with a chain, asking God's blessing and protection from all corners of the world. He also prays that the family be always united like the links of the chain and that those separated from the family be united to them in spirit. This being done the candles are lighted and a star with a candle is placed in a window as a sign of welcome to any stranger who is hungry or needs shelter. **Blessing** - After thus the mother sprinkles everyone present with holy water. Then the father takes the holy water to the barn to bless the animals and to make sure that on this holy night they are well fed. Now a traditional toast is offered. Then the mother takes a clove of garlic, dips it in some honey, and makes the sign of the cross upon the forehead of those present. The honey symbolizes the sweetness of life, the garlic symbolizes the bitterness. Thus, each is reminded to bear sweetness and bitterness of life during the coming year. **Menu** - The supper consists of mushroom soup (with sauerkraut juice); bobalky (small biscuit like breads mixed with nuts or poppy seeds); beans; stewed fruits and/or vegetable dishes; fish; kolachy (Christmas cakes) and tea. The menu varies according to the custom of the village. However, whatever the menu, NO MEAT is served. In some places, the abstinence includes dairy products. (There are traditionally twelve courses served, reminiscent of the Twelve Apostles, with one empty place setting at the table for any unseen, or unexpected guest -- perhaps even Christ himself disguised as such).Prayers are offered during supper for a prosperous growth of products during the coming year. Carols are sung, presents exchanged. An exciting part of the evening for the children would be the hunt for nuts and fruit hidden in the straw on the floor by the father of the house. The games are interrupted by the carolers who make the rounds of the village.

Liturgical Observance - By evening all begin to prepare for church. The Christmas Eve services consist of the Great Compline - an evening service. The church resounds with the chanting of verses taken from the Book of Isaiah: God is with us; all you nations understand and do penance for God is with us! After the church services the men of the village call upon each other offering Christmas greetings to neighbors or favorite friends. Children are often chosen to extend these greetings. The most eloquent receives a special reward from parents, grandparents or godparents. These well-wishers are eagerly awaited at every home. If by chance a high ranking official of the village or county drops in as a well-wisher it is considered not only an honor but a good omen. By the time the well-wishing is complete, the church bells call the people to Christmas Divine Liturgy. Usually those who were shepherds were given a position of honor during this Liturgy. They came with their bagpipes and after Liturgy played Christmas Carols. Afterwards everyone journeys home and quiet reigns in the village until the afternoon when the church bells again call the people for Christmas Day Vespers. More carol singing follows and the festivities of Christmas extend until the feast of Theophany (January 6/19). Carol Singers - A popular practice is the carol singing carried on by the Yaslichkary who carry a Nativity Shrine in the shape of a small church. Angels lead the singers while the old wise shepherd (Kuba or Guba) tags along. They visit every home - every family expects them. They are dressed in white garments with high cylinder shaped hats, with ribbons of flashy colors across their breast. The Kuba is the comedian of the group, chasing children with his wooden hatchet and threatening to kidnap the bad ones in the bag he carries into which he also collects the gifts the Yaslichkary receive. The caroling continues during the three-day observance of Christmas.



AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATIVITY ICON



The focus of the icon, of course, is on the birth of our Lord from His most pure virgin mother Mary; She is shown larger than any of the other figures, reclining on a mat, and looking not at her new-born Son, but rather with love and compassion towards us, inviting all to come and worship her new-born son. Our Lord is shown in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, "for there was no room for them in the inn." *(cf. Luke 2)* The back-drop for the manger is a dark cave, which immediately reminds us of the cave in which our Lord was buried 33 years later, wrapped in a shroud. In the cave are an ox and donkey, details not mentioned by the Gospels, but which are an invariable feature of every icon of the Nativity; the scene is included to show the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "the ox knows his Owner, and the donkey his Master's crib, but Israel does not know Me, and the people has not regarded Me" *(Isaiah 1:3)*.

The scene at the top center of the icon depicts the three divine rays of the triune God. In so showing this, the icon depicts that the Trinity - Father, the pre-eternal Son and Holy Spirit are at the heart of the event. The Incarnation is not only about the birth of the Son, but also involves the other two members of the Trinity because all three are of one and the same essence (the Greek word for this is "Homoousios"). In another way the rays are referred to also as the divine star of Bethlehem that shone and provided the direction for all the players of the Incarnation event. The divine light thus provides a canopy for the infant birth of the Saviour and lightens the universe for the proper understanding of the truth – that God became man so that man can become potentially God-like.

At the top of the icon, on both sides of the mountain, are found two groupings of angels who often are looking downwards, sometimes to the side or upwards. They serve a two-fold role. First, they are the messengers of the spiritual world bringing glad tidings to mankind and secondly, they are the true adorers of Christ's birth, the "marvel of marvels". The angelic hosts as such unite heaven and earth and together glorify the "new born King". The angel of the Lord, found on the top extreme right-hand side of the icon, is depicted looking down upon an amazed shepherd, announcing to him the good news of great joy. The fact that Jewish shepherds and heathen magi were among the first to worship our Lord shows us the universality of this great event, meant for the salvation of all mankind.

On the left-hand side of the icon are found three figures of the Magi or wise men. They are depicted following the star, shining above the cave, and brining their royal gifts to a Babe in a poor cave. The wise men represent the humanity that has not been exposed to the Old Testament – often referred to as the Gentiles. Yet they have a mission to find the "King of Kings" and have travelled far for this event. Their search reaches an end, "following the star of Bethlehem", and they accept of the Son of Righteousness without hesitation. The three wise men are usually depicted in three different age brackets. The one of the extreme left is very young, the middle one is middle-aged and the one on the right is an elderly person. Thus all ages of humanity are called to accept Christ. The wise men were the first fruits of the Gentile world to venerate and worship Christ. In so doing they show that the ultimate sense of human knowledge is in the contemplation and worship of a Living God, "born unto us as a young Child".

A single shepherd or sometimes several are found on the right-hand middle side of the icon. These are the first of the Israelite people – the Jewish people, to accept and worship the Lord. These shepherds are simple, unsophisticated and ordinary citizens who hear the divine message in the course of their labors and fully accept the Virgin birth. In fact the shepherds are akin to the simple fishermen that Christ will call in the Gospels "to follow Him".

Joseph is depicted as an elderly man, sitting in a contemplative or meditating position, turned away from the main event of the icon. The posture of St Joseph is one of doubt and inner trouble, for he wondered if it might be possible that the conception and birth were not by some secret human union. In our Orthodox tradition, Joseph is considered the guardian of Christ and His Mother, thus he is pictured as an aged man compared to the youthfulness of the Mother of God. In his pensive stature, Joseph seems confronted or plagued by doubts about the puzzling mystery of God's incarnation from a Virgin. The pose of Joseph indicates that the true fatherhood of Christ is through the Virgin and the paternity of the Holy Spirit. This thus corresponds to the Nicene Creed's verse: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man". Often Orthodox icons show Joseph confronted by an elderly shepherd or Satan-like figure, always depicted in dark colors. This figure is the tempter, tempting Joseph into not accepting the miraculous birth of the Saviour from the Virgin. This same objection has been raised throughout the history of the Church during the last two thousand years, in different forms and ways, by those who do not accept this miracle. Thus Joseph is not the "father" of Christ while his struggle with the meaning of the virgin birth is symbolic of the struggle of all of mankind in accepting the "miracle of miracles".

On the lower right-hand side is depicted an important bathing scene. The origin of this scene is not Scriptural or apocryphal. The first mention of the bathing of Christ was made in the travelogue of a late seventh century pilgrim to Palestine, a certain bishop Arnulf. He relates that close to the Nativity cave in Bethlehem, he was shown a stone water basin which was believed to be the one in which the Divine Child had been washed after birth. Early art depictions of the bathing scene are found from as early as the fifth century. This bathing scene illustrates that Christ was truly a human being and had the fullness of human nature while at the same time he also had a divine nature and was the second person of the Trinity. Every young child has to be bathed, washed and cleaned, upon entrance into this world and Jesus was no different. This scene also serves as an argument against those heretics that did not want to acknowledge Christ's full humanity and placed only emphasis on his divinity (At the Fourth Ecumenical Council this heresy, known as Monophysitism, was defeated). Thus the two bottom scenes complement each other, showing both the theological teaching of Christ's full divinity (the pondering of Joseph of the miracle birth-incarnation of God, the second person of the Trinity – Jesus Christ) and His full humanity (the important bathing scene). Christ as such is truly GODMAN, a term coined at the Fourth Ecumenical Council in 451.

Finally, as we look at the icon as one united composition, we can only be filled with joy, not only because of the bright colors and the festive activity depicted thereon, but for the joyous news of our salvation so clearly proclaimed by it. In it, all creation is rejoicing at the birth of our Lord: the heavens (a star and angels); the earth (the mountains, plants and animals}; and especially mankind, represented most perfectly in the figure of the new Eve, the most pure Mother of God. The icon of the Nativity harmonizes six separate scenes of the festal narrative. Their depiction produces a balanced and well organized theology of the Nativity feast. The icon is truly a pictorial illustration of the KONTAKION (liturgical hymn) of the feast written by St. Romanos the Melodist which proclaims:

"Today the Virgin gives birth to Him Who is above all being and the earth offers a cave to Him whom no man can approach. Angels with shepherds give glory and Magi journey with a star. For unto us is born a young Child, the pre-eternal God."



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Saint John Chrysostom Homily on the Nativity

Behold a new and wondrous mystery.

My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech.

For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindliness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been in planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

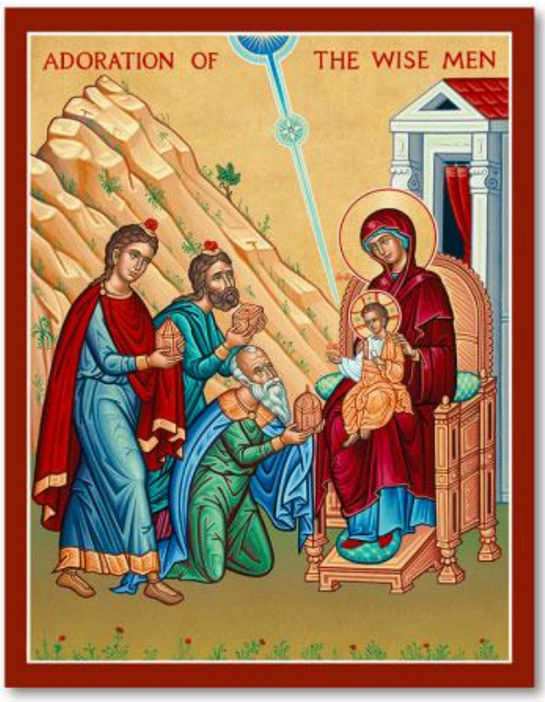
Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen. – ***Saint John Chyrsostom***

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The star went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was!



"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King, behold Magi from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He Who was born King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1-2)?'" The Star appeared in the east and led the Magi to see the new King. The tradition of the Church never held that the star was truly a celestial star but that it was some invisible power transformed into this appearance and made visible to men. Saint John Chrysostom points out in a homily that "no natural star could have traversed such a course, nor could it have shone so brilliantly at midday; and furthermore, it stood over the Child." The Magi, being led by the divine star, followed it "till it came and stood over where the young Child was (Matthew 2:9) with His Mother. Now by this time, Joseph had secured a room for the Theotokos and her Son. Thus, in Orthodox Iconography of "The Veneration of the Magi", they are depicted in a house, which is in agreement with the words of the Evangelist Matthew that "they (the Magi) came into the house (Matthew 2:11)." The Virgin Mary is usually seen sitting on a throne with a high polygonal back. The Child Jesus is sitting on His Mother's lap.

Several hymns of the Church present a dialogue between the Theotokos and the visiting Magi. "The pure virgin spoke in wonder….and she said unto them: 'Whom do you seek? For I see that you have come from a far country. You have the appearance, but not the thoughts, of Persians; strange has been your journey and strange your arrival. You have come with zeal to worship Him Who, journeying as a Stranger from on high, has strangely -in ways known to Himself- come to dwell in me."

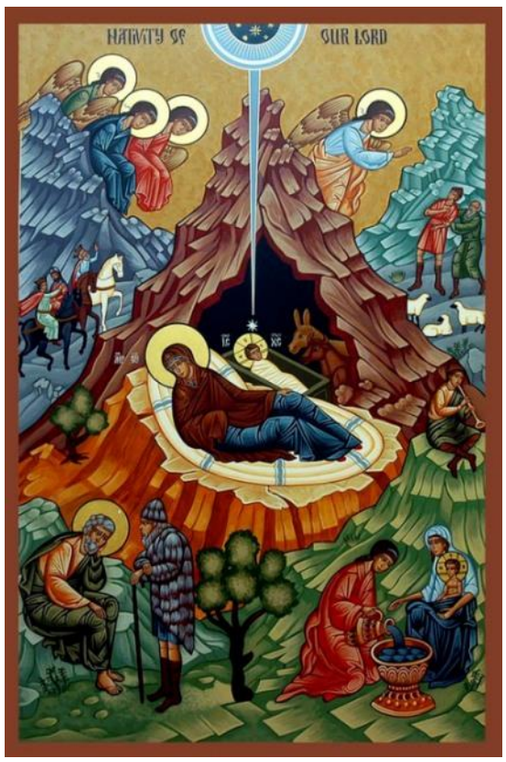
Saint Ephraim the Syrian also portrays the virgin Mother speaking with her Son, saying, "O Son of the rich One, Who abhorred the bosom of rich women, who led Thee to the poor? For Joseph was needy and I also am in want, yet Thy merchants have come, and brought gold, to the house of the poor." Also, that "The King, before Whom the angels of fire and spirit tremble, lies in the bosom of a young girl, and she cuddles Him as a baby. The heaven is the throne for His glory, yet He sits on Mary's knees.

The Magi said to her: "Indeed, clearly (centuries before His birth) did Balaam reveal to us the meaning of the words which were prophesied (by the Prophet Daniel), saying that a star would rise up: a star which would dim all prophesies and divinations; a star to destroy the parables of the wise and their teachings and their enigmas; a star much brighter than this star which appeared, for He is the Maker of the stars, about Whom it was written.

She then opened the door and received the group of Magi into their house. The Magi did not see before them either scepter or throne, only utter poverty. They seek a heavenly king, though they saw in Him nothing regal; yet satisfied by the testimony of a star, their eyes were glad as they looked upon a poor little child; for the spirit within them showed that He was a Being of awe. The star and the light that God had place in their hearts led them step by step to more perfect knowledge.

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In this night of reconcilement let no man be wroth or gloomy in this night that stills all, none that threatens or disturbs! This night belongs to the sweet One; bitter or harsh be in it none! In this night that is the meek One's, high or haughty be in it none! In this day of pardoning let us not exact trespasses! In this day of gladnesses let us not spread sadnesses! In this day so sweet, let us not be harsh! In this day of peaceful rest, let us not be wrathful in it! In this day when God came to sinners, let not the righteous be in his mind uplifted over sinner! In this day in which there came the Lord of all unto the servants, let masters too condescend to their servants lovingly! In this day in which the Rich became poor for our sakes, let the rich man make the poor man share with him at his table. On this day to us came forth the Gift, although we asked it not! Let us therefore bestow alms on them that cry and beg of us. This is the day that opened for us a gate on high to our prayers. Let us open also gates to supplicants that have transgressed, and of us have asked [forgiveness.] To-day the Lord of nature was against His nature changed; let it not to us be irksome to turn our evil wills. Fixed in nature is the body; great or less it cannot become: but the will has such dominion, it can grow to any measure. To-day Godhead sealed itself upon Manhood, that so with the Godhead's stamp Manhood might be adorned. – St. Ephraim of Syria

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PRAYER CHAIN

Thomas Buczak	Beverly Tinkle	Dave Podolak	Michaela Miller	Victoria Bennett
Cindy LaBarr	Ronald Kmet	Judith Rowlands	Arianna Jade Miller	Christina Sakmar
Annie Mishurda	Michael Derby	Angeline Komara	Taylor Miller	Matushka Helen
Steve Martyak	Sue Miller	Arianna Risso	Jennifer Gardenhour	Jasiukowicz
Joan Wine	Maureen & Jay Dabbs	Charlie Erisman	Margaret Blehi	Joanne Democko
Jessica McLaughlin	Bill & Joyce Kerr	Rachael Costlow	Bill Pringle	Robert Stokes
Michael Sakmar	Judith Pringle	Marshall Rosenow	Valentina Yaremenko	Barbara Stokes
Joseph Muchesko	Robert Pringle	Shirley Mazurak	Olga Yaremetko	Marcia Matthews
Roberta Kovalik	Barbara Virostek	Donna Babble	Steve Prieber	Jolene McClain
Theresa Milkovich	Robert Janeway	Richard Barnes	Aberdeen Rudge	Dorothy Kapolka
Kira Pronin	Helen Duray	Michael Logan	Mark Kuruzovich	Georgene Coulter
Alexxa Lowery	Andy Walls	Lloyd Broadwater	Pat Hanuska	Tommy Lee Knipple
Romayne Laichak	Jack Dahl	Nick Timko	Dwight Nugle	Tanya Britan
Debbie Dawson	Janet Hanak	Erin Demich	Rose and Terry Fyock	Frank Porembka
Zachary Rogina	Eva Zeleniak-Whitak	Mary Ann Muchesko	Rosalia Horner	Helen Porembka
Robert J. Gritzer	Malcolm Barnes	Joella Hamlin	Beverly Mayo	Daniel Porembka
Ron Kuzmyak	Ann Koehnlein	Donna Martyak	Al Kuzmyak	Dr. Rose Ann Jordan
Paul Kalcik	Larry Eisenhauer	Veronica Ronchak	Michael Paul Gost	Elmer C. Laslo
Henry Laichak	Evelyn Houston	Mary Jane Matolyak	Brooklyn Balamuto	

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Rectory Office Hours – Father is available any time by appointment.
Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please phone the rectory when a family member is admitted to the hospital.
Marriages are solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. Consult the pastor at least six months in advance and before plans have been made for the wedding reception. Marriages cannot be celebrated during the fasting seasons of the church, or on Fridays.
Baptisms are normally scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays. Consult the pastor. Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith and the other a practicing Christian.
Church Funerals are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and financial obligations to the parish; otherwise burial is from the funeral home.
The Church does not permit cremation.

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