



Nativity of Our Lord Orthodox Church

<http://nativityorthodox.com/>

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December 24-25, 2017

*Let all who enter our Holy Church heed the words of the Cherubic Hymn:
“Let us now lay aside all earthy cares”*

*The reason why God has accorded us this present life is to give us a place for repentance.
Were this not the case,
a person who sinned would at once be deprived of this life.
For otherwise of what use would it be to him?
St. Gregory Palamas*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING &
LIVES OF THE SAINTS
SAINTS AND FEASTS
Sunday before Nativity

Eve of the Nativity of Christ

Eugenia the Righteous Nun-martyr of Rome

The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, & Balthasar

The Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks and came to see the
Lord

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Prayers & Readings

Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture

O Master Who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and

open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and acting in all things according to Your holy will. For You are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

December 24th, 2017

Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40

BRETHREN, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Matthew 1:1-25

The book of the Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, and Aram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud,

and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

December 25th, 2017

Epistle Reading

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:4-7

BRETHREN, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ.

Gospel Reading

The Gospel According to Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

December 25th

1. The Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son (Galatians 4:4) to save the human race. And when nine months were fulfilled from the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel had appeared to the Most-holy Virgin in Nazareth, saying, Rejoice, thou that art highly favored ... behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son (Luke 1:28, 31), at that time there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the people of the Roman Empire should be taxed. In accordance with this decree, everyone had to go to his own town and be registered. That is why the righteous Joseph came with the Most-holy Virgin to Bethlehem, the city of David, for they were both of the royal lineage of David. Since many people descended on this small town for the census, Joseph and Mary were unable to find lodging in any house, and they sought shelter in a cave which shepherds used as a sheepfold. In this cave-on the night between Saturday and Sunday, on the 25th of December-the Most-holy Virgin gave birth to the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. Giving birth to Him without pain just as He was conceived without sin by the Holy Spirit and not by man, she herself wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, worshiped Him as God, and laid Him in a manger. Then the righteous Joseph drew near and worshiped Him as the Divine Fruit of the Virgin's womb. Then the shepherds came in from the fields, directed by an angel of God, and worshiped Him as the Messiah and Savior. The shepherds heard a multitude of God's angels singing: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14). At that time three wise men arrived from the east, led by a wondrous star, bearing their gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. They worshiped Him as the King of kings, and offered Him their gifts (Matthew 2). Thus entered the world He Whose coming was foretold by the prophets, and Who was born in the same manner in which it had been prophesied: of a Most-holy Virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, of the lineage of David according to the flesh, at the time when there was no king in Jerusalem of the lineage of Judah, but rather when Herod, a foreigner, was reigning. After many types and prefigurings, messengers and heralds, prophets and righteous men, wise men and kings, finally He appeared, the Lord of the world and King of kings, to perform the work of the salvation of mankind, which could not be performed by His servants. To Him be eternal glory and praise! Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

Out of burning love, Thou didst come down from heaven;
From eternal beauty, Thou didst descend into monstrous pain;
From eternal light, Thou didst descend into the thick darkness of evil.
Thou didst extend Thy holy hand to those choked in sin.
Heaven was amazed, the earth quaked.
Welcome, O Christ! O ye peoples, rejoice!

Out of burning love, by which Thou didst create the world,
As a slave Thou didst debase Thyself to loose the enslaved,
To restore the house that Adam destroyed,
To enlighten the darkened, to unloose sinners.
Love that knows not fear or humiliation-
Welcome, O Christ! The Master of Salvation!

Out of burning love, O King of all beauty,
Thou didst leave the radiance of the beautiful Cherubim,

Thou didst descend into the cave of human life,
To despairing men, with a torch and peace.
How to contain Thee?-The earth became frightened.
Welcome, O Christ! Heaven bears Thee up!

The most beautiful Virgin for a long time hoped in Thee.
The earth raises her to Thee, that through her Thou wilt descend
From the lofty throne, from the heavenly city,
To bring health, to release man from sin.
O Holy Virgin, Golden Censer-
To thee be glory and praise, O Mother full of grace!

REFLECTION

The Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was first worshiped by shepherds and wise men (astrologers) from the east-the simplest and the wisest of this world. Even today, those who most sincerely worship the Lord Jesus as God and Savior are the simplest and the wisest of this world. Perverted simplicity and half-learned wisdom were always the enemies of Christ's divinity and His Gospel. But who were these wise men from the east? This question was especially studied by St. Dimitri of Rostov. He claims that they were kings of certain smaller regions or individual towns in Persia, Arabia and Egypt. At the same time, they were erudite in the knowledge of astronomy. This wondrous star appeared to them, which announced the birth of the New King. According to St. Dimitri, this star appeared to them nine months before the birth of the Lord Jesus, i.e., at the time of His conception by the Most-holy Theotokos. They spent nine months in studying this star, in preparing for the journey and in traveling. They arrived in Bethlehem shortly after the birth of the Savior of the world. One of them was called Melchior. He was old, with long white hair and beard. He offered the Lord the gift of gold. The second was called Caspar, of ruddy face, young and beardless. He offered the Lord the gift of frankincense. The third was called Balthasar, of dark complexion and a very heavy beard. He offered the Lord the gift of myrrh. After their deaths, their bodies were taken to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Milan, and from Milan to Cologne. It can be added that these three wise men were representatives of the three main races of men that descended from Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The Persian represented the Japhethites, the Arabian represented the Semites, and the Egyptian represented the Hamites. Thus it can be said that, through these three, the whole human race worshiped the Incarnate Lord and God.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the beauty of the soul of the Most-holy Theotokos:

1. How her soul was radiant and immaculate;
2. How her soul was filled with peace from faith and hope in God;
3. How her soul was filled with the sweet-smelling fragrance of prayer.

HOMILY

on the birth of the Lord, the Son of God

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world (John 16:28).

The only-begotten Son of God, brethren, begotten in eternity of the Father without a mother, was born in time of a mother without a father. That first begetting is an unfathomable mystery of the Holy Trinity in

eternity, and the second is the unfathomable mystery of God's power and love for mankind in time. The greatest mystery in time corresponds to the greatest mystery in eternity. Without entering into this greatest mystery with the small taper of our understanding, let us be content, brethren, with the knowledge that our salvation had its origin not from man or from earth, but from the greatest heights of the divine invisible world. So great is God's mercy, and so great is the dignity of man, that the Son of God Himself came down from eternity into time, from heaven to earth, from the throne of glory to the shepherd's cave, solely to save mankind, to cleanse men from sin and to return them to Paradise. I came forth from the Father, where I had everything, and am come into the world, which cannot give Me anything. The Lord was born in a cave to show that the whole world is one dark cave, which He alone can illumine. The Lord was born in Bethlehem-and Bethlehem means ``the House of Bread"-to show that He is the only Bread of Life worthy of true men.

O Lord Jesus, the Pre-eternal Son of the Living God and the Son of the Virgin Mary, enlighten us and nourish us with Thyself.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

Prayer Of Saint Basil

I thank you, Christ and Master our God, King of the ages and Creator of all things, for all the good gifts you have given me, and especially for the participation in your pure and life-giving mysteries. I, therefore, pray to you, good and loving Lord: keep me under your protection and under the shadow of your wings. Grant that to my last breath I may with a pure conscience partake worthily of your gifts for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. For you are the bread of life, the source of holiness, the giver of all good things, and to you we give glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Sixth Hour Prayers

O You Who on the sixth day and hour nailed to the cross the sin which rebellious Adam committed in Paradise, Tear asunder also the bond of our iniquities, O Christ our God, and save us.

Prayer of St. Basil

God, Lord of hosts and Maker of all creation, who in Your great compassion and mercy sent down Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind and by His precious Cross destroyed the record of our sins, triumphing over the source and power of darkness: O Lord and Lover of mankind, accept also the thanksgiving and fervent prayers of us sinners. Deliver us from every dark and harmful transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies that seek to destroy us. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and do not incline our hearts to deceitful words or thoughts, but wound our souls with love for You, that always looking to You, guided by Your light, and seeing You, the eternal and ineffable Light, we may give You unceasing praise and thanksgiving: to the Father without beginning, with Your Only-Begotten Son and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O LORD, SAVE THY PEOPLE AND BLESS THINE INHERITANCE.
GRANT VICTORY OVER THEIR ENEMIES TO ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS,
AND PROTECT THY PEOPLE WITH THY CROSS.

DIVINE LITURGIES

Wednesday – 10:00 A.M.
Spanish Liturgy – Saturday – 6:30 P.M.
Sunday Matins – 8:50 A.M.
Sunday English Divine Liturgy – 10:00 A.M.

VESPERS

Saturday – 5:00 P.M.

CONFESSIONS

Monday-Friday, 4:00-6:00 P.M.
By appointment
Before Sunday Divine Liturgy (during Matins)

ORTHODOX WORKER MEALS

FRIDAYS – 11:30 A.M TO 1:00
P.M

Either the demons tempt us themselves or they equip those who do not fear the Lord to act against us: themselves, when we are alone, away from others, just as they tempted the Lord in the desert; through others, when we associate with them, as they tempted the Lord through the Pharisees. It is for us to look to our model and beat them back on both fronts.

St. Maximus the Confessor

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For all that we have –
That so many nations and people do not have...

We should all say...

GOD BLESS AMERICA

&

GOD BLESS HIS GRACE BISHOP GREGORY

Λ Ω

MIND THE SPIRITUAL GAP!

WHEN DID YOU LAST
INITIATE THE HOLY MYSTERY
OF REPENTANCE?

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IF YOU WANT TO KNOW
WHAT IS OCCURRING IN
GOD'S CHURCH, ATTEND AND
PARTICIPATE IN HIS CHURCH.

“Only two kinds of men publicly admit to doing evil: those who repent of their deeds and are willing to accept the consequences for having acted wrongly, and those who are comfortable with their conduct and believe that no serious consequences will come from divulging it”