

SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY, OF THE ANCESTORS



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord -- December 25th

December 22, 2013

SUNDAY BEFORE NATIVITY - OF THE HOLY ANCESTORS OF CHRISTS
THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR ANASTASIA

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 23 – DECEMBER 29

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24 – VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY

10:00 AM – ROYAL HOURS

10:00 PM – *3 Нами Бог!* "Велике Повечір'я" "God is with us" Great Complines followed by Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25 – THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY FOR ALL PARISHIONER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26 – SYNAXIS OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY FOR ALL PARISHIONER

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28 – THE HOLY TWENTY THOUSAND MARTYRS BURNED IN NICOMEDIA; PASSING INTO ETERNAL LIFE (1945) OF BLESSED HRYHORIY (GREGORY) KHOMYSHYN, BISHOP OF STANYSLAVIV (IVANO-FRANKIVS'K) AND MARTYR

6:00 PM – Great Vespers for Sunday (*satisfies for Sunday obligation*)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29 – SSUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY: DAVID, JOSEPH, AND JAMES; THE HOLY FOURTEEN THOUSAND INFANTS SLAIN FOR CHRIST'S SAKE IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA BY HEROD; OUR VENERABLE FATHER MARCELLUS, HEGUMEN OF THE MONASTERY OF THE SLEEPLESS ONES

9:30 AM – Hierarchical Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners



LET'S GO CAROLING!

ON DECEMBER 28, LET'S GATHER AT THE CHURCH AT 10:00 AM TO GO CAROLING AT THE HOMES OF OUR SHUT-INS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO GO CAROLING UP UNTIL FEBRUARY 2ND - DEPENDING UPON INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING OR YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED OR YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE VISITED, PLEASE CONTACT FR. JAMES.

Thank You! - to all those who helped to clean and decorate the church and the hall for the bishop's visit and for the feast of the Nativity. Thank you to all who helped make the bake sale a success. May God bless you for your generosity! The Varenyky and bake sale brought in \$616.00.

Mark Your Calendars

Saturday, January 11, 2014: 9:00 PM - Midnight. *Маланка* (New Year's Celebration) in the church hall. Cost: \$20 when purchased on or before January 5; \$25 at the door. Hors d'oeuvres, borshcht, wine, beer and champagne. Bring your dancing shoes!

Sunday offering for December 15

Amount	Number
\$5.00	1
\$10.00	4
\$15.00	1
\$20.00	4
\$35.00	1
\$40.00	7
\$50.00	7
\$75.00	1
\$100.00	3
\$125.00	1
\$300.00	1
\$500.00	2
<hr/>	
\$2605.00	

Parishioner Total: \$2340.00

Visitor Total: \$265.00

Average / parish household (42): \$55.71

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Surplus: **\$215.00**

Christmas Epistle of His Beatitude Sviatoslav

December 20, 2013

This is an unofficial translation and is presented until such is promulgated.

*To the Son, eternally and immaculately born of the Father,
Who—in the fullness of time—was born bodily, without seed, from a Virgin,
Let us cry out to Christ-God: Holy are You, O Lord,
Who fortified our strength!
(Canon of the Nativity).*

Christ is born!

At the voice of the angel, calling to the shepherds in the dark of night, let us now hasten to the poor stable in Bethlehem. Here we see in the Blessed Virgin Mary's arms the Son of God, who came into our world as a man. Together with them, let us rejoice and marvel; let us sing and contemplate the living and true God, who—born in a human body—gives Himself into human hands as a small, gentle and defenceless child.

Our Saviour's Nativity reveals the depths of Divine life as well as the truth about man. He—who today appears in human flesh—existed before the creation of the world, for—as God before all ages—He is eternally and immaculately born of the Father as a son! This is the ineffable and incomprehensible mystery of Jesus Christ's divine sonship which today is revealed and preached to all mankind. This feast makes the divine sonship accessible for all through the proclamation that God the Father loves us as his sons and daughters. In His new-born Son, we experience today our nearness to God. We experience the same warm, powerful, real and life-giving intimacy which is the Father's intimate affection for His first-born.

Gazing into the faces of the Divine Child and His Mother Mary, let us grasp the truth the Nativity teaches us about our humanity and of His humanity, which is a sign of God's presence: "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (Lk 2:12). This child—the God of Israel, Who—in the fullness of time—was born bodily from a Virgin without seed. He bestows upon Joseph the Betrothed, the wonderful role of guardian. At the Nativity of Christ, we receive the Eternal God in our own form. For people rightly desire to be cared for and here in Bethlehem, God himself—as a child—is the one caring for the human family!

Humaneness—as a sense of and respect for the sanctity of human life—is a moving and saving path along which—on this mysterious night—the Son of God, the Son of Mary, comes to our homes, to our families, to our nation. And this divine-humanity—the God-Manhood of Incarnate Son of God—gives us a Christmas path to follow in order to love God and neighbour. By celebrating Christmas with travellers and the homeless, or in solidarity with those who are despised and whose dignity is denied, we, Christians, as true guardians and evangelists of God's presence among us, make our world, our society more humane and dignified for man himself.

The birth of the Son of God, the Eternal Word of the Father, reveals along with the greatness and glory of our God, the Creator and Saviour, the greatness and glory of man as the crown of all creation. In His Incarnation, God reveals the special dignity of man, because He is incarnated in it—that is to say, in his own image. St. Irenaeus of Lyon says: "When the Word was made flesh... He Himself became what His image was... making man like the invisible Father through the visible Word" (Adv. Haer., 5, 16, 2).

Glorifying the dignity of the human person, Christ's Church today sings out: "Let us cry out to Christ-God: Holy are You, O Lord, Who fortified our strength!" Just as the coming to earth of the Son of God through the Incarnation became the centre of world history, similarly the dignity of the human

person is the foundation for a true and indeed humane society. The Church teaches that social institutions and their leaders must respect each human person and their prime duty is to promote the holistic growth of each person. The person can never be a means for the realization of economic, social or political agendas imposed by secular authorities. Rather governments must be vigilant when placing restrictions on freedoms or burdens on a person's private life to never harm human dignity (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, § 131-133).

There is no future for a society in which man is demeaned. The dignity of the human person is the source for just laws and equitable social order. For in the human person the temporal and eternal, the divine and human, are united. Humanity is the door to eternity opened on Christmas Day by the Son of God's humanity. So celebrating the Nativity means to keep open the doors of our hearts to human dignity, especially of the weak and defenceless, as was the Divine Child Himself in the arms of the Virgin Mary.

Today once again Ukrainian society is striving to build its future on the foundation of the Christian faith. The new-born Saviour is the fulfilment of the hopes of all mankind for the coming of God's kingdom—a kingdom of justice, peace and goodness. The birth of the eternal King of Peace was announced by the angel, when he said to the shepherds: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour" (Lk 2:10-11). This historic moment is important to us, for the word of the Evangelist proclaims that Christ Himself is the source of our joy and the end of our fears! In the Nativity of Christ, may our anxiety be transformed into hope, may confusion and uncertainty be directed along the path that leads to the place of our Lord's birth. On this Christmas Day, when, according to the apostle Paul, the power of God was made manifest in human weakness (cf. II Cor. 12:9), our sense of powerlessness is turned into a realization of our self-worth. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, this realization of our self-worth becomes a force that will enable us to build a society worthy of man. That is why today we glorify the power of the divine-humanity, singing: "Holy are You, O Lord, Who fortified our strength!"

Dearly beloved in Christ! On this joyous feast day of Christ's Nativity, I wish all of you my sincerest greetings. I wish for you goodness and peace, harmony and health. I desire to knock on the door of every Ukrainian family! With the sound of ancient carols, I wish to cheer every Ukrainian heart! Announcing the great joy of our Saviour's birth, I want to gather around Bethlehem's stable all of our church—both in Ukraine and abroad— into one community of God!

Today let us feel like one Christian family in which our Saviour is born. Along the path of humanity and Christian solidarity, we can touch all who defend their own dignity, the dignity of their family and their nation! Let us share our Christmas joy with those who are far from home, in hospital beds or prison bunks. Together, guided by the light of the star, let us make haste towards our neighbours in order to see in the flesh—the Invisible One; in His poverty—the Source of all goodness; in His weakness—the Almighty, as the new-born Christ-God in the embrace of the Theotokos.

Christ is born!

Let us glorify Him!

† SVIATOSLAV

*Given in Kyiv,
at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ,
19 December 2013,
on the feast day of St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra, the Wonderworker*

“OUR SAVIOR, BOTH GOD AND MAN”

By Saint Ephrem the Syrian – 4th Century

We confess one and the same individual as perfect God and perfect man. He is God the Word Which was flesh.

For if He was not man, why was Mary chosen? And if He is not God, whom does Gabriel call Lord?

If He was not man, who was laid in a manger? And if He is not God, whom did the angels who came down from heaven glorify?

If He was not man, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes, And if He is not God, in whose honor did the star appear?

If He was not man, whom did Simeon hold in his arms? And if He is God, to whom did Simeon say, “now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace”?

If He was not man, whom did Joseph take when he fled into Egypt? And if He is not God, who fulfilled the prophecy: “Out of Egypt have I called my Son”?

If He was not man, whom did John baptize? And if He is not God, to whom did the Father say: “This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased”?

If He was not man, who hungered in the desert? And if He is not God, unto whom did the angels come and minister?

If He was not man, who was invited to the marriage in Cana of Galilee? And if He is not God, who turned the water into wine?

If He was not man, who took the loaves in the desert? And if He is not God, who fed the five thousand men and their women and children with five loaves and two fish?

If He was not man, who slept in the ship? And if He is not God, who rebuked the waves and the sea?

If He was not man, with whom did Simon the Pharisee sit at meat? And if He is not God, who forgave the sins of the harlot?

If He was not man, who wore a man’s garment? And if He is not God, who healed the woman with the issue of blood when she touched His garment?

If He was not man, who spat on the ground and made clay? And if He is not God, who gave sight to the eyes of the blind man with the clay?

If He was not man, who wept at Lazarus’ grave? And

if He is not God, who commanded him to come forth out of the grave four days after his death?

If He was not man, whom did the Jews arrest in the garden? And if He is not God, who cast them to the ground with the words: “I am He”?

If He was not man, who was judged before Pilate? And if He is not God, who frightened Pilate’s wife in a dream?

If He was not man, whose garments were stripped from Him and parted by the soldiers? And if He is not God, why was the sun darkened upon His crucifixion?

If He was not man, who was crucified on the cross? And if He is not God, who shook the foundation of the earth?

If He was not man, whose hands and feet were nailed to the cross? And if He is not God, how did it happen that the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened?

If He was not man, who hung on the cross between the two thieves? And if He is not God, how could He say to the thief: “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise”?

If He was not man, who cried out, and gave up the ghost? And if He is not God, whose cry caused many bodies of the saints which slept to arise?

If He was not man, whom did the women see laid in the grave? And if He is not God, about whom did the angel say to them: “He is arisen, He is not here”?

If He was not man, whom did Thomas touch when he put his hands into the prints of the nails? And if He is not God, who entered through the doors that were shut?

If He was not man, who ate at the sea of Tiberias? And if He is not God, on whose orders were the nets filled with fishes?

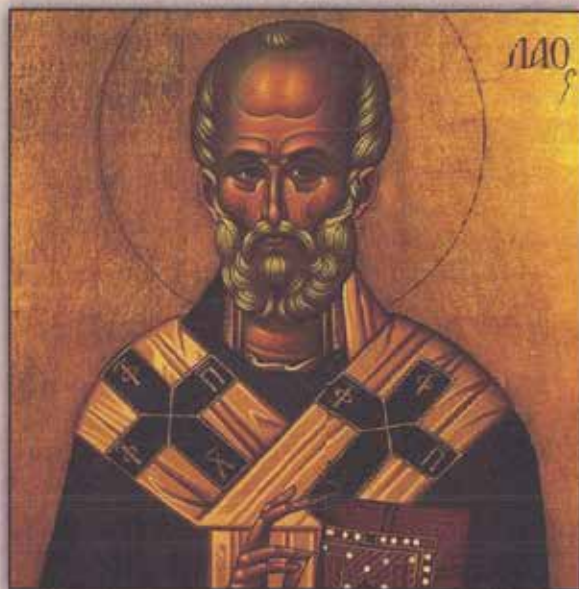
If He was not man, whom did the apostles see carried up into heaven? And if He is not God, who ascended to the joyful cries of the angels, and to whom did the Father proclaim: “sit at My right hand”?

If He is not God and man then, indeed, our salvation is false, and false are the pronouncements of the prophets.

CHRISTMAS AND THEOPHANY THE INCARNATION AND MANIFESTATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker
December 6th

We have gathered to celebrate and to praise with song the model of bishops and a glory to the fathers, a fountain of miracles and a great helper of believers. Let us sing to the saintly Nicholas: Rejoice, O Protector of Myra who was revered as its leader and strongest pillar. Rejoice, O Radiant Star whose light of miracles shines throughout the world. Rejoice, O Divine Joy to those in sorrow. Rejoice, O Defender of those who are oppressed; for even now, all-holy Nicholas, you still pray to God for us who celebrate your feast with faith and who honor you with zeal and joy.



Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, the Patriarchs

Today we commemorate the ancestors of Christ. Sing with fervor a hymn of praise to Christ the Savior who exalted them among all nations. He is the Lord who does wondrous deeds because He is powerful and mighty. From them He brought forth a royal scepter, the immaculate maiden of God and virgin Mary. From her, Christ our God came forth to give life and eternal salvation for all. O believers, let us give praise today to all the Fathers who lived before the Law: Abraham who was beloved by God, Isaac who was born according to the promise, Jacob and the twelve Patriarchs, the very meek David and the favored prophet Daniel. Let us also glorify with them the three youths who changed the fiery furnace into a place of refreshing dew. Let us beg forgiveness of our sins from Christ our God who is glorified in his saints.



Sunday of the Holy Fathers

He who is carried by the Cherubim has taken human nature in the abode of the immaculate womb. He has come to earth to be born of the tribe of Judah. The holy cave has been adorned like a splendid palace for the King of all; the manger, like a ruby throne. The Virgin will place the Child into it for the renewal of his boundless creation.

Having conceived in a manner beyond understanding, the Virgin places You into the manger of the dumb animals, O eternal Word of God, because You come to pardon the ignorance that I acquired through the envy of the serpent. You come to be wrapped in swaddling clothes in order to break the chains and fetters of my sins. O only-blessed One and Lover of Mankind, I most joyfully glorify, extol, and adore You and your coming in the flesh; for through You I have been freed.



Nativity of Our Lord December 25th

Because the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all creation is enlightened. Behold! The shepherds keep watch and the Magi are adoring; the angels are singing hymns of praise and Herod is trembling; for the Savior of our souls has revealed himself in the flesh.

O Christ, what shall we offer You for your coming on earth in our humanity for our sake? Every creature that has its being from You gives thanks to You: the angels offer hymns of praise, the heavens give a star; the Magi present their gifts and the shepherds, their wonder; the earth provides a cave and the desert, a manger. As for us, we offer a Virgin Mother. O God who are from all eternity, have mercy on us.



*Synaxis of the Holy Mother of God
December 26th*

O Christ our God, your kingdom is eternal, and your reign is from generation to generation. You became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and became man from the ever-virgin Mary. Your coming, O Christ, has shed a great light upon us. You are the Light of Light and the radiance of the Father. You have illumined the whole creation. Therefore, everything that breathes sings a hymn of praise to You. You are the image of the Father's glory. You are the eternal God, existing before all ages, who shone forth from the Virgin. O Lord our God, have mercy on us.

Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth. Today Bethlehem receives the One who at all times sits with the Father. Today the angels sing the praises of the newborn infant. Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and good will to all.



*Saint Basil the Great
January 1st*

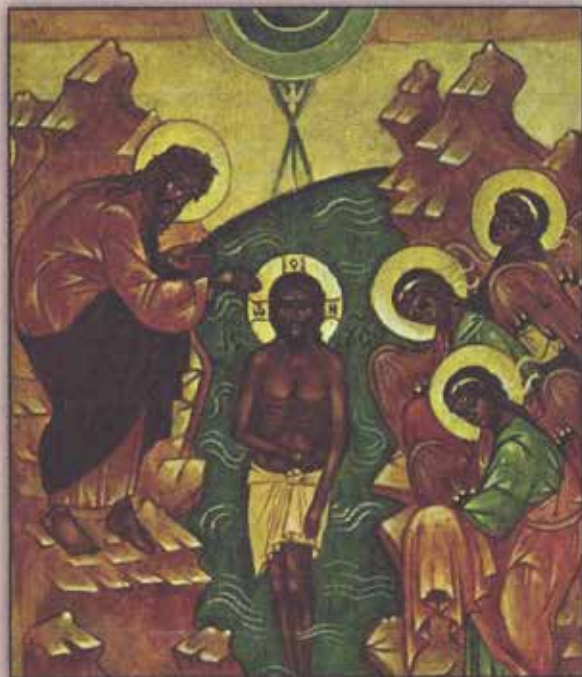
O venerable Father, you became a lover of wisdom, preferring life with God to all possessions of the world. Your contemplation of death made you forsake the wealth of the earth, and by your perseverance in fastings, you overcame the sting of passions. By study of the divine law you preserved the freedom within your soul.

By your generous practice of virtue you subjected the passions of the flesh to the spirit. You renounced the flesh, the world, and the princes of the earth; now you stand in the presence of Christ. Intercede with Him for great mercy upon our souls.



Theophany of Our Lord in the Jordan
January 6th

O our Savior, the armies of angels trembled when they saw You baptized by your servant, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness and descending, and when they heard the voice of the Father speaking from heaven: This One upon whom the Forerunner lays his hands is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. O Christ our God, glory to You! O God and Lord, when you resolved to save those who had strayed from You, You condescended to take the form of a servant, for it was fitting that You assumed our human nature for us. And when You were baptized in the flesh, O our Redeemer, it made us worthy of your forgiveness. Therefore, we cry out to You: O Christ our God, our Benefactor, glory to You!

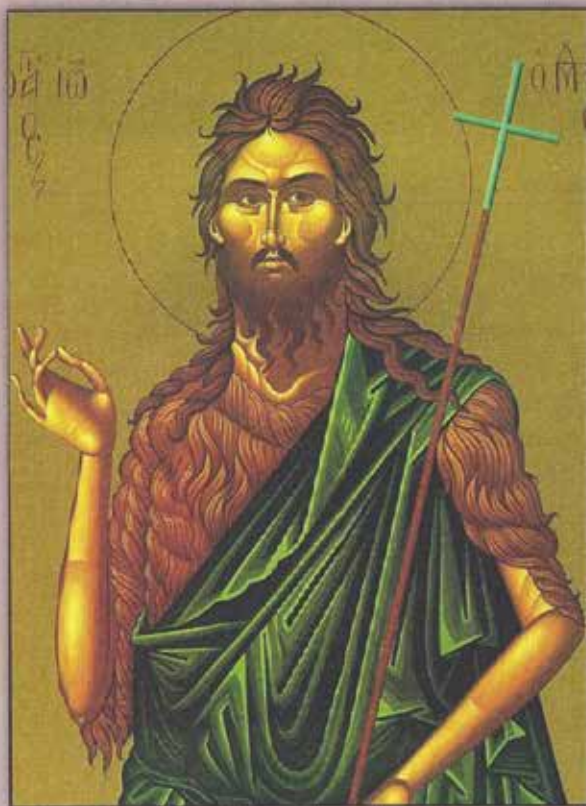


Synaxis of John the Baptist
January 7th

When the Jordan River received You, O Fountainhead, the Comforter descended in the form of a dove. Now behold the marvel: the One who bowed the heavens bows his head to the Forerunner, and the one made of clay cries out to his Maker: Why do You command me to perform what is beyond my power? It is I who need to be baptized by You. O Christ our God, O Sinless One, glory to You!

I manifest myself as completely human. I who am rich have willingly become poor, so that I may enrich with incorruption and deliverance all the poor. Come! Baptize the One who is not subject to corruption and who frees the world from decay.

*All text from Vesper Stichera, The Festal Menaion,
Sisters of Saint Basil, Uniontown, PA*





**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

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

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 kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been implanted 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 infant's 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 Ghost, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.

St. John Chrysostom