



# The Sunday Messenger

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH - WILKES BARRE, PA

28th Sunday after Pentecost + Sun, Dec 25th, 2022 + The Sunday of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ



## Hymns for Today

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone 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!

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels with shepherds glorify Him; The Wise Men journey with the star, since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child.

## Please Sing Along!

Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies along with the choir throughout the Divine Liturgy is encouraged!

## Epistle Reading - Galatians 4:4-7

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

## Gospel Reading - Matthew 2:1-12

Now after 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 when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also." When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had

**DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS:** A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared to receive the Holy Sacrament through prayer and fasting. If you have questions please let us know!

come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.



## This Week's Schedule

### Holy Trinity Orthodox Church

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#### THIS WEEKEND

##### The Great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord

Friday, December 23rd

8 AM: Royal Hours for the Nativity of Our Lord

Saturday, December 24th

7 PM: Great Compline & Matins w/ Litya

Sunday, December 25th

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy  
No Coffee Hour - Merry Christmas!

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#### THIS WEEK

**FAST-FREE WEEK!**

Mon, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy for the Mother of God

Wed, 11 AM-1:30 PM: Private Prayer in Church

Wed, 6:30 PM - Akathist Service to Our Lord Jesus Christ

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#### NEXT WEEKEND

Saturday, December 31st

5 PM: Great Vespers for the Feast, Confession

Sunday, January 1st - Circumcision of Our Lord

8:40 AM: 3rd & 6th Hours, 9 AM: Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour, Orthodoxy 101

## Parish Calendar

DEC 26th - Liturgy for the Mother of God @ 9 AM

DEC 31st - Great Vespers: Circumcision of Christ @ 5 PM

JAN 1st - Feast of the Circumcision of Christ / St. Basil

Jan 5th - Great Vespers w/ Litya - Theophany @ 6:30 PM

Jan 6th - Divine Liturgy for Theophany @ 9 AM

Jan 8th - Parish Council Meeting @ 11:30 AM



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### & Upcoming Parish Events

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ORTHODOXY 101: A weekly class for visitors, inquirers, catechumens, or anyone wanting to refresh on the basics of the Orthodox faith. Sundays following Divine Liturgy (starts back on January 1st).

### OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE THIS SEASON

#### **Give to HTOC Friends of the Poor Ministry**

Support our own parish ministry - "Friends of the Poor" - by making a monetary donation OR by donating warm "new" or "like-new" coats, hats, gloves, etc for the winter months. As we minister to the homeless and poor of Wilkes-Barre we encounter a wide variety of needs, especially this time of year. If you would like to make a donation by check please write "Friends of the Poor" on the memo line. If you have questions about donations or how you can get involved in this ministry please see Patrick Tutella.

## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

**December Birthdays:** David Clark (12/1), Stephen Dutko (12/8), Nina Grymko (12/10), Andrew Kondratick (12/11), Lydia Dutko (12/12), Andrew Conklin (12/13), Joan Austin (12/18), Christa Talpash (12/19), Dcn Lawrence Worlinsky (12/19), Patrick Tutella (12/19), Susan Goobic Howell (12/19), Jeri Basarab (12/21), Mary Ann Kudey (12/21), Dolores Rilko (12/21), Kellie Ann DiBattista (12/27), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31)

**Anniversaries:** N/A

**This Week's Birthdays:** Kellie Ann DiBattista (12/27), Anessa Cardoni (12/28), Daniel Bisset Jr. (12/31)

**Ask Fr. Innocent:** Do you have questions about the Orthodox faith? Submit your questions anonymously in the vestibule in the small black "Ask Fr. Innocent?" box. Questions will be answered during coffee hour and/or in the bulletin.



## WORDS OF WISDOM From the Saints & Teachers

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### Nativity Letter from His Beatitude Met. Tikhon

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, My Beloved Children in the Lord, Christ is born! Glorify him!

'But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and his Mother, and go to the land of Israel..."' (Mt. 2:19-20)

The protagonist, so to speak, for the first two chapters of Saint Matthew's Gospel is the humble and silent man whom we call the Righteous Joseph the Betrothed.

Joseph is called 'just,' that is, he walked according to the commandments of God (Mt. 1:19). And, according to the scriptures, in keeping the commandments, a man may learn true knowledge. As the Psalmist says, 'Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments' (Ps. 118:66).

We find that this is exceptionally true in the case of Saint Joseph. So just, so righteous, was he, that he was worthy to be taught and led by an angel. In an event that is sometimes called the annunciation to Saint Joseph, an angel comes to the righteous man in his moment of doubt concerning the pregnancy of his betrothed, telling him not fear.

And this exhortation not to be afraid is no mere formality, for the next words of the angel disclose a dread and fearful task. The angel asks Joseph to serve the most holy Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary in place of an earthly husband ('take Mary your wife'), and to minister to the Lord Jesus Christ in the place of an earthly father ('you shall call his name Jesus').

This alone—the command to serve as a foster father to the God of all and as a guardian for the Mother of the Light—would be fearful enough. But soon Saint Joseph and the holy Mother and Child for whom he is obliged to care are beset by extraordinary circumstances: a murder plot, an escape to a distant land, and a sojourn in that foreign country. We can only assume that, in Egypt,

among strangers, away from home and property, the responsibility to provide for his supposed wife and son weighed very heavily upon this righteous man.

But again, the words of an angel, and this time these are words of relief and joy: 'Go the land of Israel.' Return home to your kin; return home to your property; return home to your people and your customs and your land.

The first time an angel visited the righteous Joseph, he brought a dread order from the Almighty, an order that would have to be carried out under the most trying of circumstances. The second time an angel came, he brought a welcome reprieve.

But in both cases, the just man Joseph was equally obedient to the divine will. When he was commanded to care for Mother and Child, he took up the task without hesitation, no matter what difficulties ensued. And when he was told to return to Israel, he went just as readily.

The same paradoxical way that Saint Joseph protected and cared for the omnipotent Master who holds all creation in the palm of his hand, God has given to us, Orthodox Christians, a special charge of sacred stewardship. God needs nothing from us, and yet he delights in allowing us to cooperate with him in the work of preaching the Gospel and sanctifying the world.

We might say that, just like the Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, we are, by divine grace, charged with caring for the newborn Christ. For what is the Church but Christ's Body, growing in this world in wisdom and stature until it reaches the measure of the stature of the fullness in the age to come (Lk. 2:52, Eph. 4:13)? And we all share a responsibility, according to our station in life, to care for the Church through prayer, financial support, sacramental participation, and sharing and teaching the faith.

And then, on another level, we are each charged to care for Christ in our life, in our own heart. Saint Paul wrote to the Galatians that he was in travail until Christ be formed in them (Gal. 4:19). Each of us is called to reveal Christ in our life, to become a saint, to become Christ by grace. Through baptism and the Eucharist we have all received Jesus Christ within ourselves, as it were as a new-born Child. By prayer, careful practice of the virtues, attentiveness to our thoughts, and the cultivation of authentic love for God and man, we allow Christ to grow

in us, until, we pray, it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us (Gal. 2:20).

Today, celebrating the Nativity of the Savior in the flesh, may we all take Saint Joseph as our example as we seek to foster Christ in the Church and in our own hearts. Let us practice the commandments, discern the will of God, and do his will, even when the circumstances are difficult.

Truly, this world is an Egypt, and caring for Christ and his Church as Saint Joseph did always involves obstacles and challenges. But if we sojourn with the Christ-child in Egypt, faithfully attending to him in our lives and our communities, we can be assured that we, like Saint Joseph, will one day hear those welcome words: ‘Go to the land of Israel’—that is, come, ye righteous, and enter the heavenly mansions the Father has prepared for you from before all ages (Mt. 25:34).

By caring for our infant Savior and Lord in this way, we show our willingness to cooperate with the grace of God, God who so desired to have us as his fellow-workers, his brethren, and his friends that he deigned to be born in a cave and laid in a manger, on a cold night ‘while gentle silence enveloped all things, and night in its swift course was now half gone’ (Wis. 18:14). To him, our newborn God and Lord, be all glory, honor, and adoration, together with his eternal Father and his most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit.

With the blessing of the newborn Messiah, who is Lord and God before the ages, I remain sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Tikhon  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada



## The Treasury

“... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” + Jesus Christ

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**Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open:** \$12,305  
**Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open:** \$2,840  
**Last Week's Collection (12/18/22):** \$1,985

## Thank you to all who donated poinsettias.

### For the Health of:

William & Mary Gurka

Kennedy, Conklin, & Seasock Families

Tumavitch and Conon Families & Friends

Kosko & Stankiewicz Family

Meck, Goobic, & Willis Families

Apanovich, Huntzinger, & Yursha Families

Zimich & Krill Families

Lydia Tutella

Halina Zukiewicz

HTOC Church School Students

Welgus Family

Louie Gianuzzi & Family

Father & Matushka Neal & Sons

Soljaga & Sofrenovic Family

Tom & Joan Austin & Family

### In Memory of:

Andrew Dutko Sr.

Stephen P. Krill Family

William & Eva Sokola

Anna P. Homick

Helen & Peter Welgo

Steven Homick

Kosko & Stankiewicz Family

Delores Karas

Tumavitch & Conon Families & Friends

Stephen Hutz III

Kennedy, Conklin, Seasock Families

William & Julia Talpash

Goobic Family

Apanovich, Huntzinger, & Yursha Families

Welgus Family

Soljaga & Sofrenovic Family

Stephen & Susie Dutko

Zimich & Krill Families

Robert & Melanie Hoats

Andrew & Eva Chervak

Anna, John, & Joseph Tutko