



Saint John the Baptist Orthodox Church



A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

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Very Reverend Father John Brancho, Pastor Emeritus
Timothy Martin, Reader
Matthew Peifer, Stephen Brancho, & John Radick, Cantors
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December 15, 2019

Volume V

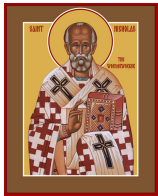
26th Sunday after Pentecost / Prophet Habakkuk (Abbacum) (7th c. B.C.)

9:20 – Nativity Canon & Carols (Kol'ady); 9:30 - Divine Liturgy Tone 1 Liturgical Color: **Purple**

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19; Gospel: Luke 18:18-27 (11th Sunday of Luke)

YOUTH Sunday / Panachida for +Julia Potoski (1-year) and Father's Grandmother, +Josephine (Smoley) Urban (20-year) / St Nicholas Breakfast following Liturgy / NO Church School

SERVICES, SAINTS, AND READINGS FOR THE WEEK



Tuesday, December 17 – 9:30 Akathist Hymn to the Nativity of Christ

Wednesday, December 18 – 7pm Vespers for the Feast of St Nicholas in HOMESTEAD

Thursday, December 19 – Feast of St. Nicholas / NO Liturgy scheduled on the North Side

Holy Father Nicholas, pray for us that we may love the Incarnate Christ and serve the poor around us. Amen.

Saturday, December 21 – 11a-1p Mystery of Holy Confession offered

The opportunity for the Holy Mystery of Confession is available following every service.



# Monday	Prophet Zephaniah (635 B.C.)	1 Timothy 5:1-10	Luke 20:27-44
# Tuesday	Great-martyr Barbara (306)	1 Timothy 5:11-21	Luke 21:12-19
# Wednesday	Venerable Sabbas the Sanctified (532)	1 Timothy 5:22-6:11	Luke 21:5-7,10-11,20-24
# Thursday	St. Nicholas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia (345)	1 Timothy 6:17-21	Luke 21:28-33
# Friday	St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan (397)	2 Timothy 1:1-2, 8-18	Luke 21:37-22:8
# Saturday	Venerable Patapius of Thebes (7th c.)	Galatians 5:22-6:2	Luke 13:18-29

* Let us Imitate Christ and the Saints and Fast as they did! # Nativity (Philip's) Fast (Advent)

December 22 – 27th Sunday after Pentecost / Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos

9:20 – Nativity Canon & Carols (Kol'ady); 9:30 - Divine Liturgy Tone 2 Liturgical Color: **Purple**

Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17; Gospel: Luke 17:12-19 (12th Sunday of Luke)

Church School

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A Warm Welcome To Our Visitors!

Glory Be To Jesus Christ! (responded with: **Glory Be Forever!**)

Slava Isusu Christu! (Slava Na Viki!)

We are happy that you have joined us today! Please join us downstairs for coffee and a bite to eat. It is our pleasure to have you in our presence this morning and we wish God's Blessings to all who visit with us today and hope you stop in again soon!

If you have any questions in regards to our worship or Orthodoxy, please see Father Dave and he will gladly answer any of your questions to the best of his ability.

He looks forward to meeting you!

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This Bulletin Is Offered:

If you wish to sponsor a bulletin In Honor of (anniversary, birthday, etc.) or In Memory of someone, please do so by signing up on the sheet in the vestibule of the Church or by contacting Fr. Dave. An additional stewardship offering to the Church is requested.



PARISH BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS



(Please have submissions for this section to Father Dave by Wednesday.)

No, Father Does Not Want You To Buy Gift Cards for a Parishioner in Need

Cyber crime has been infiltrating our lives and our homes for years. It is now knocking at the door of our parishes.

Parishes are being targeted by a phishing scam via an email or text message where the attacker poses falsely as the priest and asks the recipient for money or gift cards. [This has happened at least 5 times in the past couple months!]

I can guarantee that I will never ask you to do something like this! If you receive something out of the ordinary, be sure to call me and I will contact the Federal Trade Commission and FBI.

Thank you!

Fr. Dave Urban (and please use the phone number in the header)

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Food Drive Project for FOCUS - non-perishable food items are being collected in the hall. Please bring canned fruits and vegetables, cereals, canned meats, soups, oatmeal, pasta, peanut butter and jelly, and rice.

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Nativity Commemorations – We offer you the opportunity to sponsor items to be used for Nativity as commemorations: *anonymously, in memory of departed loved ones, OR for the health of loved ones.* If you are interested in making any of these commemorations, please sign up on the sheet in the Vestibule and give an *additional free-will stewardship offering* to the Church.

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Weekly Candle Intentions / Memorials were offered last week by Tim Martin; Shuster Family; Lawrence Martin; Kirish Family; Olga Radick; Eleanor Sanger; Mirilovich Family; Joanne Nelson; Theresa Sharpless; Patty Watson; Cindy Pavidonis.

"I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." - John 8:12

The Eternal Lamp was offered last week by Dan and Diane Hindman, In Memory of +Michael Timko. May His Memory Be Eternal! Vičnaya Pamjat!

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Raffle Winners – I was remiss in having this in previous bulletins! The winners of the Relocation Raffle were pulled at our Turkey Bingo:

1st prize (Steeler Tickets): Bill Kopchick (*Ambridge*)

2nd prize (\$100 cash): Cindy Pavidonis

Thank you to everyone who supported this effort!

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Stewardship/Dues are due - The end of the civil calendar year is here. Have you made a financial contribution to your parish yet? Please fulfill your stewardship responsibility of *time, talent, and treasure*.

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2020 Calendars have arrived and are in the Church Vestibule to be picked up.

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The Nativity Fast (*Filipovka / Advent*) - The Fast runs until the Eve of the Nativity of our Lord on Monday, January 6. As in Great Lent, you should establish for yourself a rule of fasting and stick to it. It is often said that the Nativity Fast is so much more difficult because of the nature of society around us (*and being on the Old Calendar, the false thought of celebrating 'two Christmases'*). We can enjoy the season with our extended family & friends and still keep the spirit of the Fast. Everyone should try, at a minimum, to keep Monday, Wednesday & Friday as fast days, no matter what is happening on the 'new calendar.' If you have questions, please talk with Father Dave. **Prepare the Manger of your Soul for the coming of the new borne Messiah!**

A REMINDER TO MAKE TIME FOR YOUR NATIVITY FAST CONFESSION: DON'T WAIT

"There is more mercy in God than there are sins in us. Confess your sins at once, whatever they may be." +St Tikhon of Zadonsk

Fr. Dave will be available for confessions after ALL services, from 11-1 on Saturdays Dec. 7, 14, 21, & Jan. 4, and by appointment. Let us begin to shine in spirit once again, being made free of the weight and stain of our own faults!

"Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." (Luke 5:12)

Nativity Coffee Social – will be a cover-dish surprise supplied by everyone in the parish. Bring in your favorite dish and let's celebrate the Feast with a feast!

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Christmas Raffle – Items are requested and being collected on the bar top in the church hall for our Christmas Raffle. Typically people will bring in a nice bottle of wine, but feel free to be creative!

Visit Our Diocese On-Line

- Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org
- Camp Nazareth: www.campnazareth.org
- FB: www.facebook.com/acroddiocese
- Twitter: twitter.com/acrodnews
- You Tube: youtube.com/acroddiocese

Our Stewardship Gifts To God

Stewardship:	\$ 416
Candles/Eternal Lamp:	\$ 191
Envelopes/Stewardship:	\$ 661
Total Collections:	\$ 1268
Capital Improvement Fund:	\$ 45
Relocation Fund (*includes raffle):	\$ 825

Give Generously: "For they gave according to their means... and beyond their means, of their own free will." 2 Cor 8:3

November Financial Report:

Donation Income = \$ 4561.47

***Expenses = \$ 4172.05**

Net Income = \$ 389.42

**details listed on the church hall bulletin board*

Average at Sunday Divine Liturgies: 49

Christmas at FOCUS – We have again offered to donate 4 sheet cakes, 300 bottles of water, 300 napkins, and 300 plastic-ware sets to FOCUS Pittsburgh for their annual Christmas Dinner for those in need. In addition, they are asking for \$25 gift cards from Target. Please see **Kathy Schmack** if you are able to make a physical OR monetary donation towards this wonderful event which will be held on **Saturday, December 22nd**. *Your prayers and stewardship are greatly appreciated!*

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ACRY NEWS

Jr. ACRY to restart!



We are excited to announce that a local Jr. ACRY chapter is going to be restarted at our parish! Our 1st ice-skating social event at the PPG rink downtown will be published soon...

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Home Blessings – will begin 1/19/20.



It is NOT TOO EARLY to schedule your annual home blessing! Fr. Dave is interested in visiting and catching up with EVERYONE this coming Theophany season. Please catch Father when he has his phone to plan ahead.

Coffee Social Steward Schedule

- December 22: **Sharon and Matt**
- December 29: **Open / Meat-Free Potluck**
- January 5: **Open / Meat-Free Potluck**

The Divine Liturgy concludes at the final blessing, but the liturgy continues downstairs as we gather in love and fellowship with our parish family and visiting neighbors. (Everyone is also encouraged to help clean up after.) Thank you to all those who support and keep this critical ministry alive in our parish!

Snowed In? Physically unable to make it to church? – Our diocese is blessed with the opportunity to watch our Cathedral's Divine Liturgy every Sunday at 9am. Of course, the best scenario is to attend the Divine Liturgy and receive the Eucharist. When limitations occur, please consider taking the time Sunday morning to pray with our brothers and sisters via the web. Go to www.acrod.org/organizations/cathedral/live/ to watch the *live broadcast*.

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LOOKING AHEAD LOCALLY

- ✘ **Thursday, January 2** – 9:30 Pre-festive Moleben
- ✘ **Saturday, January 4** – 11a-1p Confessions

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SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

"Of all the afflictions that burden the human race, there is not one, whether spiritual or bodily, that cannot be healed by the Holy Scriptures." +Saint John Chrysostom

Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19

⁸ for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), ¹⁰ and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹² For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; ¹³ but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. ¹⁴ Therefore it is said,

"Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

Gospel: Luke 18:18-27

The Rich Ruler

¹⁸ And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ²⁰ You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" ²¹ And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." ²² And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." ²³ But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. ²⁴ Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

Source: www.orthodoxpittsburgh.com/parish-calendar/orthodox-calendar © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos

The Holy Prophet Avvakum (Habbakuk)

Commemorated on December 15 / 2

The Holy Prophet Avvakum (Habbakuk), one of the 12 Minor Prophets, was descended from the Tribe of Simeon, and he prophesied in about the year 650 B.C.

The Prophet Avvakum foresaw the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the Babylonian Captivity and the later return of the captives to their native-land. During the time of the war with the Babylonians the prophet withdrew to Arabia, where with him there



occurred the following miracle. When he was bringing dinner to the reapers, he met with an Angel of the Lord, and instantly by the strength of his spirit he was transported to Babylon, where at the time the Prophet Daniel was languishing in prison. Thus, the food, intended for the reapers, assuaged the hunger of the exhausted Prophet Daniel. After the end of the war with the Babylonians, the Prophet Avvakum returned to his fatherland and died in extreme old age. His relics were found at the time of the holy Constantinople Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450).

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LIVING ORTHODOXY

An "Interview" with Saint Nicholas

Q. St. Nicholas, when & where were you born?

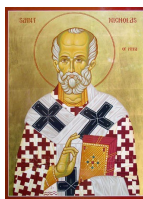
I was born around the late 200's in a small town called Patara which is in the country we now call Turkey.

Q. Did you have any brothers and sisters?

No, I was the only son of very good Christian parents who taught me about Jesus Christ our Lord and about the true Orthodox Faith. They also taught me how to pray, fast and worship God.

Q. What happened after your parents died?

Since my parents were quite wealthy, after their deaths I inherited a great deal of money and property, which I gave away secretly to the poor. I spent a lot of time with my Uncle Nicholas who was an archbishop. He ordained me as a reader and then a priest. Later on I was chosen by God



to be Archbishop of Myra in Turkey.

Q. What does your name mean?

Nicholas comes from two Greek words, *nike* which means victor or conqueror and *laos* which means people. So my name means "victor of the people".

Q. Did you have any difficulties in your life?

Oh yes, many. I was locked up with other Christians in prison because we refused to worship idols. Jesus saved me from harm and I continued to teach and guide my flock in faith. I also defended the Orthodox Faith at the 1st Ecumenical Council in Nicea in the year 325 against a priest named Arius who was not telling the truth about who Jesus Christ really was.

Q. Why do some people call you the Wonderworker?

God blessed me through the grace of His Holy

Spirit to perform miracles while I was living on the earth and also now while I am in the heavenly kingdom with all the saints.

Q. Would you please tell us about some of the miracles during your life?

Here are a few. I saved people and sailors from

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drowning, helped to rescue and release prisoners who were unjustly accused, fed people during a famine, helped the poor and prayed for many people who were sick to be healed. I always gave thanks and glory to our God.

SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Father can meet M-F 9:30a-4p or by appointment.
Online Community: Please email Fr. Dave to receive the weekly bulletin via email.

Phone Tree – Please call Fr. Dave to be added.
Emergency Sick Calls – Please notify Fr Dave when you or a family member are going into the hospital or having a procedure so he can pray with you and you may receive the Anointing to be fully prepared.

Mystery of Confession – Opportunities are available after every service, most Saturdays during fasting periods from 11am to 1pm, OR by appointment.

Holy Communion/Eucharist – The reception of the Holy Eucharist is encouraged for all Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves, with fasting from midnight on, regular Confession, and forgiveness for all people. Those who are not Orthodox may receive a *blessing* from the chalice.

Lapsed Members – You are always welcome home and we want you back! Generally speaking, sincere participation in the Mysteries of Confession, Communion, and regular attendance at the divine services are all that is required to begin parish life anew! See Fr. Dave for specific details.



Baptisms – Two God-parents are required, at least one of whom must be Orthodox by faith (and the other a practicing Christian). In the case of infants, the newly-baptized must have one name that is Christian in origin. Parents/grandparents/guardians must also promise to bring the child up in an Orthodox Christian way of life. Please consult Father for more details.

Adult Chrismation – New parishioners are always welcome! In the case of adults seeking entrance into the Church, a period of prescribed catechism will be established with Fr. Dave before administration of the Mysteries. An Orthodox Christian sponsor is also required.

Marriages – are only solemnized on Saturdays or Sundays. They are not performed during fasting periods and certain Feast Days. Please consult Father ASAP for more details (before arrangements are made for the hall).

Church Funerals – are provided for practicing Orthodox Christians who are current in their spiritual and financial obligations; otherwise burial is from the funeral home. The Church does not permit cremation.

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SPIRITUAL VITAMINS FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY

“Be careful with your mouth, but primarily with your mind; do not let evil thoughts start talking to you. Do not let your mouth say words that could perhaps wound your brother. Let your mouth put forth words which are fragrant: words of consolation, courage and hope. It is a person's mouth that reveals his interior, inner man.”
+Elder Ephraim of Arizona, 6/24/27 - 12/7/19

MONDAY

“The holy gospel-oriented virtues: faith and love, fasting and prayer, meekness and humility, compassion and goodness, hope and patience, truth and justice. Applying these virtues produces a holy man, namely, a perfect and complete man. Such a man knows the real meaning of the world and of life, and he lives with his whole being directed towards realizing his given purpose in the arena of human activity.” +St. Justin of Serbia

TUESDAY

“Do not despair if you keep falling into your old sins. Many of them are strong because they have received the force of habit. Only with the passage of time and with fervor will they be conquered. Do not let anything deprive you of hope.” +St. Nektarios

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WEDNESDAY

“Fasting and self-restraint are the first virtue, the mother, root, source and foundation of all good.”
+Callistos and Ignatios Xanthopoulos

THURSDAY – FEAST OF ST. NICHOLAS

“The sincerity of your deeds has revealed you to your people as a teacher of moderation, a model of faith, and an example of virtue. Therefore, you attained greatness through humility, and wealth through poverty. O Father and Archbishop Nicholas, ask Christ our God to save our souls.”
Tropar (Tone 4) for the Feast of St. Nicholas

FRIDAY

“The Lord calls to him all sinners; He opens His arms wide, even to the worst among them. Gladly He takes them in His arms, if only they will come to Him.” - Elder Macarius of Optina

SATURDAY

“To what end do fasting and penitence lead ? For what purpose is this trouble taken? They lead to the cleansing of the soul from sins, to peace of heart, to union with God; they fill us with devotion and sonship, and give us boldness before God.”
+St. John of Kronstadt



PRAYER CORNER

*Our Parish Prayer List for Special Intentions and Other Needs **

A Prayer For The Sick: O Christ, You alone are prompt to defend us; quickly



visit Your suffering servant *name(s)*. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, deliver *him/her/them* from sickness and bitter pain. Heal *him/her/them* so that *he/she/they* may sing to You and always praise You for You alone love us. Amen.

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For the Health of... Susan, Stelian, John, Alexandra D., Annie, Aislinn, Emily, Fr. Dcn. Artemius, Pañi Marie, Michael, Daniel, Jake, Anna Mae, Eleanor D., Viola, Juliana, Fredrick, Kenneth, Michael, Roberta, Gary, Lino, Louis, June, Helen, Doug, Joanne
...through the prayers of St. Nectarios the Wonderworker; St. Luke, the Surgeon; and St. Panteleimon, the Healer.

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For the Special Intentions of... Metropolitan Gregory, Stephen, David, Anastasia, Nicholas, Cassandra, Alexander, Nancy, Andrea, Jason, Tyrone, Sarah, Ameer, Joshua, John, Kathryn, Rose, Charles, Justin *our seminarians:* Thomas, John, Daniel and Dylan *and our Church Council, Curators, and Relocation Committee:* Matthew, Lawrence, Timothy, Theresa, Rich, Gina, Robert, Jane, Anthony, Mary Jane, Steven, Kenneth, Jillian, John, Wendy, John, Margaret, John, John, Todd *and for those who labor towards our Community Outreach ...through the prayers of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker; St. John the Baptist; the Archangels Michael & Gabriel; and the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.*

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Patronal Feast Days (Name's Day): Barbara Kirish - Great martyr Barbara (12/17); Nicholas Kubis - Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker (12/19)
(contact Fr. Dave with your Patron Saint)

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Birthday Prayers for... Brian Gogal (12/15), Madelyn Spirnak (12/17), Donald Gavulich (12/19), John

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Woloshyn (12/19), Patricia Deluca (12/20), Patricia Donley (12/20), Fr Nik Ferencz (12/20), Mike Puhac (12/21) *...May God allow them to grow in peace and love all the days of their lives and may He grant them many and blessed years! Na Mnohaja I Blahaja L'ita!*

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For our Catechumens & Inquirers... Dustin, Stephen, Daniel, Susan *...through the prayers of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. John Maximovitch.*

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For those preparing for Marriage... Ashley & Derek *...through the prayers of Sts. Adrian & Natalia and all Holy Martyrs.*

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For Pregnant Mothers... Caitlenn, Allison, Pañi Ileana, Faith *...through the prayers of St Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, & St Irene Chrysovalantou.*

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For those serving in the Armed Forces & Civil Authorities... Thomas R. Dzadozsky, Devin Meegan, and Trevor Meegan *...through the prayers of St George, the Great-Martyr & Wonderworker.*

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For the souls of the newly departed...
 +Kelly Leone (11/25), +Francis (Smoley) Zatorsky (11/19), +Evalyn T. Brudnak (11/14)
*...May the Lord God grant them blessed repose where there is no pain sorrow or mourning.
 May their Memory in God be Eternal*



DEVOTIONAL PRAYERS FOR THE NATIVITY FAST:



A PRAYER FOR PEACE - NATIVITY FAST PRAYER CHALLENGE 2019

*Metropolitan Gregory asks each member of our Diocese, either as a family or individually, to pray this **Prayer for Peace** every evening of the Nativity Fast.*

O Christ our God, at Your Holy Birth, the choirs of angels proclaimed peace to the shepherds in the fields. (Luke 2:14) After Your Glorious Resurrection, You came to Your disciples saying "Peace be with you!" (John 20:19) May Your Holy Peace be pre- sent in our hearts, in our homes, in Your Church, and in the entire world. Cleanse us of all impurity, O Lord, so that we may be filled with Your peace which surpasses all understanding, and which will guard our hearts and minds. (Philippians 4:7) Sanctify us completely, O God of Peace, so that our whole spirit, soul, and body be pre- served blameless at Your coming. (1 Thessalonians 5:23) For You are the King of Peace and the Savior of our Souls, and to You we give glory forever. Amen.

THE CANON OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

Ode 1: Christ is born, glorify him! Christ comes from heaven, meet Him! Christ is an earth, be exalted! O all the earth, sing to the Lord, and sing praises in gladness, all people, for He has been glorified.

Ode 3: To the Son Who was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, and in the last times was without seed made flesh of the Virgin, to Christ our God, let us cry aloud:
 You have raised up our horn, holy are You, O Lord!

Ode 4: Rod of the root of Jesse, and flower that blossomed from his stem, O Christ, You have sprung forth from the Virgin. From the mountain overshadowed by the forest You came, made flesh for her that knew not wedlock, O God not formed from matter. Glory to Your power O Lord!

Ode 5: As You are God of Peace and Father of mercies, You have sent to us Your Angel of Great Counsel, granting unto us peace. So are we guided towards the light of the knowledge of God. And watching by night, we glorify You, O Lover of mankind.

Ode 6: The sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, like a babe from the womb: while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh: came forth from her yet kept her undefiled. For being Himself not subject to decay. He preserved His Mother free from harm.

Ode 7: Scorning the impious decree, the three children brought up together in godliness feared not the threat of fire: but standing in the midst of the flame they sang: "O God of our fathers, blessed are You!"

Ode 8: The furnace moist with dew was the image of a wonder past nature. For it burned not the children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb into which It had descended. Therefore in praise, let us sing: let the whole creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all forever.

Ode 9: I behold a strange and wonderful mystery. The cave has become heaven, the throne of the Cherubim, the Virgin. The manger a noble place where lies Christ our God Who cannot be contained. Let us praise Him in song and magnify You!