

HOLY ANGELS BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Joseph, David, and James

December 29, 2024

Sunday after the Nativity – Joseph, David, 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

December 29, 2024

Schedule of services for the week of December 30 – January 5

Tuesday, December 31 - *Our Venerable Mother Melania the Roman*

5:00 PM – Great Vespers with Litija

Wednesday, January 1 – *The Circumcision of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ; Our Holy Father Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia*

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy of St. Basil For all parishioners

Saturday, December 28 – *Pre Feast of Theophany; The Synaxis of the Seventy Holy Apostles; Our Venerable Father Theoktistus, hegumen of the Cucume Monastery in Sicily*

9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

4:00 PM – Confessions

5:00 PM – Great Vespers

Sunday, January 5 – *Sunday before Theophany; The Holy Martyrs Theopemptus, bishop of Nicomedia and Theonas; Our Venerable Mother Syncletica of Alexandria; The Holy Prophet Micah*

7:30 AM – Matins

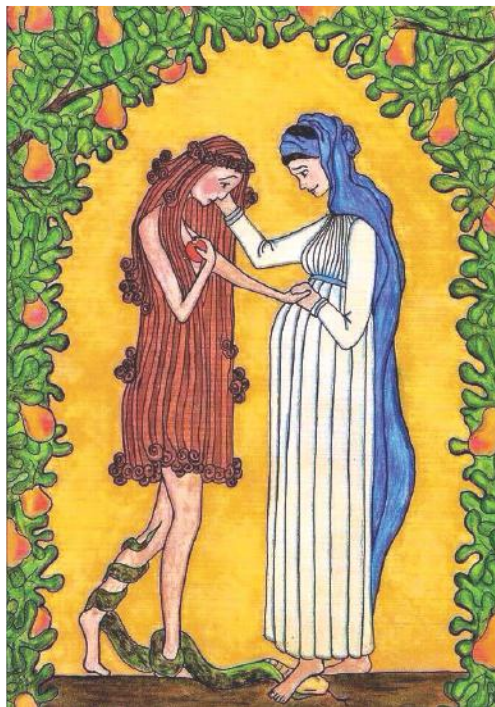
9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy For all parishioners

5:00 PM – Great Vespers with Litija and the Great Blessing of Water for Theophany

“Out of Egypt I have called my son.” The righteous Joseph the betrothed was faithful to his calling, protecting Jesus and the Theotokos by journeying to Egypt and returning to Nazareth. Our Lord calls each one of us out of the spiritual Egypt of our lives so that we may live in the promised land meant for our lives. Is he calling you to a life of holy orders or monasticism? Contact the Vocations Office at 206-329-9219 or email: vocations@ephx.org

O Physician of Souls and Bodies, we pray for:

Pope Francis, Barbara Alexander, Maria Amaro, Fr. Deacon Craig Anderson, Janice Andre, Peter Andre, Fr. Christopher Andrews, Harry and Virginia Bowden, Kim Camplisson, Patrick Carmack, Noah Chase, Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, Julia Camberos, Dennis Cline, Amy Cohn, Vivian Corr, Maria Cruz, Joe Danscuk, Fr. Daniel Dozier, Gabriel Espedal, Ana Fandrey, Karen Foto, Christine Galgano, Janet Greenwell, Deborah Harris, Michael Havens, Martha Hill, Doris Huber, Rebecca Huber, Melissa Hunter, Taylor Kessler, Jacob, Jamie Kohanyj, Juan Lopez, Pauli Martin, Mila Mina, Linda Moffit, Maryann Nagrant, Julia Ohnysty, Genevieve Paquette, Sylvia Pasnak, Fr. Lee Perry, Anthony Porrello, Nina Porrello, Peter Porrello, Fr. Robert Rankin, Margaret Raya, Michael Raya Jr. Maha Salazar, Gretchen Sharpe, Karen Simonich, Debbie Stark, Tava Tomc, Hong Truong, Pat Walsh, Maria Zhukova, Gianna, Nicole, Subdcn Eddie and his wife Viane.



Mary consoles Eve

Two feasts of the Church occur on the 1st of January

The Circumcision of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

On the eighth day after His birth, the divine Child was taken to the Temple and duly circumcised according to the Jewish Law that had been observed from the time of Abraham. At this time He was given the name Jesus, the name announced to the most holy Virgin by the Archangel Gabriel (Luke 1:31).

The Baptism of the New Covenant was prefigured in the Circumcision of the Old Covenant. The Lord's Circumcision shows that He took true human flesh upon Himself, not its semblance as heretics later taught of Him. The Lord was truly circumcised, desiring thus to fulfill all the Law, which He Himself had given through our forefathers and the prophets. Fulfilling all the ordinances of the Law, He superseded them by Baptism in His Church, for, as the Apostle declares: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15). (In the Church Calendar, this Feast of the Lord has neither Forefeast nor Postfeast.)

St Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea.



St Basil was born in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, in about 330. While still unbaptized, he spent fifteen years in Athens studying philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy and other contemporary secular disciplines. Among his fellow-students were Gregory the Theologian and Julian, later the apostate emperor. When already of mature years, he was in the Jordan together with his former tutor Evulios. He was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for nearly ten years, and died at the age of fifty.

A great champion of Orthodoxy, a great torch of moral purity and zeal for the Faith, a great theological mind, a great builder and pillar of the Church of God, Basil fully deserved his title "the Great". In the Office for his Feast, he is referred to as a bee of the Church of Christ, bringing honey to the faithful but stinging those in heresy. Many of the writings of this Father of the Church have survived - theological, apologetic, on asceticism and on the Canons. There is also the Liturgy that bears his name. This Liturgy is celebrated ten times in the year: on January 1st, on the Eves of Christmas and the Theophany, on every Sunday in the Great Fast with the exception of Palm Sunday, and on the Thursday and Saturday in Great Week.

St Basil departed this life peacefully on January 1st, 379, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ.

WHO WERE THE MAGI?

The Magi were Persian priestly scholars, known for their expertise in medicine, philosophy, science, astrology, and dreams. When the Prophet Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar recognized his God as the “God of gods and Lord of lords, Who reveals mysteries”. Daniel was renamed Baltasar and appointed the chief of this society. (Daniel 2:48; 4:6; 5:11). The prophetic and messianic writings of Daniel had a profound effect on these scholars, who also were familiar with Balaam’s prophecy about the star shining forth from Jacob (Num. 24:17).

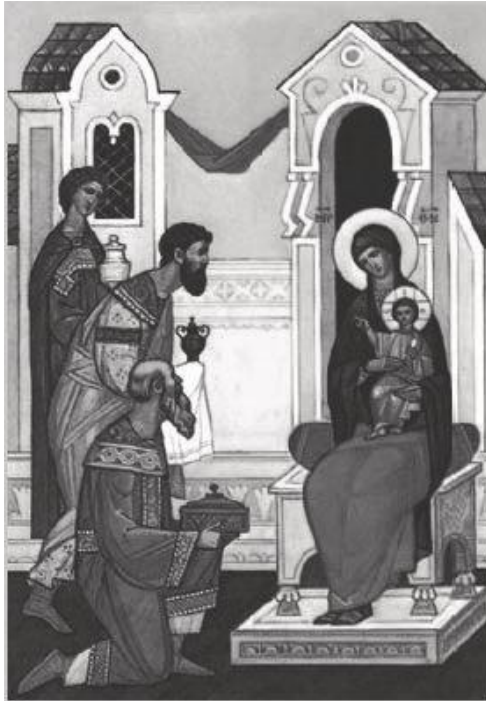
At the time of Christ, the Magi composed the upper house of the Council of the Megistanes whose duties included the absolute choice and election of the king of the realm. Their sudden appearance in Judea caused Herod great fear as he sought to keep his fragile control over the region. However, it was in the hope a divinely-imposed dominion that the Magi had made their lengthy journey to Judea.

Since the Magi believed that there was a mystical influence of the stars, they would constantly study the heavens seeking extraordinary sign which might herald the “Expected One.” St. Theophylact explains how the Lord used the stars to draw the Magi to Him when he writes: “Because the Magi were astrologists, the Lord brought them in a manner natural to them, just as Peter, being a fisherman, came through the catch of a multitude of fish.”

The wise men, on behalf of the entire human race, brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh: gold because they were returning to the acknowledgment that God is the only true King, frankincense because they were

returning to the worship of the Lord as the only true God, and myrrh because Christ, as the bringer of the Resurrection, would abolish death and there would no longer be any more need for myrrh as a burial ointment.

What subsequently happened to these gifts is never mentioned in the Scriptures, but several traditions have developed. One story has the gold being stolen by the two thieves who were later crucified alongside Jesus. Another tale has it being entrusted to and then misappropriated by Judas.



The number and identity of the Magi is not known for sure. Since three gifts were offered, it is often assumed that there were three in their company; the traditional names being Melchoir, Gaspar, and Balthazaar. Sometimes they are depicted as old, middle-aged, and young. Some consider them to be from Persia, Arabia, and Egypt as the descendants of Shem, Japheth, and Ham.

St. John Chrysostom rebukes an unbelieving Jewish nation by comparing them to the Gentile Magi: “The faith of the Magi is the condemnation of the Jews.

The Magi believed on the authority of their one soothsayer Balaam and the Prophet Daniel; but the Jews, from the testimony of many prophets, refused to believe. Whereas the magi acknowledged that the coming of Christ would terminate their profane knowledge and magical arts, the Jews would not accept the Lawgiver’s doing away with their sacrifices and refused to accept the mysteries of the divine dispensation. The Magi confessed a Stranger; the Jews rejected their own.”

HOW TO WORSHIP

19 December 2015

<http://pemptousia.com/2015/12/how-to-worship/>

Every priest is asked questions about behavior during worship, both what should be done to show proper respect in the Lord's temple and what can be done to achieve more meaningful participation in the services. This article will attempt to address some of the more common questions and concerns; it draws on a variety of sources. These should not be taken as laws to be obeyed, but as aids to an attitude or frame of mind which will make our parish's worship more meaningful to each of us.

Whenever we enter or leave the temple we should do so as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the prayers of our brothers and sisters.

As we enter or leave the temple, we should first face the altar and cross ourselves. Before going to our place, we should venerate the icon of the Patron Saint or of current Feast in the center of the temple and the icons of our Lord and the Theotokos (after buying and lighting candles, if we so desire).

It is best to avoid traffic in and out of the church during services. Especially do not enter or leave during a censing, an entrance, the Scripture readings, or the sermon; coming and going is especially distracting at these times. Being late for services is a common failing among Eastern Christians of all sorts, but it is not something we should be proud of. Leaving services early without a very good reason is just as bad.

While in the temple we should try to maintain an attitude of prayer and a spirit of humility, like the tax collector of the Gospels (Luke 18:10-14). Our purpose for coming is to approach our Lord and King in company with our brothers and sisters; we come together to constitute God's Church. These facts should govern our attitudes and behavior.

We should avoid conversation in the church even if the service has not yet begun. We should spend the time before services preparing for worship; necessary conversation should be conducted quietly so as not to disturb the prayers of others.

We will get more out of the services if we pray rather than merely attend them. Allow the hymns to enter your heart, and make their words your own. Remember that the services are not a time for private prayers but for sharing in the common worship of the Church.

Follow the service with your body as well as your mind. Eastern Christian piety is rich in actions which enable the whole person to worship. We should cross ourselves at the proper times (on hearing an invocation of the Trinity, and at any prayer or petition which personally affects you). At censings and blessings the proper response is to bow to the priest (crossing oneself is not necessary). During Great Lent there are times when we kneel or do prostrations; follow the priest and altar servers in this matter. Kneeling is not proper on Sundays, since each Sunday is a feast of the Resurrection, a weekly Pascha. (The reader or choir is exempted from certain actions if performing them disrupts the service.)

Let us remember above all that the temple must be filled with an attitude of mutual love and respect. We have assembled to share in the Church's worship, to unite with each other and our Lord, to anticipate the joyful time when we are gathered into His Kingdom. Our attitude toward one another should reflect that of the Lord, who loves us all and desires nothing more than our spiritual growth and our salvation.

The Real 'War on Christmas' is Perpetrated by Christians Themselves

BY PATRICK B. CRAINE

Note: Patrick Craine is the Canadian Bureau Chief for LifeSiteNews.com.

Dec. 24, 2013 (LifeSiteNews.com) - The 'war on Christmas' is by now a long-hallowed tradition in North America. Every year, starting in November, atheists and conservatives battle over nativity scenes and Christmas trees on public property. And we have the 'naughty or nice' lists, the boycotts, and letters targeting retailers who try to cash in on Christmas without acknowledging the reason for their annual windfall.

It's a worthy battle and one that I'm happy to play some small part in as a pro-life, pro-family, and "pro-Christmas" journalist. But I think it's important we recognize that what we have come to know as the 'war on Christmas' is really just a minor skirmish. The real "war on Christmas" is not, in fact, waged by the irreligious, but by principalities and powers. I would suggest, in fact, that the largest part in that war nowadays is played by Christians themselves.

They do it, not by opposing Christmas, but by celebrating it, intentionally or not, **in a way that robs it of its meaning**. The atheist campaign pales in comparison not only because they are still largely a fringe group (in Gallup's 2012 poll only 14% of Americans had 'no religion', compared to 74% identifying as Christian), but because it's always more effective to distort an ideal than to oppose it.

The pro-abortion movement knows this well. By twisting the notion of freedom, they've convinced two generations now to accept legalized baby-killing. Likewise, the best way to destroy Christmas isn't by banning it from the public square, even though that strategy plays its part. The best way is to gut it and imbue it with a new meaning.

Essentially, Christians do that by divorcing Christmas from the Cross – when they want the peace, mercy, and love without the spiritual battle, justice, and hatred of sin.

The 'Keep Christ in Christmas' slogan that we so often see this time of year on bumper stickers or billboards is a useful reminder. But its effect is largely muted by the fact that the target audience's basic reaction is 'duh'. People who celebrate Christmas know that they are celebrating the birth of Christ. They're not challenged by the slogan because they fully agree with it, in their own way.

The problem is that Christ and His Gospel have been co-opted and distorted. The Cross has been edited out, and Christ has been re-envisioned according to modern sensibilities. In the public mind, the Lion of Judah has become a hippy sentimentalist; the Lamb of God a cuddly teddy bear. He's nice; He doesn't make great demands of us – except for the ones the culture does. Our path to heaven is laid wide by being a "good person," in other words, by staying on the right side of the law and giving to charity now and then. One of the key challenges of proclaiming Christ in this culture we live in is that to get our message across we have to first break through these preconceived distortions.

This distortion of Christ is what allows even the most virulent opponent of the unborn child's right to life to profess a belief in the Author of Life. **It's what creates the heinous situation that one can celebrate the Christ Child's birth as the manifestation of God, while at the same time upholding his mother's right to kill Him even the moment before.**

The rigorous, believing Christian knows that Christ not only was born to die and rise again to welcome us into eternal life with Him, but that to follow Him into heaven we must first embrace His Cross. The fact is, though, that we cannot embrace Christ's Cross without also embracing His humiliation and His poverty. And I think this is where even believing Christians can play an unwitting role in the war on Christmas.

Our culture, and I dare say even our Christian culture, has often lost the simplicity of Christmas, the poverty of Christmas. **Something seems backwards when we celebrate God's condescension to be born in a stable by spending many hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on gifts.** I don't begrudge the gift giving tradition whatsoever, but I do condemn the consumerism that has engulfed our annual festivities. Christmas is most certainly a time for celebration, **but we wreck the celebration by overindulgence.**

My family was forced to embrace the "poverty" of Christmas this year in a simple way that forced us to rely on God's providence and our community.

Our tradition is to delay buying our Christmas tree until the last week of Advent. We find it helps us embrace the season of Advent, and we use a spindly Jesse Tree in the lead-up to Christmas instead. This delay in buying a tree has never been a problem before because we lived near a city and there were always trees available right up until the end.

This year, though, we have moved to a small town in Northern Ontario and found to our disappointment that by the time we were

looking for a tree they were gone from all the stores around us. Rather than relying on the store, we would have to step a little outside our comfort zone and use a bit of ingenuity. Fortunately, we have a wonderful Christian community here and we were able to visit some friends with a large acreage who helped us cut down a beautiful tree from their property.

Embracing simplicity is a scary thing when we're used to doing things on our own, but it forces us to rely on God's providence. When we do that, we find that He'll open up new paths and show us unexpected joys. We should ponder that especially at this time of year, for it was through Mary's **self-renunciation, her "yes," that God's greatest and most unexpected of gifts came into the world.**

We wish you all a very blessed and merry Christmas, and God's blessings on the New Year!

Patrick, Jenna, Noah, Isaiah, and Anna Craine

A Meditation: Year of the Lord, Volume 2

During the Christmas season God's love and His message of new hope comes to us through the beauty and peace of the incarnate Christ. Yet the Good News of God's love may be entirely missed, and Christmas may be an unfulfilled dream, amidst the hectic bustle of cleaning, shopping, writing, calling, decorating, banking and visiting. The basic reason for an unfulfilled Christmas is that we focus on ourselves, how to please each other, how to feel good and how to secure happiness with all the things we regard necessary. Yet only Christ can give us a true Christmas. Only His presence in our hearts can bring happiness, peace, joy, warmth and security. Cling to Christ ever more closely during the Christmas season. Take time to pray and to establish your spiritual and practical priorities. Let Christ come with you from home to school, from kitchen to shopping center, from Church to business office.



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Facebook: [Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church](https://www.facebook.com/HolyAngelsByzantineCatholicChurch)

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Bless, O Lord, the worship and Stewardship of your faithful servants:

Adult tithes: \$830.00; Refund from Eparchy: \$190.00; Loose Change: \$202.00; Candles: \$864.84; Improvement Fund: \$50.00; Retired Religious Fund: \$100.00; Non-Parishioner: \$125.00; Church Usage: \$200.00; **Total: \$2061.84**

Vocation Icon: This week: Washicko Family
Next week: Chase Family

Please sign up in the narthex to host the vocation icon.

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PHOENIX

SUBSCRIBES TO THE
*Charter for the Protection of
Children and Young People*

adopted by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops.

The Eparchy, within all its parishes, institutions and programs, is committed to assuring a safe environment in ministry for its children and vulnerable adults that conforms to the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People.

For additional information regarding the eparchial Safe Environment Program or to report any incidents of concerns, please contact:

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Cell: (480) 307-5182 -- email: vac@ephx.org*

- or -

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