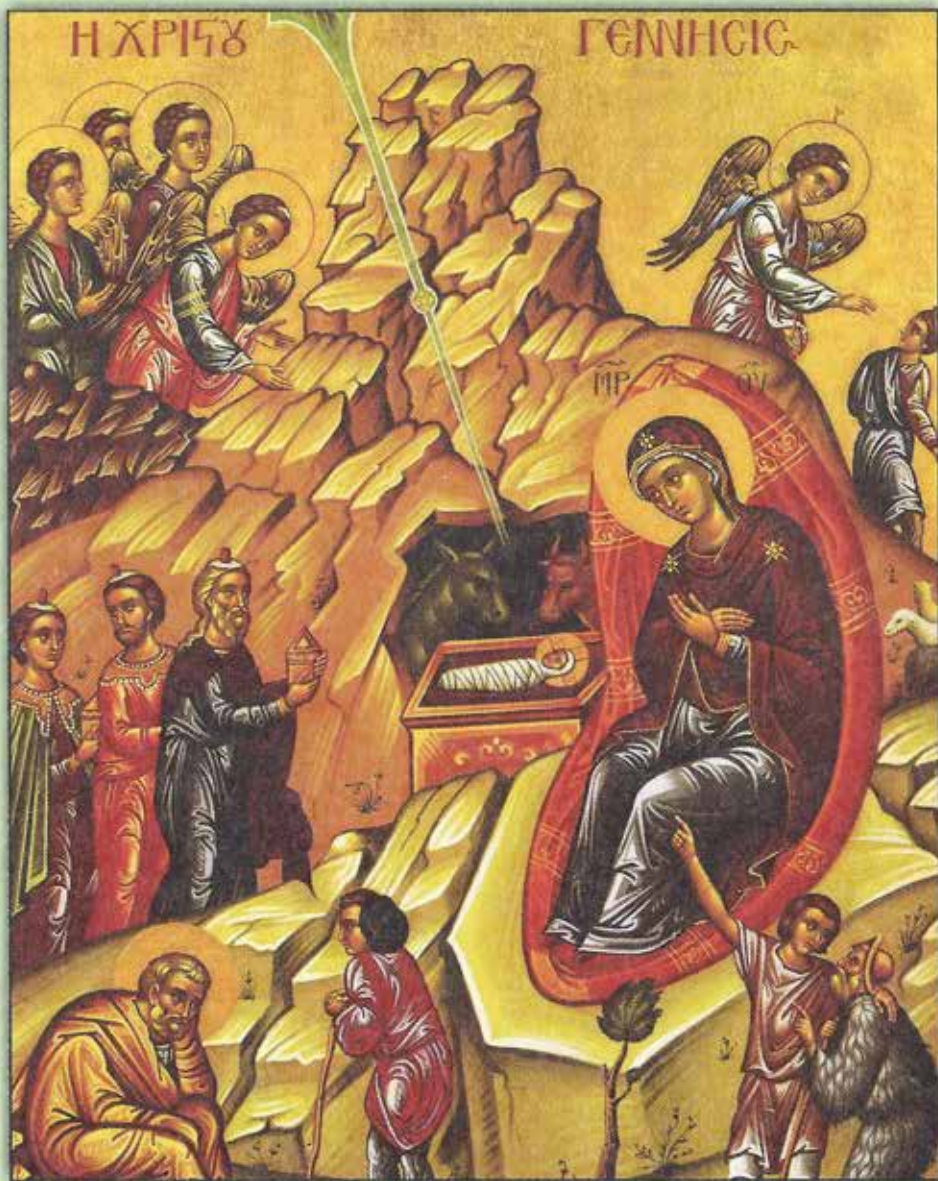


THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
SUNDAY OF THE ANCESTORS



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord

December 22, 2019: Sunday Before Christmas

Epistle: Heb. 11: 9-10 & 32-40

Gospel: Mt. 1: 1-25

Mon., Dec. 23	8:00	Special Intention (Anonymous)
Tues., Dec. 24		Christmas Eve 10:00 pm For Our Parishioners
Wed., Dec. 25		Christmas: Nativity of Our Lord 10:00 am For Our Volunteers
Thurs., Dec. 26		Synaxis of the Mother of God (Solemn Holy Day) 9:00 Health of Kelly Smith (Father-In-Law, Howard)
Fri., Dec. 27		Feast of the Protomartyr Stephen (Simple Holy Day) 9:00 + Msgr. Stephen Hrynuck (Legate)
Sat., Dec. 28		No Morning Divine Liturgy No Confessions Today 4:00 pm + Michael & Rose (Carol)
Sun., Dec. 29	9:00	+ Fred Jacobs (Hunt Family)
	11:30	For Our Parishioners



Christ Is Born! Glorify Him!

Christos Razhdayetsia!

Slavite Yeho!

Another Christmas is here. Let us reflect on the true meaning of this celebration. We will receive gifts, many will receive more than others. But we will receive one gift equally. That is the gift of the Incarnate God. Let us acknowledge this unique gift by participating in as many of the special Christmas Services as possible

and remembering the real reason for the season, and to pray for Peace on Earth!

May the Incarnate Christ, be with each and everyone of you during this holiday season and throughout the year 2020. My prayers for your con-

tinued health and happiness.

Christ is Born! -- Glorify Him!

Christos Razhdayetsia! Slavite Yeho!

Father Nestor

CHRISTMAS PASTORAL OF THE UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY OF THE U.S.A.

CHRIST IS BORN!

These days we have a lot on our minds. Schoolchildren are being graded, high schoolers have college applications, college students just completed their exams and papers. All await the results. Adults are considering year-end family or professional budgets and December expenses—hoping to somehow come out ahead. And we all wonder: What was really accomplished during the past year? Gleeful on the outside but exhausted on the inside. The “Holiday Season” is upon us.

The global political atmosphere is supercharged: famine and mass killings in Yemen, wars on different continents, with the persecution of Christians, other religions, and minorities in many countries. The ongoing invasion of Ukraine, trade wars, the apparent unraveling of the European Union and western culture, in general, coming

apart. The world seems bereft of global leaders with political vision and moral authority. And to all this, we might add conflicts in families and among friends that become particularly visible during the season when we are supposed to be together and happy.

There are indicators that depression, addictions, and suicides are on the rise in the American population. Objective and subjective causes of anxiety abound: the absence of a moral compass, aggression in music and movies, immigration and refugee crises, poverty, the climate. Many among us are dislocated, bewildered, and sad. Much in society is coming unglued. Things are not going that well in the Church...

There is much to mull over. Often our minds are overwhelmed by the flood of technologically generated and disseminated information, by sensationalized and polarized news. It is

increasingly difficult to foster profound relations when communication and interaction are increasingly virtual, more “screen to screen” than “heart to heart.”

Even the good news of Christmas is filtered through the media and colored by conflicts and controversies.

In the midst of all this, it is essential to remind ourselves what Christmas is really about.

The Nativity of the Lord begs to interrupt and distract us from our anxiety and alienation in the most gentle and vulnerable way. It could not be more humble, hidden, or human.

The Son of God came into a world that was far from neat, peaceful, or welcoming. Jesus was not born in a royal palace, as we sing in one of our beloved Christmas carols. He immediately met cold misery in a foul, infested cave. Herod’s bloody violence against children led Joseph and Mary to flee with the newborn Babe as refugees to a foreign land. The homeless Christ, Jesus the refugee, the helpless Infant pursued by a tyrant is in full solidarity with our human suffering and loneliness—from day one! God is with us—you and me. He will never abandon us as we seek to live in holiness, dignity, and mutual love. “For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My loving-kindness will not be removed from you, And My

covenant of peace will not be shaken,” Says the Lord who has compassion on you (Isa 54:10)”.

The appeal and proposal that comes to us in an Innocent Child could not be gentler. God’s Word becomes a man. The Son of God dwells among us, in this world with all of its beauty and challenge (John 1:14).

The Lord could not be any closer to our human experience. He comes to us in a shepherd’s cave, inconspicuously, far from home... for all of us, for our salvation. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10).

The first to see Him were simple folks — the shepherds (Lk 2:8-20). Those called by Biblical prophecy to pay homage — came from afar (Matt 2:1-12). Others — out of jealousy, fear, and ambition — sought to kill Him (Matt 2:16-18). But most of humanity noticed nothing at all. How blessed we are to know, to see, to hear (Matt 13:16), to celebrate the Emmanuel — God is with us (Matt 1:23). “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” (Rom 8:31-32).

This Christmas we wish all of you a deeply personal experience of God’s

presence in your life, in your families and communities. We wish you the abiding tranquility that comes from a sense that God is near. A peace experienced by the shepherds who heard angels singing “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:14).

However, we would like to wish you much more. We hope that you can carry the news of the Birth of Jesus to others. Through your hospitality, generosity, mercy, through your carols and good word. For “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:3-4). And yet the Scripture says: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!” (Rom 10:15).

We propose that this Christmas we all sit down and attentively read the Nativity narrative (Luke 2:1-20, Matthew 1:18-2:18). Let us do so quietly, in our homes, with an icon and candle, with the starlit sky shining through the window, reading alone or with those dear to our heart.

Let us reflect on the mystery of a God who becomes one of us, and share with others what we see and hear. When we share, our joy doubles. When we bring encouragement to those who might be sad, their sadness is cut in half.

The Mother of God was called to carry the Word of God in her womb and to give birth to the Messiah in Bethlehem. Joseph carried the Infant to safety in Egypt. We are called to carry His Salvation to our sisters and brothers — by our peace, by our love, by the way we relate to those with whom we live and work.

This Christmas we wish for you that your family, your profession, your efforts, your rest and relaxation may be permeated with the joy of the Nativity, no matter what your situation might be — material or spiritual.

We have been given much. We have received God Himself in our lives! Having received, let us give to others so that peace and joy may reign on this earth.

We remain your humble servants in the newborn Messiah,

+Borys Gudziak (author)
Archbishop of Philadelphia for Ukrainians
Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM (Eparch of Stamford)

+Benedict Aleksiychuk (Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago)

+Bohdan J. Danylo (Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma)

+Andriy Rabiw (Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia)

2019 PARISH DUES

With the end of 2019 quickly approaching, we offer this gentle reminder to make sure that your 2019 Parish Dues are paid. Also, we remind

our Parish Family Members that as of January 1, 2011, Parish Dues are now \$25.00 per adult per year. There is no increased planned for 2020.

2020 CHURCH CALENDARS

The 2020 Church Calendars are available in the back of the Church. The

Calendars are free, but any donations will be appreciated.

COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS!

We all know family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, or school friends, who are Catholic and no longer attend the Divine Liturgy. Christmas is a great time to invite them to come home to the Church. Think about it, pray about it, and invite someone to come to Church with you during the Christmas Season. There is always a chance that you will be rejected or your invitation will fall on deaf ears.

Just remember that Jesus experienced the same kind of reception and He did not give up. So if your invitation receives no response or a negative one, just wait a few weeks and ask again. In the meantime, pray for that person, but don't give up on them no matter how long it takes. It is hard to persevere and it is hard to be rejected, but just be patient and kind and trust in the Lord.

PROPERLY RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

When approaching to receive Holy Communion, do not be afraid to approach the Priest. Father's arms are

only so long and when you stand too far away, it is difficult to distribute Holy Communion.

We also remind everyone to tilt your head back and open your mouth WIDE. Please keep your tongue in your mouth. Please do not bite down on the communion spoon. There is no need to say anything since the priest says the prayer. There is no need to say AMEN as is done in the Roman Catholic Church.

For those faithful who are a little unsteady on your feet, please feel free to use the first pew in front of the icon

of the Mother of God. We don't want anybody to get hurt. Father will come up and give you Communion.

Now finally, a little about the red Communion Cloth. Sometimes the Altar Servers hold it; sometimes Father holds it. When the Altar Servers hold, simply approach (i.e., come close to the Priest). If Father is holding it, simply lift it up to your chin. The purpose of the Communion Cloth is to help prevent accidents.

FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

The annual Festival of Ukrainian Christmas Carols will be held on Sunday, January 12, 2020 at 3:00 pm at our Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. All

are invited to attend this annual celebration to praise our new-born King and our Lord Jesus Christ at this Christmas time.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM

The Collection Processing Team for the month of December 2019 is Team

#4: Ron Barkofsky & Joe Smagula.

Altar Boy and Lector Schedule for December 28 & 29, 2019

	Altar Boys	Lectors
4:00 pm	Brett Lowe -- Alex Nick	John Sakson
9:00 am	Brennin Marcinko -- Cole Marcinko	Pat Marcinko
11:30 am	Brian Radle -- Tyler Muchisky	Frank Lesnefsky

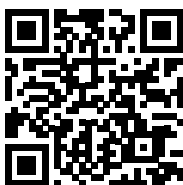
Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

135 River St., Olyphant, PA 18447-1435

Telephone: 570-291-4451 Fax: 570-489-6918

Web Site: stcyrils.weconnect.com

E-Mail: sscyrilandmethodius@comcast.net



Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Jesus Our Joy and Peace

When our Lord and Savior came to earth and made Himself bodily present, the angels appeared in chorus and gave the good news to the shepherds: I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people. We, too, borrow this hymn from these holy angels and announce great joy to you.

Today, very dearly beloved, the people of Christ have been exalted, and the enemies of truth have been humbled. Today, dearly beloved, Christ is in joy, and the Devil in grief. Today, the angels are in exaltation, and the demons in confusion.

Today, Christ, the King of peace, has come forth with His peace and routed all discord, banished dissension, and dissipated conflict. As the brilliance of the sun lights up the sky, so He illumines the Church with the splendor of peace. For, the text says, there has been born to you today a Savior

of the world. O how desirable is the very name of peace! How firm a foundation peace is for the Christian religion, and what a heavenly ornament for the altar of the Lord! What can we utter worthy of peace? Peace is a name of Christ Himself, as even the Apostle says: For Christ is our peace. He it is who has made both one. The two were at variance, not over conflicting opinions or faith, but because of the Devil's envy. But, just as the streets are cleansed when the king comes forth, and the whole city decked with myriad flowers and banners to keep out of sight anything less worthy of the king's countenance, so also now, when Christ the King of peace comes forth, let everything depressing be removed from our midst. While truth is shining, let falsehood be banished, and discord flee, and concord be resplendent.

St. Peter Chrysologus