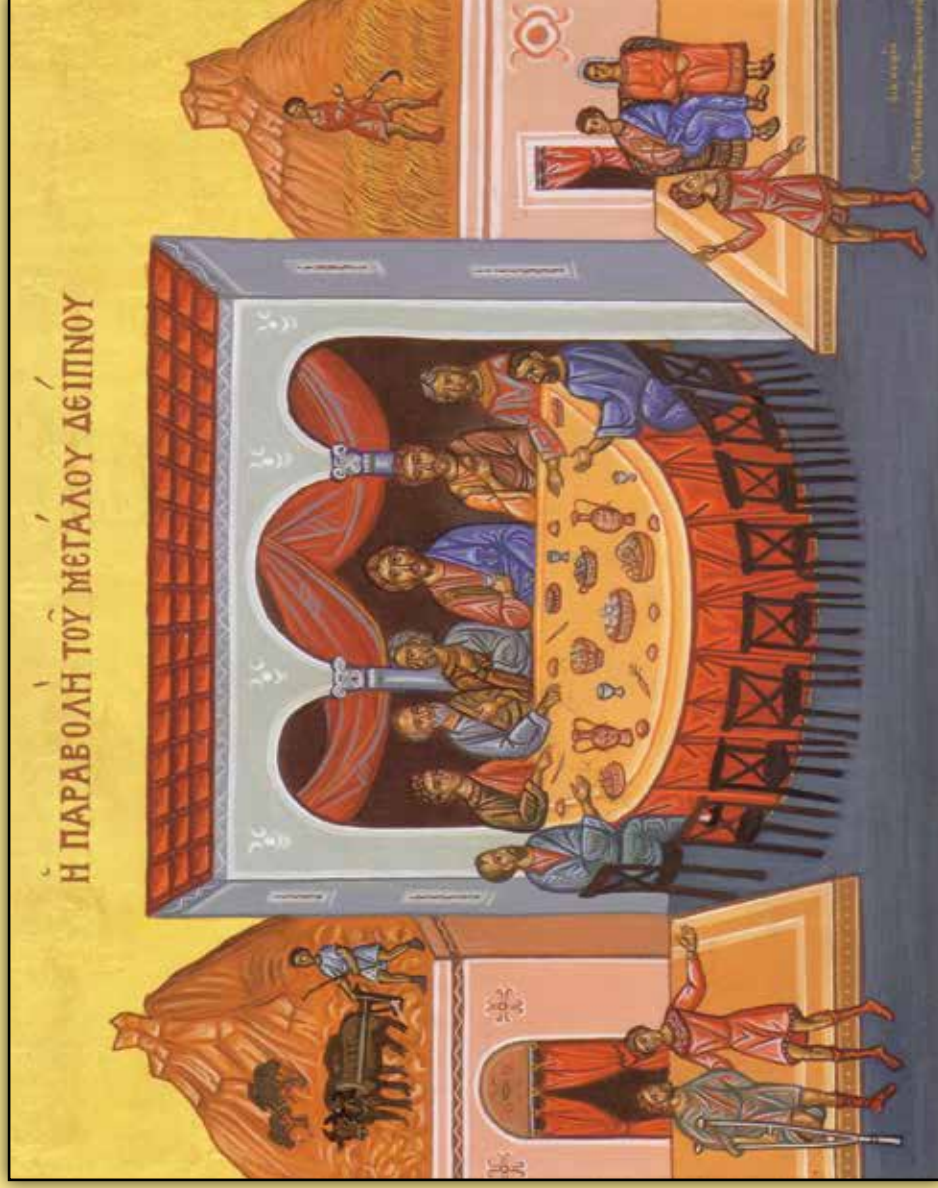


ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:16-24)

December 11, 2022: Sunday of the Forefathers			
Epistle: Col. 3: 4-11		Gospel: Lk. 14: 16-24	
Mon., Dec. 12	9:00	+ Victor Minajew (Howard Smith)	
Tues., Dec. 13	9:00	+ Olga Smith (Howard Smith)	
Wed., Dec. 14	No Divine Liturgy Today.		
Thurs., Dec. 15	9:00	+ Marlene Nestrick (Lauren Telep)	
Fri., Dec. 16	9:00	+ John & Nellie Priblo Family & Spurge Chidillo (Dolly Daniels)	
Sat., Dec. 17	No Morning Divine Liturgy.		
	2:00 pm	Confessions.	
	4:00 pm	+ George Chowanec (Family)	
Sun., Dec. 18	10:30	For Our Parishioners	

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ICONS?

Statues have never been a part of Byzantine Christian liturgical worship. Not because statues were completely unknown in the Byzantine world, but because the icon came to be the most perfect artistic way of depicting Christ and the saints. And this is no accident.

In fact, the Byzantine tradition developed a whole theology out of icons. Sometimes every color, every angle, every shape, every line, every expression on their faces – just about anything and everything – in an icon can have deep theological meaning. On the contrary, statues in the Latin West have always been considered as ‘reminders’

of the holy person, without much theological meaning in and of themselves.

Because icons have an entire theology behind them, the way we paint (or ‘write’) an icon depends heavily on orthodox theology. Icons are written according to specific rules, or ‘canons,’ to make sure that the same orthodox Christian truths are communicated to new generations. Icons are theology in color, and so they must follow a certain standard.

Icons often seem unrealistic to us, as opposed to the three-dimensional statues of the Latin Church. But we should not assume that this is only be-

cause the Byzantine tradition is all about murky mysticism. Byzantine Christianity is most concerned about realism... but true, spiritual realism. In other words, icons are meant to depict Christ or the saint according to the heavenly reality in which he or she is already living.

Lastly, icons are considered ‘win-

dows into heaven.’ As such, they have sacramental meaning to the worshipping assembly. They are not just objects of devotion, that arouse good feelings and pious sentiments within us. They remind us of where we are all going, of our heavenly destination, and of our vocation to be saints of God.

ASK THE PASTOR

What is an angel?

The word angel means a “messenger” of God. An angel of God is one of the spirits of heaven sent down by God to announce His will and to fulfill His orders. The Holy Scriptures give us many accounts of the deeds performed by the angels by the order of God, such as: the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah or guarding Paradise after the fall of Adam. The New Testament tells of angels who appeared to Zacharias, and the Virgin Mary. “An angel,” says St. John Damascene, “is an intelligent substance, always active, having free will and bodiless, serving God: a being that has received immortality as a gift of

God. The Creator alone knows its essential nature.” According to the Tradition there are nine ranks of bodiless powers or the Hosts: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim and seraphim (cf. Col. 1:16). The Cherubim and Seraphim are described as offering continual adoration before God with the incessant and ever-resounding cry: HOLY! HOLY! HOLY! (Isaiah 6:3, Rev. 4:8). We refer to this when we sing the Cherubic Hymn in the Divine Liturgy: Let us mystically represent the Cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life –creating Trinity. Together with them we sing: Holy! Holy! Holy!

Q&A

QUESTION: *What is Incarnation, that word is often used in our church during Christmas season?*

ANSWER: INCARNATION refers to Jesus Christ coming “in the flesh”.

The eternal Son of God the Father assumed to Himself a complete human nature from the Virgin Mary. He was (and is) one divine Person, fully possessing from God the Father the entirety of the

divine nature, and in His coming in the flesh fully possessing a human nature from the Virgin Mary. By His Incarnation, the Son forever possesses two natures in His one Person. The Son of God, limitless in His divine nature, voluntarily and willingly accepted limitation in His humanity in which He experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue -- and ultimately, death. The Incarnation is indispensable

to Christianity -- there is no Christianity without it. The Scriptures record, "...every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God" (I John 4:3). By His Incarnation, the Son of God redeemed human nature, a redemption made accessible to all who are joined to Him in His glorified humanity.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

It was the evening of December 24, 1944 -- and three American soldiers, one badly wounded, had become lost in a snow-covered Ardennes forest.

They had wandered for three days, unable to find their unit. If they didn't find shelter soon, the one injured soldier would surely die.

These three American soldiers eventually stumbled upon a small shack in the middle of the woods. They knocked on the door.

When Elisabeth Vincken and her 12 year old son Fritz heard the knock on the door, they were struck with fear. Elisabeth cracked the door open, and was shocked to see three enemy soldiers on her doorstep.

But seeing the injured soldier, Frau Vincken had compassion on these three boys and welcomed them inside.

Frau Vincken didn't have much -- a

single chicken was all the food she had left. But having compassion on the war weary soldiers she offered them all she had.

As the chicken was roasting in the oven, there was another unexpected knock on the door. Her son went to open the door, thinking there were more American soldiers who were lost.

But this time, the four soldiers standing outside the cottage were not American -- they were German!

The punishment for harboring enemy soldiers was death.

Elisabeth, fearing for her life, pushed past Fritz and stepped outside.

The four German soldiers explained that they were lost and hungry, and asked if they could spend Christmas Eve in her home.

Elisabeth told them they were welcome to share what little food she had,

but warned that she had other “guests.” The German soldiers sternly asked if they were Americans.

Frau Vincken nodded. “Es ist Heiligabend und hier wird nicht geschossen,” she said. “It is the Holy Night and there will be no shooting here.”

She told the German soldiers to leave their weapons outside and then invited them into the cabin. The tension in the air was thick as the German and American soldiers stared at each other.

But what happened next is truly a Christmas miracle.

One of the German soldiers, a former medical student, noticed the badly injured American soldier. The German had compassion on his enemy and offered to tend his wounds.

That simple act of kindness broke the tension. The American soldiers began to strike up a polite conversation using what little German they knew.

Frau Vincken finished preparing supper and motioned for everyone to sit around the table. As they said grace, the exhausted and forlorn soldiers forgot all about the war -- if only for a moment. Several of the soldiers -- both American and German -- had tears in their eyes as they ate their humble Christmas dinner.

That evening, these bitter enemies declared an informal truce as the spirit of Christmas filled Frau Vincken’s tiny shack.

The next morning, the German soldiers provided directions to the American front lines -- and even gave the Americans a compass. They shook hands, thanked Frau Vincken for her hospitality, and went their separate ways.

With carnage all around them, the Spirit of Christmas proved to be a more powerful force than the hatred of war.

IT’S OKAY TO SAY “MERRY CHRISTMAS”

Every Christmas, anti-Christian groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Communist Party, various Islamic groups and Atheist groups sue some city for erecting a nativity scene on public property. Likewise, fearing they may be perceived as politically incorrect, a handful of retailers replace the word “Christmas” with

“Holiday” in their marketing.

It may seem like a small issue, but these things are significant because they diminish the importance of the Christian foundations of our society.

Our ideas of justice, mercy, liberty and love for our fellow man are deeply rooted in the Traditions of the Apostolic Church which includes the Bible, par-

ticularly in the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. That's why America has been a light among the nations in the world.

Like the angel who appeared to the shepherds saying: "I bring you good news of great joy," we Christians have a

story to tell about the blessings of honoring the true God. Telling the story can start with simply not patronizing stores that use "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" and by reminding those who say "Happy Holidays" that "It's okay to say Merry Christmas!"

THE LEGEND OF THE CANDY CANE

Every year as Christmas nears, candy canes show up in stores and millions are sold and eaten. While the striped candy is delicious, it is more than just a pretty, tasty treat to enjoy around Christmas. The Legend of the Candy Cane was designed to be a reminder of what Christmas is all about.

A candy maker in Indiana wanted to make a candy that would help us remember who Christmas is really about. So he made a Christmas Candy Cane. He incorporated several symbols for the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ. He began with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize

the virgin birth and sinless nature of Jesus. Hard candy to symbolize the solid rock, the foundation of the Church, and firmness of the promises of God. The candy maker made the candy in the form of a "J" to represent the name of Jesus. It also represented the staff of the "good Shepherd". The candy maker then included red stripes. He used three small stripes and a large red stripe to represent the suffering Christ endured at the end of his life. The candy became known as a Candy Cane - a decoration seen at Christmas time. The meaning has faded, but still gives joy to children young and old, whom Jesus loves and treasures.

ANDREW'S PENCE

The Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) has decided to hold a collection, called Andrew's Pence, to support faithful of UGCC abroad where there is no permanent ecclesiastical structure.

More than 100 years ago Ukrainians started to leave their native land in search of a better life, material welfare, and freedom. Many settled on another continent, where church buildings of the UGCC are not everywhere, so that

the faithful could not attend services in their native Church. Wishing to provide all faithful of the UGCC with spiritual care, the bishops call upon all to support the faithful of the UGCC abroad in prayer and financially, collecting the

so-called Andrew's Pence.

According to the Protocol of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, the "Andrew's Pence" collection is to be taken in all parishes each year in the month of December.

'TIS THE SEASON TO SAY THANKS!

We wish to thank all the Parishioners who volunteered their time to decorate our Church for the Christmas Season. It was a task which took two days to com-

plete. Our Church looks beautiful for this Holy Season. Thank you to all of our "Angels."

2023 CHURCH CALENDARS

The 2023 Church Calendars are available in back of the Church. The

Calendars are free, but any donations will be appreciated.

UPDATE ON THE SUNDAY CHURCH ENVELOPS

Hopefully everyone received their Sunday Collection Envelopes for the month of December. If you still did not receive them, please contact the Parish Office. They have apologized for the lateness of the December Envelopes and have put us on a priority list so that this does not happen again.

With Budget Envelope Company being a new company for us, they are

not familiar with our liturgical calendar. The December envelopes have a few errors. The correct dates are as follows:

- the Maternity of Anna was on December 9th.
- the Synaxis of the Mother of God should be on December 26th.
- St. Stephen should be on December 27th.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...

The Collection Processing Team for the month of December 2022 is Team #4:

Ron Barkofsky, and Joe Smagula.

Sunday Collection for Dec. 3 & 4, 2022: \$

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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Invited to the Banquet

It is written in the Gospel: The Master sent out his servants to call them who wish to come, inviting them: "My banquet is ready." But those who were called began to excuse themselves, one saying: "I bought some yoke of oxen." Another: "I have married" (Luke 14:16ff). You see, he was ready who called, but the invited refused. They themselves were alone responsible in the way they answered.

Thus, so great is the dignity of Christians. Consider, the Lord has prepared for them the Kingdom and has called them to enter, but they have refused.

Concerning the gift that Christians will receive by way of their inheritance, one could rightly say that if anyone, from the time of Adam's creation to the end of the world, should battle against Satan and put up with afflictions, it would be nothing in comparison to the glory which he is to obtain. For he will reign forever together with Christ. Glory to Him who so loved such a person that He gave himself and His grace and entrusted himself to Him. Glory to His greatness!

Pseudo-Macarius