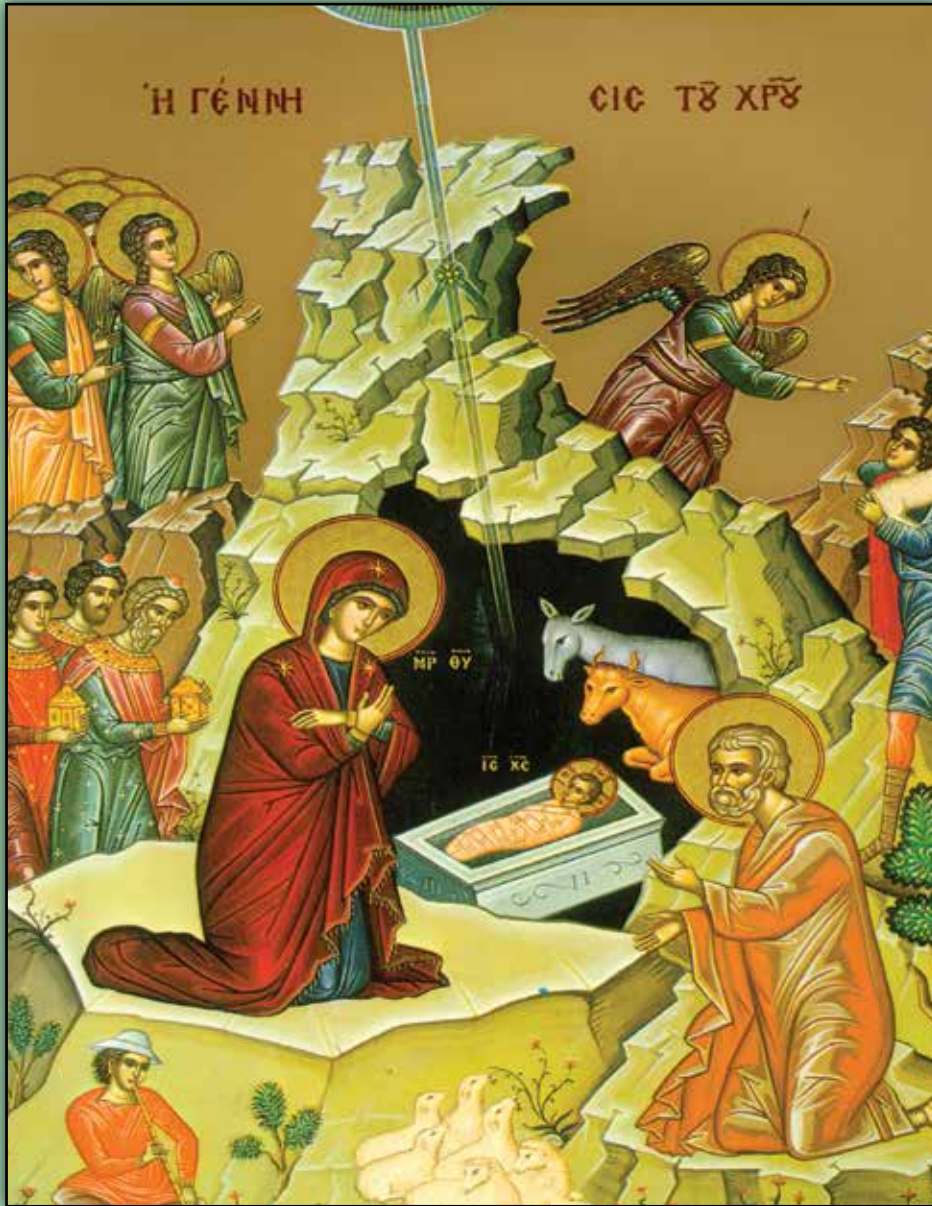


SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
SUNDAY OF KING DAVID, JOSEPH AND JAMES



*Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord*

## December 31, 2023: Sunday After Christmas

Epistle: Gal. 1: 11-19

Gospel: Mt. 2: 11-23

<b>This Weekend</b>	4:00	For Our Parishioners
	10:30	+ Michal Bojko (Michael & Theresa Vacendak)
<b>Mon., Jan. 1</b>		<b>Circumcision of Our Lord: New Year</b>
	10:30	For Souls in Purgatory
<b>Tues., Jan. 2</b>	9:00	Health of Mary Patricia Brown (Howard Smith)
<b>Wed., Jan. 3</b>	9:00	+ Frank (Carol)
<b>Thurs., Jan. 4</b>	9:00	+ Nick Chaykosky (Bill & Jane Granza)
<b>Fri., Jan. 5</b>	9:00	+ Marlene Nestor (Husband, John)
<b>Sat., Jan. 6</b>		<b>Theophany of Our Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)</b>
	9:00	For Our Parishioners; Solemn Blessing of Water
	2:00	Confessions
	4:00 pm	+ Roman Kushner (John & Mary Ann Turko)
<b>Sun., Jan. 7</b>	10:30	For Our Parishioners

## NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As we stand today on the threshold of a brand New Year, I offered this prayer of faith and anticipation for all of you. A New Year always stands before us like a gift not yet unwrapped - we wonder what's inside, what will come our way with this New Year. No matter what: happy, sad, easy, difficult, challenging - we can handle it all by

holding fast to our faith in God and in His love for us.

So, to all of our parishioners, your families, and your friends: Happy New Year! God bless you all in this New Year 2024, most especially with the best of health! Stay safe! And please continue to pray for me too!

*Father Nestor*

## **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

As we look into 2024 we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchased it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life. The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak — every man, woman and child has the same twentyfour hours every day. Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on. And you cannot bring back time. Once

it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it. Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the kingdom of God. The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out the window, or will you make every minute count? I would like to wish you, your family and loved ones a Healthy and Blessed New Year!

## **WHY DID JESUS ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE BAPTIZED?**

John's baptism was not a baptism of salvation; it was a baptism of repentance for sinners. The Jews held a unique belief about repentance. This belief held that if Israel could repent perfectly for even one day, the Messiah would come. It was only the hardness of their hearts that was delaying the coming of God's Redeemer into the world. John was aware of this conviction, and his actions cemented his reputation as the forerunner of the

Messiah.

An interesting feature of John's baptism was the fact that Jews did not need baptism. Only converts to the Jewish religion were baptized. No Jew ever conceived that he or she, a member of the Chosen People, a son or daughter of Abraham assured of God's salvation, could ever need baptism. Yet Jews, after hearing John preach his message of repentance, were submitting to his baptism as a way of



demonstrating their change of heart and of experiencing God's forgiveness of sins. When Jesus requested baptism from John, he wanted to demonstrate

that he identified himself with his people's search for God.

Identifying with his people's sinfulness, Jesus allowed himself to be baptized at the hands of John to demonstrate his solidarity with the people and to signal the beginning of the Messianic Age that John had promised. After Jesus' baptism, John's mission was accomplished and Jesus took center stage.

We know the rest of the story. Later, Jesus would commission his apostles to go baptize all nations. This baptism would not be a baptism of repentance but a baptism of water and the Spirit, which would signify that the baptized had found Jesus and were living in forgiveness and freedom.

## CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Christ is Born! - Glorify Him! So many thanks - so little space!

Our beloved Church and the surroundings were breathtaking to behold with the glorious decorations. I wish to say a very heartfelt THANK YOU, GOD BLESS YOU to all the angels who helped to decorate the Church. All of you demonstrate the true spirit of Christmas. Everything was perfect.

I thank the cantors and St. Cyril's

Choir for gifting us with "heavenly music" throughout this Christmas Season. And, as we all know, "He who sings, prays twice!"

To the "heavenly bakers" who provided all the bread for the services (and some goodies for the rectory), our sincerest thanks.

I also wish to thank all of you who sent cards, remembrances and the delicious baked goodies!

## SOME CHRISTMAS HUMOR... AN ANSWERED PRAYER

It was the day after Christmas at a Church in San Francisco. The Pastor of the Church was looking over the creche when he noticed that the baby Jesus was missing from among the figures. He hurried outside and saw a little boy with a red wagon, and in



the wagon was the figure of the infant Jesus. So he walked up to the boy and said, "Well, where did you get your

passenger, my fine friend?"

The little boy replied, "I got Him at Church.

"And why did you take Him?"

The boy said, "Well, about a week before Christmas I prayed to the little Lord Jesus and I

told Him if He would bring me a red wagon for Christmas, I would give Him a ride around the block in it."

## THE GOLD SLIPPERS

It was only four days before Christmas. The spirit of the season hadn't yet caught up with me, even though cars packed the parking lot of our local discount store.

Inside the store, it was worse. Shopping carts and last minute shoppers jammed the aisles. Why did I come today? I wondered.

My feet ached almost as much as my head. My list contained names of several people who claimed they wanted nothing but I knew their feelings would be hurt if didn't buy them anything.

Buying for someone who had everything and deploring the high cost of items, I considered gift-buying

anything but fun. Hurriedly, I filled my shopping cart with last minute items and proceeded to the long checkout lines. I picked the shortest but it looked as if it would mean at least a 20 minute wait.

In front of me were two small children - a boy of about 5 and a younger girl. The boy wore a ragged coat. Enormously large, tattered tennis shoes jutted far out in front of his much too short jeans. He clutched several crumpled dollar bills in his grimy hands. The girl's clothing resembled her brother's. Her head was a matted mass of curly hair. Reminders of an evening meal showed on her small face.

She carried a beautiful pair of shiny, gold house slippers. As the Christmas music sounded in the store's stereo system, the girl hummed along, off-key but happily.

When we finally approached the checkout register, the girl carefully placed the shoes on the counter. She treated them as though they were a treasure.

The clerk rang up the bill. "That will be \$6.09," she said. The boy laid his crumpled dollars atop the stand while he searched his pockets. He finally came up with \$3.12. "I guess

we will have to put them back," he bravely said.

"We will come back some other time, maybe tomorrow." With that statement, a soft sob broke from the little girl. "But Jesus would have loved these shoes," she cried. "Well, we'll go home and work some more. Don't cry. We'll come back," he said.

Quickly I handed \$3.00 to the cashier. These children had waited in line for a long time. And, after all, it was Christmas. Suddenly a pair of arms came around me and a small voice said, "Thank you lady."

"What did you mean when you said Jesus would like the shoes?" I asked.

The boy answered, "Our mommy is sick and going to heaven. Daddy said she might go before Christmas to be with Jesus." The girl spoke, "My Sunday school teacher said the streets in heaven are shiny gold, just like these shoes."

"Won't mommy be beautiful walking on those streets to match these shoes?"

My eyes flooded as I looked into her tear streaked face. "Yes" I answered, "I am sure she will."

Silently I thanked God for using these children to remind me of the

true spirit of giving. 'Tis the Season!! receive  
Remember that it's better to give than

## **2023 PARISH DUES**

With the end of 2023 here, we offer Also, we remind our Parish Family  
this gentle reminder to make sure Members that Parish Dues are now  
that your 2023 Parish Dues are paid. \$50.00 per adult per year.

## **2024 CHURCH CALENDARS**

The 2024 Church Calendars are Calendars are free, but any donations  
available in back of the Church. The will be appreciated.

## **COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...**

The Collection Processing Team for Cucura. We thank all of you for all  
the month of December 2023 is Team your efforts throughout this year.  
#4: Ron Barkofsky, Steve & Jeannie

## **Sunday Collection for December 23 - 25, 2023: \$**

## **A TIME TO CELEBRATE...**

*Happy Birthday and Mnohaya Leeta to the following Parishioners who  
celebrate their birthday in December:*

Bill Granza  
James Jablonski

Cheryl Matuszewski  
Janet Melnick

Eileen Kushner

*If your Birthday or Anniversary is not listed, and you would like it listed, please  
drop us a note indicating when your Birthday or Anniversary is. We only publish  
this information by request. If you do not provide this information, it will not  
be published.*



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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

### ***Celebrate and Be Glad***

Let us strive to comprehend the mystery. The reason God is in the flesh is to kill the death that lurks there. As diseases are cured by medicines and assimilated by the body, and as darkness in a house is dispelled by the coming of light, so death, which held sway over human nature, is done away with by the coming of God. And as ice formed on water covers its surface as long as night and darkness last but melts under the warmth of the sun, so death reigned until the coming of Christ; but when the grace of God our Savior appeared and the Sun of Justice rose, death was swallowed up in victory, unable to bear the presence of true life. How great is God's goodness, how deep his love for us!

Let us join the shepherds in giving glory to God, let us dance with the angels and sing: Today a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ the Lord. The Lord is God and He has appeared to us, not as God, which would have been terrifying for our weakness, but as a slave so as to free those who live in slavery. Who could be so lacking in sensibility and so ungrateful as not to join all here present in our gladness, exultation, and radiant joy? This feast belongs to the whole of creation. Let everyone join in and be grateful. Let our voices too ring out in songs of jubilation!

*St. Basil the Great*

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