

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

EPISTLE READING OF THE DAY: This morning's Apostolic Reading is from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Galatians, Chapter 4, verses 4-7: BRETHREN, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ.

Ὁ Ἀπόστολος, πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολῆς Παύλου τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα, κεφ. 11, ἐδάφ. 9-10, 32-40:
Ἀδελφοί, ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. Ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, κράζον, Ἀββὰ, ὁ πατήρ. Ὡστε οὐκέτι εἰ δούλος, ἀλλ' υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ.

GOSPEL READING OF THE DAY: This morning's Gospel Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 2, Verses 1-12: At that time, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Ἡ σημερινὴ εὐαγγελικὴ περικοπὴ ἐκ τοῦ κατὰ Ματθαῖον, κεφ. 2, ἐδάφ. 1-12: Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως, ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἠλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. Ἀκούσας δὲ Ἡρώδης ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐταράχθη καὶ πᾶσα Ἱερουσόλυμα μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπυνθάνετο παρ' αὐτῶν ποῦ ὁ Χριστὸς γεννᾶται. οἱ δὲ εἶπον αὐτῷ· ἐν Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας· οὕτω γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου· καὶ σὺ Βηθλεὲμ, γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα· ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραὴλ. Τότε Ἡρώδης λάθρα καλέσας τοὺς μάγους ἠκρίβωσε παρ' αὐτῶν τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος, καὶ πέμψας αὐτοὺς εἰς Βηθλεὲμ εἶπε· πορευθέντες ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάσατε περὶ τοῦ παιδίου, ἐπὶ δὲ εὔρητε, ἀπαγγεῖλατέ μοι, ὅπως καγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ. οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπορεύθησαν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀστήρ ὃν εἶδον ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ προήγεν αὐτούς, ἕως ἐλθὼν ἐστη ἐπάνω οὗ ἦν τὸ παιδίον· ἰδόντες δὲ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα, καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν· καὶ χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ μὴ ἀνακίμψαι πρὸς Ἡρώδη, δι' ἄλλης ὁδοῦ ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν.

CHRIST IS BORN: GLORIFY! Today is the great feast of the Nativity. God sent His Only Son. Rejoice! We are grateful to His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos, the celebrant of today's Nativity Divine Liturgy, and extend our prayers and best wishes that God may grant him many years.

DIVINE LITURGY THIS WEEK: Next Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ, eight days after Christmas. It is also the Feast Day of St. Basil the Great, the author of the Divine Liturgy which we celebrate that day. And, of course, it is the first day of 2017. As this year, the Feast falls on a Sunday, services will be celebrated according to the Sunday schedule: Orthros at 9 a.m., followed by the Divine Liturgy at 10:30 a.m.

RECENT PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS: As noted, seven individuals were candidates for election to a two-year term, beginning January 1, 2017. They are: **George Ambadiotakis Ambuis, S. Christopher Kyriacou, Vassiliki Moulas, Dean Nicolakakis, Manoli Nuris, Nick Rally, and Christopher Ramos.** Together with Father Stephen and the eight who were elected last year, they compose the Parish Council for 2017. Note: we have two new Parish Council members. They are Young Adults. Meanwhile, the eight members who were elected last year to a two-year term are: **Philippos Athanasiades, George Gavros, Deno C. Konstantinidis, Katina Kostoulas, Ph.D., Thomas A. Nuris, Paul P. Sogotis, Nicholas Svetcoff, and James D. Vorrises.** The oath of office will be administered on Sunday, January 8, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. Immediately thereafter, all 15 lay members, together with Father Stephen, will convene to elect Parish Council officers for 2017.

PARISH VASILOPITA: The Parish will also celebrate its *Vasilopita* on January 8, sponsored by the Cathedral Ladies Philotochos. You are invited to a champagne brunch following the Divine Liturgy, and the administration of the oath of office to the recently elected members of the Parish Council. For more info., please e mail P_Aleco@sbcglobal.net.

RECENTLY, WE OBSERVED STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY: Two Sundays ago, we observed Stewardship Sunday, the day when we bring our Stewardship Commitments for 2017 to church with us and deposit them in the appropriate basket. We thank you for your Stewardship Commitments for 2017, for your commitments are what enables our parish to operate and to fund its various ministries. Meanwhile, if you were not able to bring your 2017 Stewardship Commitment with you, please mail it to the Cathedral, at your earliest convenience. An honor roll of 2017 Stewards will appear in the February *Herald*. We look forward to including your name on the honor roll of 2017 Stewards of the Cathedral.

BASKING IN THE GLOW OF THE GALA: For some time, we will be basking in the glow of our 95th Anniversary Gala, held on November 5. It was a spectacular event. People will be talking about it for a long time. Photos and a video of the evening is available by clicking on the following link: www.kostasphotography.com/Gala2016

INTRODUCTION TO ORTHODOXY: (Sundays, 9 a.m., upstairs). This class is especially intended for those who are thinking about converting to Orthodoxy and for family members and friends who would like to support them on their journey, but it is also open to people who are already Orthodox and who would like to deepen their understanding of their faith. We explore Christian theology and practice through reading selections of Scripture, the Church Fathers, the lives of the Saints, and other texts representative of the Orthodox worldview. These readings are the starting point for our discussions, which aim at clarifying doctrine and worship and helping us to discover (or rediscover), week after week, why we belong in the Church. If you are interested in attending the class, please contact **Alexandros Kozák** at orthodoxy-agkozak@sneakemail.com.

ALMOST THERE, with respect to the outside of the Cathedral. Now that the scaffolding is down, one can see this magnificent landmark which you are creating--the center of our Greek Orthodox faith in the heart of the City. You should be very proud of your accomplishments. Do share the good news with your friends, relatives and neighbors. Invite them to come and see what you are doing to respond to the invitation, *“Build me a Sanctuary, and I will appear among you.”* (Translated from the Septuagint: *Και ποιήσεις μοι ἅγίασμα, καὶ ὀφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν*). (Exodus 25:8). Meanwhile, the contractor is completing waterproofing of the exterior, especially around the garage. He is also building the entrenchment drain, the housing for the garage exhaust ducts, and, at the same time, restoring the archways. Connection to the sewers, on the Stevenson Street side, took place December 17. On the Valencia Street side, they will take place on January 11.

As for the interior, we hope to complete much of it by the end of 2017, as your generosity permits. We need your prayers and your continued financial support. Now would be a good time to make that end-of-the year gift, resulting in a tax deduction for you and enabling the Cathedral to continue building. We hope to be done with the outside by March and to start using the garage by April, as work begins on the interior. We hope to consecrate the new Cathedral to the glory of God to coincide with our 100th anniversary, in 2021. God will bless us, indeed, if it is His Will that His All Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who laid the cornerstone back in 1997, also consecrates it to God’s glory in 2021! Now, let’s move full-speed ahead to complete what we’ve begun.



“The Church shall be a home for Orthodox Christians from every ethnic and national background. It shall be a house of prayer for all humankind, in which the Holy Name of our Triune God shall be extolled and all of creation sanctified.”

(Ecumenical Patriarch
Bartholomew, Ground breaking,
November 6, 1997)