



PARISH BULLETIN

HOLY ARCHANGHEL MICHAEL'S ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

No. **188**/29 December 2019



Sunday after the Birth of Our Lord

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Mode 3.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let things on earth be glad, for the Lord hath wrought might with His arm; He hath trampled on death by death; He hath become the first-born of the dead. From the bowels of Hades hath He delivered us, and hath granted great mercy to the world.

Seasonal Kontakion. Mode 3.

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; to the Unapproachable, the earth doth offer a small cave; Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; for our sakes is born a young Child, He that existed before the ages as God.

Prokeimenon. Mode 3.

Psalm 46.6,1

**Sing praises to our God, sing praises.
Verse: Clap your hands, all you nations.**

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among

my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.



The Gospel According to Matthew 2:13-23

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Word of the week – Reflection On the Sunday after the Nativity

[The Gospel reading for today] briefly says that the story of the God-man is tragic from His first days. What is more

tragic, however, is the condition of the chosen people who give chase to their Savior. Nevertheless, God interferes and directs the steps of Joseph. Does this alleviate human responsibility? Of course it doesn't.

The beginning of the life of the Lord on the earth teaches us many things. It teaches us that we must expect temptations and plotting from the beginning. What does this mean? It simply means that when someone is deemed worthy of undertaking a spiritual ministry, he should expect tragedies and perils. He should not, however, be upset. He must accept everything courageously, knowing that this is exactly the course of the spiritual life. It has temptations conjoined to it, because these "good" temptations weave the life of the righteous.

St. John Chrysostom says that the temptations are not met with the strength of the body, but with the disposition of the soul. This is why the sky is not as bright with its captivating reflections and colors, as the souls of those persons who endure their temptations by the grace of their Lord and transform them into joy and spiritual life experiences. The road towards sanctity is not inhibited by any temptation or human obstacle. This is because we are not alone, but have God inside us and around us, who opens the way of Divine knowledge. This is the road that leads to the beautiful Gate of Paradise.

St. John Chrysostom, interpreting the rage of Herod on account of the

mockery of the Magi, says that when a soul is ungrateful and incurable, she does not retreat before anything and especially does not accept that she seeks after unfeasible things. Human beings, when they reject the faith and remove from their souls the fear of God, not only dare, but put to practice everything. An ungodly human being becomes a wild beast, and for this reason, woe to them who may fall into the hands of ungodly persons.

...Jesus Christ was pursued from the very beginning and he had to flee from his place because of the murderous fury of Herod. The one who left was He who would save His people according to the order that Joseph received from the Angel. What does this mean for us? It means that we must never be anxious, when what is done to us is contrary to what we expect. God often fulfils His plans by contradictory events, giving us in this way the greatest proof of His power...

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by becoming man and going through all the events of the Divine Economy "came out as a victor to accomplish victory." In other words, He was given the crown of victory, and departed as a victor in order to accomplish new victories. One of these, which is the most substantial, will be the one in which God will come to dwell among the people for ever, and will wipe out every tear from their eyes (Rev. 21:3-4). "O Lord may Your kingdom come." AMEN!

- Translated by Fr. George Dion. Dragas



Liturgical Schedule for this week

Tuesday <i>December 31</i>	10:30 pm	Vespers, Litia – Circumcision of Christ; St. Basil the Great
	12:00 am	Thanksgiving Service for New Year
Wednesday <i>January 1</i>	9:00 am	Matins
	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy – Circumcision of Christ; St. Basil the Great
	6:00 pm	Paraklesis
Saturday <i>January 4</i>	9:00 am	Divine Liturgy & Memorial
	5:00 pm	Vespers
Sunday <i>January 5</i>	9:00 am	Matins
	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy

Announcements:

- **Happy name day** to Melania Collazo (Dec. 31st - St. Melania Romana), and Vasilica Tanko and Vasilios Nahn (St. Basil – Jan. 1st).
- **Last day for Stewardship commitments.** Anything turned in after today will count for 2020.
- **January 5th** (the day before Theophany) is a fast day. Please see the calendar for details.
- **General Assembly** – Jan. 26th. If you are interested in being on the parish council, please see Luke Yanka, Deb Thomo, or Fr. John.
- **House Blessings are coming up!** Don't forget to schedule you house blessing with Fr. John after January 6.



16 Romanian Avenue, Southbridge, Massachusetts, 01550, P.O. Box 823 (508) 765-5276

www.stmichaelorthodox.com