

# ***Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church***

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

(814) 244-4063

[stnicholasjtown@gmail.com](mailto:stnicholasjtown@gmail.com)

## ***The Sunday before the Nativity - The Sunday of the Holy Fathers (01.02.2022)***

### ***Matthew 1:1-25***

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias; And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel; And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.(KJV)

## *The Sunday before the Feast of the Nativity*

The Lord Jesus Christ said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (Jn 14:6) Serious believers are interested in the truth about the Lord God.

When the Church celebrates Pascha, believers hear from the Gospel: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”(Jn.1:14)

Today God’s Holy Church is moving into the final days leading to the Feast of Jesus Christ’s Nativity. Interest in truth about God is paramount and centered in this world-wide Church celebration.

God’s Holy Church documents in the Divine services leading to the Feast of the Nativity specific names and prophecies associated with Jesus Christ’s Virgin Birth.

Serious believers have an opportunity to conduct research within the context of the Church to verify known facts and the historical record of Christ’s birth. The Word becoming flesh is embraced, celebrated and proclaimed in the Church.

Immeasurable changes in the world inaugurated due to Jesus Christ’s birth bear witness to and verify the authenticity. Believers immersed in preparing for the Feast come to know personally in the Church the truth of the Virgin Birth.

The Church moves as a whole through the centuries and throughout the world to prepare and to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity. Lives change, are enriched and become new in Christ.

Truth and verifiable evidence are synonymous. Serious believers come to know Christ in the Church and to experience Christ’s Virgin Birth. The heart, mind and soul embrace and know the certainty of the authentic truth of the evidence.

God does not disappoint serious believers. The Lord Jesus Christ said: “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn.8:32) The light, joy and peace associated with Jesus Christ’s birth continue to prevail through the centuries.

The days leading to the Feast of the Nativity and Feast itself offer the interested and the attentive believers complete and verifiable truths to embrace, celebrate, share and proclaim.

God is due everlasting gratitude. Life exists, is enriched and becomes new in the Feast of the Nativity. Life is inseparable from the New Born Christ Child and the Ever-Existing Christ.

God’s Holy Church welcomes and encourages believers to become immersed in the joy, the peace and the truth of the Feast of the Nativity. God’s everlasting love is manifested in the Word taking on human flesh and dwelling among us.(Jn.1:14)

---

*The Sunday before the Nativity-Sunday of the Holy Fathers. St. Ignatius the God-bearer. St. Daniel II of Serbia. Serbian Fathers’ Day, December 20, 2021/January 2, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*

# The Nativity Sermon of St. John Chrysostom

Behold a new and wondrous mystery. My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Bethlehem this day resembles heaven; hearing from the stars the singing of angelic voices; and in place of the sun, enfolds within itself on every side, the Sun of justice. And ask not how: for where God wills, the order of nature yields. For He willed; He had the power; He descended; He redeemed; all things yielded in obedience to God. This day He Who is, is Born; and He Who is, becomes what He was not. For when He was God, He became man; yet not departing from the Godhead that is His. Nor yet by any loss of divinity became He man, nor through increase became He God from man; but being the Word He became flesh, His nature, because of impassability, remaining unchanged.

And so the kings have come, and they have seen the heavenly King that has come upon the earth, not bringing with Him Angels, nor Archangels, nor Thrones, nor Dominations, nor Powers, nor Principalities, but, treading a new and solitary path, He has come forth from a spotless womb.

Since this heavenly birth cannot be described, neither does His coming amongst us in these days permit of too curious scrutiny. Though I know that a Virgin this day gave birth, and I believe that God was begotten before all time, yet the manner of this generation I have learned to venerate in silence and I accept that this is not to be probed too curiously with wordy speech.

For with God we look not for the order of nature, but rest our faith in the power of Him who works.

What shall I say to you; what shall I tell you? I behold a Mother who has brought forth; I see a Child come to this light by birth. The manner of His conception I cannot comprehend.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

Christ, finding the holy body and soul of the Virgin, builds for Himself a living temple, and as He had willed, formed there a man from the Virgin; and, putting Him on, this day came forth; unashamed of the lowliness of our nature.

For it was to Him no lowering to put on what He Himself had made. Let that handiwork be forever glorified, which became the cloak of its own Creator. For as in the first creation of flesh, man could not be made before the clay had come into His hand, so neither could this corruptible body be glorified, until it had first become the garment of its Maker.

What shall I say! And how shall I describe this Birth to you? For this wonder fills me with astonishment. The Ancient of days has become an infant. He Who sits upon the sublime and heavenly Throne, now lies in a manger. And He Who cannot be touched, Who is simple, without complexity, and incorporeal, now lies subject to the hands of men. He Who has broken the bonds of sinners, is now bound by an infants bands. But He has decreed that ignominy shall become honor, infamy be clothed with glory, and total humiliation the measure of His Goodness.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been in planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.

## *The Prologue from Ochrid* *St Nikolai of Zhicha*

### **1. THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son (Galatians 4:4) to save the human race. And when nine months were fulfilled from the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel had appeared to the Most-holy Virgin in Nazareth, saying, Rejoice, thou that art highly favored ... behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son (Luke 1:28, 31), at that time there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the people of the Roman Empire should be taxed. In accordance with this decree, everyone had to go to his own town and be registered. That is why the righteous Joseph came with the Most-holy Virgin to Bethlehem, the city of David, for they were both of the royal lineage of David. Since many people descended on this small town for the census, Joseph and Mary were unable to find lodging in any house, and they sought shelter in a cave which shepherds used as a sheepfold. In this cave--on the night between Saturday and Sunday, on the 25th of December--the Most-holy Virgin gave birth to the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. Giving birth to Him without pain just as He was conceived without sin by the Holy Spirit and not by man, she herself wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, worshiped Him as God, and laid Him in a manger. Then the righteous Joseph drew near and worshiped Him as the Divine Fruit of the Virgin's womb. Then the shepherds came in from the fields, directed by an angel of God, and worshiped Him as the Messiah and Savior. The shepherds heard a multitude of God's angels singing: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14)*. At that time three wise men arrived from the east, led by a wondrous star, bearing their gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. They worshiped Him as the King of kings, and offered Him their gifts (Matthew 2). Thus entered the world He Whose coming was foretold by the prophets, and Who was born in the same manner in which it had been*

prophesied: of a Most-holy Virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, of the lineage of David according to the flesh, at the time when there was no king in Jerusalem of the lineage of Judah, but rather when Herod, a foreigner, was reigning. After many types and prefigurings, messengers and heralds, prophets and righteous men, wise men and kings, finally He appeared, the Lord of the world and King of kings, to perform the work of the salvation of mankind, which could not be performed by His servants. To Him be eternal glory and praise! Amen.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

#### **THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

Out of burning love, Thou didst come down from heaven;  
From eternal beauty, Thou didst descend into monstrous pain;  
From eternal light, Thou didst descend into the thick darkness of evil.  
Thou didst extend Thy holy hand to those choked in sin.  
Heaven was amazed, the earth quaked.  
Welcome, O Christ! O ye peoples, rejoice!

Out of burning love, by which Thou didst create the world,  
As a slave Thou didst debase Thyself to loose the enslaved,  
To restore the house that Adam destroyed,  
To enlighten the darkened, to unloose sinners.  
Love that knows not fear or humiliation--  
Welcome, O Christ! The Master of Salvation!

Out of burning love, O King of all beauty,  
Thou didst leave the radiance of the beautiful Cherubim,  
Thou didst descend into the cave of human life,  
To despairing men, with a torch and peace.  
How to contain Thee?--The earth became frightened.  
Welcome, O Christ! Heaven bears Thee up!

The most beautiful Virgin for a long time hoped in Thee.  
The earth raises her to Thee, that through her Thou wilt descend  
From the lofty throne, from the heavenly city,  
To bring health, to release man from sin.  
O Holy Virgin, Golden Censer--  
To thee be glory and praise, O Mother full of grace!

### **REFLECTION**

The Lord Jesus, born in Bethlehem, was first worshiped by shepherds and wise men (astrologers) from the east--the simplest and the wisest of this world. Even today, those who most sincerely worship the Lord Jesus as God and Savior are the simplest and the wisest of this world. Perverted simplicity and half-learned wisdom were always the enemies of Christ's divinity and His Gospel. But who were these wise men from the east? This question was

especially studied by St. Dimitri of Rostov. He claims that they were kings of certain smaller regions or individual towns in Persia, Arabia and Egypt. At the same time, they were erudite in the knowledge of astronomy. This wondrous star appeared to them, which announced the birth of the New King. According to St. Dimitri, this star appeared to them nine months before the birth of the Lord Jesus, i.e., at the time of His conception by the Most-holy Theotokos. They spent nine months in studying this star, in preparing for the journey and in traveling. They arrived in Bethlehem shortly after the birth of the Savior of the world. One of them was called Melchior. He was old, with long white hair and beard. He offered the Lord the gift of gold. The second was called Caspar, of ruddy face, young and beardless. He offered the Lord the gift of frankincense. The third was called Balthasar, of dark complexion and a very heavy beard. He offered the Lord the gift of myrrh. After their deaths, their bodies were taken to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Milan, and from Milan to Cologne. It can be added that these three wise men were representatives of the three main races of men that descended from Noah's three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. The Persian represented the Japhethites, the Arabian represented the Semites, and the Egyptian represented the Hamites. Thus it can be said that, through these three, the whole human race worshiped the Incarnate Lord and God.

### CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the beauty of the soul of the Most-holy Theotokos:

1. How her soul was radiant and immaculate;
2. How her soul was filled with peace from faith and hope in God;
3. How her soul was filled with the sweet-smelling fragrance of prayer.

### HOMILY

I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world (John 16:28).

The only-begotten Son of God, brethren, begotten in eternity of the Father without a mother, was born in time of a mother without a father. That first begetting is an unfathomable mystery of the Holy Trinity in eternity, and the second is the unfathomable mystery of God's power and love for mankind in time. The greatest mystery in time corresponds to the greatest mystery in eternity. Without entering into this greatest mystery with the small taper of our understanding, let us be content, brethren, with the knowledge that our salvation had its origin not from man or from earth, but from the greatest heights of the divine invisible world. So great is God's mercy, and so great is the dignity of man, that the Son of God Himself came down from eternity into time, from heaven to earth, from the throne of glory to the shepherd's cave, solely to save mankind, to cleanse men from sin and to return them to Paradise. *I came forth from the Father*, where I had everything, *and am come into the world*, which cannot give Me anything. The Lord was born in a cave to show that the whole world is one dark cave, which He alone can illumine. The Lord was born in Bethlehem--and Bethlehem means "the House of Bread"--to show that He is the only Bread of Life worthy of true men.

O Lord Jesus, the Pre-eternal Son of the Living God and the Son of the Virgin Mary, enlighten us and nourish us with Thyself.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

## *Services this Week*

- **THURSDAY- January 6th – Christmas Eve Liturgy of St Basil 10:00 AM – His Grace Bishop Irinej will be visiting and serving at Divine Liturgy – Please join us!**
- **Vigil and Blessing of the Yule Log (Badnjak) – 7:00 PM**
- **FRIDAY - January 7th – The Nativity of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ - Christmas Day – Liturgy 10:00 AM**
- **SATURDAY – January 8<sup>th</sup> - Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos - Liturgy 09:00 AM**
- **29th Sunday after Pentecost – (Sunday, January 9th) – 10:00 AM  
Divine Liturgy**



**Donations Sunday December 26, 2021**

**Offering - \$1,187.00 Candles - \$50.00 Dues - \$100.00**

**Donations For St Nicholas Krsna Slava**

**St Nicholas Kolo - \$1000, St Nicholas Choir - \$200,**

**Kumovi Peter & Joanne Todorich - \$100,**

**Joe Golden - \$100, Danica Wess - \$100, Betty Baranik - \$100,**

**Cameron Palmer - \$50, Sylvester Gjurich - \$50,**

**Nick & Emma Saula - \$25, Dianne & Dan Tomak - \$25,**

**Richard & Suzette Gardenhour - \$25,**

**Gary, Rose & Kristina Marinkovich - \$25, Rick Kondas - \$20,**

**George Kohan - \$12, Patricia Niel - \$10, Dan Gjurich - \$8**

**In Memory of Connie Bartis – Joe Bartis - \$300**

**Building Fund**

**In Memory of Connie Bartis**

**Olga Lucas - \$50, John & Natalie Ofsanko - \$50, Dan Lovrich - \$40,**

**Chester & Dorothy Siembak - \$25**

**Large Candles**

**In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak**

**In Memory of Parents, Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Robert & Milica Knepp**

**In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich from Richard Kondas**

**In Memory of Ed Gartrell from Steve Purich**

**In Memory of Linda (Locher) Leckrone from Dorothy Podolak**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**Please consider donating to the cost of the coin (\$218) for the  
cesnica. (See Richard Gardenhour or someone in the candle  
room)**

**\*\*\*\*\***

**HOLIDAY ROLLS**

**The kolo is selling Nut, Poppyseed, Apricot and Lekvar - \$12/each**

**Please see Donna Zimmerman if you are interested, we have a few left...We  
also have Pumpkin Rolls (\$10)! -(724) 757-4189**



**IMPORTANT DATES TO PLACE ON YOUR CALENDAR**

**§ Thursday, January 6th – Christmas Eve Liturgy of St Basil**

**10:00 AM – His Grace Bishop Irinej will be visiting and serving at Divine Liturgy – Please join us!**

**§ Vigil and Blessing of the Yule Log (Badnjak) – 7:00 PM**

**§ Friday, January 7th – Christmas Day – Liturgy 10:00 AM**