

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church
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**The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ
(01.07.2024)**

Matthew 2:1-12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. **(KJV)**



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BY THE GRACE OF GOD
BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA

Most beloved clergy and monastics, sons and daughters, faithful children
of the Eastern American Diocese of our Most Holy Serbian Orthodox Church:

GOD'S PEACE — CHRIST IS BORN!

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!
Today Bethlehem receives Him who reigns forever with the Father.
Today angels glorify the Newborn Babe in hymns worthy of God:
Glory to God in the highest!
And on earth, peace, good will to men!"
(Matinal Verse of Christmas)*

The Nativity of Christ in the flesh is, indeed, my beloved, a holiday of great joy. For every Christmas, as "*Bethlehem receives Him who reigns forever with the Father*", we also discover anew Love Incarnate, as we receive Christ in our hearts. Through the integrity and unity of everyone and everything in Him, the true man within is revealed in each of us. This, therefore, is the very source of our boundless joy and festal celebration. We join the angels in hymns of praise, exclaiming from all our heart: "*Glory to God in the highest*", as we earnestly pray for peace on earth, and good will to humankind.

Now we behold a Divine Child, who did not come as an intruder in our lives; rather as a loving God, who neither came to reign over us, nor to lord over us, rather to be one with us as a brother, as a friend, and as a constant companion to all of us – one who will lay down His life for us. As such, He came into this world, which He created, as the Prince of Peace, to identify with us and usher in a Reign of Peace. This Kingdom shall reign over all, allowing us, here and now, to be the extension of His love, as stewards of peace in this world, sealed with His declaratory beauty! Truly, "*blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance*" (Ps. 33:12).

The cold and darkness of winter, which can dominate our lives and our society, now radiate beneath the brilliant and warm glow of the illuminating Star of Bethlehem. The chill and nightfall of winter dissipate before this heavenly hearth making a new home for Him, who tonight was "*made flesh by the Holy Spirit and made man of the ever-virgin Mary*"! That is why the Christmas Star is always a sign and symbol that guides us through so many obstacles and adversities, so that we can find, yet again, the right path. In so doing, we establish a system of values, are regenerated, and demystify all existing half-truths and untruths. In so doing, we discover those divine and eternal aspirations and dimensions within us and perceive the true meaning of our human existence.

Toward the close of the old year, and the beginning of the new year, Christmas affords us a renewed opportunity to hear Christ, saying: “Behold, I make all things new!” (Rev. 21:5). And, precisely in that newness, to turn over a new leaf in our lives and to begin looking at ourselves and others from a new perspective, devoid of bitterness and anger. The only way to change the world around us is to perceive the divine dimensions and aspirations within ourselves and others. Only then will we be able to comprehend the true joy and fullness of life. For Christ is born and hope has arrived – exceeding all our expectations, bringing restoration to families and communities! Only His hope can raise those stumbling and place us, once again, on the narrow path to salvation.

In the words of the ever-memorable Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann: “The Church, if it is to be the Church, must be the revelation of that divine love which God *poured out into our hearts*. Without this love nothing is *valid* in the Church because nothing is possible. The content of Christ’s Eucharist is love, and only through love can we enter into it and be made its partakers” (*For the Life of the World*). As such, we must allow Christ Emmanuel to conquer our own hearts to offer clarity on the most elusive of human emotions – peace, forgiveness and humility, the very attributes of Incarnate Love.

Greeting you in the joy in which heaven and earth glow this Holy Night, in celebration of this divine intervention in history, praying that the true light of knowledge will truly shine among us, renewing in us the wholeness and unity of everyone and everything in praising the Newborn Babe, joyfully, from all our heart, exclaiming:

**GOD'S PEACE – CHRIST IS BORN!
INDEED, HE IS BORN!**

Given in New York at Christmas in the Year 2023.

Your prayerful intercessor before the crib of the Divine Infant,

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BISHOP OF EASTERN AMERICA
THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ

Father Rodney Torbic

**Peace of God! Christ is Born!
Indeed He is Born!**

Believers around the world gather today in God's Holy Church to worship and celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hearts, minds and souls are filled with Christ's love.

Jesus' birth permeates the centuries. Jesus' birth is always new! The Church celebrates Jesus' birth in the present. Believers are renewed each year with Jesus taking on human flesh.

Hearts of believers embrace the miracle of the Virgin Birth. The Virgin Birth exceeds the limits of the finite mind. With God all things are possible. .(Mt.19:26)

Believers' minds, hearts and souls welcome the Lord taking on human flesh.

God's churches and monasteries are filled with exceeding joy on the Feast of the Nativity. Families in homes throughout the world take time to celebrate Jesus' birth. Peace fills believers' homes and hearts.

Believers share the joy of Jesus Christ's birth in their greetings on the Feast of the Nativity. The need for God's peace extends to human daily relationships. The world needs and benefits from the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pauses have been known to take place even in times of wars so that combatants could pause for the Feast of the Nativity. The Feast of the Nativity is a time for peace to be restored in homes, communities and among nations.

Jesus Christ is the Exemplary Model of Peace. He remained peaceful when arrested and taken to be crucified. He did not raise a hand in self-defense or call others to defend Him. (Luke 22:47-54)

Leaders everywhere do well in promoting peace and in emulating Jesus' humility and example of serving others. Jesus established the clear and lasting example of humility and service in washing His disciples' feet. (Jn.13:13-14)

In today's world having lasting peace and humility as primary virtues seems to be greatly lacking. If true peace and humility were valued in more human hearts, greater peace would abound in the world.

The number of people and countries arming themselves, the daily news about violence and wars shows clearly that peace is not primary in hearts everywhere. The Feast of Christ's birth is a renewed call for peace among humans.

The world faces challenges today as has every generation. Herod was troubled by Jesus' birth. Corrupt leaders of every age are troubled with the presence of serious believers living in the way of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Honest and moral believers are disconcerting in places filled with corruption. Corruption and falsehoods are addressed and uncovered when serious believers pursue and reveal truth.

The Lord Jesus Christ is clear in saying: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (Jn.14:6) The Feast of the Nativity is a time for believers to reflect deeply in the heart, and soul on Jesus' words.

Jesus Christ taking on flesh opens the new way of living. Jesus Christ's birth opens the path to the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Forgiveness of sins and renewal of life became possible in the Living Christ.

Today is a time for peace and joy. Today give abundant thanks to the Lord God. Christ's birth fills the hunger of the soul. Christ's birth fills the essential primary need of Life for the whole world.

The Feast of the Nativity challenges believers to think deeply and seriously about Jesus taking on human flesh. The Divine taking on human flesh as a newborn infant child in simple surroundings is a most humble action.

In this world where glory is too often misplaced, giving glory to the Living God taking on human flesh is the timely message for today. Giving glory to the Living God is always the timely message for every day.

The Gospel states the wise men put forth the effort to find the new born Christ Child. They worshipped him and gave Him gifts. Wise men and women always seek, worship and give gifts to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Peace of God! Christ is Born!
Indeed He is Born!**

**Feast of the Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ. December 25, 2023/January 7, 2024.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic**

Donations December 31, 2023

Offering - \$ 778.00 Candles - \$60.00
Dues - \$250.00

Building Fund Donations

In Memory of Charles Johnson from George Moncilovich - \$200

Large Candles

IMO Mary Ellen Locher-Byrd from Helene Gleason

IMO Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp

IMO Grandparents Amelia & Pete Mastovich from Rick Kondas

IMO brother Joseph Kondas from Rick Kondas

Donations are now being taken for the Gold coin for our Christmas Cesnica. Please see Richard Gardenhour.

A special thank you to all who purchased Poinsettias

Tony & Linda Freidhoff & Joanne Uzelac IMO Donald Uzelac & Wayne & Patricia Freidhoff

Carole McAllister IMO Nick & Sara Davich and Nick Jr.

Evelyn Walet IMO Father Sam Vuckovich and Aunt Mimi

Eli Cvijanovich IMO Deceased members of the Cvijanovich/Bitsko Families

Dianna T. Dunnington IMO Milos & Mildred Tumbas

Karyn Waligora IMO Lazo & Bosa Vuckovich

Diane Tomak IMO Mother Bosa and Tetes Draga, Zora & Cookie, Baba Damjena and Kuma Julie

Danica B. Wess IMO Buncich Family & Wess Family

Mike Stipanovich IMO Alex & Beverly Stipanovich

Joe Bartis IMO Connie Bartis

Richard Kondas IMO Amelia & Joseph Kondas

John & Patricia Pavich IMO Deceased Family Members

Father Rodney Torbic

Laura, Pete, Pete Jr. & Michelle Nesdore

Donna Zimmerman IMO Nicholas, Mary, David, & Deborah Miller

Diane Thomas IMO Helen Sabo & Dorothy Lavrnja

Nicholas Banda IMO Deceased Members of the Devich, Perich & Banda Families

Michelle Pagano IMO Olga Pagano

Mary Kelly

Gary, Rose & Kristina Marinkovich IMO Family

Peter & Joanne Todorich IMO Nikola, Mildred & Nick Jr.

Richard & Suzette Gardenhour IMO Grisin, Bozich and Gardenhour Families

Helene Gleason IMO Betty & Lazo Vuckovich

Pat Niel IMO Buncich, Niel & Wess Families

DONATION ENVELOPES

Please be aware that there is a mistake for the Palm Sunday Envelope - It is marked as March 31st. Our Palm Sunday is Sunday, April 28th. Sorry for any inconvenience.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY (January 6th) - Christmas Eve

9:30 AM – Vespers and Divine Liturgy (of St. Basil the Great)

7:00 PM - Vigil and Blessing of the Yule Log (Badnjak) followed by blessing of Cesnica with Golden Coin and Holy Fathers' message for everyone

SUNDAY (January 7th) – The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ - BOŽIĆ - 10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy

MONDAY (January 8th) – Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos - 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

TUESDAY (January 9th) - Holy Apostle, Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY (January 10th) – The Holy God-bearing Fathers
9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY (January 14th) - Circumcision of Our Lord (St. Basil)
10:00 AM – Divine Liturgy