

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission, Denton
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Bulletin for Sunday of December 23rd, 2012

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
Schedule of Services

December 23rd Sunday Before Nativity, tone 4

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

December 24th Monday Nativity Eve

8:00 a.m. Royal Hours

10:00 a.m. Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil

6:00 p.m. Nativity Vigil

December 25th Tuesday Nativity of Our Lord in the Flesh

8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

December 27th Thursday

5:00 p.m. Parish Open House at Rectory

December 29th Saturday

5:00 p.m. Vigil, Confession

December 30th Sunday After Nativity, tone 5

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

From Saint Thalassios, the Libyan (*friend of St. Maximus*)

If God has taught you a spiritual knowledge of created beings, you will not doubt the words of Scripture concerning the blessings held in store.

According to the degree to which the intellect is stripped of the passions, the Holy Spirit initiates the intellect into the mysteries of the age to be.

The more the intellect is purified, the more the soul is granted spiritual knowledge of divine principles.

He who has disciplined his body and dwells in a state of spiritual knowledge finds that through this knowledge he is purified still further.

The intellect that begins to pursue divine wisdom starts with faith; it then passes through the intermediate stages until it arrives once more at faith, though this time of the highest type.

400 Chapters on Love, Self-Control & Life, 4.74-78

Announcements for December 23rd

To Our Visitors: Welcome! Please join us after the service for coffee and conversation. If you would, fill out a visitor's card for us and leave it in the basket on the table by the door.

To All: Please be aware that Holy Communion is open only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for worthy participation in the Mystery through prayer, fasting, and a recent confession to a priest (within the last month or so). We should be modestly dressed (so as not to distract others) and present to hear "Blessed is the Kingdom" at the beginning of the Liturgy (in *unusual* circumstances no later than the Gospel reading), and not leave until the dismissal at the end.

The Special Offering today will go towards helping our youth go on the annual winter service retreat in Pharr.

The Coffee Hour offering this month will go to help raise money for the teens going on the service retreat in Pharr, Texas, after Nativity.

No Classes this Week

The Open House at the Rectory to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord will be held this Thursday, December 27 starting at 5:00. All are invited and welcome.

Please Pray for our Catechumens: for Joel and Mindy Brown and their children Daniel, Anya, and Elijah, Gary & Olivia Reynolds and their children Ariel, Analise, and Alexandria, Jacob Neff, Lauren Williams, Elizabeth Dakak, Philip, Sean, and for our inquirers Faith Neff and Jason. Please pray for the novice Svetlana. Pray for Joe Fincher, (Olga's husband).

Hall Expansion Update: The temporary back deck and wheelchair ramp have been constructed.

Coming in January: Besides the Feasts of Theophany and St. Maximus, the following changes may be expected. The regularly scheduled weekday Liturgy will be on Thursday (until Great Lent) and will be served (at least some of the time) at 9:00. Wednesday nights will be a time for the parish to come together in the middle of the week for instruction, refreshment, fellowship, and prayer, with a meal at 5:30, a class at 6:00, and Vespers followed by Confession at 7:00. The class will begin by considering the book *Orthodox Spirituality* by Hierotheos Vlachos (copies in bookstore). One week out of the month, the class will be directed towards the men of the parish to discuss ways they can live out their Orthodox faith in an unOrthodox land. I am convinced that strong, godly men who stay true to their marriages, families, and faith are the antidote to many of

the ills in our society. The Basics of Orthodoxy class will meet Thursdays at 7:30 following Vespers at 6:30.

Tithes, Offerings & Attendance: Bringing our tithes and offerings to the temple of God is part of our worship of God, which also supports our efforts to proclaim the fullness of the Gospel of Christ in Denton through the establishment of a permanent Orthodox parish and new missions in Denton County and north Texas. Checks should be made out to St. Maximus Orthodox Church and placed in the basket on the candle table, where there is also a box for alms (those in need) and a box for our building fund.

Last week we gave \$2314.50; this month we have given \$7411.31 our monthly budget is \$9187 (\$2297 per week. (To build a church will require a monthly income in the neighborhood of \$11,000 a month.) In addition: Candles \$61.50, Expansion Offering \$83.97, Renovation (Soda) \$8, Building Fund \$27. May God bless your faithful giving! Attendance: Vigil 25, Liturgy 80.

Hall Expansion Fund: A total of \$65,709.75 has been raised so far of the estimated \$79,000 it will cost. All **Coffee Hour Donations** go to support this until December.

From Saint Maximus

Many are the things of which the believer has need in order to attain knowledge of God and virtue: deliverance from passions, patient acceptance of trials, the inner principles of virtues, the practice of methods of spiritual warfare, the uprooting of the soul's predilection for the flesh, the breaking of the senses' attachment to sensible objects, the utter withdrawal of the intellect from all created things; and, in short, there are countless other things which help us to reject sin and ignorance and to attain knowledge and virtue. It was surely because of this that the Lord said, 'Whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you will receive' (Matt. 21:22), stating simply that the devout must seek and ask with understanding and faith for all those things, and for those alone, which lead to virtue and knowledge of God. For all these things are profitable, and unquestionably the Lord gives them to those who ask.

Thus he who for the sake of faith alone — that is to say, for the sake of direct union with God — seeks all the things that contribute towards this union will unquestionably receive them. He who seeks either the things which we have mentioned or other things without this motive will not receive them. For he has no faith, but like an unbeliever uses divine things to boost his own glory.

Various Texts, Second Century 17-18

Troparia and Kontakia for December 23rd

Resurrectional Troparion, tone 4

Having learned the radiant proclamation of the Resurrection from the Angel, /the women disciples of the Lord cast off the ancestral curse, /and, boasting, told the Apostles: /Death hath been despoiled, Christ God is risen, /granting the world great mercy.

Troparion, Holy Forefathers, tone 2

By faith, Thou didst justify the forefathers, / when through them didst betroth Thyself aforetime / to the Church from among the nations. / The Saints boast in glory / that from their seed, there is a glorious fruit, / even she that bare Thee seedlessly. / By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4

Once Mary, bearing in her womb an Offspring conceived without seed, / was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, as being of the seed of David. / And while they were there, / the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. / But there was no room for them in the inn. / But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, // and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Kontakion, Holy Forefathers, tone 6

Ye would not worship a hand-wrought image, O thrice blessed ones; / but armed by the Undepictable Essence, / ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire. / Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: / Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, since Thou art merciful, / and hasten to come unto our aid; for Thou art able, if it be Thy will.

Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave / to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word. / Hearing this, be of good cheer, O inhabited earth, / and with the angels and the shepherds glorify Him // whose will it was to be made manifest a young Child, the pre-eternal God.