

### From Saint Maximus

Do not lightly discard spiritual love: for men there is no other road to salvation.

Because today an assault of the devil has aroused some hatred in you, do not judge as base and wicked a brother whom yesterday you regarded as spiritual and virtuous; but with long-suffering love dwell on the goodness you perceived yesterday and expel today's hatred from your soul.

Do not condemn today as base and wicked the man whom yesterday you praised as good and commended as virtuous, changing from love to hatred, because he has criticized you; but even though you are still full of resentment, commend him as before, and you will soon recover the same saving love.

When talking with other brethren, do not adulterate your usual praise of a brother by surreptitiously introducing censure into the conversation because you still harbor some hidden resentment against him. On the contrary, in the company of others give unmixed praise and pray for him sincerely as if you were praying for yourself; then you will soon be delivered from this destructive hatred.

*400 Chapters on Love, 4.25-28*

### Troparia and Kontakia for Sunday, December 14

#### Resurrectional Troparion, tone 2

When Thou, didst descend to death, O Life Immortal / Thou didst slay Hell with the lightning-flash of Thy Divinity, / and, when from the nether regions Thou didst raise the dead, / all the powers of Heaven cried out: / 'O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!'

#### Troparion, Holy Forefathers, tone 2

By faith, Thou didst justify the forefathers, / when through them Thou 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.

#### 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.

## Announcements for December 14

**To Our Visitors: Welcome!** Please join us after the service for coffee, food, 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. We invite you to go first through the food line and join the priest at the table.

**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 if we are communing), and not leave until the dismissal at the end.

**The Special Offering** this week will be for Holy Nativity Monastery in Kemp, Texas.

**Temple Wine** given in memory of Archbishop Dmitri.

### Classes this Week

No Basics of Orthodoxy class today due to Mission Council.

Wednesday, 8:00 p.m. Writings of St. Athanasius of Alexandria:  
*On the Incarnation*

**Today**, we honor the Resurrection of Christ and the Holy Forefathers. The Sunday falling between December 11-17 is known as the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, who were the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh and all the holy Patriarchs and Prophets of the Old Testament who prefigured or foretold Christ. They lived before the Law and under the Law. We remember especially the holy Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed", and that seed was Christ. O Holy Forefeathers, pray to Christ for us!

**The New Roof** and the skylight have been installed on the church.

**Mission Council** will meet today after Liturgy.

**Holy Unction**, the Mystery of the Church unto the healing of soul and body, will be offered generally for all Orthodox Christians who have had a recent Confession and are in communion with the Church on Tuesday, December 16 at 6:30 p.m.

**Coffee Hour** is a part of our ministry to bring us together through fellowship over food. It takes all of us bringing food and cleaning up to make this work. Please participate in this ministry!

**Church Cleaning:** part of our love for God's house is keeping it clean and in good order. The same two people have cleaned the church for the past month. We are suffering a dearth of people

signing up to clean each week. Please make time to clean. If everyone takes part, no one has to clean more than once every three months.

**Thursday Liturgy:** Parents, please instruct your children that on Thursdays no one is to go upstairs to eat. There is plenty of room downstairs and outdoors for everyone, and we'd like to keep the mess contained.

**High Chairs:** If you use a high chair for your child, please wipe it down before you return it to its place as a courtesy to others.

**Almsgiving** is an essential part of our Christian lives, and God gives much grace in response to our giving alms to those in need. For the Nativity Fast, you may give money in the alms box, but you may also bring non-perishable food for our modest food pantry, which goes to help both parishioners and those outside the Church who come with need. Please give generously with joy!

**Nativity Fast** has begun. We fast from meat, dairy, fish, wine, oil & marital relations (fish, wine, oil are noted on the wall calendar when permitted) and seek to increase in both quantity and quality our prayer (corporate and private), almsgiving, spiritual reading, and deeds of service in fulfillment of Christ's commandments that we may make more room for Christ in our lives. If you have not been to Confession and Communion in the past couple months, now is the time to prepare yourself to participate in those Mysteries. The Nativity Fast lasts through Liturgy on December 25.

**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 \$1866.39 in tithes and offerings; our monthly budget is \$9502 (\$2192 per week). Candles \$87; Special offering for Building Fund \$27. Attendance: Liturgy 80, Vigil 31.

**Please Pray:** for catechumens Holly Bellan, Seth Williams, and Rick Hollembeak, the postulant Elias, the novice Svetlana, and Elizabeth (Chandler) Jones. Pray for Joe Fincher and Olga, for Joanna (Sherri) Hale, for Patricia, Perpetua, and James Lydon. Please pray for former parishioners: the newly departed Stephen and Natalya (daughter) Perrin, and for Natalya (mother) in hospital in stable condition.

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## Bulletin for Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014

### Schedule of Services

#### **December 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday Holy Forefathers**

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy  
3:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession

#### **December 15<sup>th</sup> Monday**

6:00 a.m. Hours  
6:15 a.m. Divine Liturgy

#### **December 16<sup>th</sup> Tuesday**

3:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession  
6:30 p.m. Holy Unction

#### **December 17<sup>th</sup> Wednesday**

6:00 Confession  
7:00 p.m. Vespers  
8:00 p.m. Class: St. Athanasius of Alexandria, *On The Incarnation*

#### **December 18<sup>th</sup> Thursday**

8:45 a.m. Hours  
9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

#### **December 19<sup>th</sup> Friday**

6:00 a.m. Matins or Midnight Office, Confession  
7:00 p.m. Vespers, Pannikhida, Confession

#### **December 20<sup>th</sup> Saturday**

5:00 p.m. Vigil, Confession

#### **December 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday Before Nativity**

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

But for the searching and right understanding of the Scriptures there is need of a good life and a pure soul, and for Christian virtue to guide the mind to grasp, so far as human nature can, the truth concerning God the Word. One cannot possibly understand the teaching of the saints unless one has a pure mind and is trying to imitate their life. Anyone who wants to look at sunlight naturally wipes his eye clear first, in order to make, at any rate, some approximation to the purity of that on which he looks; and a person wishing to see a city or country goes to the place in order to do so. Similarly, anyone who wishes to understand the mind of the sacred writers must first cleanse his own life, and approach the saints by copying their deeds. Thus united to them in the fellowship of life, he will both understand the things revealed to them by God and, thenceforth escaping the peril that threatens sinners in the judgment, will receive that which is laid up for the saints in the kingdom of heaven. *St. Athanasius the Great, On the Incarnation, ¶57*

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission  
belongs to the Diocese of the South, Orthodox Church in America