

St. Maximus the Confessor Orthodox Mission, Denton

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Bulletin for Sunday December 20th, 2015

Schedule of Services

December 20th Sunday Before Nativity, tone 4

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Church School

December 21st Monday

6:00 a.m. Matins, Confession

3:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession

December 22nd Tuesday

6:00 a.m. Matins

7:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession

8:00 p.m. Class: Basics of Orthodoxy 201

December 23rd Wednesday

6:00 a.m. Matins, Confession

7:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession

December 24th Thursday Nativity Eve

8:00 a.m. Royal Hours

noon Vespers, Divine Liturgy of St. Basil

6:00 p.m. Vigil

December 25th Friday Nativity of Our Lord

7:45 a.m. Hours

8:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

December 26th Saturday

9:30 a.m. *Feast Day Services at Holy Nativity Monastery*

7:00 p.m. Vespers, Confession

December 27th Sunday after Nativity, tone 5

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Church School

From Saint Maximus 500 Various Texts

God, who yearns for the salvation of all men and hungers after their deification, withers their self-conceit like the unfruitful fig tree (cf. Matt. 21:19-21). He does this so that they may prefer to be righteous in reality rather than in appearance, discarding the cloak of hypocritical moral display and genuinely pursuing a virtuous life in the way that the divine Logos wishes them to. They will then live with reverence, revealing the state of their soul to God rather than displaying the external appearance of a moral life to their fellow-men. 1.74

Announcements for December 20

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 his 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).

The Special Offering this week will be for Holy Nativity Monastery.

Classes This Week

Tuesday 8:00 Basics of Orthodoxy 201 "God's Plan for Man: Made in the Image and Likeness"

The Vespertal Liturgy for Nativity Eve, with all the Old Testament prophecies of Christ's coming, will be served at noon on Thursday. The usual Eucharistic fast is in force, from midnight, for communicants.

Next Saturday Vespers only will be served at 7:00 p.m. N.B.

Church Decoration: We shall decorate the church for Nativity today after coffee hour. Please stay and help. Many hands make light work.

Relics of St. Herman: to the right of the icon of Christ which we venerate in the church is the large icon of St. Herman. A relic (a bit of bone) has been put out in a silver box for veneration along with earth from his grave.

Nativity of our Lord: Starting today, we begin celebrating the forefeast of the Nativity. We keep the feast of the Nativity itself by using the troparion and kontakion of the feast in place of our usual prayers before and after meals. We also use the greeting: "Christ is born!" and the response: "Glorify Him!" There is no fasting from December 25 through January 4.

Nativity, Troparion, tone 4

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God / hath shone upon the world the light of wisdom. / For by it, those who worshipped the stars / were taught by a star to adore Thee, / the Sun of Righteousness, / and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. // O Lord, glory to Thee!

Nativity, Kontakion, tone 3 (By St. Romanos the Melode)

Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Transcendent One, / and the earth offereth a cave to the Unapproachable One! / Angels with Shepherds glorify Him! / The wise men journey with the star: // since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child!

Feast Day for Holy Nativity Monastery will be Saturday, December 26, with Hours at 9:30, Divine Liturgy at 10:00, and a reception and luncheon at noon. Fr. Vasile Tudora of St. John's, Euleus, will speak on the subject "The Christian Family Suspended Between Tradition and Temptation". Please call to reserve a spot by December 20 to (903) 498-4474 or email nativitymonastery@gmail.com.

An All-night Vigil and Liturgy will be served again this year for St. Basil/New Year, starting about 10:00 p.m. Thursday, December 31.

Please Pray: for our catechumens, Adam and Jenilee Skelton and Marsha Northam, for the inquirers Dante, the Wells family, the Dean family, for the novices Elias and Svetlana. Pray for Joe Fincher and Olga, for Patricia, Perpetua, and James Lydon. Please pray for former parishioner Natalya Perrin, and for our diocesan administrator, Fr. Gerasim. Pray that the Lord will send laborers into His harvest field here in Denton and North Texas. Remember always to pray for your priest.

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 slot in the candle table (or in the basket passed during Liturgy), where there is also a box for alms (those in need) and a box for our building fund.

Last week, we gave \$2113.20 \$2934.97 in tithes and offerings; in December, we have given \$5048.17; our monthly budget is \$10,350 (\$2389 per week). Candles \$53.50; renovation (drinks) \$4, building fund \$39, special offering for IOCC \$107.27. Attendance: Vigil 45, Liturgy 83.

From Saint Maximus (*continued*)

The devil is both God's enemy and His avenger (cf. Ps. 8:2). He is God's enemy when he seems in his hatred for God somehow to have acquired a destructive love form men, persuading us by means of sensual pleasure to assent to the passions within our control, and to value what is transitory more than what is eternal. In this way he seduces all our soul's desire, separating us utterly from divine love and making us willing enemies of Him who made us. He is God's avenger when - now that we have become subject to him through sin — he lays bare his hatred for us and demands our punishment. For nothing pleases the devil more than punishing us. When he has been given leave to carry this out, he contrives successive attacks of passions

inflicted against our will, and like a tempest he pitilessly assails us over whom, by God's permission, he has acquired authority. He does this, not with the intention of fulfilling God's command, but out of the desire to feed his own passion of hatred towards us, so that the soul, sinking down enervated by the weight of such painful calamities, may cut itself off from the power of divine hope, regarding the onslaught of these calamities not as a divine admonition but as a cause for disbelief in God. 1.80

Troparia and Kontakia for Sunday, December 20

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

Great are the achievements of faith! / In the fountain of flame, as by the water of rest, the Three Holy Children rejoiced. / And the Prophet Daniel / proved a shepherd of lions as of sheep. / By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

Troparion, Forefeast of Nativity, tone 4

Make ready, O Bethlehem! / Open unto all, O Eden! / Adorn thyself, O Ephrata! / For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. / Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, / wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from which we live, not dying like Adam. // Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

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.

Forefeast of Nativity, Kontakion, tone 1

Be glad, O Bethlehem! / Make ready, O Ephratha! / For lo! she who beareth the Lamb and Shepherd in her womb / doth make haste to give birth. / Beholding this, the God-bearing fathers are glad // hymning with the shepherds the Virgin who giveth milk.