

**GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016**

THE DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT WILL BE CELEBRATED TODAY

Holy Nativity

Priests:
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Saturday Evening:
Vespers: 4:00 pm

Sunday Morning:
Orthros: 8:45 am
Divine Liturgy:
10:00 am



The Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ in the Flesh.

ἘΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ after ΔΟΞΟΛΟΓΙΑ

APOLYTIKION after DOXOLOGY

Ἡ Γέννησίς Σου Χριστέ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ἀνέτειλε τῷ κόσμῳ, τὸ φῶς τὸ τῆς γνώσεως· ἐν αὐτῇ γὰρ οἱ τοῖς ἄστροις λατρεύοντες, ὑπὸ ἀστέρος ἐδιδάσκοντο, Σὲ προσκυνεῖν, τὸν Ἥλιον τῆς δικαιοσύνης, καὶ Σὲ γινώσκειν ἐξ ὕψους ἀνατολήν. Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

Your birth, O Christ our God, dawned the light of knowledge upon the earth. For by Your birth, those who adored stars were taught by a star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to know You, Orient from on High. O Lord, glory to You.

ΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ ΑΝΤΙΦΩΝΟΝ

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

α´ Ἐξομολογήσομαί Σοι, Κύριε, ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ μου, διηγῆσομαι πάντα τὰ θαυμάσιά σου.

v.1 *I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.*

β´ Ἐν βουλήνῃ εὐθέων καὶ συναγωγῇ, μεγάλα τὰ ἔργα Κυρίου.

v.2 *In the assembly and congregation of the upright, great are the works of the Lord.*

γ´ Ἐξεζητημένα εἰς πάντα τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ.

v.3 *Sought out in everything of His will.*

δ´ Ἐξομολόγησις καὶ μεγαλοπρέπεια τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος.

v.4 *Confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness endures to the age of the ages.*

REFRAIN (after each stichera) :

Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

ΤΟ ΔΕΥΤ. ΑΝΤΙΦΩΝΟΝ

α' Μακάριος ἀνὴρ, ὁ φοβούμενος τὸν Κύριον· ἐν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς αὐτοῦ θελήσει σφόδρα.

β' Δυνατὸν ἐν τῇ γῆ ἔσται τὸ σπέρμα αὐτοῦ.

γ' Δόξα καὶ πλοῦτος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος.

δ' Ἐξανέτειλεν ἐν σκότει φῶς τοῖς εὐθέσιν.

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

v.1 *Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments.*

v.2 *His descendants will be mighty on the earth.*

v.3 *Glory and wealth will be in his house, and his righteousness endures to the age of the age.*

v.4 *Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness.*

REFRAIN (after each stichera) :

Σῶσον ἡμᾶς, Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἐκ Παρθένου τεχθεὶς, ψάλλοντάς Σοι· Ἀλληλούϊα.

Save us, O Son of God, Who was born of the Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

ΤΟ ΤΡΙΤΟΝ ΑΝΤΙΦΩΝΟΝ ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ (Απολυτικιον Της Εορτης)

Ἡ Γέννησίς Σου Χριστέ...

THE THIRD ANTIPHON THE NATIVITY APOLYTIKION (The Hymn of the Feast)

Your birth, O Christ our God...

ΕΙΣΟΔΙΚΟΝ

Ἐκ γαστρὸς πρὸ ἑωσφόρου ἐγέννησά σε· ὤμοσε Κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται. Σὺ εἶ Ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ. Σῶσον ἡμᾶς. Υἱὲ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἐκ Παρθένου τεχθεὶς, ψάλλοντάς σοι· Ἀλληλούϊα.

SMALL ENTRANCE HYMN

Before the morning star, from the womb, I have begotten you. The Lord has sworn and will not repent. You are a Priest forever in the order of Melchisedec. Save us, O Son of God, who was born of the Virgin, as we sing to You, Alleluia.

ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ἡ Γέννησίς Σου Χριστέ...

NATIVITY APOLYTIKION

Your birth, O Christ our God...

ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ

Ἡ παρθένος σήμερον τὸν ὑπερούσιον
τίκτει καὶ ἡ γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον τῷ ἀπρο-
σίτῳ προσάγει. Ἄγγελοι μετὰ ποιμε-
νῶν δοξολογοῦσι· Μάγοι δὲ μετὰ ἀστε-
ρός ὁδοιποροῦσι· Δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ
ἐγεννήθη παιδίον νέον ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων
Θεός.

KONTAKION

Today the Virgin gives birth to Him who is
above all being, and the earth offers a cave
to Him whom no man can approach. Angels
with shepherds give glory, and Magi journey
with a star. For unto us is born a young
Child, the pre-eternal God.

Ο ΤΡΙΣΑΓΙΟΣ ΥΜΝΟΣ

Ὅσοι εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε,
Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε. Ἀλληλούϊα. (3x)...

THE TRISAGION HYMN

As many of you have been baptized in
Christ, you have put on Christ. (3x)...

THE EPISTLE READING

Prokeimenon. Plagal First Mode. Psalm 65.4,1.

Let all the earth worship you, and sing praises to you.

Verse: Shout with joy to God, all the earth.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Chapter 4:4-7

Brethren, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.

THE GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:1-12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born

king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: `And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.



ΤΟ ΣΥΜΒΟΛΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

ΜΕΓΑΛΥΝΑΡΙΟΝ

HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

Ἐπὶ σοὶ χαίρει, Κεχαριτωμένη, πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις, Ἄγγέλων τὸ σύστημα καὶ ἀνθρώπων τὸ γένος, ἡγιασμένε ναὲ καὶ παράδεισε λογικέ, παρθενικὸν καύχημα, ἐξ ἧς Θεὸς ἐσαρκώθη καὶ παιδίον γέγονεν, ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων ὑπάρχων Θεὸς ἡμῶν· τὴν γὰρ σὴν μήτραν θρόνον ἐποίησε, καὶ τὴν σὴν γαστέρα πλατυτέραν οὐρανῶν ἀπειργάσατο. Ἐπὶ σοὶ χαίρει, Κεχαριτωμένη, πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις δόξα σοι.

All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace: the assembly of angels and the human race. You are a sanctified temple and a spiritual paradise, the glory from whom God was incarnate and became a child—our God, existing before all ages. He made your womb a throne, and your body more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in you, O full of grace. Glory to you.

ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟΣ ΥΜΝΟΣ

Ἐλύτρωσιν ἀπέστειλε Κύριος τῷ λαῷ
αὐτοῦ. Ἀλληλούια.

COMMUNION HYMN

The Lord has sent deliverance to His
people. Alleluia. (Repeat)...

ΕΙΔΟΜΕΝ ΤΟ ΦΟΣ

Ἡ Γέννησίς Σου Χριστέ...

POST-COMMUNION HYMN

Your birth, O Christ our God...

✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠ ✠✠✠

TODAY

- An Artoclasia is being offered by John & Stella Athans
 - No Church School
- Please join us for Fellowship Hour after Liturgy today!
- ♪ Happy Birthday today to Jesus Christ and Marcelino Mandapat.
Χρόνια Πολλά!

MONDAY the 26th

SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS

- Matins: 8:45 am
- Divine Liturgy: 10:00 am

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

TUESDAY the 27th

ST. STEPHEN

- Matins: 8:45 am
- Divine Liturgy: 10:00 am
- Artoclasia: 11:30 am

(An Artoclasia is being offered by Steve & Popi Peppes)

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

The Parish Office will be closed through January 2nd.

PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL FOR CHRISTMAS

✠ BARTHOLOMEW

By God's Mercy Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch
to the Plenitude of the Church
Grace, Mercy and Peace from the Savior Christ Born in Bethlehem

“Christ’s incarnation is my own recreation”^[1]

Beloved brothers and sisters, dear children in the Lord,

We praise and glorify the God in Trinity, who deemed us worthy once again this year to reach the great feast of the Nativity in the flesh of the Son and Word of God the Father in “little Bethlehem.”

The holy Church is celebrating with fullness of joy, for Christ “assumed flesh” through His incarnation^[2] and rendered the Church “an adornment for the world.”^[3] Indeed, the entire human race, and even “all of creation,” rejoices over this divine blessing. “All of creation is today filled with joy because Christ is born of a Virgin.”^[4]

In contrast to the “unmoved mover” of the ancient Greeks, our God is the communion of love and lovingly moves in time toward humankind and the world. “In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us.” (1 John 4.10)

The pre-eternal Word of the Father, who granted “being” to humankind, now grants us “well being” through His incarnation. “This is the reason behind the feast; this is why we celebrate today: namely, God’s descent to us so that we might ascend—or return—to God . . . in order that, by laying aside the old man, we may assume the new man; and in order that, by dying to Adam, we might therefore live in Christ; in order that we might be with Christ, be crucified with Him, be buried with Him, and arise with Him.”^[5] The way of deification through grace is henceforth open to everyone coming into the world. All of us are “capable of containing God.” “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3.28)

Unfortunately, the Gospel of Christmas is once again proclaimed to a world where the racket of weapons is heard, where unprovoked violence against individuals and peoples is enacted, and where inequality and social justice prevail. It is unbearable to witness the state of countless children, victims of military conflict, irregular situations, manifold exploitations, persecutions and discriminations, as well as hunger, poverty and painful dispossession.

Last April, we had the opportunity in Lesbos to witness with our own eyes—together with His Holiness Pope Francis of Rome and His Beatitude Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece—the tragic circumstances of refugees and immigrants, and especially the acute problems of the suffering children, innocents and defenseless victims of military violence, as well as the racial and religious discrimination and injustice, all of which are constantly increasing.

The feast of God’s Word, who became an infant—the child Jesus, whose disappearance is pursued by worldly authority, according to the Evangelist Matthew (Matt 2.13)—is a reminder and invitation for us to care for children, to protect these vulnerable victims and to respect the sacredness of childhood.

Of course, children and sensitive souls are also threatened in economically developed and politically stable countries of the world, whether by the immense crisis of marriage and family, or by diverse interventions as well as the use of physical or spiritual force. A child’s soul is altered by the influential consumption of electronic media, especially television and the internet, and by the radical transformation of communication. Unbridled economics transfigures them from a young age into consumers, while the pursuit of pleasure rapidly vanishes their innocence.

continued →

In light of these dangers, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church addressed children and young people “with particular love and affection” (Prov. 8) by including the following in its Encyclical:

Amid the medley of mutually contradictory definitions of childhood, our most holy Church presents the words of our Lord: “Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18.3) and “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it (Luke 18.17), as well as what our Savior says about those who “prevent” (Luke 18.16) children from approaching Him and about those who “scandalize” them (Matt 18.6).

The mystery of Christmas is crystallized in the words of the festive Kontakion: “For us, a new child was born, God before all ages.” The divine Word as child and the child as God is revealed to the world with “the pure heart” and simplicity of a child. Children comprehend truths, which “wise and prudent” people are unable to approach. As Elytis observes in his poem From one’s neighbor: “You can build Jerusalem out of children alone!”

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord,

We appeal to all of you to respect the identity and sacredness of childhood. In light of the global refugee crisis that especially affects the rights of children; in light of the plague of child mortality, hunger and child labor, child abuse and psychological violence, as well as the dangers of altering children’s souls through their uncontrolled exposure to the influence of contemporary electronic means of communication and their subjection to consumerism, we declare 2017 as the Year of Protection of the Sacredness of Childhood, inviting everyone to recognize and respect the rights and integrity of children.

As underlined in another significant document of the Holy and Great Council, the Church of Christ does not look to “judging and condemning the world” with its word (John 3.17; 12.47), “but rather to offer to the world the guidance of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, namely, the hope and assurance that evil, no matter its form, does not have the last word in history and must not be allowed to dictate its course.”^[6]

Therefore, we venerate our Savior with humility and compunction, for He has visited us from on high; we praise with divine song the immensity of the sacred Incarnation; we kneel down before the All-Holy Theotokos, who holds the child Jesus; and we address from the sleepless Phanar the festive greeting to all children of the Church of Constantinople, both near and afar: “Christ is born; glorify Him. Christ has come from heaven; come out to meet Him,” together with our paternal wishes and patriarchal prayer.

“Be strong in the grace of Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 2.1) Let us all strive together with faith and sincere love in the good struggle of new life in the Church, adhering to all that the Lord has commanded. For He is with us “all the days of our life, to the end of the ages.” (Matt 28.20)

Christmas 2016

✠ **BARTHOLOMEW** of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant of all before God

[1] Gregory the Theologian, *Moral Poems* 34.

[2] John Chrysostom, *Homily before Exile* PG 52.429.

[3] Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 6.

[4] Christmas Matins.

[5] Gregory the Theologian, *Homily 38 on Epiphany, namely the Nativity of the Savior*.

[6] The Mission of the Orthodox Church in the Contemporary World, introduction.