

# Holy Trinity Hellenic Orthodox Church

Lowell, Massachusetts

Rev. Fr. Nikolaos D. Pelekoudas, Presbyter

**December 24, 2018**

## *Eve of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ*

### Today's Calendar

**Parish Council members on duty: Paris Karahalios, Joan Metropolis**

**December 25, 2018**

## **Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ**

### **READINGS**

Epistle Reading	Galatians 4:4-7	Page 121
Gospel Reading	Matthew 2:1-12	Page 122

### Today's Calendar

**Parish Council members on duty: Daniel Routsis, George Tgibides, Betty Themeles, Thomas Themeles**

### For Our Edification

#### **The Meaning of the Nativity**

The Feast of the Nativity of Christ is one of the 12 major feasts of our Church. According to our Church fathers, it is called a "splendid three-day Pascha." In addition, the liturgical services for Christmas, officially called *The Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ*, are consciously patterned after the services for the festival of the Pascha of the Lord, the Holy Resurrection. There is both a 40-day fast and pre-feast preparations.

The hymns of our Church during the Christmas season call us to receive with joy the news of our incarnate Lord "for He who gives riches becomes poor, for He assumes the poverty of my flesh that I may assume the riches of His divinity. He that is full empties Himself, for He empties Himself of His glory for a short while that I may have a share in His fullness."

Christ offers himself on Christmas in order to fill that which is void in all of us, to offer hope where there is none and to restore us to our original state of blessedness from which we had fallen.

God has promised to be with us always. He did not abandon us even in our most sinful state, but because of His great love for mankind, He sent His Only Begotten Son as a gift and as an offering of love, for the salvation of all mankind. The angels affirmed this offering of peace and love on that first Christmas evening as they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill towards men." Christ came to bring peace and goodwill toward all men who believe in His birth. The miraculous birth of whom, a humble Virgin brought salvation to the world.

Even though Christmas is celebrated in the midst of this winter season and the world has commercialized every aspect of this feast, we can feel the warmth of Christ enter our hearts as we have Christmas with our families and attend the services that our Holy Orthodox Church offers and by singing the majestic hymn which was written by St. Kosmas the Melodist: "Christ is born, glorify Him! Christ comes from heaven, go to welcome him; Christ is on earth, be lifted up! Sing to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praises in gladness, you people, for He has been glorified!"

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#### **The Magi**

The Magi were scholars of the ancient world. Being astrologers, they knew well the science of the stars and were able to read in them the destiny of men. Originating in the East (Persia, Syria, Mesopotamia), they were the representatives of a highly developed civilization whose knowledge of science was among the most advanced of that era.

A star revealed to them the birth of the King of the Jews. The sudden appearance of the star indicated that the child would have an exceptional future.

The Magi believed this prophecy and set off to pay homage to this illustrious coming from afar to bow before a small, poor, and naked child. At its feet, they place not only their gifts, but also all their knowledge, in order to worship Him whom they recognize as the true God.

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