

# Holy Apostles Newsletter

DIOCESE OF THE WEST

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA



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## From the Holy Fathers

### On Almsgiving:

Blessed is he who is considerate to the needy and the poor. Not even night should interrupt you in your duty of mercy. There should be no delay between your intention and your good deed. Generosity is the one thing that cannot admit of delay. He who does acts of mercy should do so with cheerfulness. The grace of the deed is doubled when it is done with promptness and speed. What is given with a bad grace or against one's will is distasteful and far from praiseworthy. When we perform an act of kindness we should rejoice and not be sad about it. Let us visit Christ whenever we may, let us care for him, feed him, clothe him, welcome him, honor him, not only at a meal or by anointing him as Mary did, or by giving him gold, frankincense and myrrh, like the Magi.

- a Sermon by Saint Gregory of Nazianzes



## Christmas and Orthodox Nativity

**O**n American Christmas, some of you more, some of you to a lesser extent, celebrate, have parties, give presents to each other, etc. Alas, American Christmas is acquiring a more and more pagan character: so much time is wasted on shopping, often unnecessarily, for clothing, for everything exterior, while inner spiritual concerns remain almost in oblivion.

The Nativity of the God-Child Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, is hardly given any thought whatsoever. The kind, gentle image of Christ is supplanted by that of jolly old Santa Claus—a false representation of one of God's greatest saints—Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker of Mira.

The psychology of the masses is infectious. We, the zealots of religious piety, understand this and, in a fatherly way, for the sake of love, look askance, although not without sadness, at this chaotic tribute in the country which gave shelter to our flock. At the same time, we sincerely ask all members of our Church: having given notice to the secular world, when the embers of the American festival have died, give some attention to your inner self—prepare yourself spiritually, in the Orthodox way, for our Orthodox Feast of the Nativity of Christ. First of all, for at least the remainder of Lent—fast. After all, there are not many fast days left. Whoever is able, prepare yourselves with fasting. On the holy eve of the feast, make certain that you come to church: the Nativity services are so beautiful! On the day of Nativity, try your best to get leave from work or school, even if you must lose a day's wages. Give them to God!

Keep holy, sanctify in a special way, this whole day of the Great Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. Do not do anything thoughtless on the Nativity. It is traditional on this day to visit the clergy, family or friends, to somehow reinforce the joy of the Festival. It is not sinful on this day to have guests or go out, within reason of course, so as not to lose the image

of God, which we carry. It is certainly blessed for families and those of means [who have more of this world's goods] to invite people who are alone to their Nativity dinner, especially those in poverty, to warm them with kindness and attention. How good this is and pleasing to God!

On this great day we can and must celebrate, especially spiritually. Too often this celebration is substituted with uncontrolled drunken parties. It is not a crime to be merry and celebrate a Festival, but not wildly. Examine the Holy Gospels. There the word joy appears nearly twenty times, but the word gladness appears only once, and even then in conjunction with the word joy. I will introduce the text: But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth (Luke I, 13-14).

On the Feast day of the Nativity it has become customary, seemingly from the Three Wise Men, to give each other gifts, especially the poor and needy. This is a good and holy custom! As pastors, we understand how, when all around people are celebrating, it is difficult not to be caught up in the festivities. However, blessed are those who maintain their fasting and prayer throughout the whole period of the Nativity Fast.

Taken from Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago († 1987), translated from Russian by Alexander Morin.

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# Community Forum

## **TRANSITIONS PROJECT**

The Transitions Project is scheduled for this Monday, December 3. Each sandwich maker should make 25 sandwiches. The bread will be in the fellowship hall by Saturday afternoon. If anyone is interested in joining the sandwich making team, let Matushka Mary know.

## **COAT BLANKET DRIVE**

You have about 2 more weeks to participate in the Transitions Project annual coat and blanket drive. The barrel resides in the fellowship hall and can be filled with blankets and coats of all kinds. They will come to collect the barrel around Dec. 14.

## **UPCOMING DATES/FEASTS**

Tues, Dec. 18 - Great Vespers for St. Nicholas at 5:30 pm, followed by (vegan) pizza party in fellowship hall  
Fri, Jan 4th - Royal Hours for Christmas Eve at 6 am  
Sun, Jan. 6th - Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom at 9 am  
Sun, Jan. 6th - Vigil (Great Vespers and Matins), followed by Liturgy of St. Basil at 11 pm, followed by breaking of fast meal in the fellowship hall  
Mon, Jan. 7th - Christmas party at 5 pm  
Fri, Jan. 18th - Royal Hours for Theophany at 8 am, followed by Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, followed by the Blessing of the Waters.  
Fri, Jan. 18th - Vigil (Great Compline and Matins) at 6 pm  
Sat, Jan. 19th - Hours at 8:30 am, followed by Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom at 9 am, with Baptism and Chrismation of Joe Harvest, followed by second blessing of waters down at the Willamette River.

## **HOUSE BLESSINGS**

Fr. Dimitri will be doing house blessings the weeks of January 21 and January 28. Please call him to schedule a time where he can bless your home and all those who dwell therein! No need to provide a meal for him when he comes.

## **ALMSGIVING COMMITTEE?**

Are there any among you interested in heading up an almsgiving committee for the Church? It would be good for someone to be in charge of our giving alms during fasting seasons and this would include heading up the Transitions project. Talk to Fr. Dimitri if you're interested.

## **PARISH-WIDE MEETING**

Please make every effort to attend a parish-wide annual meeting, Sunday, Dec. 16th after the Agape meal up in the fellowship hall.

## **CATECHISM CLASSES CONTINUES**

Fr. Dimitri is teaching a catechism class for inquirers and for whoever would like to learn more about the faith. See the calendar for dates and times.

## **ST. NICHOLAS VISIT**

On Tuesday, December 18th, after Vespers we will have a special visitor at Holy Apostles. Saint Nicholas is coming to visit us and is bringing with him treats and special gold coins for the kids! After his visit, we will have a (vegan) pizza party up in the fellowship hall, and will hear about the life of St. Nicholas and the wonder-working miracles he has performed.

## **FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE**

If you are interested in being on a Church Building Fundraising Committee, please come to dinner at the Donnor's house on Monday, December 10th at 7 pm. Please RSVP to Joanna by e-mailing [jdonnor@gmail.com](mailto:jdonnor@gmail.com) or calling 503-484-7773. Please bring your ideas with you! ♦

## Kitchen Corner

**Pumpkin Bread or Muffins, contributed by Paraskeva Story**

**5c. flour, 1 ½ t. salt, 4 t. baking soda, 1 t. cinnamon, 1 t. allspice, 1 t. cloves, ½ t. nutmeg, 3 ½ c. sugar, 1 30-ounce can pumpkin 1 c. oil, 3 eggs or equivalent of egg replacer**

**Optional  
2c. chopped nuts  
2 c. chopped dates**

**Preheat oven to 350 degrees.**

**Cream together eggs, sugar, oil and pumpkin.**

**Mix together flour, baking soda, salt and spices. Add dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Stir in nuts and dates. Pour into 6 small or 3 regular, greased and floured, loaf pans and bake 1 hour or spoon into multiple, greased muffin tins and bake 20 – 25 minutes. ♦**

# Holy Apostles Schedule

DATE	COFFEE HOUR AGAPE MEAL	COFFEE HOUR CLEAN UP	CHURCH CLEANING TEAM	FLOWERS
<b>DECEMBER 2</b>	Joanna Donnor & team	Perez & Dingmans		
<b>DECEMBER 9</b>	Bev Aiello & team	Watt & Story		
<b>DECEMBER 16 (Parish-wide meeting)</b>	Thomaida Hudanish & team	Virosteck & Watt		
<b>DECEMBER 23</b>	Elena Kojenov & team	Aiello & Phillips		
<b>DECEMBER 30</b>	Justina Goakey & team	Campbell & Beckel		

## FR. DIMITRI'S DAY OFF

Fr. Dimitri's day off is Monday, so he doesn't answer his phone or return calls on this day. Unless you have an emergency that cannot wait until Tuesday, please know that this day is his day of rest and he'll get back to you sometime other than Monday! Don't be offended if you don't hear from him until later in the week.

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Please feel free to use the newsletter to make an announcement, to communicate a message you need to convey to the parish as a whole. Use the newsletter to give away something, to sell something! Use it as a tool or resource to communicate! Also, if you are need of something, use it in this way. Submit a recipe! Submit your announcement to Fr. Dimitri or Mat. Mary at least a few days before the end of the month.

## GOD GRANT YOU MANY YEARS!

Happy Feast Day to the following people who celebrate their names day in December:

7/20 St. Ambrose of Milan  
Ambrose Beckel

If you don't see your name listed, please let Joanna Donnor know, as she updates the names day list. ♦

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