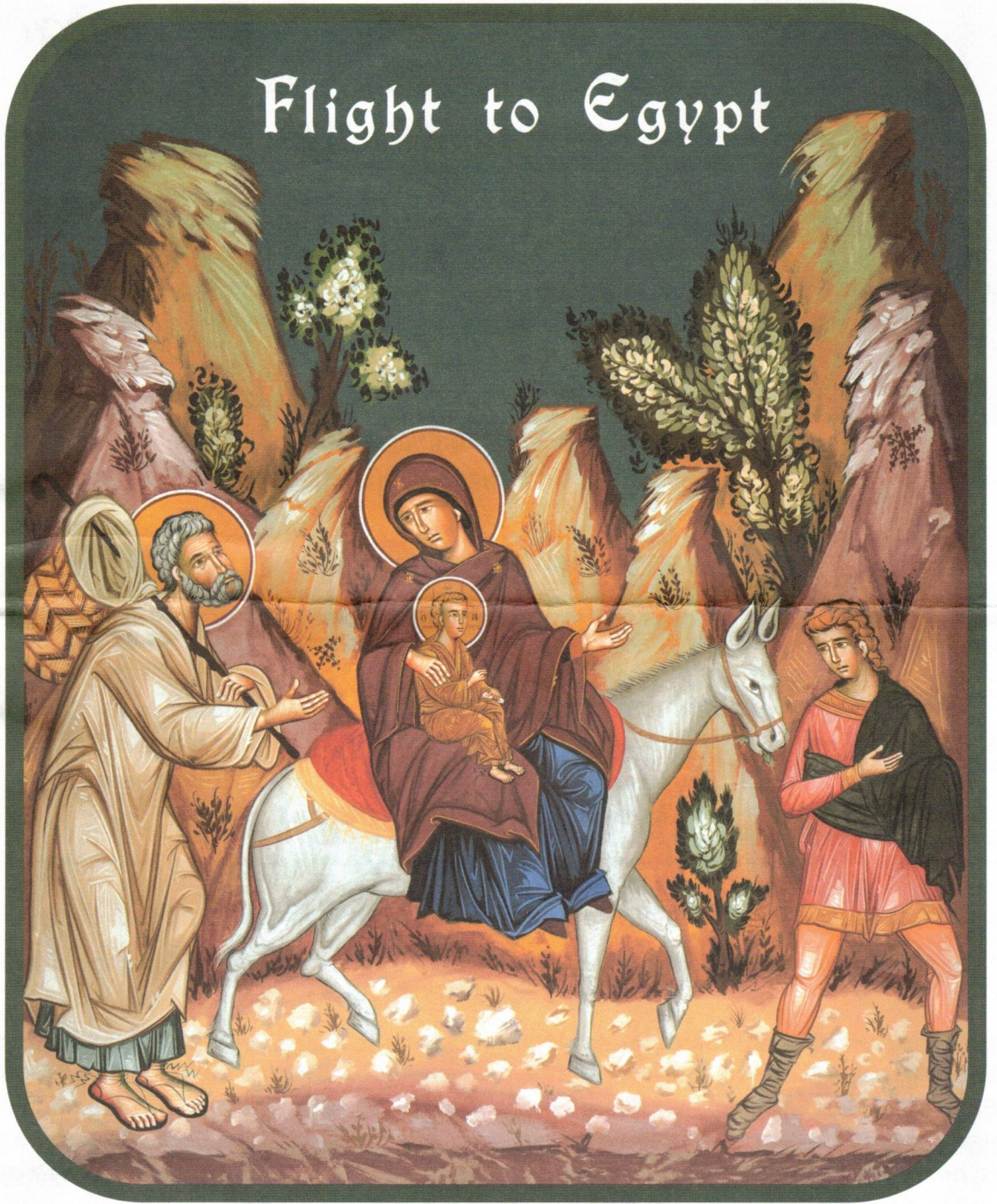
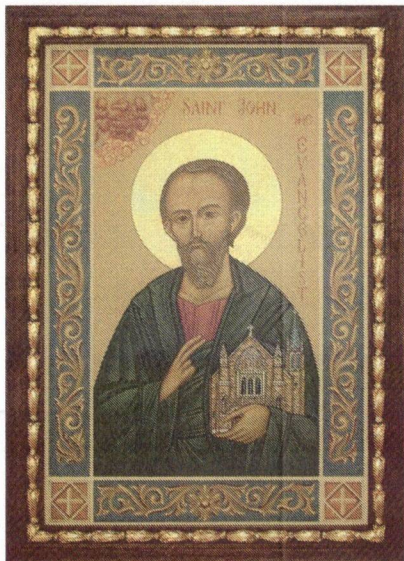


# Flight to Egypt



December 29, 2024





***ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST  
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH***

**1501 8TH AVENUE**

**BEAVER FALLS, PA. 15010**

**(724) 847-1111**

***WWW.SAINTJOHNCHURCH.ORG***

**HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN SABA , ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK  
AND**

**METROPOLITAN OF ALL NORTH AMERICA**

**HIS GRACE BISHOP THOMAS, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE  
OF CHARLESTON, OAKLAND , AND MID-ATLANTIC**

**REVEREND FATHER SERAPHIM MOSLENER**

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***Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. (John 16:23 )  
When a new person is baptized or Chrismated we say to that person, "Welcome Home!" The Church is where each person voluntarily belongs as one who believes in and belongs to Christ .***

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***We take this opportunity to welcome those guests worshiping with us.***

***Anyone wishing to request prayers for Health and Well-being, or a Trisagion prayer,  
please contact Fr. Seraphim***

***The Orthodox Church understands that the sacraments we experience are a fundamental part of the sacred life of a worshiping community that shares in "one body...one faith". (Eph. 4:5). Thus, we can only share Communion with those who are Orthodox and who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and Confession. If you are not Orthodox, or are not properly prepared, you are welcome to come forward and receive a blessing and then to take a piece of the blessed bread.***

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# **DIVINE LITURGY FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024**

## **TONE 2 / EOTHINON 5**

### **AFTER-FEAST OF & SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST**

**COMMEMORATION OF JOSEPH THE BETROTHED, DAVID THE PROPHET AND KING,  
AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF GOD**

#### **THE FIRST ANTIPHON**

I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders. In the council of the upright, and in the congregation, great are the works of the Lord.

***Refrain:* Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.**

They are sought out in all the things that He hath willed. Confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages. (***Refrain***)

**Glory...** Both now... (***Refrain***)

#### **THE SECOND ANTIPHON**

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed.

***Refrain:* Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.**

Glory and riches shall be in his house, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages. (***Refrain***)

There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright; he is merciful and compassionate and righteous. (***Refrain***)

**Glory...** Both now... **O, only begotten Son and Word of God...**

#### **THE THIRD ANTIPHON**

The Lord said unto my Lord: sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send Thee a rod of strength out of Zion. With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of Thy saints.

***Chant the Apolytikion of the Nativity of Christ. After the Little Entrance, chant these hymns in the following order***



## **RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO**

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hades with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

## **APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR**

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn there from to worship Thee, O Sun of justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

## **APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY IN TONE TWO**

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; for with the shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi thou didst worship, and by the angel it was revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

## **APOLYTIKION OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST**

O beloved Apostle of Christ God, Come quick and save a people with no recourse. He who let you rest your head on his breast, Will not reject you pleas on our behalf. Beseech Him then, O wise and holy Theologian, Dispel from us the dark and ominous clouds of disbelief. Grant us his peace and great mercy./

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## **KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE THREE**

*(\*\*The original melody\*\*)*

On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; \* to the Unapproachable, \* the earth doth offer a small cave; \* Angels join in choir with shepherds \* in giving glory; \* with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; \* for our sakes is born a young Child, \* He Who existed \* before the ages as God.

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**THE 2025 CHURCH CALENDERS ARE AVAILBLE IN THE NARTHEX**

## PASTOR'S PAGE MONTHLY: JANUARY, 2025

*Forgive me but I am like most and hate to see Christmas leave after waiting for weeks of it's coming, so here is the homily from Christmas Eve and hopefully thoughts to carry into 2025!*

**Dec 24/25 (Nativity), 2024 Gal 4:4-7; Mt 1:18-25; Mt 2:1-12 Christ Is Born!**

I think of joy today. There is a somewhat common picture of a young child standing in a field of wild flowers to bring a handful of fresh picked wild flowers to the mother. The mother is not in the painting but we all know she is nearby. It always seems to be a moment of joy. Then I think of who made the wild flowers, the field in which the flowers grew, and who made the child that brought the flowers to the mother. The birth of that child brings joy to the mother. As Jesus says, "after all that travail and anguish comes joy." Even that joy is only a fraction of what I am talking about today. There is a greater joy today. It comes with a headline announcement: "I bring you good news of a great joy." (Lk 2:10). This is the joy of another birth, the birth of the Son of God.

Yes, the story begins with this announcement, this headline. But here is the rest of the story about joy. We cannot think of joy today without thinking of things that cause us to lose joy. As much as Christmas may take us to the top of the mountain of joy, we spend most of our days living in the valley surrounded by the tedious and mundane. Herod secretly met with the wise men and then instructed them "to go to Bethlehem and when you find Him bring back word to me that I may worship Him."

**Worshipping Him wrongly** can cause us to lose our joy. Of course King Herod never struck me as a joyful king. Perhaps paranoid, fearful, and angry is more accurate.

**Fear** can cause us to lose joy. Worldly fear undermines its strength. It is the shepherds' first response on seeing and hearing the angel. It is the caution from the angel to the shepherds in that great announcement at the birth of Christ in the dark of night with great light when he said: "do not be afraid," as if to say, do not let your fear ruin this moment. It is the introduction to the next words: "For behold I bring you good news of a great joy..." Their response is a worldly and human response to startle. We might live with that kind of fear causing loss of joy, but even the fear of God's judgment through tears of repentance St Nikitas reminds us advances us toward purity of heart. He tells us to pursue that which is spoken from Isaiah 11 where the gifts of the Spirit begin with wisdom and end with the spirit of the fear of God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7)). This fear St Nikitas writes, "possesses great saving power." One kind of fear may get our attention but the other tends to the purifying of our hearts.

**Living a lie** can cause us to lose joy as in any sin! St John of Kronstadt wrote: "To repent is to know there is a lie in our heart." After that we must relocate joy in our hearts which is King David's prayer: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psalm 50:14).

**Prolonged illness** can cause us to lose joy. Any weakness is like losing air out of a balloon. It is hard to carry joy in illness as it is for a balloon to float losing air. Of our spiritual guides St Paul understood it well with his "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor 12:7-10). The Lord gave him an antidote: "My grace is sufficient



for you for, My strength is made perfect in weakness." Even and especially in weakness with His grace and strength can our joy be replenished.

**Death and sorrow** over a loved one or good friend can cause us to lose joy. Even "Jesus wept" with that experience. Grief is a very human weight which never seems fair. I was a fairly young husband attending a wedding of a young friend and neighbor with my wife. She began to cry. I tapped her on her knee and asked "what did I do?" She said, "Nothing, I'm happy." I learned that day for the first time that there are different kinds of tears. So we sometimes have in the communion line: tears of sadness in repentance before and tears of joy after communion. Jesus said it well: "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine upright persons who are in no need of repentance." (Lk 15:7).

We can lose our joy but joy knows it belongs in us because that joy is Jesus! Abraham, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Habbakuk all knew it for the future but no one knew joy first hand until Jesus came into the world and brought it! He is the one who spoke to the disciples and concluded that "My joy may remain in you and your joy may be full" (Jn 15:11) When did he say it? "Joy" is mentioned most often in John's Gospel and all of it on the day and evening in which he would be betrayed and arrested. That joy among the disciples seems to get lost in His death that brought fear and sorrow. But that joy is brought to life when he is Resurrected. No wonder St John Climacus calls Lent "a joy-creating sorrow."

Christ is our joy! Christ Is Born! Christ is Born! We knew it all along. "In the fullness of time (at just the right time) God sent forth his Son" (Gal 4:4). We just could not say it all these weeks of the Nativity fast! Now we say it because **in joy and for joy Christ is born**. Our joy and His joy is joined together in every Liturgy. He is born that His joy may be in our hearts, His home, and our joy may be full. Yes, in the midst of fears, doubts, poor worship, illness, loss, and grief in this world, His joy is always with us because **CHRIST IS THAT JOY!** As the Psalmist writes: "In His Presence is fullness of joy." (Ps 16:11). Christ is Born! Christ is Born! Christ is Born!

**Brief Parish News:** Charlie West reposed on Dec 13. Memory Eternal! . . . Many years to Terry Rossman (Jan 16) . . . Thanks to all who made the visit by Bp Thomas successful on Dec 15 . . . We are grateful for those who have reorganized the bookstore into a place to visit! Deadline to sign up for house-blessings: January 5<sup>th</sup> (call or text Fr Seraphim at 724-494-7215 if you desire one and cannot sign up),

Fr Seraphim received this thank-you note from Betsy who coordinates AA after thanking them for the new icon in the Church: "It is because of your church that we have been able to provide a safe space to those seeking recovery and salvation. We are so appreciative of your willingness to assist in this mission. You have welcomed us with open arms to participate in your services, and are looking forward to attending again."

**May God give you mercy, peace, life, health, and salvation throughout the coming year!**

## THE EPISTLE

(For the Sunday after Nativity of Christ)

***God is wondrous in His saints. Bless God in the congregations.***

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)**

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel, which was preached by me, is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

## THE GOSPEL

(For the Sunday after Nativity of Christ)

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:13-23)**

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."



## **DECEMBER/JANUARY SERVICES**

**December 28th Saturday — NO Great Vespers**

**December 29th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM**

**December 31st Tuesday — Divine Liturgy 6PM**

**CIRCUMCISION OF CHRIST— St. Basil Liturgy**

**January 4th Saturday — No Great Vespers**

**January 5th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM**

**THEOPHANY OF CHRIST — ST. BASIL LITURGY**

**“ Indoor Service of Great Blessing of the Water”**

**January 11th Saturday — NO Great Vespers**

**January 12th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM**

**COUNCIL MEETING 12Noon**

**January 18th Saturday — Community Breakfast 8:30-10:30 AM**

**Great Vespers 5PM**

**January 19th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM**

**January 22nd Wednesday —Daily Vespers at 6PM, light meal to follow with study session—GREAT LENT.**

**January 25th Saturday — Great Vespers 5AM**

**January 26th Sunday — Matins 9AM / Divine Liturgy 10AM**

**January 29th Wednesday — Daily Vespers at 6PM, light meal to follow with study session —GREAT LENT.**



**Prayers are offered for the health and well-being of:**

Fr. Steven, Kh. Paraskeva, Ann, Carol, Debbie, Shannon, Aiden, Justin, Sassic Family, Harriet, Jan, Fr. Andrew, Frank, Charlene, Trish, Cindy, Joann, Marlene, George, Julianna, Ray, Lori, Patrick, Dionisia and Labrini.

Catechumens Breana, Jessica, Nicholas

**For Thou are the Resurrection, the Life, and the Repose of Thy servants who have fallen asleep especially:**

Prayers are offered in memory of Infant Micah, Eleanor.

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***\*\*HOUSE BLESSING SCHEDULE\*\****

FR. Seraphim to bless houses on Jan. 8,10,11 and other days by appointment. Sign up for house-blessings on Table in narthex and you will be called as to day and time that works for you. (Leave a phone number with your name.)

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***THOUGHT FOR THE DAY***

“A firm beginning will certainly be useful for us when we later grow slack. A soul that is strong at first, but then relaxes, is spurred on by the memory of its former zeal. And in this way new wings are obtained.” (St. John Climacus)

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**New Classes—GREAT LENT**

**Wednesday, January 22nd: DAILY VESPERS 6PM followed by fasting meal and Study of the Great Lent. Brochures will be on table in narthex. Print pages off website one time and use for 6 weeks prior to Lent.**

## THE ULTIMATE "PROTECTIVE PARENTS"

Being a parent can be described as a multi-faceted vocation. A father and mother are called upon to provide for every need of their child - sometimes at great expense and often with greater sacrifice. A child must be taught, nurtured, fed and disciplined. These are just a few parental responsibilities that a father and mother are obligated to meet.

Perhaps the most important duty, however, that every parent must embrace is protecting their child from harm and misfortune. Sometimes lost in the story of our Lord's Nativity is the effort made by Joseph and the Virgin Mary to protect their precious Child from King Herod. He slaughtered scores of innocent children in Bethlehem and its surrounding region in his rage-driven quest to eliminate anyone who would dare be referred to as the "King of the Jews."

The Gospel of St. Matthew gives us the account of the courageous actions of our Lord's earthly parents. An angel of the Lord warns Joseph in a dream: "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." (Matthew 2:13) In the dead of night, they fled from their home in Bethlehem and embarked upon a long and dangerous journey, traveling hundreds of miles over rugged, unfamiliar terrain. Somehow, they safely arrived in Egypt, remaining there until Joseph received another heavenly visitor saying: "Arise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." (Matthew 2:20) Their stay in Egypt is shrouded in mystery. What we do know is this: Joseph and Mary were the ultimate "protective parents," preserving unharmed the One Who would grow up to be the Savior of the world.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin

Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey

Litho

St. John the Evangelist

