



## Nativity of Our Lord



~ KONTAKION ~

Today the Virgin  
gives birth  
to the Transcendent One,  
and the earth  
offers 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!



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# ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

## December 2024

### WAITING FOR THE LORD TO COME

*Adapted from an Advent Sermon by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom*

In these days of fasting as we approach the “holidays” as everyone now calls this season, our Lord Himself gives us a stern and clear warning. Are we going to be like the guests called to the bridal feast of the king's son? One refused to come because he had acquired a plot of land. He wanted to possess the earth and instead became a slave to it. The others could not come because they were too busy-- there was no time for God. The one who had taken a wife could not share in the joy of the Bridegroom because his heart was already too full. This parable will be read on December 15, just two Sundays before the Winter Pascha. How do we respond to the invitation?

### Meeting the Lord in Holy Communion

Advent is a time when we should stand face to face before the judgment of God and listen to the voice of our own conscience. Every time we come to Communion we must have tried our best to make peace with those with whom we are at variance. We must have tried to make peace with the thoughts of our mind and heart that accuse us of disloyalty to God and to one another. We must have made our peace with the living God so that it cannot be said that He died for us in vain. It is a matter of pondering deeply within ourselves, of passing an honest judgement upon ourselves and coming to Communion through repentance and Confession, after a searching examination of our lives so as to not be condemned for coming lightly to the Holy Meal. This implies a certain number of simple things, but things that must be done.

1. No one should come to Communion who is deliberately late for the liturgy through laziness or carelessness. (pastor's note: **especially** if you miss the Epistle and Gospel!)
2. We should come to Communion after preparing ourselves in the course of the whole week by praying, by examining our conscience, and by reading prayers before Communion. If they are too long to be read on Saturday after the evening service or on Sunday morning, they can be distributed throughout the latter part of the week and be part of our morning and evening prayers. This is a discipline which is required of us always, but especially during Advent, Great Lent and the other fasting periods.
3. The Orthodox Church has always taught that those who wish to receive Communion should strive to do everything in their power to be present on Saturday evening at the service, so as to be prepared to meet the Lord on Sunday, the day of His Resurrection. This is often difficult, sometimes impossible, but if we **never ever** come...?

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These are not simply rules of formal discipline; these are appeals for us to be guided into a more meaningful life and to encounter the Lord more worthily, or rather less unworthily.

May we enter into this period of fasting, preparing ourselves by being attentive to the ways in which we treat others, ourselves and God, to the way in which we learn from the Church to pray, to worship and to obey the Lord's commandments. Pay attention more seriously to the fasting rules. Their purpose is to shake our physical complacency, to energize us spiritually and physically, to prevent ourselves from being "heavy" and incapable of soaring Godwards. Prepare yourselves throughout this period of Advent, waiting for the Lord to come, but waiting not passively, but with joyful anticipation in the way in which you would wait for someone beloved to arrive at your home. Remember that being in the presence of God is not our right; it is the greatest privilege that He can confer on us, so let us behave accordingly. Amen.

## CONFESSION

The perfect way to receive Christ during this season is to receive the wonderful sacrament of His most pure Body and Blood in Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy on Christmas Day. Part of our preparation for this reception should include repentance and a sincere confession of our sins during this Advent. Confessions will be heard after any of the evening services or by appointment.

## NATIVITY FAST ALMSGIVING

**Sunday, December 1**

*Africa Fund*

**Friday, December 6 - St. Nicholas Day**

*Raffle proceeds to benefit Holy Assumption  
Monastery, Calistoga*

**Sunday, December 8**

*Postpartum Support Center*

**Sunday, December 15**

*Homeward Bound*

**Sunday, December 22**

*Marin Pregnancy Clinic*

## CHRISTMAS OFFERING

As the Magi beheld the newborn Savior and worshipped Him, they also brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We as Orthodox Christians, as we re-witness the birth of our Savior, also should respond out of love and bring to Him our gift. This gift should not be haphazard - with no thought. As your contribution supports the work of the Church - the body of Christ - it is certainly one of the most important gifts that you will give at Christmas this year.



A special envelope and detailed schedule of services will be mailed later this month.

## ST. NICHOLAS DAY

At 7pm on Thursday, December 5, we begin the celebration of our "altar feast." The celebration of a parish feast ought to be something special, full of prayer and good fellowship. It is kind of like a birthday party. It is something that each of us should participate in, giving thanks to God for our place of worship, for His innumerable mercies to us, for the intercessions of our heavenly patron on our walk through life, for our parish family and our fellowship. *Fr. Andrew Morbey*

*When we leave  
the holy banquet  
of Communion  
on Christmas,  
we are as happy as the  
Magi would have been  
if they could have  
carried home  
the infant Jesus.*

*- Curé d'Ars*

