

**Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:****For the health of:**

Police Officer **Nicholas** on his birthday, grandson of Elena Wolff. Offered by his family. – Be Safe.

**Fr. Matthew** and **All the Parishioners of the Church of the Mother of God.** Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Happy New Year! Offered by Linda and Richard Dantine.

**Readings:**

- **Colossians 3:4-11**
- **Luke 18:35-43**
- Galatians 1:11-19 (Sunday After)
- Matthew 2:13-23 (Sunday After)

**BRETHREN**, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

**At that time**, as he drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

**Saturday service: Vespers – 6:30 PM****Sunday service:****Hours – 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****Private Confession – Half hour before any service.**

See Fr Matthew for other times.

**General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month****Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month****Coffee hour – after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room****Church School - Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month)**

**We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.**

**Announcements:**

- **Today, we welcome His Grace, Bishop Michael.** Please join us at a reception dinner for Bishop Michael immediately after the Liturgy. Tickets for the dinner will be \$10.00 each.
- **There will be a Vespertal Liturgy** for the Feast of the **Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on Monday evening, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.** Remember to bring a container to bring Holy Water home with you.
- The next **meeting of the Sisterhood of the Protection of the Theotokos** will be on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, after coffee hour.
- The next **meeting of parish council** will be on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, after coffee hour.
- Our **Annual Parish Meeting of the Parishioners** will be Sunday February 8, 2015 right after coffee hour. The annual meeting of the parishioners is for the election of the Parish Council and its officers, reports by the Rector and Council members, and for other business. Please contact Trudy Ellmore, the Council President, if you have an item that you want included on the agenda or if you plan to nominate someone for a Parish Council position.
- Our Orthodox Church Calendar for 2015 is available at the candle stand. It is the St. Tikhon's Lectionary Wall Calendar that contains Icons of feast days. It also contains the readings for the year along with feast and fast days.

**Special Announcements:**

- Parish dues for 2014 are still being accepted. Just a reminder.
- **Any Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to:** [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

**A Place Like No Other:**

On the last two days of the year, we read from Mark's Gospel, 11:11-26. The narrative begins with Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem.

The first place Jesus goes is the Temple. After He has "looked around at everything" there, He and the twelve apostles go off to Bethany as the day ends.

The next morning, they return to Jerusalem, and Mark records one of the most unsettling incidents in the Gospels. Jesus is hungry, and when He sees a fig tree from afar, He approaches it to look for fruit. The tree has leaves, but no figs. Jesus curses (meaning that He passes judgment on) the fig tree: "May no one ever eat fruit from you again."

This might seem to be an uncharacteristically harsh thing for the compassionate Lord to do, especially because the passage tells us that "it was not the season for figs." But fig trees grow in a certain way: the fruit usually appears before the leaves, so a tree with leaves could be expected to have fruit as well. Even a tree "out of season" might have fruit because fig trees often produce several crops each year.

Jesus was with His apostles, and the fig tree provided a lesson for them: the outward appearance of "fruitfulness" is not enough. All of us must produce real fruit, and take care not to look as though we are doing so when in fact our spiritual lives are barren.

Now Jesus is about to return to the place He went to first the day before, the place like no other—the Temple. There He will make it plain that Israel's way of worship has become barren and fruitless by driving out "those who bought and sold in the Temple." He accuses them of making a holy place into a "den of robbers." That phrase is from Jeremiah 7:11, which means that this isn't the first time the religious leaders have been warned that they are disrespecting God's house. Hearing His words, the current leaders don't take the lesson; instead they seek ways to destroy Him.

To emphasize that Jesus truly respects the Temple as a place like no other, Mark adds a detail that is found only in his Gospel, writing that Jesus "would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple." This greatest place of worship is not to be used as a convenient shortcut or a covered thoroughfare.

The morning after this momentous event, Jesus and the apostles pass the fig tree again. Peter exclaims, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." The Lord's power is clearly real, and so is His warning about fruitlessness.

Jesus reminds the apostles, and us, to be prayerful. A faithful and believing person will receive a beneficial answer to prayer, and will be able to do great things, as they have seen Him do. He adds that as we pray we should forgive, if we have anything against anyone, so that the Father in heaven may also forgive us.

What good words with which to start the new year.

- Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America.

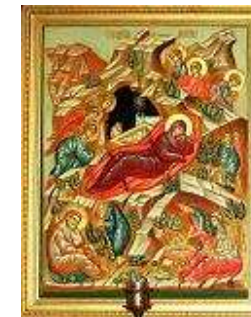
**Orthodox Church of the Mother of God*****"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"****Founded 1966*

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Sunday after the Nativity

**Christ is Born!****Glorify Him!****Today godly David is filled with joy;****Joseph and James offer praise.****The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy.****They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth,****and they cry out: "O Compassionate One, save those who honor You!"**

Kontakion — Tone 3

**Today the Church remembers:****Afterfeast of the Nativity • Sunday after Nativity**

• **Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James the Brother of the Lord** • The 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia, including: Glycerius, Zeno, Theophilus, Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius, Indes, Gorgonius, Peter, Euthymius, and the Virgins: Agape, Domna and Theophila (302) • Ven. Ignatii of Lomsk (Vologdá—1591) • Apostle Nicanor the Deacon (38 A.D.) • Ven. Simeon the Myrrhusher, of Mt. Athos (14th c.).

**December 28, 2014****29<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost****Tone 4 of the Octoechos**See us on the web at: [ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin](http://ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin)E-Mail us at: [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)