

Nativity Fast (or Advent; also called St. Philip's Fast):

As Orthodox Christians, we begin the celebration of the Nativity of Christ (December 25) with a time of preparation. Forty days before the feast of the birth of Our Lord we enter the period of the Christmas Fast [Advent]: to purify both soul and body to enter properly into and partake of the great spiritual reality of Christ's Coming. This fasting season does not constitute the intense liturgical season that is characteristic of Great Lent; rather, Christmas Lent is more of an "ascetical" rather than "liturgical" nature. Nevertheless, the Christmas fasting season is reflected in the life of the Church in a number of liturgical notes that announce the coming feast.

Within the forty days preparation the theme of the approaching Nativity is introduced in the services and liturgical commemorations, little by little. If the **beginning of the fast on November 15** is not liturgically marked by any hymn, five days later, on the eve of the **Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple**, we hear the first announcement from the nine *hirmoi* of the Christmas Canon: "**Christ is born, glorify Him!**"

With these words something changes in our life, in the very air we breathe, in the entire mood of the Church's life. It is as if we perceive far, far away, the first light of the greatest possible joy — the coming of God into His world! Thus the Church announces the coming of Christ, the Incarnation of God, His entrance into the world for its salvation. Then, on the two Sundays preceding Christmas, the Church commemorates the **Forefathers** and the **Fathers**: the prophets and the saints of the Old Testament who prepared that coming, who made history itself into the expectation, the waiting for, the salvation and reconciliation of mankind with God. Finally, on December 20th, the church begins the **Forefeast of the Nativity**, whose liturgical structure is similar to the Holy Week preceding Pascha — for the birth of the Son of God as child is the beginning of the saving ministry which will lead Him, for the sake of our salvation, to the ultimate sacrifice of the Cross.

- Rev. Alexander Schmemmann

This Nativity Season, try to remember some of the remarkable **saints of the season**, such as **Apostle Andrew**, the Holy and All-Praised First-Called November 30; **St. Nicholas**, December 6; **St. Herman** of Alaska, December 13; **St. Stephen** the protomartyr, December 26; and on New Year's Day, **St. Basil**. Try to **increase prayer time. Go to confession**. Remember to **give alms** with generosity and joy. Try to **go to Church more often**. And try to **incorporate the Church's traditions** in ways that make sense here and now (such as an Advent wreath and calendar for six Sundays, or a Christmas Eve dinner that is a variation of old traditions). Though we may not be perfect fasters, we must try to **incorporate the spirit of Orthodox worship and emphasis** to this time of year.

Also remember: "The Lord's birth and baptism are directly connected to His dying and rising. He was born in order to die. (The harmony between the events is overwhelming.) Jesus lay as an infant in the cavern in the reign of Caesar Augustus that He might lay in the tomb under Pontius Pilate. He was hounded by Herod that He might be caught by Caiaphas ... He was worshipped by wise men that the whole of creation might adore Him in His triumph over death." - Rev. Thomas Hopko

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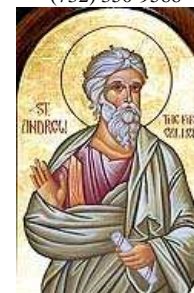
Sunday Bulletin

Church of the Mother of God
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Apostle Andrew

Christ is in our midst!

He is and always will be!

*Andrew, first-called of the Apostles
and brother of the foremost disciple,
entreat the Master of all
to grant peace to the world
and to our souls great mercy.*

Troparion- Apostle Andrew

On this day the Church remembers:

Greatmartyr James the Persian (421) • Ven. Palladius of Thessalonica (6th-7th c.)
• St. Jacob, Bishop and Wonderworker of Rostov (1392) • Uncovering of the Relics of St. Vsa'volod (Gabriel) of Pskov (1192) • Seventeen Monk Martyrs in India (4th c.) • St. Roman (5th c.) • Repose of Ven. Diodorus, Abbot of Yuriev Monastery (Solovetsky Monastery—1633) • Bl. Andrei (Andrew) of Simbirsk (1841) • Commemoration of the Weeping Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, called "ZNAMENIYE" ("THE SIGN") at Novgorod in 1170, and the other Icons of the Most-holy Theotokos, "OF THE SIGN": the "KURSK-ROOT" (1295), "ABALATSKAYA" (1637), and others.

November 27, 2011

Tone 7 of the Octoechos.

24th Sunday after Pentecost
10th Sunday of Luke

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For eternal memory of:****Charles**, father of Reader Charles**For the health of:****Svetlana** (Stella), on her 30th birthday, offered by her mother, Svetlana.**Marisa** Romanofsky, on her 20th birthday, offered by her family.**There will be a Pannikhida Services today for:****Luba** Zviagintseva (3 years)**Readings:**

- Ephesians 2:14-22
- Luke 13:10-17

BRETHREN, for he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

Sunday service:**Hours - 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****(General Confession – 9 50 AM on the first Sunday of each month)****(Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month)****Church School - 9:30 AM****(no classes 1st Sunday of each month)****Coffee hour** after Liturgy

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

Announcements:

- **St Nicholas Celebration.** Our Saint Nicholas Day celebration will be held on Sunday **December 11th** at coffee hour after Divine Liturgy. There will be food, fun, and surprise guests.
- **Toys for Kids** The church school students will be collecting for the "Toys for Kids" campaign again this year. If you can, please bring a new unwrapped toy for any age child on or before **December 11, 2011**. There will be a collection box in the basement of the church. All of the toys will be distributed in December to needy children throughout the Atlantic County area. The website the Atlantic County Toys For Kids Program is: www.toysforkidsprogram.com

Special Announcements:

- **There will be a meeting of the Parish Council today**, after coffee hour.

Reminder:

- Upcoming bulletins can be sponsored; this can be done with the signup sheet at the candle stand.
- Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to: Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org