

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

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Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector

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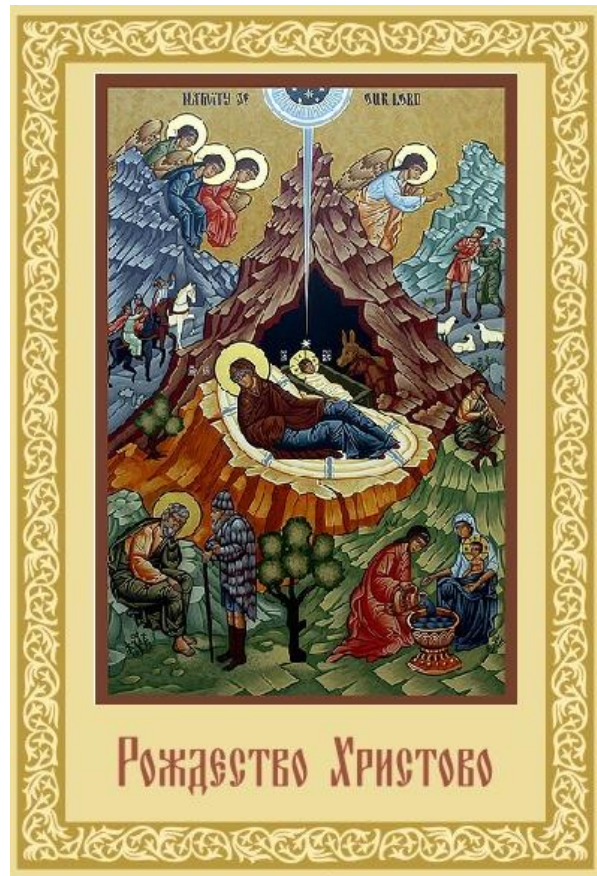
*Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest*

DECEMBER 21, 2025

TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40

Brethren: By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.



Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

GOSPEL: Mt 1:1-25

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So, all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” So, all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’” Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Tony Monastra, 2119 Willow Cove, Marblehead, OH 43440; **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road Vermilion, OH 44089; **Irene Vangeloff**, 3580 Shaw Ave., Apt. 305, Cincinnati, OH 45208 Tel.: (513) 376-9693



DECEMBER REPOSED

Peter Onyock (1952) No date provided; Anna Mazurik (1968) No date provided; **1-** Helen Elchisco (1990); **3-** Mary Hubicki (2013); **8-** Mary (Marika) Lefas (2019); **12-** Anna Bretz (2002); **13-** Joseph Mazurik (1986); **13-** Archimandrite Seraphim Oblivantseff (1954) Former Pastor; **15-** Michael W. Belenky (1971); **20-** Julia Brosajah Millie (1953); **20-** John Mazurik (2017); **20-** William Pipenur (2003); **21-** Mary Sennich (1985); **22-** Antonima Vecsey (1972); **23-** Steven Danchisen (1982); **24-** Alexandra Turkul (1980); **24-** John Bird No year Provided;

25- Joe Rose (2022); **29-** Alexandra Dotsenko (1980); **30-** Rita Felenchak (1996); **31-** Jevgeny Cernonok (1980); **31-** Janice Timko (2021); **31-** Katherine Dauterman Debby Pinta's mother (2024)



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

- MON. Dec 22** Forefeast of the Nativity, Great Martyr Anastasia the Deliverer from Poisons; Heb 3:5-11, 17-19, Mk 9:42-10:1
- TUE. Dec 23** Forefeast of the Nativity, 10 Holy Martyrs of Crete; Heb 4:1-13, Mk 10:2-12
- WED. Dec 24** **Eve of the Nativity of our Lord;** Heb 1:1-12, Lk 2:1-20
- 4:00 PM** **GREAT COMPLINE with Litya**
- THU. Dec 25** **NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**
- 9:40 AM** **HOURS**
- 10:00 AM** **DIVINE LITURGY**
- FRI. Dec 26** **Second Day of the Nativity of our Lord; Synaxis of the Most Holy Mother of God;** Heb 2:11-18, Mt 2:13-23
- 9:10 AM** **HOURS**
- 9:30 AM** **DIVINE LITURGY**
- SAT. Dec 27** **Third Day of the Nativity of our Lord, Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen, Saturday after the Nativity;** 1 Tim 6:11-16, Mt 12:15-21



4:00 PM **VESPERS**

SUN. Dec 28 **29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, Sunday after Nativity, Tone 4**

9:10 AM **HOURS**

9:30 AM **DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Social**



ATTENDANCE



12/13 Vespers, **12** attending; **12/14** Divine Liturgy, **32** attending (6 guests); **12/19** Akathist, **8** attending (3 guests);



PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Richard Williams / Christine Twarek / Tony Monastra / Alvin Foland / Delaine Ward (Ron Royhab's sister) / Rachel and her unborn baby / Kristen Cassell / Laura DeKemper / Tom Hileman / Cliff & Kathy Ruggles / Sandra / Renee Haynal / Sharon Shaheen (Patti Owen's sister) / Norb / Heidi Golob / Ron & Bobbie Royhab / Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášová / Ruth Sheller / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / James Bargdill / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

Other Requests: Patty Wandover / Russ M. / Suzeann / Laura Engler / Robin (Niece of Kathy Ruggles) / Catechumen Sessely / Catechumen Daniel / Catechumen Adam / Catechumen Joshua / Catechumen Stephanie / Catechumen Max / Catechumen Michael / Catechumen Sharon / Steve Rohweder / Nicole Williams / John Couture / Don / Ann Turinsky / Marcia / Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Linkoln Paull / Matushka Melania / Sharyn Osborne / Christine Zahm / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Susanne / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čížmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



DECEMBER CANDLE SPONSORS



Altar Candles: Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle, In thanksgiving for God's Blessings on the 30th Wedding Anniversary **(\$50)**; **Chandelier:** Mary Grieger and Tim Glovinsky, In Loving memory of Basil Glovinsky; Sonya Rose, In Loving Memory of Joe Rose **(\$50)**; **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Jean Hileman, In memory of my father, William Pipenur (2003) **(\$25)**; **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Ben **(\$20)**; **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš **(\$20)**



VIGILS FOR DEC 14



Susan Guzy 2 In loving memory of Aunt Mary(12/3/2013) Vishnaya Pamyat, Special Intentions

Laura Kovach 3 For health and/or healing of Jerry Z., Patti O., Deb F., Tony M., Russ M., Barbara D., Matushka Michelle, Burt K., Bobbie R., Peggy S., Brenda T., Matushka Melania, Ron R., Betty K., Margaret M., Hannah S., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., and Irene V.

Safe travels for my family
Special Intentions

Sandy Martin 1 Special Intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 For the health of Elaine, For the health of Fr Peter & Matushka Michelle, For the health and recovery Christine Twarek, For the health & recovery of Matushka Melania, For the health and recovery of Patty, Cathy, Patti, Laura, Kathy & Cliff, Irene, Ron & Bobbie, Rodney, Betty, Carol, Kayla, Pam, Jim, Heidi, Wayne, Peggy, Marcia, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara, and Walter, For the health of Jen, Tina, Tony, Father David, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Sonya, Margi & Joe, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, Special Intentions



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



23 – Teri Cassell; **25** – Darlene Mazurik *; **26** – Fr. John Adamcio *; **31** – Fred & Christi Soski Anniversary *



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“Bistro 163” is the charity we donate to for the month of December.

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDAR



- Dec 24th** – **Eve of the Nativity**, Great Compline with Litya 4:00 pm (*Wednesday*)
- Dec 25th** – **NATIVITY OF OUR LORD** 10:00 am Divine Liturgy (*Thursday*)
- Dec. 31st** New Year’s Eve – Vespers at 6:00 pm (*Wednesday*)
- Jan. 1st** Circumcision of Our Lord, St. Basil the Great – Div. Liturgy at 10:00 pm (*Thursday*)
- Jan. 5th** Eve of Theophany – Vespers at 6:00 pm followed by **Holy Supper** (*Monday*)
- Jan. 6th** **THEOPHANY (BAPTISM) OF OUR LORD** – Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM (*Tuesday*)

READERS LIST



Sunday Dec 21 – Joe
Sunday Dec 25 – Tim
Sunday Dec 28 – Tim

CLEANING SCHEDULE



Dec 22, Roddie & David
Dec 29, Bobbie
Jan 5, Natalie
Jan 12, Tim

COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST



Dec 21 - Mat. Michelle
Dec 28 - Natalia & Ryan
Jan 4 - Gabe Mazurik

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall.

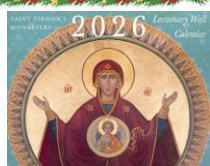
SUNDAY OFFERING



Sunday, December 14, 2025

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Tithe | \$3,638.00 |
| Candles | \$ 64.00 |
| Vigils | \$ 95.00 |
| Holy Day Donation | \$ 100.00 |
| Memorial Donation | \$1,000.00 |
| Flowers Donation | \$ 410.00 |
| Wine Donations | \$ 45.00 |
| Incense & Charcoal Donation | \$ 25.00 |
| Candles at St. Tikhon | \$ 20.00 |
| Bistro 163 (Dec.) | \$ 175.00 |
| Building Restoration | <u>\$ 725.00</u> |
| Total: | \$6,297.00 |

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!



NEW "2026" LITURGICAL CALENDARS

We wish to express our sincere thanks to **Tom Priesman** of **Neidecker, Crosser & Priesman Funeral Home** for sponsoring our liturgical calendars. The new calendars are located in the vestibule of the church.



CHRISTMAS SALE – THANK YOU!

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Natalie and Mat. Michelle for helping with the orders of our Christmas Sale yesterday. The total profit from the sale was **\$ 681.22**. May Our Lord reward you for your time and energy with all His special blessings during this Nativity Season and always!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA PLANTS DONATIONS 2025

The following is the list of sponsors who made donations in Memory/Good Health of their loved ones

- Adam Marks – For health of Konstantina Macheras and her family and for my family
- Mike and Sharon Cole – For health of Hank, Melanie & Jaclyn
- Tim Glovinsky & Mary & Dan Grieger – In loving memory of Basil Glovinsky
- Susan Guzy – For the health of Gary, Russ, Father Peter & Matushka Michelle, all family, friends, and members of Holy Assumption Parish
In loving memory of all departed of the Guzy, Felenchak Gula and Szoldra families
- Jean & Tom Hileman – For the health of Our children & grandchildren, and for blessings received
In loving memory of departed Pipenur & Hileman families
- Jim & Laura Kovach – In loving memory of departed members of the Mazur and Kovach families
- Sandy & Dave Martin – For the health of Elchisco & Martin Families & Church family & friends
In loving memory of departed Elchisco & Martin Families
- Greg Mazur – In loving memory of Mom & Dad & Archpriest Fr Gladky
- Sonya Rose – For the health of Joe & Lisa, Margaret & Dennis, Chris & RJ
In loving memory of Joe, Marguerite, Mom, Dad & George Michael
- Stamp family – For the health of Larisa, Arcadie, Lefterii, Costas, Marina and newborn Calvin Theodor (Theodosius)
In loving memory of Gheorghe, George, Galina, William, Tatiana, Natalia, Victor
- Natalie & Greg Twarek – For the health of Mazurik & Twarek family members and our church family & friends
In loving memory of our departed parents, Grandparents, Aunt Ella

Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle – & all departed family and friends
For the health of Barbara Wrolewski and Michal & Helena Tomas
In loving memory of deceased of the Tomas, Drozd, Wroblewski,
and Dubee families

We would like to thank the following parishioners for their donations for wine and incense

Jean & Tom Hileman – wine
Jim & Laura Kovach – wine
Fr. Peter & Mat. Michelle – wine, incense

Sincere thanks the following parishioners for their donations without specified intention

Susan Guzy
Stamp family

May Our Lord and God reward you all for your generosity and grant you His Special blessing throughout this Nativity Season and always!



Sunday before the Nativity

Commemorated on December 21

The Sunday before the Nativity of Christ we commemorate Adam and Eve (the first-created), the righteous Abel, son of Adam, the righteous Seth, son of Adam, the righteous Enos, son of Seth, the righteous Kenan, son of Enos, the righteous Mehaliel (Maleleim), son of Kenan, the righteous Jared, son of Mehaliel, the righteous Enoch, son of Jared, the righteous Methuselah, son of Enoch, the righteous Lamech, son of Methuselah, the righteous Noah, son of Lamech, the righteous Shem, son of Noah, the righteous Japheth, son of Noah, the righteous Arphachshad, son of Shem, the righteous Canaan, son of Arphachshad (in some versions of the OT, Canaan is called the son of Ham), the righteous Shelah, son of Canaan (some versions of the OT call Shelah the son of Arphachshad), the righteous Eber (from whom the Hebrews take their name), son of Shelah, the righteous Peleg, son of Eber, the righteous Ragab (Reu), son of Peleg, the righteous Serug, son of Ragab, the righteous Nahor, son of Serug, the righteous Terah, son of Serug.

The holy Patriarchs: the righteous Patriarch Abraham, son of Terah, the righteous Patriarch Isaac, son of Abraham, the righteous Patriarch Jacob, son of Isaac, the righteous Patriarch Reuben, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Simeon, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Levi, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Judah (Christ was of this tribe), the righteous Patriarch Zebulun, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Issachar, son of Jacob and Leah, the righteous Patriarch Dan, son of Jacob and Bilhah (Rachel's maid), the righteous Patriarch Gad, son of Jacob and Zilpah (Leah's maid), the righteous Patriarch Asher, son of Jacob and Zilpah, the righteous Patriarch Naphthali, son of Jacob and Bilhah, the righteous Patriarch Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel, the righteous Patriarch Benjamin, son of Jacob and Rachel.

The righteous Pharez and Zerah, twin sons of Judah, the righteous Hezron, son of Pharez, the righteous Aram, son of Hezron, the righteous Aminadab, son of Aram, the righteous Nahshon, son of Aminadab, the righteous Salmon, son of Nahshon, the righteous Boaz, son of Salmon, the righteous Obed, son of Boaz and Ruth, the righteous Jesse, son of Obed.

The holy Prophet-King David, son of Jesse, King Solomon, son of David, King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, King Abijah, son of Rehoboam, King Asa, son of Abijah, King Jehosaphat, son of Asa, King Joram (Jehoram, an evil king), son of Jehosaphat, King Ochoziah (Ahaziah), son of Joram, King Jotham,

son of Uzziah (Oziah), King Ahaz (a faithless king), son of Jotham, King Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, King Manesseh, son of Hezekiah, King Amos (Ammon), son of Manesseh, King Josiah, son of Amos, King Jechoniah, son of Josiah.

Shealtiel, son of Jechoniah, Zerubbabel (who led captives back to Jerusalem, and laid the foundations of the new Temple), son of Shealtiel, Abiud, son of Zerubbabel, Eliachem, son of Abiud, Azor, son of Eliachem, Zadok, son of Azor, Achim, son of Zadok, Eliud, son of Achim, Eleazar, son of Eliud, Matthan, son of Eleazar, Jacob, son of Matthan, St Joseph the Betrothed, son of Jacob.

The righteous Melchizedek, King of Salem, the righteous Job, the holy Prophet Moses, the priests Hur and Aaron, Joshua, son of Nun.

The holy prophet Samuel, the holy prophet Nathan, the holy prophet Daniel, the three holy youths Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

The righteous Sarah, wife of Abraham, the righteous Rebecca, wife of Isaac, the righteous Leah, first wife of Jacob, the righteous Rachel, second wife of Jacob, the righteous Asineth, wife of Patriarch Joseph the all-comely, the righteous Miriam, sister of Moses, the righteous Deborah, Judge of Israel and prophetess, the righteous Ruth, wife of Boaz, the righteous woman of Zarephath, to whom Elias was sent (3 Kings 17), the righteous woman of Shunem, who was hospitable to Elisha (4 Kings 4), the righteous Judith, slayer of Holofernes, the righteous Esther, who delivered Israel from death, the righteous Hannah, mother of the prophet Samuel, the righteous Susanna.



Merry Christmas

Wishing you all a Happy and Blessed Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord!

Christ is Born!

Glorify Him!

With love, Fr. Peter and Matushka Michelle



Please Note: All the days between December 25th and January 4th are fast free



SINCERE THANK YOU!

Fr. Peter and Matushka Michelle would like to thank the entire parish for your Christmas wishes and especially for your gifts for the Nativity of Our Lord! May the Lord reward you for your kindness and love and bless you abundantly throughout this Nativity Season and in the New Year!

Sincerely in the New Born King,

Fr. Peter and Matushka Michelle



December 25, 2025

12/001

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, beloved children in the Lord,

When it was time for thy coming upon earth, the first taxation of the world was held; and then thou madest ready to enroll the names of all who believed in thy birth. For this cause Caesar published such a decree, since thy timeless and eternal kingdom was newly made manifest.

– St. Germanus, Doxastichon at the Praises, tone six

Christ is born! Glorify him!

In one of her most famed hymns, the venerable Cassia draws parallels between the reign of Caesar and the reign of Christ: “When Augustus reigned alone upon earth,” she says, “the many kingdoms of men came to an end,” and when Christ was born in that reign, the many gods of the nations were done away. As the many cities of the world passed under one rule, all the nations came to believe in one God.

The relationship between these two reigns, two rules – that of Rome and that of Christ – goes beyond poetic parallels, however. Divine providence arranged for the birth of the Lord at precisely the right moment, when the Pax Romana, the peace secured by the ascendancy of the Roman Empire, ensured that the Good News of Jesus Christ could travel freely throughout the Mediterranean world, from Jerusalem to Italy, to Gaul and North Africa, and beyond it, to barbarian lands and the Persian Empire.

At the same time, we must not forget the role played by Roman rule also at the end of the Savior’s earthly life, when the Lord gave himself up for the life of the world: he was flogged by Roman soldiers, condemned by a Roman governor, pierced by a Roman lance. In the end, it was a Roman officer who recognized what had taken place: “Truly this was the Son of God.”



Roman imperial authority paved the way for the coming of Christ in the flesh and made possible the apostolic preaching of the Gospel; this same authority sentenced God himself to death. Thus, Rome occupies an ambivalent place in the tradition of the Church; as a symbol, it is bivalent. On the one hand, we speak of the New Rome and the Third Rome: the reign of Christ established on earth in Roman garb. Our bishops, with their eagle rugs and their sakkoi, still bear the trappings of Eastern Roman emperors.

On the other hand, in New Testament—in St. Peter's first epistle and St. John's Apocalypse (1 Pet. 5:13; Rev. 17–18 et passim)—we see Rome equated with Babylonian harlotry, with the old Jerusalem that kills the prophets and rejects those sent to her. Rome appears both as the city of God on earth and the supreme city of the world, the dominion of the flesh and of the devil.

However, St. Germanus of Constantinople, in the doxastichon I quote above, offers a new and higher perspective. He does not only draw parallels, as does St. Cassia; neither does he assign Roman rule an incidental, albeit providential, role. Instead, he views Rome as the direct instrument of God: "For this cause Caesar published such a decree," so that the kingdom of God might appear and Christ might enroll his faithful in the book of life. Whatever else Caesar's decree may have done, whatever Caesar may have intended, the cause for that decree was determined by God, and it was part of his holy design, his plan; God's providence was the agent, the decisive factor.

When God made the world out of nothing, he did so in order that the world might come to know him and love him, and so that he could show his love to the world—so that he could love the world. This does not apply only to the world as an abstract whole; it applies to each of us, who are microcosms, little worlds unto ourselves. God loves each of us with his whole love; in love, he made everything for each of us—for me and for you. As St. Paul says, "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21–23).

All of history points toward the coming of Christ; all the actors on the world stage, all the empires of men, all the civilizations from furthest antiquity to the end of the world: all of this has existed, exists, and will exist solely for the sake of his First and Second Coming. Moreover, since his Coming was for our sake—not his own, since, in his divine aseity, he has no need of anything—this means that all the world exist for us, for each of us—for me and for you. All of history took place, takes place, will take place, for your sake.

Rome stands as a potent symbol of all this history, of the entire world of human events. Thus, it is inevitable that Rome both serves as a vehicle of the Gospel and an instrument of the Passion, both as an ally and an enemy of Christ. The Church, in her earthly sojourn, has known the two aspects of Rome as well: the Rome of Diocletian and the Rome of Constantine; the Rome of the catacombs and the Rome of the Hagia Sophia.

So it is in our own lives. Sometimes the circumstances of life bring us joy, sometimes they bring us pain. But no matter what happens to us, we must know, as the great spiritual testament attributed to St. Seraphim of Vyritsa says, that all of this was from the hand of the loving God. Every weal, every

woe, every ease, every hardship: all of this was from him. Without all these events, known and unknown, past, present, and future, you would not be who you are. All of this is a gift from God to you, so that you could receive a still greater gift: God himself.

Today he appears as a newborn Child in the arms of his most pure Mother; soon she shall bear him to the temple of sacrifice, and thence to exile in Egypt. Thus, both in happiness and in trials, let us imitate her in always extending to him our heart's embrace. Holding him close, we will come to understand, with St. Germanus and St. Seraphim, that everything that has taken place, from the very beginning of time, has happened so that we could come to this moment, to this cave, to this manger, and experience the Advent of God in the flesh. Everything has happened so that he could be ours, and we could be his.

To our infant Savior, the Creator and Sustainer of all, the true Love of our hearts, our deepest Desire, the Fulfillment of our being: to him be all love and adoration, together with his Father and his All-holy Spirit, throughout the ages of this world and unto endless eternity.

Greeting you with the joy of Christ's Nativity,
With my primatial prayers and blessing,

+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada



Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF THE MIDWEST

Thursday, 25 December 2025
The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ
№. 170

ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF
THE MOST REVEREND DANIEL
ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO AND THE MIDWEST

To the Clergy, Monastics, Faithful and Friends of the Diocese of the Midwest

*Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
has shone to the world the light of wisdom!
For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Orient from on high.
O Lord, glory to Thee!*

Beloved Sons and Daughters in Christ,

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

I greet you all in the joy and peace of Christ as we gather with family, friends, and our fellow believers to celebrate in the bright light and brilliance of the Nativity of Our Lord!

The liturgical texts of the Feast of the Nativity are filled with references to light and darkness. From the text of the troparion of the feast, quoted above, to the words taken from the Prophet Isaiah, *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light* (Isaiah 9:2), and in many other scriptural and liturgical texts, we are reminded that Christ, the Light of the World, was born into this world as the Light which extinguishes all darkness, the darkness of sin and of death, and the darkness experienced in human life. Even one of the season's most popular carols reminds us of this. In *We Three Kings*, we hear the refrain, "Oh star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light." The *Perfect Light* of which we sing is Christ Himself.

Throughout these past forty days, we have been preparing ourselves to celebrate the cherished and bright feast of the *Birth in the Flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ*. through its fasting discipline, its call to prayer, the exhortation to reach out in love to a needy world, and its appeal to participate more fully in the Divine Services, the Church has called us to reflect more deeply upon the relationship between darkness and light that we encounter in various spheres of human life – principally in the areas of our physical, spiritual and moral life.

During the most recent days of this year's period of preparation for the celebration of our Lord's Nativity, we have been witnesses to an increase in the powers of darkness extending around the globe. Violence, continuing wars, the hateful and senseless taking of innocent human life, brutal social upheaval, and the attempted destruction of the moral order, among other influences and efforts, have been experienced around the world in so many different and intense ways in these past few weeks and days. However, whether by the taking of one human life, the attempt to harm or destroy a people or peoples, or a movement to destroy the moral order, these are all an exercise of darkness trying to overtake the light. This, however, is ultimately impossible. The Light - the Light of Christ - will always illumine and bring brightness, order, and peace. The Light that shone in the darkness of the night of the Savior's birth will always overcome the darkness. The Light of Christ will always shine through and overcome the darkness of this world. This is good news, the good news we now celebrate.

I invite you all to join with me in pondering and celebrating this great mystery of the Birth of Christ. Our communal celebration of the Lord's Nativity offers us the opportunity to pause and reflect upon the Mystery of the Incarnation: that God became man, took upon Himself our human flesh and human life, was Incarnate of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit and became man. This is not only a celebration of Christ's birth, and neither is it merely a time to ponder the depths of the mystery of the Incarnation – it is much more. It is also a profound proclamation, the Good News, that *light has entered the world's deepest night*. The Birth of Christ proclaims that no darkness is too mighty or too powerful for Christ's light to penetrate it. Just as the star guided the wisemen from the East, so the light of Christ, the Perfect Light, guides every individual who is willing to seek after Him. May we, too, be guided by His Light.

May the Light of Christ shine brilliantly in your hearts and homes as you gather with family and friends to celebrate this bright and joyous feast. Be assured of my prayers for you and all your loved ones.

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

With love in the Incarnate Son of God,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DANIEL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest