

PREPARATION FOR THE BLESSING OF HOMES

Before the Priest arrives at your home, here are a few reminders on how to prepare:

- In the main room of the home, usually the kitchen or dining room, have placed on the table a white cloth, a candle and /or an Icon or cross. You may place a small container of Holy Water on the table. (Note: Father will be bringing his own.)
- Make a list of those living in the house including pets and all deceased you want prayed for.
- Turn off all TV's, radios, computers, etc. So as to keep focused on the blessing service.
- Make sure that pets are heeled or restrained so as not to get underfoot while Father goes through the home.
- In some customs, someone (usually a child) takes a candle and leads Father through the house while the rest follow.
- If you have any items to be blessed (Icon, Cross, etc.). Put them on the table where the blessing will take place.
- When the priest arrives, have everyone in the home gather around the table and join in the blessing. **PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT.**
- Invite friends or neighbors to participate and witness the beauty of this tradition.

NOTE: Remember, the invitation to the priest to come and bless your home is an invitation to ask for the mercy of God upon the household. The sprinkling of the Holy Water is a sign of God's presence in the home as an extension of His Holy House, the Church. It is a time to renew our commitment to God as we begin another year in His mercy and love for mankind. Please contact Fr. Andrew to make arrangements to have your home blessed by the end of January.

ANNUAL BLESSING OF LAKE ERIE

Saturday, January 8, 2022 at Noon

Weather Date: Saturday, January 15 at Noon

Location: Clemons Park across the street from
Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
110 East Main Street, Marblehead, OH



Blessing of the Lake, the
Village of Marblehead &
surrounding areas,
prayers for the civil
authorities and residents.

Noon: Join us for the Procession from Holy Assumption Orthodox
Church to Clemons Park across the street.

Return to Church following the Service for food, adult beverages,
coffee, tea, water, soda.

QUESTIONS? Please call Father Andrew

Rectory: 419-798-4591 / Cell: 570-212-8747

14,000 Infants (the Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem Commemorated on December 29

14,000 Holy Infants were killed by King Herod in Bethlehem. When the time came for the Incarnation of the Son of God and His Birth of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Magi in the East beheld a new star in the heavens, foretelling the Nativity of the King of the Jews. They journeyed immediately to Jerusalem to worship the Child, and the star showed them the way. Having worshipped the divine Infant, they did not return to Jerusalem to Herod, as he had ordered them, but being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their country by another way. Herod finally realized that his scheme to find the Child would not be successful, and he ordered that all the male children two years old and younger at Bethlehem and its surroundings be killed. He thought that the divine Infant, Whom he considered a rival, would be among the dead children. **Con't Pg 15**

Christmas Greetings from your Rector

Christ is Born!

I greet you on this joyous and needed Feast of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ! It has been a very difficult year and a half and it doesn't seem to be easing.

As your rector and Spiritual Father, it is important to let you know that this day begins our spiritual journey back to the Lord. Jesus became man so the doors can be opened to Heaven once again for all of us.

This world is troubled without God. We need God back, not only in the world and our country, but within ourselves by partaking of His Body and Blood.

I'm hoping and praying for those who have not returned back to their Spiritual home. Please come back soon because without God in our lives and bodies we are nothing.

The Church and the Lord are here waiting for your joyous return. For whatever your reason was and/or is keeping you away, allow this Great Feast to heal your wounds and bring forgiveness into your hearts. May God heal whatever is ailing you or bothering you.

It is time to return home. Let this little babe and king lead you back.

May the joy of this Great Feast be with all of you and your families today and remain in your hearts throughout the entire year and beyond.

Glorify Him!

Nativity Con't from Pg 3

the Virgin the Throne of the Cherubim; the Manger a room, in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain is laid." (Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Nativity Canon).

Having given birth to the divine Infant without travail, the Most Holy Virgin "wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:7). In the stillness of midnight (Wisdom of Solomon 18:14-15), the proclamation of the birth of the Savior of the world was heard by three shepherds watching their flocks by night.

An angel of the Lord (Saint Cyprian says this was Gabriel) came before them and said: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which

shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). The humble shepherds were the first to offer worship to Him Who condescended to assume the form of a humble servant for the salvation of mankind. Besides the glad tidings to the Bethlehem shepherds, the Nativity of Christ was revealed to the Magi by a wondrous star. Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theophylactus, commenting on Saint Matthew's Gospel, say that this was no ordinary star. Rather, it was "a divine and angelic power that appeared in the form of a star." Saint Demetrius of Rostov says it was a "manifestation of divine energy" (Narrative of the Adoration of the Magi). Entering the house where the Infant lay, the Magi "fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Mt. 2:11).

The present Feast, commemorating the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, was established by the Church. Its origin goes back to the time of the Apostles. In the Apostolic Constitutions (Section 3, 13) it says, "Brethren, observe the feasts; and first of all the Birth of Christ, which you are to celebrate on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month." In another place it also says, "Celebrate the day of the Nativity of Christ, on which unseen grace is given man by the birth of the Word of God from the Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world."

In the second century Saint Clement of Alexandria also indicates that the day of the Nativity of Christ is December 25. In the third century Saint Hippolytus of Rome mentions the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, and appoints the Gospel readings for this day from the opening chapters of Saint Matthew.

In 302, during the persecution of Christians by Maximian, 20,000 Christians of Nicomedia (December 28) were burned in church on the very Feast of the Nativity of Christ. In that same century, after the persecution when the Church had received freedom of religion and had become the official religion in the Roman Empire, we find the Feast of the Nativity of Christ observed throughout the entire Church. There is evidence of this in the *Con't Next Pg*

works of Saint Ephraim the Syrian, Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Ambrose of Milan, Saint John Chrysostom and other Fathers of the Church of the fourth century.

Saint John Chrysostom, in a sermon which he gave in the year 385, points out that the Feast of the Nativity of Christ is ancient, and indeed very ancient. In this same century, at the Cave of Bethlehem, made famous by the Birth of Jesus Christ, the empress Saint Helen built a church, which her mighty son Constantine adorned after her death. In the Codex of the emperor Theodosius from 438, and of the emperor Justinian in 535, the universal celebration of the day of the Nativity of Christ was decreed by law. Thus, Nikēphoros Callistus, a writer of the fourteenth century, says in his History that in the sixth century, the emperor Justinian established the celebration of the Nativity of Christ throughout all the world.

Patriarch Anatolius of Constantinople in the fifth century, Sophronius and Andrew of Jerusalem in the seventh, Saints John of Damascus, Cosmas of Maium and Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople in the eighth, the Nun Cassiane in the ninth, and others whose names are unknown, wrote many sacred hymns for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, which are still sung by the Church on this radiant festival.

During the first three centuries, in the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Cyprus, the Nativity of Christ was combined together with the Feast of His Baptism on January 6, and called “Theophany” (“Manifestation of God”). This was because of a belief that Christ was baptized on anniversary of His birth, which may be inferred from Saint John Chrysostom’s sermon on the Nativity of Christ: “it is not the day on which Christ was born which is called Theophany, but rather that day on which He was baptized.”

In support of such a view, it is possible to cite the words of the Evangelist Luke who says that “Jesus began to be about thirty years of age” (Luke 3:23) when He was baptized. The joint celebration of the Nativity of Christ and His Theophany continued to the end of the fourth century in certain Eastern Churches, and until the fifth or sixth century in others.

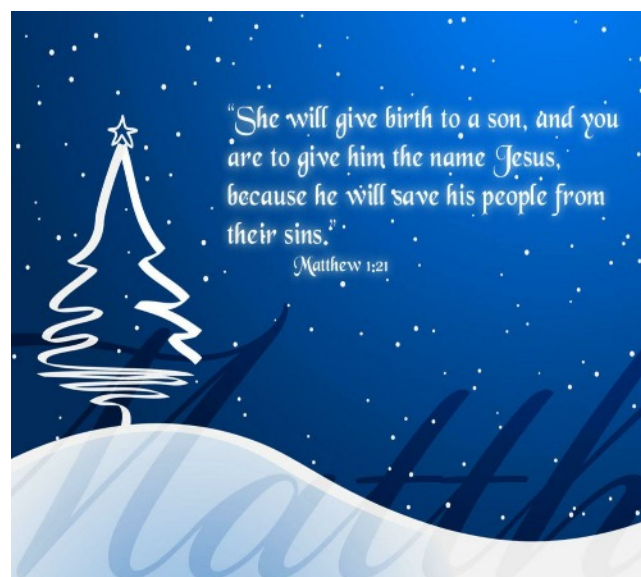
The present order of services preserves the memory of the ancient joint celebration of the Feasts of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany. On the eve of both Feasts, there is a similar tradition that one should fast until the stars appear. The order of divine services on the eve of both feastdays and the feastdays themselves is the same.

The Nativity of Christ has long been counted as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. It is one of the greatest, most joyful and wondrous events in the history of the world. “The angel said to the shepherds, ‘Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.’ Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, glorifying God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.’ Those who heard these things were astonished at what the shepherds told them concerning the Child. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen” (Luke 2:10-20).

Thus the Nativity of Christ, a most profound and extraordinary event, was accompanied by the wondrous tidings proclaimed to the shepherds and to the Magi. This is a cause of universal rejoicing for all mankind, “for the Savior is Born!”

Concurring with the witness of the Gospel, the Fathers of the Church, in their God-inspired writings, describe the Feast of the Nativity of Christ as most profound, and joyous, serving as the basis and foundation for all the other Feasts.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



In Memoriam: The Twelfth Anniversary of the Repose of Archbishop Job

Saturday, December 18, 2021, marks the twelfth anniversary of repose for His Eminence, Archbishop Job (Osacky). Memorial services were held throughout the diocese, including the Diocesan Cathedral, Holy Trinity Cathedral.

Archbishop Job was born Richard John Osacky in Chicago on March 18, 1946. He completed university studies at Northern Illinois University and, after graduating from Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, in 1970, he served as cantor and youth director at Saint John the Baptist Church, Black Lick, PA. Concurrently, he assumed responsibilities in leading Reader Services, conducting religious education and youth work, and painting icons. It was his extraordinary affinity with Orthodox youth that gained him the recognition of the Church at large.

In 1973, he was ordained to the diaconate and subsequently to the priesthood by Bishop Theodosius of Pittsburgh [later Metropolitan Theodosius]. He was assigned to the parish in Black Lick, where he also served as spiritual director for the Orthodox Christian Fellowship at nearby Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

As a celibate priest, he maintained a zeal for the monastic life in all his endeavors. In 1975 he was made a riasaphor monk, and later was tonsured a monk in the Lesser Schema by [then] Bishop Herman in August of 1982. In November of that year he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite.

Recognizing his zeal and spirit of dedication to Church service, the Diocese of New England nominated Hieromonk Job as their diocesan bishop. The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America ratified the nomination and elected him Bishop of Hartford and the Diocese of New England. He was consecrated to the episcopacy on January 29, 1983, at All Saints Church in Hartford, CT.

At its session of November 5, 1992, the Holy Synod of Bishops elected Bishop Job to the See of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest, which had been vacant since the retirement of Bishop Boris in 1988. He was enthroned as Bishop of his native city at Holy Trinity Cathedral on February 6, 1993.

In his years in the See of Chicago, the Diocese of the Midwest experienced tremendous growth. This was witnessed in—but certainly not limited to—the

establishment of numerous new mission parishes in the diocese.

In addition to his ministry as the ruling hierarch of the Diocese of the Midwest, he enjoyed his long-standing and excellent reputation as an iconographer and iconologist. He was often called upon to offer lectures on this subject, and he was willing to assist and encourage other iconographers.

In recognition of his over two decades of “good and faithful” service as archpastor, at the March 2004 Session of the Holy Synod, Bishop Job was elevated to the rank of Archbishop.

Archbishop Job fell asleep in the Lord unexpectedly on Friday, December 18, 2009 en route from Cleveland to Chicago. He is interred on the grounds of Saint John the Baptist Church, Black Lick, PA.

May Archbishop Job's memory be eternal!

In Memoriam: John Sedor

LIVONIA, MI [DOM Communications] – John Michael Sedor, 89, passed away on December 17, 2021. John was born on November 3, 1932, in Detroit, Michigan, to Michael Thomas and Mary Sedor. He is survived by his beloved wife, Joanne, of 61 years; his children, John (Jane), Janet (Dan), Julie Ann (Danial), Joseph (Alexandra); and his 10 cherished grandchildren: Alexandra, Michael, Jack, Anna, Daniel, Sophia, Samuel, John, Elizabeth, and Matthew.

John graduated from Northwestern University in 1954 and was drafted into the Army during the Korean War. He served as an interpreter and liaison in Berlin. Professionally, John worked in Human Resources and Labor Relations Management. His avocations included teaching life-saving classes at the local Y.M.C.A., swimming, cooking and bread making!

John was a faithful and active member of the Orthodox Christian Church. He volunteered his time and talents to the Church locally, nationally, and internationally serving in a variety of capacities including teaching, singing in the choir, and Reading. Administratively, he served on the local Parish Board as well as in the leadership of the national Church Pension *Con't Next Pg*

John Sedor Con't from Previous PG

Board from 2008-2015. He was instrumental in creating and implementing the pastoral retirement plan for the entire OCA. John worked tirelessly for the benefit of the retired clergy, their wives, and their families.

John also volunteered with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (O.C.M.C.). He participated with mission teams teaching in Alaska, Romania, Moldova, South Africa, and Guatemala. John enjoyed fishing, story telling, classical music and laughing. When these four things were put together he would relate a “whale of a tale!”

John remained a “good and faithful servant,” with a peaceful demeanor, even as his health slowly declined. During his later years, he joyfully “took up his cross” and embraced each day as a gift, never letting his physical challenges affect his spirit and love.

John will be remembered by his family as a faithful and loving husband, father, and grandfather. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to O.C.M.C. (www.ocmc.org) or your favorite charity.



14,000 infants con't from Pg 13

The murdered infants thus became the first martyrs for Christ. The rage of Herod fell also on Simeon the God-Receiver (February 3), who declared before everyone in the Temple that the Messiah had been born. When the holy Elder died, Herod would not give permission for him to be properly buried. On the orders of King Herod, the holy prophet and priest Zachariah was also killed. He was murdered in Jerusalem between the Temple and the altar (Mt. 23:35) because he would not tell the whereabouts of his son John, the future Baptist of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The wrath of God soon fell upon Herod himself: a horrid condition struck him down and he died, eaten by worms while still alive. Before his death, the impious king murdered the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, and also his brother, and his sister and her husband, and also his own wife Mariam, and three of his sons, and seventy men of wisdom who were members of the Sanhedrin. He initiated this bloodbath so that the day of his death would not be one of rejoicing, but one of mourning.

The Christian Church very rightly proclaimed these murdered children as Saints, because they died at an innocent age, and were, in some way, the first martyrs of Christianity. They may not have been baptized in water, but they were baptized in the blessed blood of their martyrdom.

Last but not least, the relics (or perhaps some) of the Holy Infants are found in Constantinople, in the Church of Saint James the Brother of the Lord, which was built by Emperor Justin. Most of their Holy Relics are at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Portions of their Holy Relics are also to be found in the Pantokrator Monastery on Mount Athos.

