

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Department of
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
ORTHODOX CHURCH in AMERICA

Christ is Born! Let Us Glorify Him!

One of the ways we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ on December 25th is to sing the Troparion of the Feast. The words of the hymn describe Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness and the Orient from on high. The hymn also refers to the wise men from the East who followed a star to find this newborn King.

Depictions and descriptions of the wise men differ. They are sometimes called Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar, but have also been given other names. In Western art they are often shown riding camels, presumably to indicate that they come from the East, but in icons they ride horses, a way of showing that they wanted to get to the Savior as quickly as possible. Swift horses can certainly maintain a different pace from that of plodding camels, though the ride was arduous no matter what animals they rode.

While in many representations all three men look to be approximately the same age, icons show one as distinctly older than the other two, emphasizing that the urgent work of seeking salvation is for people of all ages, just as it is for people of every background and origin.

One word that is used by most traditions to identify the three travelers is "magi." This word brings to mind images of men who watched the stars closely and tried to derive wisdom from them, or who "worshipped the stars," as the Troparion states.

The wise men are not the only ones to whom this word is applied. In Acts 8:9-24 we meet a "magus" (the singular of "magi") named Simon, who says of himself that he is "something



December 25, 2016

NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

- 8:50am – Hours
- 9:00am – Divine Liturgy

Epistle: Gal. 4:4-7
Gospel: Mt. 2:1-12

- After the Liturgy everyone is invited for the traditional **Christmas Social**.

Schedule of Services

MONDAY, DEC. 26 – 2ND DAY OF NATIVITY
SYNAXIS OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS.

Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, the Brother of the Lord

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

TUESDAY, DEC. 27 – 3RD DAY OF NATIVITY
HOLY PROTOMARTYR & ARCHDEACON STEPHEN

9:00am - Divine Liturgy

(continued on the next page)

Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, and we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Please keep in your prayers our Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Genevieve Bobenko, Mary Fechisin, Andrew Fabian, Edward Fedush, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazorczyk, Marian Nagel, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Helen Rahnefeld, Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

great." He is popular and is listened to because he has amazed the people with magic. But Simon's response to the truly great things he sees the apostles doing is all wrong. He hopes to buy the power they have, so that "anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter rebukes him and urges him to repent.

The magi who come to worship Jesus in the cave are quite different. They are ready to humble themselves before this Child. They are willing to be "taught by a star to adore" Him, as the Troparion puts it, not seeking to share His power but just to offer Him gifts. They are ready to accept what God is showing them by means of a star that is different from all the stars they have studied so attentively.

In his poem "Journey of the Magi" T.S. Eliot writes that the men returned to their kingdom homes but were "no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, With an alien people clutching their gods." The magis' lives were changed, and perhaps they would never again be comfortable. God had shown them something entirely new in the stars, and the only possible response was the one we sing in the Troparion: "O Lord, glory to Thee."

Schedule of Services

(continued from previous page)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

6:00pm - Great Vespers & Litya, followed by Panikhida in memory of Anatoly Rozanovich, on the 1st Anniversary of his Repose, offered by Anna Rozanovich

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017

9:00am - Divine Liturgy & Molieben for the beginning of Civil New Year



Announcements

- ◆ Please note: due to inclement weather the **Healing Service** was postponed to Saturday, January 14, 2017.
- ◆ **Wall calendars for 2017** are available in the narthex. Many thanks to the calendar sponsor – J.C.Fila Lexington Memorial Home.
- ◆ **Envelopes for 2017** are available in the candle room. Please pick up your set and continue to support our parish, that does rely on your support! May the Lord bless you hundredfold for your generosity!
- ◆ The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Sunday, January 15, 2017 following coffee hour.

Welcome Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy. It is our joy to have you with us today. If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able.

While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross, receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and for fellowship in our Church Hall after the service.