

SS. PETER & PAUL

Lorain, OH | www.OrthodoxLorain.org | (440) 277-6266

Rev. Joseph McCartney, Rector

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Gospel Reading ~ Matthew 2:13-23
Epistle Reading ~ Galatians 1:11-19
Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ

This Week at a Glance

Tues, Jan 1st

9:00am- 3rd & 6th Hours
 9:30am - Divine Liturgy for
 the Circumcision of the Lord

Sat, Jan 5th

6:00pm- Great Vespers

Sun, Jan 6th

9:00 pm - 3rd & 6th Hours
 9:30 am - Divine Liturgy for
 the Theophany of the Lord

Christmas Cards

If you have any leftover **unused** Christmas Cards, or would like to purchase some, please bring them in to Church. Anysia Wharton will hold on to them until next year and send them to the service men & women who are recovering at Walter Reed on behalf of our parish. See Anysia for more info.

Blessing of Waters

We will have the Great Blessing of Waters next Sunday at the end of the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to take some home, please bring your own containers as we will not be providing bottles as in years past.

Gospel Meditation

On this Sunday the Church commemorates three people who were close to Christ. First of all, His ancestor, the holy King and Prophet David, who foresaw the Coming of Christ in his Psalms.

Secondly, we recall the righteous Joseph the Betrothed, who protected the Mother of God and her Child before, during and after His birth.

Thirdly, we remember the son of Joseph, James, who accompanied the Mother of God, Christ and Joseph on the flight into Egypt, and later became one of the Apostles and indeed was martyred as James the Righteous, the first Orthodox Bishop of Jerusalem.

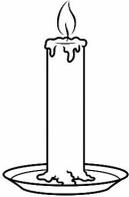
It is interesting to recall to Non-Believers the words of the Gospel regarding this Flight into Egypt, and how Joseph was commanded to 'take the young child and his mother into Egypt'. We note how the Scriptures clearly do not call Christ, 'Joseph's son', or his mother, 'your wife'. Again the Scriptures say that all this was to fulfill the words of the Scriptures: 'Out of Egypt have I called my son', and not, 'out of Egypt have I called Joseph's son'.

However, today, I would also like to recall to our attention three others who were closely associated with Christ at this time, the Three Wise Men, called the Magi. They are actually commemorated on Christmas Day itself, but somehow we often overlook them.

The Wise Men, by tradition three in number, came from Babylon, which was at that time a centre of astronomy. They came to worship Christ for they had seen a great sign in the sky. In recent times, various scientists and others have tried to identify this sign either as a star, or else a conjunction of planets, and thus to date the time of Christ's birth. As Orthodox, we do not believe that the Wise Men found Christ by following a 'star'. First of all, if it had been a star, would they have been able to follow it by day as well as by night? And above all, we know....

Annual Parish Meeting

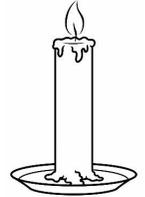
We will have our annual Parish Meeting on **Sunday, January 27th** immediately following Divine Liturgy. This annual meeting is open to eligible voting members of our parish only. Visitors and non-members will be asked to exit the church hall prior to the start of the meeting. Please keep in mind that a "voting member" is one who 1.) Has received communion and confession in the last year in our parish. (*Confession in home parish is required unless a blessing is received from the rector to confess to a different local Orthodox priest.*) 2.) One who has fulfilled financial obligation in the past year, which is currently defined by the parish council as a minimum contribution of \$275 in the last year. Confession is available up to an hour before and after vespers and before Divine Liturgy.



Tall Candles

The tall candles in the front candle stands are given for:

**John and Kathryne Pysarchyk
and Patrick Joseph Fittipaldi.**



Gospel Meditation (continued)

... the Scriptures that the Wise Men found the Christ-Child because the 'star' stopped directly over the house where He was. Stars do not stand over houses. In reality, this was no star - this was the light of the Holy Spirit.

The Wise Men came with presents, gold, incense and myrrh. Gold represented the Kingship of Christ. Incense represented the Priesthood of Christ. Myrrh represented the Prophetic nature of Christ and His triumph over Death. For ourselves today, we may ask what significance these presents have in our relationship with Christ and His Church.

First of all, do we give gold to the Church? I do not mean literally gold, I mean financial support. There are some people who may think that I am being indelicate, unspiritual, but the fact is that the Church needs financial support in order to survive. At this time of the year especially, it might be good for us to look again at how we support the Church in this respect. The Wise Men gave gold to Christ, which may well have paid for the Flight into Egypt. How do we give gold to Christ?

Secondly, do we give incense to the people who form the Church, the members or limbs of the Body of Christ? I do not literally mean incense, I mean respect, love of our neighbors whom we come across every time we attend church. This is what incense means, it is why the priest censes the icons or images in church and also the people who are images of Christ, he is showing honor and respect, not hatred and dislike. Do we honor one another and show concern and love for one another? The Wise Men did to Christ. How do we honor one another, showing love and patience?

Finally, do we give myrrh to those around us? Again, I do not literally mean myrrh, I mean merciful love and compassion to all those whom we meet in our daily life, whoever they may be. The Wise Men gave the mercy of myrrh to Christ. How do we show mercy to those around us who are all made in the image of Christ?

Let us on this Sunday after Christmas, look at what we give to Christ, to those in His Church, and to those in His world, and let us ask ourselves if we are Wise. Amen.



