

**Our Vision: *To know and love Christ, sharing His love with others***

Dec 25th, 2014

2014 NATIVITY MESSAGE OF BISHOP-ELECT PAUL  
 Beloved Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest:

**Christ is Born — Glorify Him!**

*“Today God, Who by nature cannot be seen, is seen in the flesh for our sake.”* Litya Verse from the Nativity Compline Service *“It was for this therefore that He became openly visible, to lead forth those of the visible world to the invisible.”* St. Gregory the Wonderworker, Discourse on the Nativity

The above citations from the Compline Service and St. Gregory are so important for us to internalize in our hearts as we celebrate the Great Feast of the Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. We live in a world today where there is a growing polarization of people over many issues such as culture, ideology, morality, religious practices, politics etc. Where there once seemed to be tolerance and mutual respect, there is a growing spirit of intolerance, hatred, and sectarianism that is permeating our world. It would be a mistake to conclude that our parishes in Midwest Diocese are not affected by the above realities in our world today. What does the Feast of our Lord’s Nativity offer us this day to help us address these issues in our daily lives? First we need to see that in this Mystery of God becoming Man, our Lord identifies with the whole of our fallen humanity. He identifies with us and becomes fully man for all; whether we are conservative or liberal, white or black, capitalist or socialist, high church or low church, cradle or convert, etc. The Church has had to address these realities since the time of the Apostles (just read Galatians, 1 Corinthians, or Acts, and you will see what I mean). But our Lord in assuming our fallen nature refashions and recreates us so that we might transcend the visible and find our fulfillment as human beings in the world that is invisible. Thus the Litya verse from Compline also says:

*“Today heaven and earth are united, for Christ is born. Today God has come to earth and man ascends to heaven.”*

In His person, the eternally begotten Son of God becomes the Son of man and assumes our fallen nature to fulfill our true humanity in His Kingdom. He transcends the sectarianism and polarities of our time by becoming the New Adam, the “first-born from the dead.” Our entire fallen humanity is recreated and united in Christ. St. Gregory makes this point in his discourse,

*“The Ancient of Days is become a Child, to make people children of God.”*

**Today’s commemorated feasts and saints**  
 THE NATIVITY ACCORDING TO THE FLESH OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. **The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar. Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks, and went to see the Lord.** Massacre of Monk Martyr Jonah and with him 50 Monks and 65 Laymen at St. Tryphon of Pechenga Monastery, by the Swedes (1590).

The Prophet Isaiah and St. Paul speak of the fruit of this reality in verses that are read during the services of the Nativity:

*“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them. The*



*cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in my entire holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”* Isaiah 11:6-9

*“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* Galatians 3:27-28

The incarnation of Our Lord teaches us how we can address the fallen realities of our time in our witness to the Truth in love. His Nativity shows us that all we believe, teach, and do in the Church is intimately tied to its fulfillment in His Kingdom. The minute we separate this relationship we end up preaching religion, ideology, or legislated moral codes. They become ends in themselves and thus idols; this has nothing to do with gospel, the Good News of Christ’s life-creating Death, and His Glorious Resurrection.

I pray that the Lord continue to enlighten us in our celebration of the Great Feast of His Holy Nativity and upcoming Holy Theophany. I also ask your prayers for me as I approach with fear and trembling, my upcoming consecration to be your Arch-Pastor in this Vineyard, which has been established by the Right Hand of the Lord.

May the Nativity of Our Lord bring you blessings, joy, and peace.

The unworthy Archimandrite Paul  
 Bishop-elect of Chicago and the Midwest



**Archpastoral Message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

To the honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord,

I greet all of you with the joy of the most glorious Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ! As Saint Leo the Great reminds us in his sermon on the Nativity, “in adoring the birth of our Savior, we find that we are celebrating the commencement of our own lives, for the birth of Christ is the source of life for the Christian people, and the birthday of the Head is the birthday of the Body.”

Indeed, we rejoice and celebrate on this great day. Yet we must never fail to recall those for whom the earthly sojourn seems to be anything but joyful—the lost and searching and seeking, the lonely and forgotten, the sick and imprisoned and persecuted, the hungry and thirsty, and those who, like the Christ Child, “have no where to lay their heads.” If the birth of Christ is the commencement and source of our lives, then it is not only our duty, but our blessed honor, to share the light of the newborn Christ with those who sit “in the valley of the shadow of death,” thereby revealing the love God so richly and unconditionally pours out on all who would accept it.

Our Lord proclaimed good news to the poor, gave sight to the blind, and healed every manner of infirmity. How well we know the spiritual poverty and blindness and infirmity that fills our world today. And how crucial it is to be continuously reminded that “with God, all things are possible,” (Mt 19:26) precisely because “God is with us” (Mt 1:23) and calls us to become “partakers in His divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4) Even our most seemingly insignificant expressions of love and compassion for “the least of the brethren” (Mt 25:40) make the impossible, possible and the mundane as miraculous as the divine birth we celebrate today.

The angelic hosts called out to the simple shepherds: “Tarry not in the field, O ye that shepherd the nurslings of the flocks! Cry aloud and sing praises, that Christ the Lord hath been born in Bethlehem!” Let us not tarry in singing praises to our incarnate Lord, not only with our voices, but also with our unconditional acts of love and kindness and compassion. Such is the fruit of the good news proclaimed over two thousand years ago. And such is the very heart of our common ministry to incarnate Him in our hearts and our lives, and in the hearts and lives of those whom He continually prepares to encounter Him.

Please be assured of my prayers for all of you, that Our Lord will not only equip us in our common ministry as His Body, but bring our efforts to fruition. May the divine blessing that He so freely brings into the world remain with all of us now and throughout the new year to come!

With love in the New-Born Christ,



+ Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

**WELCOME VISITORS!**

We are delighted to have visitors worship with us, and we pray that you will be blessed in your time with us! Regarding participation in the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion is treated with the utmost respect and reverence in the Orthodox Church, and it is the rule that only practicing Orthodox Christians may receive it. Our non-Orthodox guests are welcome, however, to participate with us in any other way they may desire, and are welcome to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

**Please Join us for Coffee Hour after Divine Liturgy in the Social Hall!**



If this is your first visit to our parish, we welcome you and invite you to return as often as you are able. For those interested in learning more about Orthodox Christianity please ask any of our church community – or feel free to contact Fr Stacey. Our parish library is available for your reading interests. Children are welcome to join church school classes after liturgy.

**CONFESSIONS**

Fr Stacey can usually hear confessions after any weekday service or after Saturday Vespers. He is also available by appointment, or during his regular office hours.

**Mission Statement:**

Bringing the love of Christ to our community through prayer, worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and outreach within the tradition of historic Orthodox Christianity.

**This Week:**

Today

**Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM**

Saturday

**Great Vespers 5:00 PM**

This Sunday

**Hours 9:10 AM**

**Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM**

**Coffee Hour 11:45 AM**

Upcoming

**Annual Meeting Jan 18**

**Chilly Cook Off Jan 25**

Going to miss a service? Listen online to our Divine Liturgy and other Orthodox Christian Teachings INBN.net

**Coffee Hour Schedule**

**DEC. 28** KISHA-WISE, KISHA, MONAHAN, POWELL

**JAN. 4** KKW, MONAHAN, KISHA, BYRNES

**JAN. 11** GALL, ROMANO, TAPYRIK, MUDRAK

**JAN. 18** MANOS, HOFFMAN, GATES, VORKAPICH

**JAN. 25** CHILI COOK OFF

**FEB. 1** HUBA, WESTER

**FEB. 8** HAYWOOD, GATES, CROSTON, GALL

