

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church
(Dormition of the Mother of God)**

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Sunday December 24, 2017

The Eve of the Nativity of Christ; Venerable Nun-martyr Eugenia of Rome, and with her: Martyrs Philip (her father), Protus and Hyacinth (Jacinth), Basilla, and Claudia (262); Martyrs Sossios and Theokleios (ca.286-305); Martyr Castulus (ca.307-323); Martyr Achaicus, by the sword; Venerable Vitimionus of Scetis (Bitimionus of Scete) (5th c.); Venerable Aphrodisius, monk of Palestine (6th c.); Venerable Antiochus of Palestine (*Antiochos Strategos, Antiochos Sabbaitis*), monk of the Great Lavra of St. Sabbas the Sanctified in Jerusalem (635); Venerable Nicholas the Monk, of Bulgaria (Nicholas the former soldier) (ca.802-811); Martyrs Lucian, Metrobius, Paul, Zenobius, Theotimus and Drusus, in Tripoli in North Africa; Hieromartyr Gregory of Spoleto, a priest martyred in Spoleto in Italy under Maximilian Herculeus; Saint Delphinus, Bishop of Bordeaux in France; he helped convert St Paulinus of Nola and was an untiring opponent of Priscillianism (404); Saint Venerandus, of a senatorial family in Clermont in Auvergne in France, became bishop there from 385-423 (423); Saint Caranus, a saint of the east of Scotland; Saint Tarsila, an aunt of St Gregory the Great, sister of St Emiliana and niece of Pope Felix (581); Saint Mochua, Abbot of Timahoe (637); Saint Irmina, sister of St. Adela, daughter of Dagobert II (King of the Franks) (708); Saint Adela, daughter of Dagobert II (King of the Franks), first Abbess of Pfalzel near Trier in Germany (ca.730); Saint Alberic (Albert), a monk at Gladbach Abbey in Germany (10th c.); Saint Bruno, a holy man at the monastery of Otobeuren Abbey in Bavaria in Germany (1050);New-Martyr Achmed (Ahmet) the Calligrapher, at Constantinople (1682) (see also May 3); Venerable Agapios the Younger (1812); Martyrs Protopresbyter St. Michael Shafaniv, and Presbytera St. Sofia (1918) (see also September 1); New Hieromartyr Innocent (Beda), Archimandrite, of Voronezh (*Innokenty (Bida) of Poltava*) (1928); New Hieromartyr Sergius Mechev, Archpriest, of Moscow (1942).

Services for the week of December 24

Sunday, December 24:10:00 am Divine Liturgy; 1:00 pm Great Vespers for the Eve of the Nativity;

6:00 pm Vigil Service for the Nativity of Christ.

Monday, December 25: **10:00 am Divine Liturgy** for the Feast of the Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Sunday, December 31: 10:00am Divine Liturgy (Served by Fr. Elias Crowder)

Parish News

WELCOME: to all of our guests today. We are so glad that you have come to enjoy our Orthodox worship. We invite you to come for coffee and sweets in our church hall and to enjoy fellowship with us. May God bless you!

OFFERINGS: December 17: \$1390.00

PLEASE REMEMBER Janet Mikel and Martha Smith as well as Marin Sandu (Dr. Alina's stepfather) who are suffering from serious illness. May God continue to bless and strengthen them!

FR. MARK AND CATHERINE will be traveling to Russia immediately after the Nativity celebration. They will be away for two Sundays, December 31 and January 7. These two Sundays will be covered by Subdeacon James and Reader Stephen with Typika services. There is a chance that there will be one liturgy served by a visiting priest, but details will be announced later.

COFFEE HOUR ANNOUNCEMENT: We are looking for volunteers who will take over the very simple task of laying out bagels, condiments and coffee on the Sundays which are not sponsored by any particular person or family. Three ladies are on our list at this time. Please volunteer for this easy task to help distribute the burden of feeding people after Liturgy.

TO ALL OUR PARISH FAMILY: Fr. Mark and family would like to wish you all a blessed Nativity, a healthy and happy new year, and may the Lord inspire all of us to seek His Kingdom constantly. May we be renewed through love for one another and may the blessing and protection of the Mother of God always remain close to us. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

HOMILY on the righteous Joseph

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man ... did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him (Matthew 1:19, 24). One must fear God more than men, and one must obey God more than men. This is the lesson from the life of the Righteous Joseph, the kinsman and guardian of the Holy Virgin Mary. He lived at the time of the juncture between the Law and grace, and was faithful to the Law until grace appeared; then, when the new grace of God appeared, he became faithful to grace. Obedient to the letter of the Law, he wanted to put the Holy Virgin away when she conceived the Savior of the world in her most pure body. But when an angel of God announced to him that Mary had conceived *of the Holy Spirit* (Matthew 1:20), he abandoned his intention and did not put her away, but *did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him*. He did not reason for himself, but obeyed the will of God. Therefore, God made him worthy of great glory, both on earth and in heaven. Quietly and secretly he served God, and God glorified him openly. Not only was he made worthy of the Kingdom of God but also his sons and daughters were. What father would want anything more than that his son would be an apostle of Christ? And Joseph had two sons who were apostles. Thus, God glorifies those who fear Him and obey Him.

O great Lord, God of the righteous Joseph, help us sinners also to love Thy righteousness and to fear only Thee. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.