

- ✧ The Feast has an “afterfeast” period of 6 days. Use the Troparion and Kontakion hymns as prayers before and/or after meals, and as part of the children’s evening prayers during this period. December 25 through January 4 are fast free.
- ✧ Have your children send a Christmas greeting to someone you know who is without a family, expressing the true meaning of Christmas. You might want to invite this person to your Christmas celebration.
- ✧ Make a gift to give someone for Christmas.
- ✧ Take your children to visit a shut-in parishioner or friend.
- ✧ Make a Nativity scene with your children to keep in their room or in the family room .
- ✧ Read the Nativity Gospel, Luke 2:1-20.



COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST: THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST



FOR MORE
INFORMATION,
PLEASE
CONTACT:



THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST CELEBRATED ON DECEMBER 25

The Feast of Christmas is formally entitled The Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. At Christmas we celebrate the birth as a man of the Son of God, the one who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is truly God, from all eternity... The Feast of Christmas is the celebration of the world's salvation through the Son of God who became man for our sake, so that through Him, we might ourselves become divine, sons (and daughters) of God the Father by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in us.

The Feast of Christmas was not a separate Church feast for the first four centuries of Christian history. It was celebrated with Epiphany in the one great feast of God's appearance on earth in the form of the human Messiah of Israel. The Nativity began to be celebrated as such on the 25th of December in order to offset the pagan festival of the "Invincible Sun" which occurred on that day. It was established by the Church quite consciously as an attempt to defeat the false religion of the heathens. Thus, we discover the troparion of the feast making a polemic against the worship of the sun and the stars and calling for the adoration of Christ, the True Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2), who is Himself worshipped by all elements of nature. (Fr. Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith: Volume 2, Worship*).

THE NATIVITY IN SCRIPTURE AND HYMNS

Epistle: Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Vespers, "Lord, I Call," Sticheron 4

What shall we offer You, O Christ, Who for our sakes has appeared on earth as Man? Every creature made by You offers You Thanks: the angels offer a hymn; the heavens, a star; the wise men, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, its cave; the wilderness, a manger, and we offer You a virgin mother! O Pre-Eternal God, have mercy on us!

Divine Liturgy, Troparion, Tone 4

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You, the Orient from on high. O Lord, Glory to You!

Divine Liturgy, Kontakion, Tone 8

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One! Angels with shepherds, glorify Him! The wise men journey with the star! Since for our sake the eternal God is born as a little child!

Festal Salutation

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- ✧ Come to Church as a family to celebrate the pre-Feast. These services set the tone for the Feast Day itself.
- ✧ Place an icon of the Nativity in a special place in your home. Discuss the festal icon with your children, and help them to identify each figure.

