

<p>CHURCH BULLETIN</p>	<p>V. Rev. Fr. George Veselinovic, Parish Priest Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146 412.622.4714 (cell) 412.856.8166 (office) dj.veselinovic@yahoo.com www.stnicholasmonroeville.org stnicholasmonroeville@gmail.com</p>	<p>SUNDAY January 6, 2019</p>
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SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST – CHRISTMAS EVE

Hebrews (11: 9-10; 17-23; 32-40)

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise. God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Gospel: Matthew (1: 1-25)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot

Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

TROPARION TONE VII

By Your Cross, You did destroy death! To the thief, You did open Paradise! For the myrrhbearers, You did change weeping into joy! And You did command Your disciples, O Christ god, to proclaim that You are risen, granting the world great mercy!

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF THE SAVIOR – TROPARION TONE II

Great are the accomplishments of faith, for the Three Youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest; and the prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. So by their prayers O Christ God save our souls.

TRANSFER OF THE RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS, WONDERWORKER

TROPARION TONE IV

The day of the joyous celebration has come; the city of Bari rejoices and with it the whole universe leaps from joy, singing the spiritual songs and psalms. For today, the holy feast, on the occasion of the transfer of the honorable and exceedingly healing relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, has shone forth with the radiant rays, like the sun that does not set, driving away the darkness of temptations and calamities from those who faithfully exclaim to thee: "Save us, as our protector, O great Nicholas!"

KONTAKION TONE VII

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers! Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: ðthe Savior has come to those in faith! Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

KONTAKION TONE III

TRANSFER OF THE HOLY RELICS OF ST. NICHOLAS, WONDERWORKER

Your relics, O Saint Nicholas, came out as a star from the east to the west. The sea was sanctified by your journey, and the city of Bari, through you, has received the grace. For working for us, you have appeared as an excellent, wonderful and merciful Wonderworker.

KONTAKION TONE I

Rejoice O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself O Ephratha! The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd she carries in her womb. The God-bearing forefathers will rejoice beholding Him and the shepherds will glorify her nursing Him.

KONTAKION OF THE THEOTOKOS - TONE VI

Steadfast protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator: do not despise the cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you do always protect those who honor you.

SAINTS WE COMMEMORATE TODAY – *Holy Nun-martyr Eugenia* – *Serbian Father's Day*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Matthew Shaffer, son of Melissa Karas Shaffer, is ill and needs our prayers, love, and support. Matthew is a wonderful, faithful young man and a member of our parish family. We are appealing for your compassion and help. Please see Father George and/or Nick Jokola. Make your checks payable to Melissa Karas Shaffer.

2019 BEAUTIFUL SERBIAN ORTHODOX DIOCESAN CALENDARS HAVE ARRIVED! Please support our church by purchasing these calendars for a minimal \$5.00. Calendars are available at the tutor's desk.

Today – Stay to watch a Christmas play following Divine Liturgy performed by our church school children!

Tonight - Christmas Eve service will begin at 6:00pm. Traditional lighting of the Yule tree/ Badnjak will follow. A rich and wonderful dinner following the service will be in the church hall with entertainment provided by Srpski Sinovi/ Serbian sons. Invite your family and friends and celebrate the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All are welcome/ Dobro do li!

January 7th – The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ – liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

January 8th - Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos - liturgy 10:00 a.m.

January 9th - Holy Apostle, Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen - liturgy 10:00 a.m.

January 13th – **Come celebrate Serbian New Year's Eve!** Doors open at 4:30 p.m with a traditional dinner served at 5:00 p.m. Ball drop in Belgrade at 6:00 p.m. Music provided by Srpski Sinovi. Adults - \$20 Children ó free! RSVP: 412-856-8166.

January 14th - Circumcision of Our Lord and St. Basil the Great (New Year) - liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

January 18th – Holy Cross Day - Blessing of the Water ó liturgy 10:00 a.m.

January 19th – Holy Theophany of our Lord Jesus Christ ó Epiphany ó Blessing of the Water ó liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

January 20th – Synaxis of St. John

January 27th – St. Sava Slava ó program to follow Divine Liturgy.

After January 20th, Father George will begin blessing homes.

Pizza! Pizza! – **January 20th** - Following Divine Liturgy, a pizza sale will be held. \$10 for *whole* plain or pepperoni. Pizza **will not** be sold by the slice. **All money collected will benefit the Matthew Shaffer family. Advance orders are appreciated!** Call Alexis Janiga: 412-965-5602.

Purse Bash – A 3rd planning meeting will be held Tuesday, January 15th at 6:00 p.m. in the church hall. The Purse Bash is scheduled for March 2, 2019. Ladies, it is not too late to join the group to help make this event a successful fundraiser. If you have any questions, please contact Sondra Deaunovich at Sondra7890@comcast.net or 412-760-5796.

The Committee for the 2019 SNF Summer Golf Tournament has met and is excited to begin planning for this big event for our church and local SNF lodges. To be successful, we will need everyone's help! There will be many opportunities for you to contribute. The Committee will keep you informed of our progress over the coming months. Pam Matejevich will be coordinating volunteers for the event which will take place August 7-11, 2019. Reach out to Pam or to Chairman Dushan Markoff to offer your help or ask any questions!

REMINDERS

Adult Bible Study – Classes cancelled until further notice.

Vespers ó Saturday evening 6:00 p.m.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

The Icon of the Nativity

On the cover of today's bulletin, is a picture of the icon of the Nativity. The icon of the Nativity tells the story of Christ's birth from the Scriptures. It also shows that all creation is taking part in Christ's birth. The angels give thanks with their song; the heavens give the star;

the Wise Men give their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The poor, humble shepherds give their praise and amazement; the earth gives the cave, and humanity gives the Virgin. This Holy Icon is an icon with many scenes. First, it stresses the importance of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus. She is placed in the center and is the largest figure in the icon. In this icon, she is kneeling with crossed arms, looking at the Christ child. The three stars, denoting her virginity before, during, and after the Nativity, are on her garments. The Christ Child, in the center of the icon, is in swaddling clothes and is lying in the manger. In the background is the dark cave where He was born. In the cave are an ox and a donkey guarding the newborn Babe. Even though the Gospels say nothing of the cave, this information is from Holy Tradition. Neither do the Gospels speak of the ox and the donkey, but all icons of the Nativity include these animals. Including the animals in the icon fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 1:3, "The ox knows his master, and the donkey his master's crib; but Israel does not know me, and the people have not regarded me." The long ray of light from the star points directly to the cave. This ray comes from the star and travels to all parts of the world. It teaches that this bright star is an astronomical happening, and is a messenger from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus.

On the left hand side of the icon is another scene. The Wise Men, who were led by the star, are riding horses to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. The Wise Men are of various ages. One is without a beard. In those days, young men did not wear beards. The other Wise Man has long hair and a long beard, which indicates that he is much older. These details teach that regardless of age and appearance, the Good News was given to each and everyone.

Opposite the Wise Men is the scene with the humble shepherds. An angel proclaims the glad tidings. A young shepherd plays a reed instrument. This scene reveals that the music of the humans was added to the hymn of the angels. Across from the shepherd's scene is the heavenly choir of angels. They are giving glory to God. The angels serve two purposes in the Nativity of Christ. They give glory to God and announce the good news to all mankind.

The background shows a very rugged terrain. This is not a true representation of the land in this area. Joseph could not find room in Bethlehem, so they went outside of Bethlehem to a cave. This rocky mountain formation only serves as a background for the event.

In the lower part of the icon are two more scenes. In the right hand corner are the two women Joseph brought to take care of the Christ child. They are bathing Him just as any baby is bathed. The humanity of Jesus is clearly shown in this setting.

Opposite the bathing of Jesus scene sits a sad and worried Joseph. He is not part of the central group the Christ Child and the Theotokos. Joseph is not the natural father. Joseph is troubled and despondent. There is an old man talking to Joseph. The old man is Satan. Satan can appear in many forms. Here he is as an old man who is tempting Joseph and disturbing him. Satan is telling Joseph that virgin birth is impossible. He's telling Joseph that he's a fool if he believes this. This story comes to us from Holy Tradition. The sad Joseph shows us not only his personal predicament but the dilemma of all mankind the difficulty of accepting that which is "beyond words or reason."

The tree, which is in the middle of the lower part of the icon, is a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. This tree refers to Isaiah 11: 1-2, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." King David was often mentioned as the son of Jesse and Jesus was from the House of David.

The Holy Icon of the Nativity reminds one to praise and glorify the Birth of Christ. The celebration of Christmas each year serves to remind each and everyone of us that Christ came for you and me.

