

TODAY'S READINGS: Epistle: Gal. 1,11-19; Gospel: Mt. 2, 13-23;
TODAY WE CELEBRATE:

THE TWENTY THOUSAND HOLY MARTYRS OF NICOMEDIA

During the reign of the wicked Emperor Maximian Hercules, the Christian Faith flourished in Nicomedia and increased day by day. At one time the emperor, staying in this city, learned of the large number of Christians and the progress of the Christian Church, and he became greatly embittered and conceived a plan of how to kill them all. The Feast of the Nativity of Christ approached, and the emperor, knowing that all the Christians gathered in the church for this feast, ordered that on that day the church be surrounded by soldiers and set afire. When all the Christians had gathered in the church after midnight and began the solemn celebration, the soldiers surrounded the church and would not permit anyone to leave. The emperor's envoy entered the church and announced to the Christians the emperor's command that they immediately offer sacrifices to the idols or be burned alive. Then the archdeacon, a heroic soldier of Christ, inflamed with divine zeal began to encourage the people, reminding the faithful of the Three Children in the furnace in Babylon. "Behold, brethren," he said, "the table of oblation in the sanctuary of the Lord, and understand that our true Lord and God was just now sacrificed for us on it; should we not then lay down our lives for Him in this holy place?" The people were filled with zeal to die for Christ, and all the catechumens were baptized and chrismated. The soldiers then set fire to the church on all sides, and the Christians, twenty thousand of them in number, were burned in the flames while singing praises to God. The church burned for five days; and smoke with an intoxicating and wonderful fragrance rose from it. A certain marvelous, golden-rayed light manifested itself over this place. Thus,

The tongue weighs practically nothing but few can hold it.

Dear parishioners,
I would like to thank you all who kept our family in your prayers this Holiday, and all of you who sent us Christmas cards and wished us a merry Christmas.

Praying before the cradle of the Divine Christ-Child, for all of you, my dear parishioners, I greet you with the joyous Christmas greeting:
Peace from God- Christ is Born! Мир Божији - Христос се роди!
Yours, Fr. Milan and family

numerous men, women and children gloriously died and received the wreath of eternal glory in the Kingdom of Christ. They suffered and were glorified in the year 302 A.D.

REFLECTION

A story of the Divine Christ-child: When the Most-holy Virgin, with her Divine Child and the righteous Joseph, drew near to the city of Hermopolis [Cairo], they saw a tree before the gate of the city. The travelers from afar were weary from their journey and approached this tree to rest a while, even though the tree was very tall and did not offer adequate shade. The Egyptians called this tree "Persea" and worshiped it as a god, for they believed that some divinity was hidden in the tree. In reality, an evil spirit dwelt in this tree. As the holy family approached the tree, the tree shook fiercely, and the evil spirit, terrified by the approaching Christ-child, fled. Then the tree bent its top down to the ground and worshiped its Creator like a rational creature. Thus the bent tree cast a great shadow, under which the weary travelers rested. From that day, the tree received miraculous healing powers from Christ the Lord to heal every infirmity of men. Afterward, the holy sojourners went to the village of Matarea. Near the village they saw a fig tree, and, while Joseph went into the village on business, the Most-holy Virgin took refuge under the fig tree with the Lord. And, oh, what a miracle: the tree lowered its crown down to the ground to create a shadow for the travelers, and its lower half split open in such a way that the Mother with the Child could enter and rest. And what is even more miraculous: a living spring of water suddenly opened up near the fig tree. Joseph found a hut in the vicinity, where they settled. There they lived and drank water from that miraculous spring. This was the only spring of living water to be found in Egypt, for all the other water in Egypt comes from the Nile River, which branches off into innumerable canals. And thus, like brought forth like: the Lord Jesus, the Immortal and Heavenly Spring of living water, by His presence called forth this spring of living water from the earth.

DIVINE LITURGIES AND SERVICES IN JANUARY 2016.

Thursday - January 14; Circumcision of our Lord (St Basil the Great; Julian New Year) Divine Liturgy of the St Basil at 9:30 am
Sunday - January 17; 33rd Sunday after Pentecost; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am
Monday - January 18; Krstovdan, Feast of the Holy Cross; Divine Liturgy of the St. Basil at 9:00 am followed by blessing of the water.
Tuesday - January 19; Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ - Theophany; Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am followed by blessing of the water.
Wednesday - January 20; Synaxis of St. John the Baptist; Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am
Sunday - January 24; Sunday after Theophany; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am
Wednesday - January 27; St. Sava First Serbian Archbishop and Enlightener; Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am
Sunday - January 31; 35th Sunday after Pentecost; **Celebration of St. Sava First Serbian Archbishop and Enlightener; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am following by St. Sava Children's Program and Luncheon will follow in the Center.**

A fundraising ways and means committee is being formulated. Volunteers are welcome please call the church center office 724-375-9894 to volunteer.

Give rest O Lord to thy departed servant HELEN ZIVKOVIC may her soul rest in peace. Our deepest sympathy are extended to her family, kumovi and friends.

VJECNAJA PAMJAT!

VISITS

January 5th - Franciscan Manor - Nell Semick, Rudy Kosanovich, Millie (Rebich) Winlow
January 6th - Medical Center Beaver - Sandy Giordano



THE MEANING OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

In one of the Church's services commemorating the Nativity of our Lord, we hear a certain refrain sung over and over again. It is: "God is with us!" This is the meaning of the word "Emmanuel." This expression provides us with a capsule definition of Christmas. The feastday of Christmas means that God Himself has come to earth to dwell among men. It means God has taken upon Himself human flesh and becomes man.

The origin of the exclamation "God is with us," or "Emmanuel" is a unique story. It was first used by the great Prophet Isaiah who lived some 750 years before the birth of Jesus. The Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament speaks eloquently about the forthcoming Saviour. In 7:14 we have this crystal clear prophecy: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."

The greatest act of humility was made that night, nearly two thousand years ago, when the Eternal God, the Creator, came to earth in the form of a Babe. The One whom the heavens could not contain was wrapped in swaddling clothes, as a helpless newborn. Our Lord humbled Himself and became man.

But of course it is not enough for us to simply proclaim "God is with us!" We must act upon it. This simple act must color our life - our every breath, our every day, and every encounter. Let the spirit of Christmas - the spirit of humility, love, kindness & faith sink deeply into our souls during this sacred season, and then let it linger there always. Let it be clear to one and all that God is with us and we rejoice in that reality.



WEEKLY PARISH BULLETIN

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32ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST