
ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



***Learn from me
A Nativity
reflection on
the humility of
Christ
by Fr. Vasile***

I recently found this quote on humility from Elder Paisios from Sihla (A skete in the North of Romania close to the Sihastria Monastery where Elder Cleopas lived)

“It’s best for a man to become a clay vessel, which is useful to all people and for all kinds of daily work, for food, water, and so on. But golden vessels are put in safes and locked up in cupboards. For fear of thieves they are seldom used, maybe only once a year. A clay vessel has its daily use and service to man. So also is a humble man who does not seek

honors and rank. He remains insignificant even amid men of lower rank, but he benefits, counsels, and helps everyone, and all seek him out and rejoice with him. Humility is a great gift to monks and all Christians!”

These beautiful words inspired me to write a small reflection on humility, just in time for Nativity. Here it is:

As we approach the great Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, the greatest act of humility that the entire cosmos has ever seen, it is only proper to speak about this great virtue in the hope that some will take heart from the words and advance in the practice of it in their Christian lives.

Humility is not something Christians own in exclusivity. Even the pagan religions and the philosophers recognize the great benefit of meekness and have the concept embedded in their worldview; there is no place however that cherishes and fosters humility more than Christianity. The Old and the New Testament, the writings of the Holy Fathers, the Church dogmas and practices are profoundly soaked in this noble virtue.

The reason for this central place is that God Himself is the first One, not only to teach, but also to act in humility. Here is what St. Isaac the Syrian writes: “Humility is God’s robe. The Word who became human clothed himself with humility, and spoke with us in our human body.”

What greater proof we can ask other than the fact that the Creator of the

world, the Unoriginate, the Almighty, the One Who deserves all the glory and praise, would put aside all of it, leave the heavens and become earth to save us sinners, undeserving as we are? There is nothing to match this act and is the very reason why humility and not pride, for our achievements, material or spiritual, should guide our lives.

Pride is the very opposite of humility; is to take pleasure in being praised, to have your accomplishments recognized: your talents, your beauty, your intelligence, your heritage. Pride is to say aloud: I did it, I deserve it all! Recognize me! About this Jesus Christ says: “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full”(Mathew 6:2).

The proud way is a faulted way of thinking because we cannot take credit for any of it. God has, after all, fashioned us and gave us all we possess; we are who we are because of the gifts we have freely received. Any good thing that we do has its roots into our godly origin. Forgetting this is to forget about God Himself.

A proud person will ceaselessly push out of his life anything that competes with him and his great achievements. Without realizing it he chases away everyone, including God, and he finds himself isolated in an ivory tower of self-righteousness. He sits

there by himself unwilling and, after a certain point, incapable of any progress. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (Proverbs 1:7) The proud, even if he expresses exterior piety, is as far from God as the earth it is from heaven. Any day a repenting publican enters the kingdom ahead of a proud Pharisee.

Humility on the other hand is a permanent remembrance of God, is to recognize God’s presence in every aspect of our lives. The humble cries out with the King and Prophet David Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.” (Psalms 138: 7-11)

Recognizing Gods presence in our lives is to be in communion with Him, is to receive His grace, is to let oneself guided by the Spirit of Truth and not by the spirit of the world. Humility brings spiritual dimension in our lives and restores everything in its proper place. Humility is the fulfillment of mankind’s potential that was lost through the pride of our Forefathers in paradise.

Humility brings all together in communion while pride separates us from one another. The Holy Apostle Paul observes this when writing to the Philippians: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

This is the ultimate role of humility: to unite people, to make them one with each other and together with God “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they May be one as we are one-I in them and you in me-so that they May be brought to complete unity.” (John 17:2’-2’)

God comes at Nativity and receives our flesh so He can change us into something better. As St. Athanasius puts it: “God becomes Man so man can become god.” He wants to lift the course of pride and sin and replace it with humility and virtue. He invites all to follow His lead into heavens: “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29.)

At this festive time I wish everyone of you to rejoice in brotherly love, together receiving the great gift of the Incarnation of our Lord. Let the humble infant that is born in the manger of Bethlehem grow inside of us until it reaches the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ”.

May He be glorified to the ages with His Unoriginate Father and the All Holy Spirit.

<http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info/2010/12/learn-from-me-a-nativity-reflection-on-the-humility-of-christ/>



News and Events

- On Wed, Dec. 1st & 8th we will be discussing our recent parish survey. The topics will be Evangelism and Land use. All are welcome to join this discussion via Zoom.
- On Tuesday, the 7th and 14th @ 7pm we will continue our Let all Creation Rejoice book study on zoom.
- Sunday Church School will be held on Dec. 12th.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, Dec. 15th at 7pm. If you are interested in seeing the work of the Parish Council you are always welcome to join us in person.
- The Warner Robin Prayer and fellowship group at the Olsen's on the 2nd and the 16th at 6:30pm. All are welcome.
- Please see the calendar below for our full liturgical schedule.

Many Years!

December Birthdays

- 5 Diane Dorogy
- 6 Michael Muth
- 6 Leah Hough
- 9 Diana Grace Stephens
- 9 Izzy Magnusson
- 9 Henry Gordy
- 9 Felix Sosa-Rivera
- 11 Pauline Magnusson
- 11 Landon Williams
- 14 Aidan Hintermaier
- 15 Sophia Gratigny
- 15 Nicholas Curington
- 18 Muryah Scouten
- 21 Ray Lanier
- 25 John Haralson
- 27 Edward Demenchonok
- 31 Isaac Curington



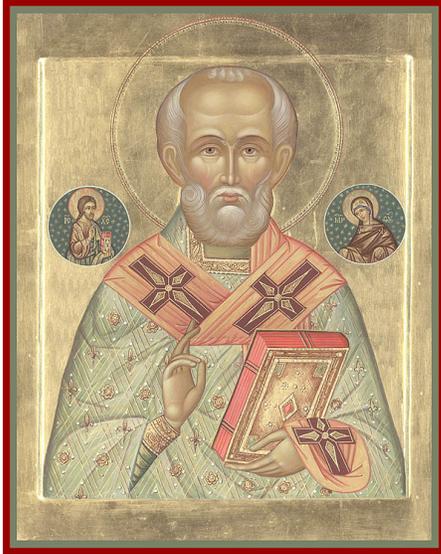
Nativity Charity

Rescue Mission of Middle Georgia Clothing drive

We are asking people to donate their clean, gently used clothing and shoes. We will have bins in the parish hall. Make us your Mission by donating your gently used clothing and household items. 100% of your contributions will stay LOCAL and help local people.

Since 1952, with the help of its generous donors, the Mission has provided residential shelter and meals to those in need in the Middle Georgia community. The long-standing relationship between Middle Georgia and the Rescue Mission has changed the lives of thousands of men, women, and children for over 67 years. The Middle Georgia community has helped the Mission, as it has "Provided a Path of Hope, Redemption, and Empowerment through Jesus Christ."

Thank you for making us your mission as we help to change the lives of those facing addiction, domestic violence, and homelessness through the compassion of Jesus Christ.

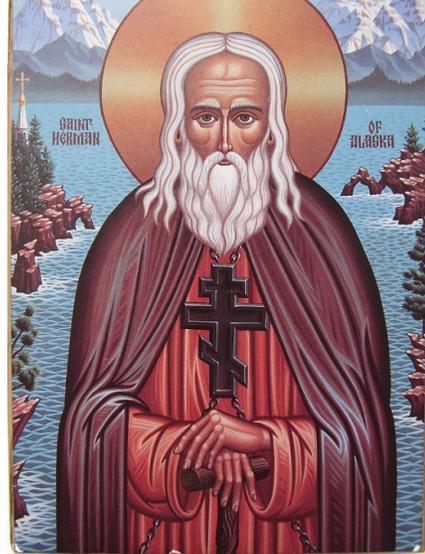


St. Nicholas

We will celebrate and Akathist to St. Nicholas on Monday, December 6th at 6pm

Our father among the saints Nicholas of Myra, Wonder-worker, was the archbishop of Myra in southern Asia Minor in the fourth century, known especially for his care for the poor. He is also the basis for the Santa Claus legends and imagery which accompany Christmas celebrations in much of the world, derived from the Dutch celebration of his feast day as the patron saint of sailors (Sinterklaas).

He is known to have been archbishop of Myra and he may have participated in the Council of Nicea in 325. In addition to being honored as the patron saint of many countries, notably Greece and Russia, and of cities, he is the patron of many occupational groups, most notably of sea-farers. St. Nicholas is commemorated by the Church on December 6, and also on May 9 (the transfer of his relics), and on July 29 (his nativity).



St. Herman of Alaska

We will celebrate and Akathist to St. Nicholas on Monday, December 13th at 6pm

Herman of Alaska was a Russian Orthodox monk from Valaam Monastery in Russia who traveled with eight other monks in 1793 to bring the Gospel to the native Aleuts and Eskimos in the Aleutian Islands. As part of the Russian colonization of the Americas, Russians had been exploring and trading there since at least 1740. Thus, he marks the first arrival of Orthodox Christian missionaries in North America. He preached the love of Christ to the Aleutians and drew many to the Church through his charitable life, caring for their orphans, building a school, and frequently defending them from the injustices and exploitation of the Russian traders. He was known to them as Apa which means "Grandfather." He lived most of his life as the sole resident of Spruce Island, a tiny wooded island near Kodiak Island.

Nativity Service

Schedule

At St. Innocent we realize that many of us have mixed-faith families, meaning that either our immediate family or our extended family is not Orthodox. With this in mind, we have spread out our Nativity services. If you cannot make them all at least come to a few!

This year's Nativity Service Schedule

- December 21 & 22 @ 6pm Pre-Nativity Matins
- December 23 @ 6pm Nativity Royal Hours
- Friday, December 24 @ 10am Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
- Friday @ 4:30pm Baptism and Chrismations
- Friday @ 6pm Nativity Candlelight Vigil
- Saturday, December 25 @ 10am Nativity Divine Liturgy Followed by food and fellowship
- There will be no Great Vespers Saturday evening
- Sunday, December 26 @ 10am Divine Liturgy

The Sacrament of Confession

During Fasting Seasons it is normative and spiritually important for us to confess our sins in the Sacrament of Confession. Have you partaken of Confession recently? This year? This quarter? Do you need spiritual encouragement? Is your conscience clean? Are you close to God? Do you love your neighbor?

Let's utilize this time of preparation for our Lord's Nativity to also repent and confess our sins. Do not let your heart get cold. Confessions can be heard by appointment or before or after any service.

Nativity Scripture

Readings

On the Eve of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, there are many Old Testament readings that the Church prescribes to be read aloud in Church. Below is an outline detailing all the Scriptural readings, Old and New Testament, surrounding our liturgical celebration of Christ's birth. Please take the time to read, and contemplate these Scriptures asking God to illuminate your understanding, especially if you know you will not be able to attend the Nativity services.

Readings for the Royal Hours

1st Hour: Old Testament- Micah 5:2-4
Epistle - Hebrews 1:1-12
Gospel - Matthew 1:18-25

3rd Hour: Old Testament - Jeremiah (Baruch) 3:35-4:4
Epistle - Galatians 3:23-29
Gospel - Luke 2:1-20

6th Hour: Old Testament - Isaiah 7:10-16, 8:1-4, 9-10
Epistle - Hebrews 1:10-2:3
Gospel - Matthew 2:1-12

9th Hour: Old Testament - Isaiah 9:6-7
Epistle - Hebrews 2:11-18
Gospel - Matthew 2:13-23

Readings for Vespers

Genesis 1:1-13
Numbers 24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18.
Micah 4:6-7, 5:5-4
Isaiah 11:1-10
Jeremiah (Baruch) 3:35-4:4
Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45
Isaiah 9:6-7
Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 9-10

Readings for Christmas Liturgy

Epistle - Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel - Matthew 2:1-12



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DECEMBER 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov 28 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	Nov 29	Nov 30 7pm Nativity Book Study	1 6pm Small Compline 7pm Survey Discussion	2 6pm Warner Robins Prayer & Fellowship	3 9:45-11:45am Prison Ministry	4 1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 3pm Catechism Group 2 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers
5 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship Decorate the Church	6 St. Nicholas 6pm Akathist to St. Nicholas	7 7pm Nativity Book Study	8 6pm Small Compline 7pm Survey Discussion	9	10 9:45-11:45am Prison Ministry	11 3pm Catechism Group 2 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers
12 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship Super Sunday Church School	13 St. Herman of Alaska 6pm Akathist to St. Herman	14 7pm Nativity Book Study	15 6pm Small Compline 7pm Parish Council	16 6pm Warner Robins Prayer & Fellowship	17 9:45-11:45am Prison Ministry	18 1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 3pm Catechism Group 2 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers
19 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	20	21 6pm Pre-Nativity Matins	22 6pm Pre-Nativity Matins	23 6pm Nativity Royal Hours	24 10am Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 4:30pm Baptism and Chrismations 6pm Vigil for the Feast of Nativity	25 NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:40am Hours 10am Festal Divine Liturgy followed by food and fellowship
26 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	27	28	29 Fast Free 6pm Daily Vespers	30	31 Fast Free	Jan 1 Circumcision of the Lord 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers

Please consult the Sunday bulletin for changes to the monthly calendar.



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JANUARY 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 26 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	Dec 27	Dec 28	Dec 29 Fast Free 6pm Daily Vespers	Dec 30	Dec 31 Fast Free	1 Circumcision of the Lord 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers
2 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	3	4 7pm Book Study	5 6:00pm Great Vespers with the Blessing of the Waters	6 THEOPHANY OF THE LORD 9am Festal Divine Liturgy	7 Synaxis of the Baptist	8 10-4pm Warner Robins House Blessings 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
9 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 12:15 pm Blessing of the Waters Amerson Park	10	11	12 6:00pm Daily Vespers	13 9am Divine Liturgy	14	15 10-4pm Macon House Blessings 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
16 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	17 St. Anthony the Great	18	19 6:00pm Daily Vespers 7pm Parish Council Meeting	20 9am Divine Liturgy	21	22 10-4 More House Blessings? 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
23 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	24	25	26 6:00pm Daily Vespers	27 9am Divine Liturgy	28	29 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers
30 Three Holy Hierarchs 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:15pm Annual Parish Meeting	31	Feb 1 6pm Vespers/Vigil for the Meeting of the Lord	Feb 2 MEETING OF THE LORD 9am Festal Divine Liturgy for the Meeting	Feb 3	Feb 4	Feb 5 5:00pm Sacrament of Confession 6:00pm Great Vespers

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