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# ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR

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***How can I  
know God as  
God really is?  
by Fr. Thomas  
Hopko***

How can I know Christ as the way, the truth, and the life of God, and humanity, the light of the world? How can I know the Orthodox Church as “the household of God,” and “the pillar, and bulwark of the truth” - God’s kingdom on earth? If you want to find answers for yourself to these questions, Orthodox Christian saints, and spiritual teachers would ask you to do the following things as faithfully, and honestly as you can, and to see for yourself what happens.

1. Be ready to do whatever it takes to know. Humbly, and courageously do what you are told without questioning it in any way. Be determined to follow what you come to know, whatever the cost.

2. Pray for enlightenment, even if your prayer is “to whom it may concern.” Pray something like this: “God, if you exist, reveal yourself to me.” If you already believe in God somehow, then pray: “God, reveal yourself to me as you really are.” As you pray, do not look for anything. Let whatever happens, happen.

3. While praying this way, read through the New Testament very slowly, at least three times. Take several months to do this. Do not be bothered about what you don’t understand, but try to put into practice what you do understand.

4. During this time, go to Orthodox Church services if you can. Just stand, or sit there, and listen. Do not judge the people who are there, in any way. Do not be bothered about what you don’t understand. If you are a confused and troubled member of the Orthodox Church, do not serve at the altar, or read, or sing in the choir, during this period.

5. During this time, do not lie about anything, do not consciously harm anyone, try to be kind, and do good to everyone you meet, without exception. If possible, do some good



work for others, even if just for an hour or two a week, as secretly as possible. Also if possible, give away some money secretly to those in need.

6. During this time, if you are not married, do not engage in any sexual acts at all, of any kind, even with yourself alone. If you fail in this, forget it immediately, and start over.

7. During this time, do not get drunk. Do not eat too much. Do not eat unhealthy foods. And try to eat, and drink less than normal, a couple of days a week, e.g. on Wednesdays, and Fridays.

8. During this time, sit in total silence, at least 10 to 15 minutes a day, or even up to 30 minutes a day, if you can, watching the thoughts that come to your mind, and letting them go with a prayer: “God [if you are there] enlighten my mind. God [if you are there] help me with this. God [if you are there] help these people who come to mind.”

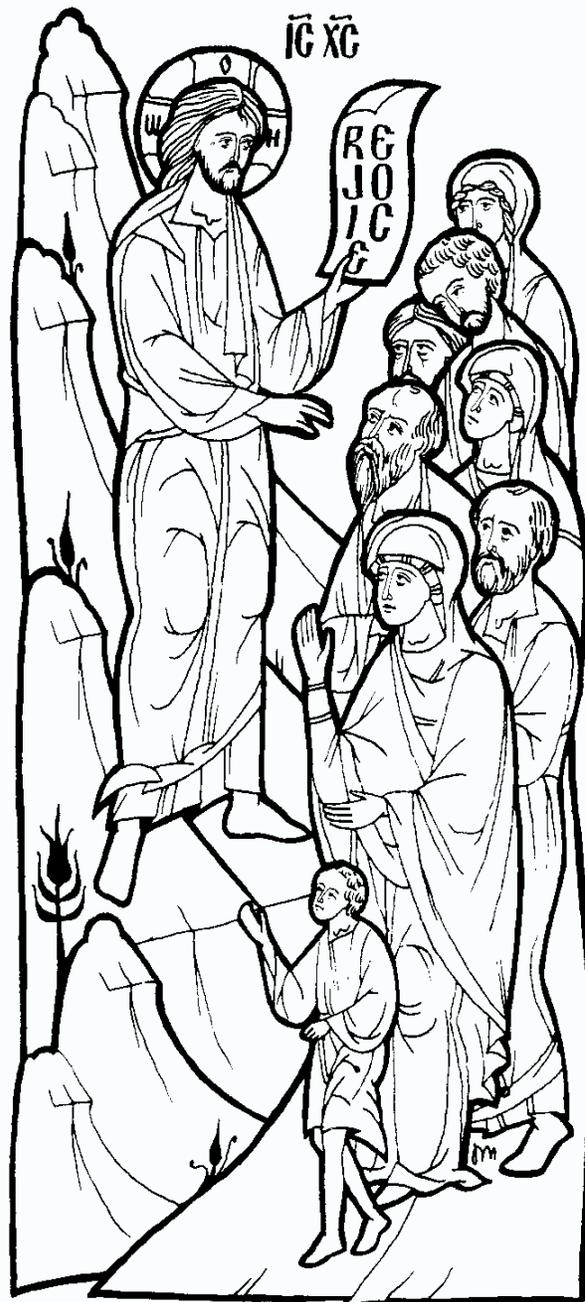
9. During this time, try to speak as little as possible, without irritating others. Do not try to make your opinions known, or accepted in conversations, unless asked. Listen to others. Be attentive to their presence, and their needs. Do not argue with anyone about anything.

10. During this time, find someone that you fully trust, and share with him/her your thoughts, feelings, dreams, hang-ups, compulsions, etc. in detail. Do not, however, go into detail about sexual things, or about other people. Discuss in detail your family of origin, and your childhood experiences — good, and bad. Focus on what memories distress, and sadden you, and what memories bring you joy.

11. During this time, do a “check list” for possible food, alcohol, drug, or sex addictions, and other addictions that you may think that you have, like, e.g. rage, gambling, or shopping. If you see that you are addicted in some way, enter a treatment programme (or a support group).

12. During this time, do your work, or your studies, to the best of your ability: carefully, responsibly, conscientiously, and devotedly. Live a day, even a part of the day, at a time. Focus fully on what you are doing at the given moment.

•CHRIST TEACHING:



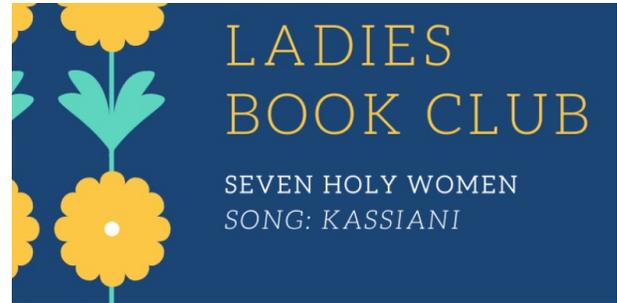
## News and Events

- We ordered the new bell! We hope it will be here before Pascha 2022. Thank you to all those who donated.
- On Wed, Nov. 3rd at 7 pm we will be discussing our recent parish survey. The topic will be discipleship. All are welcome to join this discussion via Zoom.
- Super Sunday Church School will be held on Nov. 14th.
- The Nativity Fast starts on Nov. 15th. Orthodox Christians are asked to abstain from meat and dairy until we break the fast on the Feast of Nativity.
- The Parish Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, Nov. 17th at 7 pm. If you are interested in seeing the work of the Parish Council you are always welcome to join us in person.
- Fr. Theophan and family will be out of town visiting family the week of Thanksgiving
- Please see the calendar below for our full liturgical schedule.

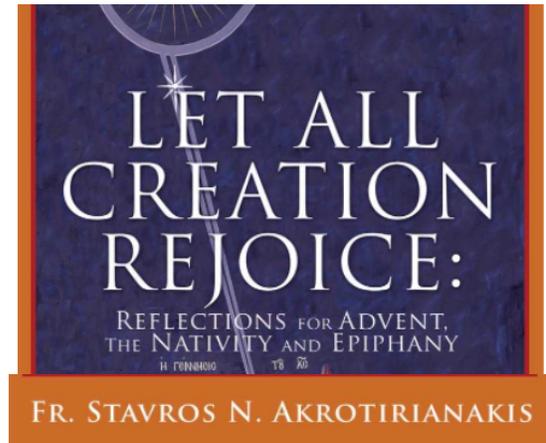
## Many Years!

### November Birthdays

- 1 Fr. Theophan Buck
- 4 Christopher Mareska
- 4 Aidan Magnusson
- 5 Kimberly Guest
- 7 Jacob Turner
- 7 Michael Brown
- 14 Elena Hintermaier
- 14 Travis Moody
- 20 Geoffrey Brown
- 23 Mariana Turner
- 26 George Gordy
- 26 Mary Gordy
- 30 Elliana Andrews



This month's Ladies book club will be on Monday, Nov. 8 at 7 PM. We'll be discussing the second section called Song, which is about St. Kassiani. All ladies are welcome! If you couldn't come to the inaugural one - first and foremost, we missed you! Secondly, the sections are stand-alone, so no need to play catch up! Please RSVP on Realm.



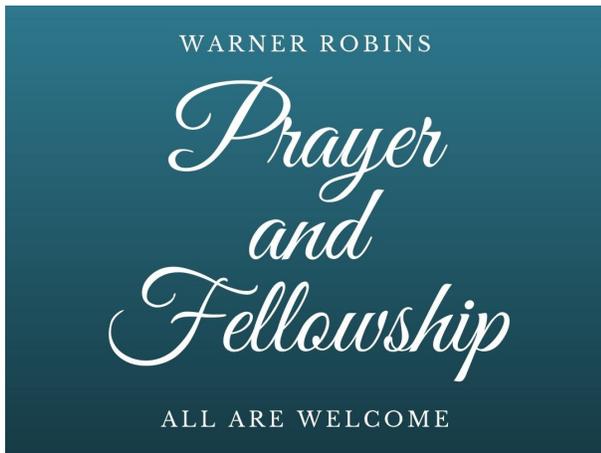
## Nativity Book Study

Hear the Christmas story as you've never heard it before. Make the Journey to the manger along with Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi. Has the Christmas season become the most stressful time of the year instead of the most wonderful time? Do you struggle to keep Christ in Christmas?

On Tuesday, Nov. 16th we will start our four-part book study of Let all Creation Rejoice. We have copies for sale in the bookstore. All Zoom links to be posted on Realm.



On Saturday, Nov. 13th from 11-5pm we will have our annual Men's fellowship retreat at Dorogy farm. We will be sending out an email with all the details in early November. Please RSVP on Realm.



In recent discussions, the idea was suggested that people get together more frequently for prayer and fellowship.

With this idea in mind. Mark & Sandra Olsen have offered their home for a biweekly gathering at their home. The formate is that we will gather for a short service which we will read together, i.e. Compline, or an Akathist. Then... fellowship! There will be light refreshments and all are welcome to come. Details will be published on Realm.

## Why fast before the Nativity?

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer, and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to others, spending less time worrying about what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in order to use our time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can gain control over things which we sometimes allow to control us—and for many people, food is a controlling factor.

While fasting from food, however, we are also challenged to fast from sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and from those other things which, while well within our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we "ruin our appetite" we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently.

If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance

our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a “must.”

In Matthew, Christ says, “WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites,” not “IF you fast” or “IF YOU CHOOSE to fast.”

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society—a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products—fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace—and pay large sums of money for—his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at “no cost”] we tend to balk as if we were being asked to do the impossible.

(<https://www.oca.org/questions/dailylife/why-fast-before-the-nativity>)



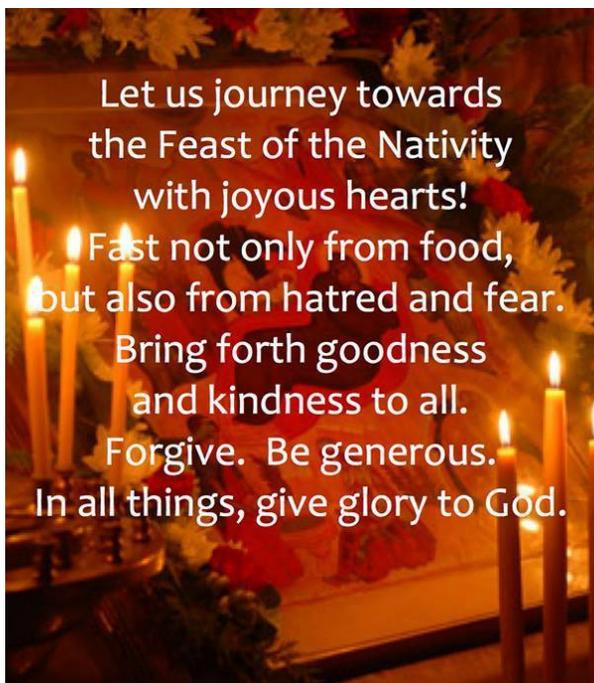
## The Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, also called The Presentation, is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on November 21.

According to Tradition, the Theotokos was taken – presented – by her parents – Joachim and Anna into the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a young girl, where she lived and served as a Temple virgin until her betrothal to St. Joseph.

One of the earliest sources of this tradition is the non-canonical Protoevangelion of James, also called the Infancy Gospel of James.

Mary was solemnly received by the temple community which was headed by the priest Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. She was led to the holy place to become herself the "holy of holies" of God, the living sanctuary and temple of the Divine child who was to be born in her. The Church also sees this feast as a feast which marks the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. (Orthowiki)



The main theme of the feast of Mary's entrance to the Temple, repeated many times in the liturgical services, is the fact that she enters the Temple to become herself the living temple of God, thus inaugurating the New Testament in which are fulfilled the prophecies of old that "the dwelling of God is with man" and that the human person is the sole proper dwelling place of the Divine Presence (Ezek 37.27; Jn 14.15–23; Acts 7.47; 2 Cor 6.11; Eph 2.18–22; 1 Pet 2.4; Rev 22.1–4).

The fortieth chapter of Exodus about the building of the tabernacle is read at Vespers, together with passages from the First Book of Kings and the Prophecy of Ezekiel. Each one of these readings all end with exactly the same line, "for the glory of the Lord filled the house [tabernacle] of the Lord God Almighty" (Ex 40.35; 1 Kg 8.11; Ezek 44.4).

Once again on this feast, the Old Testament readings are interpreted as symbols of the Mother of God. This "glory of the Lord" is referred to the Mother of Christ and it "fills" her and all people after her who "hear the word of God and keep it" as the Gospel of the festal liturgy proclaims (Lk 11.37–28). The epistle reading at the Divine Liturgy also proclaims this very same theme (Heb 9.1–7).

Thus, the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple is the feast which celebrates the end of the physical temple in Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God. When the child Mary enters the temple, the time of the temple comes to an end and the "preview of the good will of God" is shown forth. On this feast we celebrate—in the person of Christ's mother—that we too are the house and tabernacle of the Lord.

*... We are the temple of the living God, as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor 6.16; Is 52.11).*

Fr. Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith*, Vol 2.

## **A note from Parish Warden Gary Cox**

SIOC will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the last Sunday in January 2022. The requirement to hold this meeting ensures that last year's financial transactions will be reviewed and approved, the parish's slate of officers for 2022 will be filled, and a budget for the new calendar year will be ratified. The AGM is the process by which the parish reviews its previous year's activity and sets priorities for the new year.

An important aspect of this entire process is the opportunity for members of the community to bring business before the parish. Such resolutions often deal with, but are not limited to, issues relating to land use or expenditure of parish resources. The Uniform Parish By-Laws for the Diocese of the South, however, require any such business be submitted to the PC for consideration and dissemination sixty (60) days before the AGM. Thus any such business to be offered from the floor needs to be submitted to the PC by 28 November 2021.

The PC stands ready to consult on any issue and to offer assistance in any area that might prove helpful. Keep in mind that the deadline for accepting any resolutions from the parish is 28 November 2021.



**ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**7301 Rivoli Road - Macon, Georgia 31210**



**NOVEMBER 2021**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Oct 31  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	1	2	3  6pm Daily Vespers 7pm Survey Discussion	4	5	6  1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 3pm Catechism Group 2 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers
7  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	8  Synaxis of the Archangel Michael  7pm Ladies Book Club	9	10  6pm Daily Vespers	11  7pm Budget Committee Meeting	12	13  11-5pm Men's Fellowship retreat 6pm Great Vespers
14  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship Super Sunday Church School	15  Nativity Fast Begins	16  7pm Nativity Book Study	17  6pm Daily Vespers 7pm Parish Council	18  6pm Warner Robins Prayer & Fellowship	19	20  1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 3pm Catechism Group 2 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Vespers with Litya for the Feast of the Entrance
21  ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	22  Fr. Theophan out of town	23  Fr. Theophan out of town	24  Fr. Theophan out of town	25  Thanksgiving Fr. Theophan out of town	26  Fr. Theophan out of town	27  6pm Great Vespers
28  9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship	29	30  7pm Nativity Book Study	Dec 1  6pm Small Compline 7pm Survey Discussion	Dec 2  6pm Warner Robins Prayer & Fellowship	Dec 3	Dec 4  1:30pm Catechism (New Group) 3pm Catechism Group 2 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers



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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	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 <b>Super Sunday Church School</b>	6  St. Nicholas  6pm Akathist to St. Nicholas	7  7pm Nativity Book Study	8  6pm Small Compline 7pm Survey Discussion	9	10	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	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	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 5pm Chrismation of Deschler & Idzerda families 6pm Vigil for the Feast of Nativity	25  <b>NATIVITY OF THE LORD</b>  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  3:30pm Baptism and Chrismation of the Hicks family 5pm Sacrament of Confession 6pm Great Vespers