



St. Michael the Archangel Serbian Orthodox Mission

Newsletter

Jan. 2011

Christ is Born!

Saturday's - Vespers

6:00 P.M.

Sunday's - Divine Liturgy

10:00 A.M.

*"...the Word of God
Himself...He,
indeed, assumed
humanity that we
might become
God."*

*On the Incarnation, by
St. Athanasius the Great*

Important Upcoming Church Dates:

Friday Jan. 7th – The Nativity of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. We will celebrate at the home of Fr. Gregory and Mat. Ann, from 6:00 pm until 10:00 pm. It is an Open House; so come when you can. See announcements below for address.

Friday Jan.19th – The Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Service Schedule:

Saturday, Jan. 1st – Vespers, 6:00PM

Sunday, Jan. 2nd – Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Thursday, Jan 6 – Royal Hours 9:00AM,

Christmas Eve Vigil, 6:00PM

Friday, Jan. 7 – Christmas Liturgy, 10:00AM

Saturday, Jan. 8th – Vespers, 6:00 PM

Sunday, Jan. 9th – Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Saturday, Jan. 15th – Vespers, 6:00 PM

Sunday, Jan. 16th – Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Tuesday, Jan 18th – Theophany Vespers, 6:00 PM

Wed, Jan 19th – Theophany Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Saturday, Jan. 22nd – Vespers, 6:00 PM

Sunday, Jan. 23rd – Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Saturday, Jan. 29th – Vespers, 6:00 PM

Sunday, Jan. 30th – Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

✠ *Confessions will be heard on Saturdays after Vespers; also on Sunday mornings before Divine Liturgy 9:30 am to 10 am.*

Father Gregory's contact info:

Home ph: 256-325-4401 & cell: 608-334-1073.

Email: frgregory1@gmail.com

Coffee Hour:

Jan. 2nd – Stein

Feb. 6th – Ellis

Jan. 9th – Wharry

Feb. 13th – Gulas

Jan. 16th – Zarzaur

Feb. 20th – Lee

Jan. 23rd – Bergantz

Feb. 27th – Speir

Jan. 30th – Buksa

If you will be unable to serve coffee hour on your Sunday, please make arrangements to switch with another family. Thanks!

Birthdays:

God Grant Them Many Years!

8th – Elyse Jokich

12th – Nicole Pamfilis

17th – Edyth Hales

Anniversaries:

No anniversaries this month.

Church Cleaning:

Jan. – Zarzaur Feb. – Ellis

This is your Church – help keep it clean!

News Items? Please send church news items to the Newsletter editor Rick Kaiser at: rkmk2001@bellsouth.net

Prayer Requests: Please remember in your prayers: Child Jovana (2 years old – leukemia); Katarzyna Bazylewicz; Tatiana Kukhtareva; Mariam & Tom Calache; Mary Kochoff; Glenn Dengler (friend of Jokich family) and daughters Haley (7) and Nicole (3); Dessie Jokich (mother of Mike Jokich); Sandy & Roger Ellis; Daniel Ellis (brother of Roger); Ted Gulas; Edythe Hales; Markela Hatzakis; Brian Jokich; Elena Meagher and her son Igor; Daniel & Anne Kobasa (parents of H. Bergantz); Rhonda Lovette; Tim & Ron Waskerwitz; Evangeline Pamfilis; Pat Darzy; Mary Zarzaur; Fryne McCreary; and Lola Gulas.

Announcements:

1. We would like to invite everyone to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ on Friday, January 7 at the home of Fr. Gregory and Matushka Ann from 6:00 pm until 10:00 pm. It is an Open House; so come when you can. We hope to provide an evening of food, music and good company. Please RSVP. If at the last minute you find that you are able to attend, by all means come. We just need some idea of how many to expect.

The address is: 290 Maplewood Drive
Madison, AL 35758
256 325-4401
mrs.ann.schultz@gmail.com

2. Spiritual Chat Group meetings: There will be a Bible Study & Spiritual Chat group meeting on Wednesday, January 12th and Wednesday, January 26th at 7:00pm at the Church.

Fr. Gregory is available most Fridays if anyone has any needs. Please contact him at frgregory1@gmail.com, home phone at 256-325-4401 or mobile phone at 608-334-1073.

The Nativity of Christ

In a few short days, we will once again celebrate the Nativity of Christ. Again, the Holy Orthodox Church, the Body of Christ on earth, calls us more deeply into the mystery of Christ's Incarnation. One of the great Holy Fathers of the Christian Faith, St. Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria (who reposed in the Lord approx. 373 A.D.) helps us to understand this great mystery in his famous writing, "On the Incarnation." Following are a few lines from this work for your consideration.

"...As, then, he who desires to see God Who by nature is invisible and not to be beheld, may yet perceive and know Him through His works, so too let him who does not see Christ with his understanding at least consider Him in His bodily works and test whether they be of man or God. If they be of man, then let him scoff; but if they be of God, let him not mock at things which are no fit subject for scorn, but rather let him recognize the fact and marvel that things divine

have been revealed to us by such humble means, that through death, deathlessness has been made known to us, and through the Incarnation of the Word the Mind whence all things proceed has been declared, and its Agent and Ordainer, the Word of God Himself. **He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God.** He manifested Himself by means of a body in order that we might perceive the Mind of the unseen Father. He endured shame from men that we might inherit immortality. He Himself was unhurt by this, for He is impassable and incorruptible; but by His own impassability He kept and healed the suffering men on whose account He thus endured..."¹

All true Christians are called to become God, (in other words to become one with God by becoming like God). We see this idea throughout the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Fathers. In the Gospel of John 1:14, we read: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God..."

According to Archimandrite George, Abbot of St. Gregoriou Monastery on Mt. Athos, as well as many other Holy Fathers, *theosis* (deification) is the purpose of man's life.² Arch. George refers us to the Book of Genesis where we are told that man was created in God's image and likeness.

He goes on to say that, "Having been formed 'in His image', man is called upon to acquire the 'in His likeness', in other words, deification (*theosis*). The Creator, God by nature, calls man to become a god by Grace. The gifts of 'in His image' were given to man by God so that he may ascend very high; so that through them he may attain a likeness to his God and Creator; so that he may have not an external, moral relationship, but a personal union with his Creator... Since man is 'called to be a god', i.e. he was created to become a god, as long as he does not find himself on the path of deification he feels an emptiness within himself; that something is not going right; he feels no joy, even when he is trying to cover the emptiness with other activities. He may numb himself, create a fancy world, but at the same time poor, small and limited, and cage and imprison himself inside it. He may organize his life in such a way that he is never quiet, alone with himself. He can try, through noises, tension, television, radio, continuous information about this and that, as if with drugs, to forget, to not think, not worry, not remember that he is not on the right path, that he has strayed from his purpose. In the end, however, the wretched, contemporary man finds no rest until he finds that 'something else', the greatest thing that actually exists in his life, the truly beautiful and creative."³

Just as we celebrate Christ's Resurrection at Pascha and we can relate in some small way to our own experience of the Resurrection through the joy, renewal and inspiration

¹ *On the Incarnation, Refutation of the Gentiles, Section 54*

² *The Deification as the Purpose of Man's Life*, by Arch. George, p. 11-14

we feel at that time; so too at this time of Christ's Incarnation, we should reach toward a deeper experience of heaven and earth being joined together through Christ's divine nature uniting with human nature. Arch. George rightly points out that unless we are on this path of deification, we will feel no real joy, no real peace within ourselves.

At the time of Christ's birth, the world scarcely noticed His coming. Everyone was very busy dealing with the census imposed by the Roman emperor and their various activities. Joseph and Mary, instead of being received with honor and respect, had to find a humble cave for the Creator of the Universe to enter this world as an infant. Yet, this is how it is even in our times today. The world is too busy to take notice of the Incarnate God. Today's world proudly boasts of its technological accomplishments and material successes. The wealthy, famous and powerful men and women of this fallen world are honored and respected, rather than the Saints and Righteous Ones. There is still 'no room at the inn' for Christ to be born.

In order for Christ to be born within the manger of our hearts, we must become humble before God and obedient to God. Only then will we find ourselves on the right path of deification. Only then will we partake of the true joy and peace because heaven and earth will be united within us.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

In Christ,
+Fr. Gregory Schultz