

## THE EPISTLE

**Reader:** *In the 4<sup>th</sup> Tone: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.*

**Choir:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

**Reader:** *For righteous art Thou in all which Thou hast done for us.*

**Choir:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

**Reader:** *Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.*

**Choir:** And praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

**Reader:** *The Reading is from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews: [Heb. 11:9-10,17-23,32-40 (§328)]*

## THE GOSPEL

**Reader:** *Alleluia in the 4<sup>th</sup> Tone.*

**Choir:** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Reader:** *O God, with our ears have we heard, for our fathers have told us.*

**Choir:** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Reader:** *Thou hast saved us from them that afflict us, and them that hate us hast Thou put to shame.*

**Choir:** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Gospel [[Matthew 1:1-25 (§1)]

Welcome to

**Sts. Theodore Orthodox Church**

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Priest John Boddecker

Deacon Andrew Hammond

Deacon George Hammond

We are a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and all are welcome to worship with us! Our services are in English. Please join us for lunch downstairs after the service.

December 18/31, 2017

**Thirtieth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sunday before the Nativity of Christ**

## This Week's Schedule

Mon-Thurs	Midnight Office and Typika	7:00 am
Friday	Royal Hours of Nativity	8:00 am
	Vespers/Matins	6:00 pm
Saturday	EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST	
	Hours and Divine Liturgy	8:00 am
	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
	Solchennik/Lenten Meal	5:00 pm
	All-Night Vigil	6:00 pm
Sunday	FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST	
	Hours and Divine Liturgy	9:00 am
	<i>Festal Meal in Trapeza after Services</i>	

## TROPARIA

**Resurrection - Tone 5:** Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word / Who is co-unoriginate with the Father and the Spirit, / and Who was born of the Virgin for our salvation; / for He was pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / and to endure death, // and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

**Holy Fathers – Tone 2:** Great are the achievements of faith! / In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, / the Three Holy Children rejoiced. / And the prophet Daniel proved a shepherd of lions as of sheep. // By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

## KONTAKIA

**Holy Fathers - Tone 6:** A hand-wrought image ye would not worship, / O thrice-blessed ones; / but armed with the Indescribable Essence, / ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire./ Standing in the midst of the irresistible flame, ye called upon God: / Speed Thou, O Compassionate One, / and hasten, as Thou art Merciful, // to come unto our aid, for Thou art able if Thou will it.

## PARISH NEWS

- ❖ **Akathist:** There will be no Akathist service this week due to the extra services for the Feast of the Nativity
- ❖ **Annual Dues:** Annual dues are due as we near the end of 2017. If you have any questions, please see Fr. John or Natalie.

## WORD FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

I greet all of you gathered here with the New Year. I congratulate you with the joys that I hope the Lord might send you in the coming year. I congratulate you also with the sorrows that will inevitably visit you this year:

perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow, or in the near future. Incidentally, do not be confused by sorrows or fear them. Sorrows and joys are closely bound up with each other. This may seem strange to you, but remember the words of the Savior: *A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world* (Jn. 16:21). Day turns to night, and night turns to day, bad weather turns to good; so also does sorrow turn into joy, and joy into sorrow.

The Apostle Paul pronounced threatening words against those who do not endure any punishment that comes from God: If you are left without punishment, you are illegitimate children. Do not be depressed; let those be depressed who do not believe in God. For them, of course, sorrow is onerous, because they know only earthly pleasures. But people who believe in God should not despond, because through sorrows they receive the rights of sons, without which one cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Scorning the impious decree, the Children brought up together in godliness feared not the threat of fire, but standing in the midst of the flames, they sang: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou."*

Sorrows are that very threat of fire, or trial, but we must not fear them; rather we must be like the godly children and sing unto God in our sorrows, believing that they are sent to us by God for our salvation.

May the Lord save you all, and lead you to the Kingdom of Unwaning Light! Amen.

- St. Barsanuphius of Optina