

December 29 – 14,000 Holy Infants (Holy Innocents) Slain in Bethlehem

14,000 Holy Infants were killed by King Herod in Bethlehem. When the time came for the Incarnation of the Son of God and His Birth of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Magi in the East beheld a new star in the heavens, foretelling the Nativity of the King of the Jews. They journeyed immediately to Jerusalem to worship the Child, and the star showed them the way. Having worshipped the divine Infant, they did not return to Jerusalem to Herod, as he had ordered them, but being warned by God in a dream, they went back to their country by another way. Herod finally realized that his scheme to find the Child would not be successful, and he ordered that all the male children two years old and younger at Bethlehem and its surroundings be killed. He thought that the divine Infant, Whom he considered a rival, would be among the dead children.

The murdered infants thus became the first martyrs for Christ. The rage of Herod fell also on Simeon the God-Receiver (February 3), who declared before everyone in the Temple that the Messiah had been born. When the holy Elder died, Herod would not give permission for him to be properly buried. On the orders of King Herod, the holy prophet and priest Zachariah was also killed. He was murdered in Jerusalem between the Temple and the altar (Mt. 23:35) because he would not tell the whereabouts of his son John, the future Baptist of the Lord Jesus Christ.

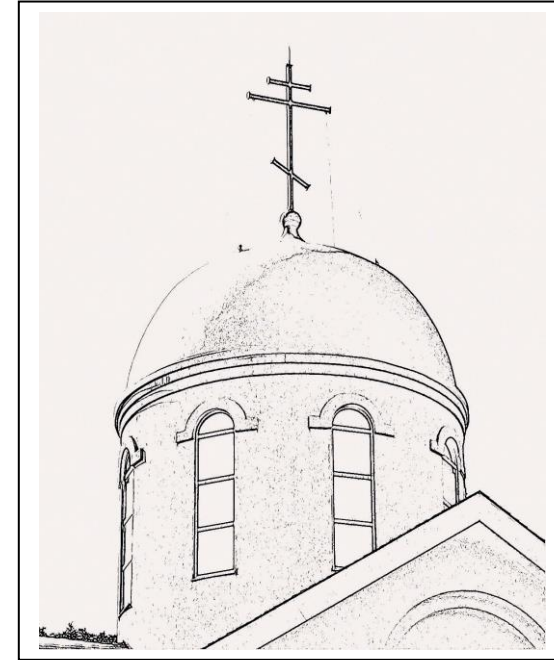
The wrath of God soon fell upon Herod himself: a horrid condition struck him down and he died, eaten by worms while still alive. Before his death, the impious king murdered the chief priests and scribes of the Jews, and also his brother, and his sister and her husband, and also his own wife Mariam, and three of his sons, and seventy men of wisdom who were members of the Sanhedrin. He initiated this bloodbath so that the day of his death would not be one of rejoicing, but one of mourning.

The Christian Church very rightly proclaimed these murdered children as Saints, because they died at an innocent age, and were, in some way, the first martyrs of Christianity. They may not have been baptized in water, but they were baptized in the blessed blood of their martyrdom.

Last but not least, the relics (or perhaps some) of the Holy Infants are found in Constantinople, in the Church of Saint James the Brother of the Lord, which was built by Emperor Justin. Most of their Holy Relics are at the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Portions of their Holy Relics are also to be found in the Pantokrator Monastery on Mount Athos.

Many thanks to all those who have financially supported the work of our parish and followed our Lord's invitation to sow generously and reap generously as a result. All 2024 donations to the parish can only be counted to this year if they are received before 2025 begins. Anyone who wishes to make a donation in 2024 should ensure that the parish receives it before the end of the year. Be assured that we will also be accepting donations in 2025!

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Matthew Petrides, Senior Warden

Christian Gamboa, Choir Director

December 29, 2024

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King,
and James the Brother of the Lord.

Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ. Sunday after Nativity.

Tone 2. The 14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem. Ven. Marcellus, Abbot of the Monastery of the "Unsleeping Ones" (485). Ven. Mark the Grave-digger, Theophilus, and John, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—11th-12th c.). Venerable Theophilos and Jacob, wonderworkers of Omuch (15th c.). Ven. Thaddeus the Confessor, of the Studion (818).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Today – 9:00am Divine Liturgy

Tuesday – 5:00pm Great Vespers

Wednesday – 9:00am Festal Divine Liturgy

Saturday – 6:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday – 9:00am Divine Liturgy

Sunday – 6:00pm Vigil (*Theophany*)

Monday – 9:00am Divine Liturgy & Blessing of Waters

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: 2 Timothy 4:5-8

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are **Fr. Paul Kucynda, Brian Price, Victorianne Vessio, Mary Herelick, Betty James, Manya Shark, Deryl Tczap, Mary Tczap, George Stavrou, Margaret Makara, Dennis & Ann Marie Gahr, Michael Getmanov, Alan Diaz, Ellen Norman, Maryann Sivilic, Lia Eickhorn, Jack Rinderer, and Lori Ratushnuk.**



14,000 Infants slain by
Herod at Bethlehem

We are happy that you have joined us for worship today and hope that you will join us for Coffee Hour after Divine Liturgy. **The reception of the Holy Eucharist** is only for baptized members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared with prayer, fasting, and periodic confession. You are encouraged to receive the blessed bread that is offered at the end of the service and which may also be offered to you by one of your neighbors during Communion.

Annunciations

TODAY – We welcome all our guests visiting us today. Please join us for the **COFFEE HOUR** in the Parish Hall after we venerate the Cross. **Team #1** is in charge of today's Coffee Hour.

TODAY – **Church School** will be held during Coffee Hour.

Tuesday, December 31 – **Great Vespers** for the combined feasts of St. Basil the Great and the Circumcision of Our Lord will be served at 5:00pm.

Wednesday, January 1 – The festal **Divine Liturgy** for the feasts of St. Basil the Great and the Circumcision will be served at 9:00am. Prayers for the **New Year** will be invoked during the service.

Sunday, January 5 – The **Vigil** for the Great Feast of the Theophany will be served at 6:00pm. The Great Blessing of Waters will be part of the Vigil. Holy Water will be available at the end of the service. All are invited to bring containers to bring holy water home with them. Water will be blessed again after the Divine Liturgy on the feast itself, on Monday January 6.

Houseblessings will begin on Monday, January 6 after the morning services, and will continue until all parishioners' homes are blessed. A house blessing sign-up sheet is located in the narthex.

Grant rest eternal in blessed repose, O Lord, to the newly departed servants of God, +Michael Vlachos (brother-in-law or Tami Economou) and +Zoran Pejovic (father of Fr. Michael Pejovic), and may their memory be eternal!

During the joyous festive period between the Feasts of the Nativity (Christmas) and Theophany (January 6), the **Church's fasting "rules"** are suspended. Meat and dairy products may be freely consumed even on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Various flavors of **dessert rolls** are now available at **\$15 per roll**. Please see Cathy Berger or Olga Pasick to make your purchases.

Please continue to use the **clothing bin** located in the church parking lot. A list of items that can be donated is located on the white board in the Parish Hall. Each donation helps the parish financially. Many thanks for your participation.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week:

Friday – Zack Aguirre

Saturday – Steve May

Keep up on OCA news by visiting www.oca.org, diocesan news by visiting www.nynjoca.org, and parish news by visiting www.occa-brick.org.