

Announcements

- **Welcome Guests and Visitors.** We welcome you and hope your experience at the Divine Liturgy is edifying and spiritually nourishing. The services of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are an intricate cycle of psalmody, scripture, praise, and thanksgiving meditating on the great mystery of the Incarnation. With Nativity on a Monday this year, the Sunday Divine Liturgy is followed immediately by Christmas Eve Vespers with 8 Old Testament “Lessons” and readings from the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel. The vigil bursts into its full radiance at the 6pm service and everything culminates in the Divine Liturgy on Christmas morning itself.
- **Please take a moment** after the service to introduce yourself to our pastor, Father Kirill. You are invited to join us for lunch after the service. We would love to greet you and answer any questions.
- **We are grateful** to Archpriest John Vitko and Deacon David Chow for celebrating with us this weekend.

This Week at Holy Trinity

- Sun. Dec. 24:** 9:30 am Divine Liturgy followed immediately by Great Vespers (festal scripture lessons) for Nativity
6:00 pm Festal Vigil – *Christ is born! Glorify Him!*
- Mon. Dec. 25:** **NATIVITY OF OUR LORD GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**
9:30 am Festal Divine Liturgy
- Tue. Dec. 26:** 9:30 am Synaxis of Theotokos Divine Liturgy in Santa Rosa
- Wed. Dec. 27:** 9:30 am St. Stephen Day Divine Liturgy in San Anselmo
6:00 pm Vespers (*here*)
- Sat. Dec. 30:** 6:00 pm Great Vespers & Confessions
followed by Choir Rehearsal
- Sun. Dec. 31:** **Sunday after Nativity. Holy Righteous Ones.**
9:30 am Divine Liturgy followed by potluck fellowship hour
- Mon. Jan. 1:** **The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. St. Basil the Great. Civil New Year.**
9:30 am Divine Liturgy
- Tue. Jan. 2:** 9:30 am St. Seraphim Day Divine Liturgy in Santa Rosa

Contact Fr. Kirill

Question? Want to talk? Or be on our email list?
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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!



December 24-25, A.D. 2023

Most Reverend Benjamin,
Archbishop of San Francisco and the West

Very Reverend Dr. Kirill Sokolov, Dean

Holy Trinity Cathedral
1520 Green Street
San Francisco, California
holy-trinity.org

Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of the West

*We are delighted to be together with you
in worshipping the Newly-Born Lord. Welcome!*

2023 Nativity Message
From the Rector of Holy Trinity Cathedral
His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin

To the Reverend Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of the West,

Dearly beloved:

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord, as we sing of this present mystery: the wall that divided God from man has been destroyed; the flaming sword withdraws from Eden's gate; the Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life; and I, who had been cast out through my disobedience, now feast on the delights of Paradise: for today the Father's perfect Image, marked with the stamp of His eternity, has taken the form of a servant. without undergoing change He is born from an unwedded mother...

(Lord I Call Stichera, The Nativity of our Lord)

One of the realities of the celebration of our Lord's Incarnation is that we have lost the sense that it is precisely a "present mystery." The festal prayer of the Church noted above refers to it as just that. The mystery is that the pre-eternal Son of God divests Himself of the glory of the Godhead and takes upon Himself human nature today. Not just human nature, but human nature in the way we each take upon ourselves human nature – as a little child. And not just as a past historical event. Today He becomes what we are, giving us the chance to become what He is. We must enter into this present mystery at this moment of time. What human reasoning can imagine this reality as the way that God saves His creation?

This supremely humble act fulfills the divine plan and inaugurates everything else necessary for that plan to come to fruition. Paradise was given to us at the beginning and it was thrown away in selfishness and the desire to "be like God" but without Him. We placed the wall between us and God. That is destroyed when the Son of God becomes the Son of Man. God protected His fallen creation by placing the angel with a flaming sword at the gates of paradise so we could not return to the Tree of Life that would permanently seal our separation if we ate of it. He replaces it with the Tree of Life that is the Son of God who comes to be crucified on the Cross, which is now the only Tree of Life, bringing us back to Paradise.

On this Day, we who were exiled from the first paradise through disobedience and sin, are invited back to the eternal Paradise, where we can feast on the fruits of this uniting of the human and divine. This fruit will never allow us to hunger again. The "celebrations" which have been going on for months now in our world will end on this day. All the feasting with which the world has enticed us (and which we sometimes are all too eager to accept) – food, drink, partying, carols, Christmas trees, etc. – will fade away rather quickly. All the enjoyment consumed will soon pass through our bodies and trees will wither away on our curbs. But while the world has had a bacchanalia of consumerism, we have been called to fast and to make an effort to prepare a place in the cave of our bodies and the manger of our souls to receive the One whom we have anticipated since that exile from paradise. Heaven and earth are united once again.

Today the earth offers a cave, the Magi offer prophetic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, angels offer hymns, simple shepherds offer adoration, and we offer the Virgin. Indeed, it is a present mystery. Brothers and sisters, my beloved flock, this day we are offered the Child who is the God-Man come to restore Paradise. Let us, in all humility, receive this most wonderful Gift and give thanks!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

In the new-born Child,

+Benjamin

Archbishop of San Francisco and the West



Many Years!

Namedays

Robert (Rdr Stephen) Parent
(Dec 27)

Steven Belonick (Dec 27)

Birthdays

Robert (Rdr Stephen) Parent
(Dec 26)

Stephen Richards (Dec 26)

Andrew Pickering (Dec 27)

Many Years!

Anniversary of Baptism

Elliot Sylvan Dunham (Dec 29)

Christ is born!

On this eve of the beautiful Nativity of Christ, my family and I warmly greet you with love, gratitude to God, and joy.

Let us glorify Him!

-Fr. Kirill Sokolov