

CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

St. Nikolai Orthodox Church, Divine Liturgy, 9:30 / Saturday Vespers, 4 pm.

9837 State Street, Louisville , Ohio 44641

Right Rev. Bishop Alexander, Bulgarian Diocese, Orthodox Church in America

Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)

Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission

Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)

December 27, 2015: 30th Sunday after Pentecost / Third Day of the Feast of the Nativity Sunday after the Nativity of Christ / Holy Righteous Ones: Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, the Brother of the Lord

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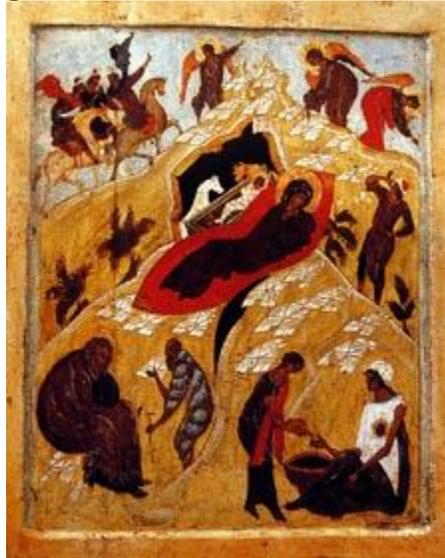
Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen / Venerable Theodore Graptos

Website <http://www.stnikolaiorthodoxmission.com/>

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page: www.facebook.com/SaintNikolaiOrthodoxMissionOfAlliance

Welcome to Visitors. Thank you for coming and praying with us today. In the Orthodox Church, Holy Communion is reserved only for Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and confession during the Church fasting seasons. We invite you to introduce yourself to Father Joe and Deacon James at the end of the Liturgy and receive a piece of the blessed bread and join us for fellowship and Christian education. We look forward to seeing you again and encourage you to learn more about the Orthodox Faith.



Tone 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,

born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion of the Feast

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore You, the Sun of righteousness, and to know You, the Orient from on high.// O Lord, glory to You!

Tone 2 Troparion (of the Righteous Ones)

Proclaim the wonder, O Joseph, to David, the ancestor of God; you saw a Virgin great with child; you gave glory with the shepherds; you worshipped with the Magi; you received the news from the Angel. Pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Nikolai)

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you.

Hierarch Father Nikolai, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved!

Tone 3 Kontakion (of the Righteous Ones)

Today godly David is filled with joy;
The glorious crown of their kinship with Christ fills them with great joy.
They sing praises to the One ineffably born on earth,
and they cry out: "O Compassionate One, save those who honor You!"

Tone 3 Kontakion of the Feast

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One.
Angels with shepherds glorify Him; the Wise Men journey with the star, //
since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!

Tone 5 Prokeimenon

You, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.
v: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!

Tone 4 Prokeimenon

God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel.

Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19 (*Sunday after the Nativity*)

Tone 5 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: I will sing of Your mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Your truth from generation to generation.

v: For You have said: “Mercy will be established forever; My truth will be prepared in the heavens.”

Tone 4

v: Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness!

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23 (Sunday after the Nativity)

(Instead of “It is truly meet,” we sing:)

Magnify, O my soul, the most-pure Virgin Theotokos,
more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts.
I behold a strange, most glorious mystery: heaven—the cave;
the cherubic throne—the Virgin;
the manger—the place where Christ lay—the uncontainable God,
Whom we magnify in song.

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Holy Prophet-King David, St Joseph the Betrothed, and St James the Brother of the Lord are commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity. If there is no Sunday between December 25 and January 1, their commemoration is moved to December 26. At an early date, some churches in the East began to commemorate certain important figures of the New Testament at the time of Theophany, and later during the Nativity season. In Syria, for example, St Stephen (December 27), Sts James (April 30) and John (September 26), and Sts Peter and Paul (June 29) were commemorated near the end of December. In Jerusalem, the saints mentioned above were combined with a feast that the Jews of Hebron celebrated on December 25 or 26 in honor of the Old Testament Patriarch Jacob. Later on, the Christians substituted St James (October 23) for Jacob, and then the commemoration of the Brother of the Lord became associated with his ancestor King David. In time, St. Joseph was linked with Sts David and James.

The Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen was the eldest of the seven deacons, appointed by the Apostles themselves, and therefore he is called “archdeacon.” He was the first Christian martyr, and he suffered for Christ when he was about thirty. In the words of Asterias, he was “the starting point of the martyrs, the instructor of suffering for Christ, the foundation of righteous confession, since Stephen was the first to shed his blood for the Gospel.” Filled with the Holy Spirit, St Stephen preached Christianity and defeated Jewish teachers of the Law in debate. The Jews maligned St Stephen, saying that he had uttered blasphemy against God and against Moses. St Stephen came before the Sanhedrin and the High Priest to answer these charges. He gave a fiery speech, in which he recounted the history of the Jewish nation, and denounced the Jews for persecuting the prophets, and also

for executing the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ (Acts ch. 7). During his speech, St Stephen suddenly saw the heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. The Jews shouted and covered their ears, and rushed at him. They dragged him out of the city and stoned him, but the holy martyr prayed for his murderers. Far off on the heights stood the Mother of God with the holy Apostle John the Theologian, and She prayed fervently for the martyr. Before his death St Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Then he joyfully gave up his pure soul to Christ. The body of the holy Protomartyr Stephen, left to be eaten by beasts, was secretly taken up by the Jewish teacher Gamaliel and his son Habib, who buried Stephen on his estate. They both believed in Christ, and later received holy Baptism.

"Every glimmering day is another great day in the struggle of the two kingdoms." Which kingdom shall I choose? Shall I choose the earthly kingdom? Or shall I choose the heavenly? St. Nikolai Velimriovich