

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

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Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, Dec 16, 23
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, Dec 17, 24
Divine Liturgy: 10am
**Coffee and fellowship
will follow the service**

*The above services are
at St. Olympia Church
34 North Main Street
Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address
St. Olympia Orthodox
Church PO Box 122
Canton, NY 13617*

Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ



Mary was of David's seed, so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. She bore in her womb the Fruit not sown by man. The time for the birth was at hand. Since there was no room at the inn, the cave became a beautiful palace for the Queen. Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old.

Troparion on the Eve of the Nativity

Today the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth to the Eternal Word. Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe! Glorify with the angels and the shepherds the Eternal God, who is willing to appear as a little child!

Kontakion on the Eve of the Nativity

Incarnation

And He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man . . .

The Orthodox Faith - Volume I: The Symbol of Faith **By Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko**

The divine Son of God was born as a man from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit (Mt 1; Luke 1). The Church teaches that the virgin birth is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Is 7.14), and that it is as well the fulfillment of the longings of all men for salvation which are found in all religions and philosophies in human history. Only God can save the world. Man alone cannot do it because it is man himself who must be saved. Therefore, according to Orthodox doctrine, the virgin birth is necessary not at all because of a false idolization of virginity as such or because of a sinful repulsion to normal human sexuality. Nor is it necessary as some would contend to give “added weight” to the moral teachings of Jesus. The virgin birth is understood as a necessity because the one who is born must not be merely a man like all others needing salvation. The Saviour of the world cannot merely be one of the race of Adam born of the flesh like all of the others. He must be “not of this world” in order to save the world.

Jesus is born from the Virgin Mary because he is the divine Son of God, the Saviour of the world. It is the formal teaching of the Orthodox Church that Jesus is not a “mere man” like all other men. He is indeed a real man, a whole and perfectly complete man with a human mind, soul and body. But he is the man which the Son and Word of God has become. Thus, the Church formally confesses that Mary should properly be called Theotokos, which means literally “the one who gives birth to God.” For the one born of Mary is, as the Orthodox Church sings at Christmas: “. . . he who from all eternity is God.”

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! (Kontakion of the Nativity)

Jesus of Nazareth is God, or, more accurately, the divine Son of God in human flesh. He is a true man in every way. He was born. He grew up in obedience to his parents. He increased in wisdom and stature (Luke 2.51–52). He had a family life with “brethren” (Mark 3.31–34), who according to Orthodox doctrine were not children born of Mary who is confessed as “ever-virgin,” but were either cousins or children of Joseph.

As a man Jesus experienced all normal and natural human experiences such as growth and development, ignorance and learning, hunger, thirst, fatigue, sorrow, pain, and disappointment. He also knew human temptation, suffering, and death. He took these things upon himself “for us men and for our salvation.”

Since, therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it was not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect . . . to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted (Hebrews 2.9–18).

Christ has entered the world becoming like all men in all things except sin.

He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him [God the Father] who judges justly (1 Peter 2.22; Hebrews 4.15).

Jesus was tempted, but he did not sin. He was perfect in every way, absolutely obedient to God the Father; speaking His words, doing His works, and accomplishing His will. As a man, Jesus fulfilled his role perfectly as the Perfect Man, the new and final Adam. He did all things that man fails to do, being in everything the most

perfect human response to the divine initiative of God toward creation. In this sense, the Son of God as man “recapitulated” the life of Adam, i.e., the entire human race, bringing man and his world back to God the Father and allowing for a new beginning of life free from the power of sin, the devil, and death.

As the Saviour-Messiah, Christ fulfilled as well all of the prophecies and expectations of the Old Testament, fulfilling and crowning in final and absolute perfection all that was begun in Israel for human and cosmic salvation. Thus, Christ is the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, the completion of the Law of Moses, the fulfillment of the prophets and Himself the Final Prophet, the King and the Teacher, the one Great High Priest of Salvation and the Perfect Sacrificial Victim, the New Passover and the Bestower of the Holy Spirit upon all creation.

It is in this role as Messiah-King of Israel and Saviour of the world that Christ insisted upon His identity with God the Father and called Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life: the Resurrection and the Life, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Door to the Sheepfold, the Good Shepherd, the Heavenly Son of Man, the Son of God, and God Himself, the I AM (Gospel of Saint John).

Defense of the Doctrine of Incarnation

In the Orthodox Church the central fact of the Christian faith, that the Son of God has appeared on earth as a real man, born of the Virgin Mary in order to die and rise again to give life to the world, has been expressed and defended in many different ways. The first preaching and the first defense of the faith consisted in maintaining that Jesus of Nazareth is in truth the Messiah of Israel, and that the Messiah Himself—the Christ—is indeed truly Lord and God in human form. The first Christians, beginning with the apostles, had to insist on the fact that not only is Jesus truly the Christ and the Son of God, but that He has truly lived and died and risen from the dead in the flesh, as a true human being.

By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God (1 Jn 4.2).

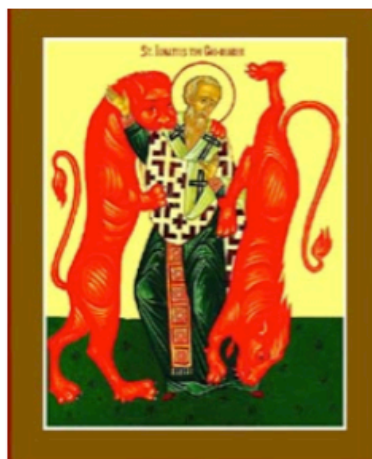
For many deceivers have gone into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh . . . (2 John 7)

In the early years of the Christian faith, the defenders of the faith—the apologists and martyrs—had as their central witness and task the defense of the doctrine that Jesus, being the Son of God in human flesh, has lived on earth, has died, has been raised by the Father, and has been glorified as the only King and Lord and God of the world. . . .

[End of Part 1]

**Hieromartyr Ignatius,
God-Bearer, Bishop of Antioch
December 20**

*By sharing in the ways of the Apostles,
you became a successor to their throne.
Through the practice of virtue,
you found the way to divine contemplation,
O inspired one of God;
by teaching the word of truth without error,
you defended the Faith,
even to the shedding of your blood.
Hieromartyr Ignatius,
entreat Christ God to save our souls.
Troparion to St. Ignatius*



Great Martyr Anastasia the Deliverer from Poisons

December 22

As a Martyr you emulated the deeds of the Martyrs to whom you ministered, and, striving valiantly, you overcame the Enemy. You are an abundant and overflowing source of grace for all who come to you, O godly-minded Anastasia.

Troparion

Those in temptations and afflictions hasten to your temple and are restored by the grace that dwells in you, for you ever pour forth healings for all the world, O Great Martyr Anastasia.

Kontakion



Great Martyr Anastasia Nun-Martyr Eugenia

Nun-Martyr Eugenia of Rome

December 24

Inspired by the Divine Spirit, you sang the praises of God, receiving the light of divine knowledge, O Eugenia, Christ's beautiful virgin. You shone forth in the choirs of monastics, and in your contest you triumphed over the Enemy. O glorious Martyr, entreat Christ God to grant us great mercy.

Troparion

Fleeing from the passing glory of this world, you longed for Christ, preserving the nobility of your soul unharmed, O godly-wise Martyr, all-praised Eugenia.

Kontakion



Kontakion of the Nativity of Christ

*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 a star!
Since for our sake
the Eternal God was born as a Little Child!*

PARISH WISH LIST

A wish list to help our parish grow!

SPECIAL, one-time needs or items

LED lights or lanterns e.g. strings of Christmas lights, to illuminate our entrances temporarily.
(Electrical work needed must be postponed until the summer.)

RECURRING needs:

Paper Plates (small and large), **Paper Bowls**, **Hot Cups**
Napkins
Plastic Utensils, especially **Forks**
Paper Towels
Toilet Paper

Many thanks to the Fergusons for donating a changing table.

Holy Mother Olympia, pray to God for us!

UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

UPCOMING NATIVITY SERVICES

Saturday, December 23	5 PM	Vespers
Sunday, December 24	10 AM	Divine Liturgy
Monday, December 25	10 AM	Divine Liturgy of the Nativity

WEEKDAY VESPERS 5 PM AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.

The life of the righteous fathers and mothers of ancient days, like that of all God's saints, is Christ. God's holy people live for Him alone, for the living God and for His Word. Their reason for being is to praise God, not only in words but in deeds, and so to live. There is a great Difference between existing and living. Many people exist. Very few really live. Only those who seek God have life. Only those who delight in His commandments and rejoice in accomplishing His will pass beyond mere existence and actually find life. "Seek God, and your soul shall live (Ps 69:32 LXX). This is the cry of the psalmist David who is especially hymned on this Sunday and on the Sunday after Christmas. His exhortation is in perfect harmony with the words of God given to Moses in His revelation of the divine Law.

Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko; The Winter Pascha

Troparion of the Nativity of Christ

*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!*

