



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Missionary Parish, Orange County, California

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

January – March 2011

Parish Center Location: 2148 Michelson Drive (Irvine Corporate Park), Irvine, CA 92612

Fr. Blasko Paraklis, Parish Priest, (949) 830-5480

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The Two Comings of Christ

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

In churches of catholic tradition in the Christian West, the Christmas “advent” season greatly emphasizes the second coming of the Lord. The faithful are called in their preparation for Christmas to look beyond the Savior’s coming in “the form of a slave, the likeness of men” (Phil 2:7), to His coming again in glory at the end of the ages to judge the living and the dead in the Kingdom of God.

In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the second coming of Christ is liturgically emphasized during the first three days of Holy Week before the springtime Pascha of the Lord’s death and resurrection. At the services of these holy days the scripture readings and hymns all refer to the end of the world and the judgment of creation by the victorious Lord who enters His glory by way of the Cross.

During the Christmas prefeast season, the connection between the first coming of God’s Son as the Suffering Servant, the Lamb of God who takes upon Himself the sins of the World, and His second coming as the triumphant King and Judge of the universe is not overtly stressed in any of the church services. But it is clearly implied in virtually all of the songs, hymns and lections. The Old Testament prophecies read at the hours, vespers, and matins on the day before the Nativity quite specifically proclaim the messianic age which Jesus is born to bring, but which He will manifest in power only at the end of history. And several verses which are sung during the season directly refer to the interrelationship between the Master’s two comings.

Christ our Judge commands us to be vigilant. We wait expectantly for His visitation, For He comes to be born of a virgin.

At Your awesome second coming, O Christ, Number me with the sheep at Your right hand, For You took up Your abode in the flesh to save us.

At Your first coming to us, O Christ, You desired to save the race of Adam; When You come again to judge us, Show mercy on those who honor Your Holy Nativity.¹

The Christmas prefeast hymns, especially the Canons, consciously refer to the hymns of the services of Holy Week before the springtime Pascha. In many of them, Easter paschal themes are replaced by Winter paschal themes, with just a few words being changed in each verse.² Thus, what is effected at these services is a sort of “triple connection.” Christ’s Nativity, with His Epiphany in the Jordan, is referred to His Passion and Resurrection, which is then referred to His Coming at the end of the ages.

In making this triple connection, the entire Mystery of Christ is placed before the believers for their contemplation and communion. Jesus was born in order to die. Indeed, of all humans who ever lived on earth, God's Son is the only one who entered the world for this purpose. He came to die so that we might live in and through Him. The eternal life which He brings to the world is already present and active in those who receive Him, but it will be manifested fully and completely in a way which no one can question, doubt, or resist only at the end of the ages. Christians are those who remember and celebrate the fact that God has visited His people in the person of His Son in order to be crucified and raised. And so they are also those who await His Coming, believing that all of God's promises made in and through Jesus will be actualized in the age to come. Therefore they expect nothing here. They want nothing here. They know that they will get nothing here, their Savior's promise for this age is only persecution and tribulation.

Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." (Mark 10:29-30)

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also." (John 15:18-20)

"The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home, and will leave Me alone; yet I am not alone, for the Father is with Me. I have said this to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16-33)

Christians live between the two comings of Christ. They remember His first coming to be sacrificed. They anticipate His second coming to reign. This is vividly portrayed in traditional Orthodox church buildings where the "royal gates" of the icon screen in front of the altar table are flanked by the icons of the Theotokos and Child on the one side, and the Lord Jesus in glory on the other. To the uninitiated it may seem as though these are simply pictures of Mary and Jesus put on the same level. This is not so. The icons which frame the Orthodox altar are images of the two comings of Christ. Mary is not alone in her icon; she is holding the Christ Child, who is not shown as a baby, but as the Son of God incarnate "in the form of a slave. . . in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7). This is the icon of Christ's first coming. And the icon on the right of the doors is not a picture of Jesus as He was on the earth. It is His image in glory as

King and Lord, the icon of His second coming. The two comings of Christ are held together in Christian thought, action, and prayer at all times. They cannot be separated. When they are, it is the end of Christian faith, life and worship. The first coming without the second is a meaningless tragedy. The second coming without the first is an absurd impossibility. Jesus is born to bring God's kingdom. He dies to prove His kingship. He rises to establish His reign. He comes again in glory to share it with His people. In the kingdom of God there are no subjects. All rule with the risen Messiah. He came, and is coming, for this purpose alone.

You have taken me captive with longing for You, O Christ, And have transformed me with Your divine love. Burn up my sins with the fire of Your Spirit. And count me worthy to take my fill of delight in You, that dancing with joy, I may magnify Your two Comings.³

^{1,2,3} Ode 9 of the canon of compline of the second day of the prefeast of the Nativity,

Мир Божји, Христос се роди!



Поново прослављамо радосни празник рођења Христовог драга браћо и сестре. Наш Свети Патријарх Павле у једној Божићној посланици написао је; да Величина наших празника и јесте у томе што они на чудесан начин тај догађај чине поново присутним и стварним. То бива јасније ако имамо на уму библијско поимање памћења, сећања, што увек подразумева оприсутњавање тога догађаја. Наш свет и век у коме живимо готово да и не познаје ову истину. Отуда овај, као и сваки други празник, људи често доживљавају као успомену на нешто што се некада давно негде догодило, нечега што је лепо да се сећамо, јер како се то обично каже, то су наши леви стари обичаји.

Међутим, празници су понајмање обичаји. На првом месту они испуњавају наш живот смислом, и то смислом постојања, освећујући време у коме живимо. Хришћани који знају да је Христос дошао, који су свесни Његовог присуства и у дому и на Светој Литургији, и који ишчекују Његов други долазак, они имају сасвим другачији однос

према животу, његовом смислу и вредностима, за разлику од оних који не размишљају на овакав начин а траже некакав смисао у свету који их окружује.

Празник рођења Христовог нам открива да нисмо позвани само да будемо добри, честити, племенити и узорни грађани, већ далеко више од тога: **да постанемо деца Божија**. Да се старамо о свету који нас окружује и да тај свет приносимо Богу како би вечно постојао. Није ли то и решење еколошке кризе. Није ли решење овог проблема, као и сваког другог, у враћању на библијски, хришћански поглед на свет. Сигурно јесте за оне који имају уши да чују и очи да виде.

Свето писмо, та књига живота, јасно нам говори о свему томе. Свет и човек створени су од Бога, из небића (1. Мој 1,1). У себи самом они немају ништа што би их држало у постојању без Бога. Само у заједници са Богом, могуће је наше постојање, наш живот. Тај живот нама Бог нуди, али нас не приморава да позив прихватимо. Будући да нас је створио по лику своме (1. Мој 1,26), даровао нам је дакле, слободу и од нас очекује да слободу пројавимо као љубав, као потврдан одговор на Божији позив. Адам и Ева су, нажалост, своју слободу пројавили на негативан начин, нису прихватили Божији позив, (1. Мој 3,6), али Господ ни њих, као ни нас, није оставио (1. Мој 3,15), већ је наставио да промишља о човеку и да га припрема за долазак Месије који ће спасити и свет и човека (Јер 31,31-33).

Како ће га спасити, подсмешљиво нас питају људи овога века. А ми одговарамо - спасиће нас тако што ће Бог постати човек, а да при том остане Бог. И то се управо дешава на данашњи дан. Бог постаје човек. Данас се спасење објавило свету.

Са овим дивним мислима Светог Патријарха Павла и са молитвом да вам Господ подари здравље у породици радост и мир у души, желим вам срећан Божић и Нову годину, са молбом да Вашим прилогом помогнете своју парохију. Мир Божји Христос се роди!

Ваш молитвеник пред Богомладенцем Христом,

О. Блашко Параклис

Peace of God! Christ is born!

Again this year we are celebrating the joyous feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ dear brothers and sisters. Our Holy Patriarch Pavle in one of His Christmas greetings wrote the following words; The greatness of our feasts is in the fact that the events are miraculously made present and real to us once again. This becomes all the more clear to us if we understand the biblical notion of remembrance, which always understands that the event remembered is in fact made present for us. This world and the time in which we live has almost no grasp of this truth. It is for this reason that people experience this and other feasts as simply being a remembrance of an event which occurred sometime and someplace long ago, as something which is nice to remember, for, as it is usually said, these are our nice, old traditions. However, the feasts are 'traditions' only in the least significant sense of the word. Firstly, they fill our lives with meaning, a sense of existence, consecrating the time in which we live. Christians who know that Christ has come, who realize that He is present in our homes and at the Divine Liturgy, and who await His Second Coming, have a completely different attitude towards life, its meaning and its values, as opposed to those who do not think this way and who seek some kind of meaning only from the world around them.

Today's Feast reveals to us that we are not called to simply be good, honorable, noble and model citizens, but far more than this: we are called to become the children of God; to care for the world around us and to offer it to God that it might eternally exist. Isn't this the solution to our ecological crisis? Isn't our return to a biblical, Christian view of the world the solution to not only this but all of our other problems? It truly is for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see.

The Holy Bible, that book of life, speaks clearly to us regarding all of these matters. The world and mankind were created by God from nothing (Gen. 1:1). In and of themselves they have nothing that would keep them in existence without God. It is in unity with God that our existence, our life, is made possible. God offers us that life, although He does not force us to accept it. Having created us in His image (Gen. 1:26), He gave us free will that in love we might use that freedom in accepting His call. Adam and Eve, unfortunately, used their freedom negatively and did not accept God's invitation (Gen. 3:6); but the Lord God did not abandon them, just as He does not abandon us (Gen. 3:15). Rather, He continued to provide for man and to prepare him for the coming of the Messiah who would save both man and the world (Jer. 31:31-33).

In a ridiculing tone contemporary man asks, 'How will He save it?' Our answer is that God will save it by becoming man, while at the same time preserving His divine nature. That is exactly what happens on this day: God becomes man. Today salvation appears in the world.

With these wonderful thoughts of our Holy Patriarch Pavle I wish that during these festive days, you fill your hearts with joy, good will, noble feelings, honest intentions, and above all fill them with love.

Peace of God, Christ is Born! Happy New Year! *Мир Божји, Христос се роди!*

Your intercessor before the Christ God,

Fr. Blasko Paraklis

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THANK YOU

Рођење Христово

Бог нас ствара кроз Христа и за Христа, јер све што је постало, Њега ради је постало, а Он ни ради чега, како сведочи свети Максим Исповедник. То значи да је Христос смисао постојања света! Бог постаје човек да би човек и сва творевина остварила назначење свог постојања, циљ ради којег су створени, а то је обожење човека и вечно постојање све твари, целокупног створеног света у љубавном јединству са Богом. Царство небеско које чекамо и ради којег смо и створени неће бити ништа друго до скуп, јединство, заједница, сабрање свих верних у Христу, односно Тело Христово којем је глава Христос, али које сачињавамо и сви ми причешћујући се Телом и Крвљу Његовим на светој Литургији.

Бити хришћанин значи живети као хришћанин, живети Христа, а не само називати се хришћанином и то своје хришћанство сводити на то што смо некад у животу крштени, што постимо Бадњи дан и Велики Петак (или још коју седмицу у години ако желимо да се причестимо), и код нас Срба на слављење славе.

Бити хришћанин је начин живота оног ко се назива хришћанином, свакодневно исповедање Христа самим својим животом, а пре свега буквално живљење Христа у Светој Литургији, причешћујући се Телом и Крвљу Христовом, самим Христом. Дубине хришћанства се ни не могу разумети објективно, без доживљаја, то јест ван Христа.

Управо из овог разлога што бити хришћанин значи имати са Богом жив, лични однос, учествовати у Њему, Бог и силази међу нас и постаје један од нас, да бисмо га најприсније и најопипљивије живели, и Њиме се и сами обожили. Но, наше учествовање у Богу и тиме наше обожење не постиже се механичким причешћивањем, као да је то неки магијски чин – да кад се причестимо онда се аутоматски обожимо, без обзира да ли ми заиста живимо Христа, односно да ли својим животом и ван тих сат или два проведених на Литургији заиста сведочимо да смо хришћани - Христови људи.

Наравно да се без причешћивања Христом не можемо називати хришћанима нити се можемо спасти, јер и сам Христос каже: "Ја сам врата; ако ко уђе кроза ме спашће се, и ући ће и изићи ће, и пашу ће наћи" (Јован 10,9), али ако хоћемо да смо хришћани, онда смо то цео живот и свим својим бићем, а не повремено и делимично, јер је то онда неискрено и није потпуна љубав. Христос каже да ће по љубави људи познати да ли смо његови, јер је Он сам извор љубави: "Ово је заповијест моја: да љубите једни друге као што ја вас љубим" (Јован 15,12).

То је апсурд Божије љубави, да Творац постаје творевина да би пригрлио сву творевину, безгранична љубав Божија којом нас љуби без икаквог остатка и уздржаности: ништа нам мање Бог не даје, већ оно највише што се може дати у љубави, а то је самога Себе! "Јер Бог тако завоље свијет", сведочи Јеванђеље, "да је Сина својега Јединороднога дао, да сваки који вјерује у њега не погине, него да има живот вјечни" (Јован 3,16). Отац је зато Сина свога послао у свет, јер је Син љубав Очева, да ни један од нас људи Божијих не пропадне, не остане у смрти, него да сви имамо живот вечни, и то не било какав живот вечни, јер ће вечан бити и пакао за који нас Бог није створио - живућа смрт егоизма и неодноса са другим, већ да вечно живимо у љубавној заједници са Богом и са свом твари.

Син Божији постаје човек не престајући бити Бог, сједињујући у себи створено са нествореним, и тако остварујући циљ стварања света. На нама је да, ако желимо, слободно ступимо, постанемо део, тј. причестимо се овом јединству створеног света и Бога у Телу Христовом, које је Црква. Пошто Отац вечно љуби Сина, и нас љуби као свога Сина кроз којег нас и ствара, којег нам шаље у свет и у којем нас познаје, ако нас нема у Телу Христовом, тј. ако не живимо Христа у Цркви, Отац нас неће препознати као своје, као свог Сина. Стога требамо вратити Христа у Божић, као што напомињу савремени оци због начина на који се данас често прославља Божић, као обичај а ван Христа и мимо Христа, ван Тела Христовог.

Божић, као и сви други празници, прославља се најпре литургијски, у Телу Христовом, јер се управо ту и налази смисао Божића и сваког хришћанског празника, да се победи смрт и оствари љубавно јединство Бога и света, а свако друго празновање јесте смислено и истинско празновање празника и Христа у празнику само ако извире из литургијског празновања као његово настављање.

Александра Топаловић

Events:

Parish Slava

By David Williams

On Sunday September 20th our community celebrated its Parish Slava for the Nativity of the Mother of God. The Hierarchical Divine liturgy for the feast was celebrated by his Grace Bishop Maxim of Western America, Fr. Blasko, Hieromonk Jovan and Deacon Thomas of Saint Barnabus Antiochian Church in Costa Mesa. Our renowned concert choir Istochnik sang the responses for the Liturgy and cultivated a prayerful atmosphere which many people commented on positively later in the day.

The liturgy was well attended by our own parishioners as well as many visitors. Among our guests was the esteemed Orthodox professor, philosopher and Theologian Dr. Christos Yannaras. Dr. Yannaras gave a short lecture on Agape (The love of Christ) as a community and the Church as a living manifestation of God's love. He elaborated by using the loving relationship of the Holy Trinity as communion and an example of the unity of the ecclesia. This communion of love he said is what made him feel very much at home with us here in Orange County.

After his lecture Dr. Yannaras answered several questions covering topics ranging from the global economy to the unselfish love that Saint Paul spoke of in Corinthians, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed [the poor], and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Plan Ahead:

- **FEBRUARY 13, 2011, 12:30pm**

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

You are hereby invited to attend the Annual Meeting of our Parish, which will be held at our Parish Center, 2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine, California, on Sunday, February 13, 2011, following the Divine Liturgy and lunch. It is imperative that all of our faithful attend this meeting to discuss the many important matters about the future of our Parish. The Parish Board will present the financial statement for 2010, and a budget proposal for 2011.

Please invite all Orange County Serbian Orthodox people to join you. Also, it is essential that you submit your *Parishioner Application* and *Stewardship Pledge* Forms before the meeting to become a member in good standing. If you do not have these Forms, please contact Fr. Blasko @ (949) 830-5480. In anticipation of your presence at this meeting, we remain,

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Blasko Paraklis, Parish Priest

Zika Tatalovic, President

PARISH BOARD ELECTIONS

Elections for the 2011 Parish Board will be held at our Annual Meeting on February 13, 2011.

Who is eligible to serve on the Parish Board?

The baptized Orthodox Christian, man or woman, who is a practicing member of the faith, participates in the sacramental life of the Church faithfully, who seeks to live his or her life fully in accordance with the Gospel and the canons of the Church and has been a member of the parish prior to elections.

We have a strong and active Board today, who fairly share the responsibilities so that none have any unreasonable burden. We are recruiting interested and active Board members as we pursue our long-term plans. If you would like to serve Christ and His church by serving on the Parish Board, please contact Zika Tatalovic, Board President, any member of the current Board, or our Parish Priest, Fr. Blasko Paraklis.

Not “Can we?”, but “HOW can we?”

The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. (2 Cor 9:6-8)

There are three common misconceptions about church life and budgeting:

- Our budget drives our programs.
- People will give if they understand what the Church needs.
- The best way to budget is on an annual basis.

Our budget drives our programs

One way of looking at the budget process, whether it be a modest family budget, a small parish budget or the budget of the Church, is to simply project income for the coming year and say, “What can we do with that money?” Certainly, no one can stay solvent for long by spending more than is coming in. That’s true whether the amount is \$25,000, \$250,000, or \$2.5 million!

The problem with this approach is that it doesn’t take into account what *needs* to be done. There are two basic approaches to meeting needs that can be followed: first, we can decide that we have maximized our income (there is no more income anywhere to find), so we bite the bullet and slash the budget, even though it is bare and minimal and all the spending vital to performing our mission. Or second, we decide that the directed spending is important and probably even inadequate, so we invest time and effort into developing new streams of revenue, different from those that we might consider tapped out in order to expand and deepen our work.

If a family knows that college expenses are coming up and there is no money for it, the choice must be made: either expand income to meet the needs or forego college. If college is important, a second job might be taken, or loans applied for, with a payment plan that fits into the budget. If we know that everything in our budget is essential to meeting the day-to-day needs of our organization and to ministering to each and every individual, the challenge we have then is to give generously so that the needs of the parish might be met. As we look at the future growth and needs of the parish, we must devote efforts and current resources towards generating the necessary *future* resources to do that work.

People will give if they understand what the Church needs

Another approach to giving is the attitude that “if they only understand what we are doing and why we are doing it, they will give.” This approach is based on the assumption that people give in response to *information*, not *inspiration*.

The problem with this approach is that it ignores the basic principle of Christian giving. That principle is that we give from our blessings to the Church and others because **God gave first**. His gifts to us are unconditional and to reflect Him, we must be unconditional givers also. When we try to get people to give simply by explaining how the budget meets the needs of the parish, we do not *inspire* anyone. We run into serious problems when others do not agree with the priorities that we have established for the parish. We can spend time and effort trying to convince others of the budgeting priorities. But if they remain unconvinced, the budget suffers.

This approach might work for special projects (building programs, etc.), but it can cripple annual budgeting and normal day-to-day needs. When the Church inspires people, great things happen, but when we simply try to sell people the budget (i.e., “you people have to give more, we can’t pay our bills!”), it fails.

The best way to budget is on an annual basis

It was not so long ago that it was not uncommon for parishes and smaller organizations to “fly by the seat of their pants” without budgets. What came in was spent as needs arose. So to speak about annual budgets is a step forward and at least shows some effort at planning. But the problem with annual budgets is that they tend to be shortsighted, great for immediate needs but lacking in vision and effort at growth and the future needs of a vibrant community. Every dynamic growing entity, whether church or some other type of organization, has one thing in common: a short-, medium- and long-range vision. If our vision is to subsist and survive, then annual budgets are more than adequate for that vision.

Not “Can We?” but “HOW Can We?”

To put energy and focus into our budgeting processes, we must begin with a vision of where we want to be and then not ask, “Can we?” but look at it positively and ask, “How can we get there?” We must begin with long-term budgeting — dream big and clarify goals and objectives. Through prayer, brainstorming and effort ask, “What does God want us to accomplish?”

Then we must prioritize objectives. Despite our best efforts, resources are not infinite. We then ask, "If we can accomplish only one of our goals in the next three years, what would it be?" Once we answer that question, we must begin to plan short-term to meet long-term goals. Very little that we do in the Church is for only one year, so why do we plan that way?

Part of visionary planning would be to explore what can be done with more. Instead of just discussing and passing a budget that shows with "a" we can do "b", we can show future goals by demonstrating that with "c" we can do "d", and with "y" we can do "z."

The core of administrative work in the Church is ministry. Lots of good things get done when adequate funding is provided. By not using the budgeting process properly and failing to inspire our faithful, we are indeed "sowing sparingly." Why should we be surprised when we "reap sparingly"? Trying to fit spending into income is backwards and antithetical to the Gospel. Church budgeting should be visionary; trying to expand income into the spending needed to accomplish the Mission of Christ in the world.

God, through His apostle, has told us that when we give cheerfully, He provides everything necessary so that we can give abundantly. A visionary budgeting process is our faithful response to His promise. *As we ponder the Gift of the new-born Christ about to be celebrated in our midst, it would be good to reflect on how we offer gifts to Him. And how we plan the use of those gifts.*

By Fr. John J. D.

STEWARDSHIP

"How will we repay the Lord for all that He has given us?"

- St. Basil the Great

I am writing you dear Brothers and Sisters to announce our 2011 Stewardship Drive and to ask for your much needed participation. As Stewards of God's Church on earth we are given the responsibility and the privilege of holding onto that which has been freely given us and to make sure our Holy Orthodox Faith is passed on to the next generation. At the Most Holy Theotokos Church we strive to not only be stewards of God's Holy Church but to also proclaim the Gospel.

We need improvement in our financial situation! We are still striving to totally support our budget from the faithful. We still have a way to go and with your prayerful consideration and participation we can make this a reality. We will continue to ask every working individual at our Community to become a steward at our Church. The stewardship money supports the operation of the parish and a portion of it goes to our Diocesan assessment. We would also like to begin some projects that are necessary for our Building Fund. We have the ability and the mandate to be responsible stewards of our church.

It is with this in mind that I humbly ask you to pledge your stewardship for the upcoming year.

You know the best your financial situation. Whatever you do, do it from the heart. All I can ask is that you consider and pray about our request for the support of the church. Only you know what you are able to give and whatever you choose to contribute will be appreciated. February 13, 2011 is a Stewardship Sunday and the annual meeting of the Parish. Please fill out the Stewardship Form enclosed below, (available on or web site), mail it to us before February 13th or bring it with you to the Annual Meeting.

2011 Stewardship Pledge Form

*This commitment I make
to secure a Christ-centered
life for myself and my family.
...to return to God the
first fruits from the gifts
He has bestowed upon me.
...to assist my Lord in
the mission of spreading
His Gospel.
...to anchor my personal
commitment in Christ, and
to do my share in serving
His people.*

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

**I COMMIT MYSELF TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH
CHURCH THOUGH THIS PLEDGE.**

TOTAL PLEDGE FOR 2011: \$ _____

To be paid: ___ weekly ___ monthly ___ quarterly ___ in full

SIGNED _____ DATE _____

Schedule of Services

The Divine Liturgy is served regularly at 10:00 am every Sunday and on major Feast days at our Parish Center at Irvine Corporate Park, 2148 Michelson Drive, Irvine.

10:00 am: *Divine Liturgy*

11:30 am: *Sunday School*

12:00 pm: *Lunch*

Vespers service followed by the Sacrament of Holy Confession will be served every Saturday @ 5:00 pm and on the eve of major Feast days at 7:00 pm. **Akathist Service to the Mother of God is served on Fridays at 7:00 PM**

Adult Class Bible Study-discussion group meets regularly on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm. The last meeting of this class for the year 2010 will be on Wednesday evening, December 29th. Classes will resume in February.

JANUARY 6th БАДЊЕ ВЕЧЕ - CHRISTMAS EVE

Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m.

Nativity Vigil at 6:30 p.m.

Yule Log Ceremony and Lenten Dinner following church services (Освећење бадњака и вечера после вечерње службе)
Parents, please arrive with your children by 6:00 pm.

JANUARY 7th БОЖИЋ - NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - CHRISTMAS

Festive Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m. and Christmas lunch following.

JANUARY 8th Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos –
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

JANUARY 9th St. Stephen the First Archdeacon and Martyr – Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

JANUARY 13th

SERBIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

Serbian New Year's celebration will be held at the Andrei's Restaurant in Irvine. See enclosed flyer!

JANUARY 14th St. Basil the Great – New Year's Day –
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

JANUARY 14th @ 7:00 pm Akathist to the Mother of God with the Myrrthstreaming Icon from Hawaii.

This wonderworking Icon (a paper copy of the Myrrthstreaming Montreal-Iveron Icon), in a span of just under three years, has healed, through the grace of God, a great many of spiritual and physical sufferings, including; cancer, blindness, kidney failure, demonic possession, etc.

JANUARY 15th Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 am in the presence of the Myrrthstreaming icon from Hawaii.

NO FASTING FROM JANUARY 7th THROUGH AND INCLUDING JANUARY 17th ...

In celebration of Christmas we do not fast at all (even on Wednesdays and Fridays) from January 7 through and including January 17. On January 18, however, we fast rigorously (no meat/poultry, dairy products/eggs or fish) in preparation for the Feast of Epiphany on January 19th.

JANUARY 18th Theophany Eve – Крстовдан
Divine Liturgy & Great Blessing of Water 10:00 a.m.
Bring your empty bottles for holy water.

JANUARY 19th Theophany – Богојављење.
Divine Liturgy 10:00am Followed by Great blessing of Water.

JANUARY 20th St. John the Baptist - Divine
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

OSVECENJE VODICOM - EPIPHANY HOME BLESSINGS TO BEGIN JANUARY 18

This service is essentially the "consecrating" of one's home and/or business, a marking off and consecration of one's living space and/or working space that declares your home and work and all who live in it as belonging to Christ! It coincides with the New Year and allows us to rededicate, renew and fortify not only ourselves with the blessings of the Epiphany but also our homes and work places. Those wishing to have their home and/or workplace blessed during this period are asked to contact Fr. Blasko at his home number at (949) 830-5480 or at email: OBlasko@aol.com

PREPARATION FOR ST. SAVA PROGRAM If you want your child to participate in the St. Sava program, please contact Fr. Blasko at (949) 830-5480 or Sanja Rakonjac at (714) 723-2303 as soon as possible. All children who are participating in the St. Sava program must attend rehearsals regularly.

JANUARY 23rd ST. SAVA OBSERVANCE

We shall hold our St. Sava celebration on Sunday, January 23rd. The Divine Liturgy as usual will start at 10:00 a.m. Banquet and children's program will follow Divine Liturgy. If you want your child to participate in St. Sava's children program please contact Sanja Rakonjac at (714) 723-2303, or Fr. Blasko at (949) 830-5480 as soon as possible.

JANUARY 27th ST. SAVA

Divine Liturgy at 10:0 a.m.

JANUARY 30th Spiritual Concert of our Choir Istochnik at St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, in Irvine @ 11:30am

FEBRUARY 12th САБОР СВ. ТРИ ЈЕРАРХА - SYNAXIS OF THE THREE HOLY HIERARCHS СВ. Литургија почеће у 10:00ам часова пре подне. The Holy Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 a.m.

FEBRUARY 15th СПЕТЕЊЕ ГОСПОДЊЕ – MEETING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE – Presentation. СВ. Литургија почеће у 10:00ам часова пре подне. Holy Divine Liturgy will begin at 10:00 a.m.

GREAT LENT Great Lent starts on Monday, March 7th, and will end on Easter Sunday, April 24th

LENT: SUFFERING AND ASCETIC EFFORT

Father Alexander Elchaninov

However just and pure a man may be, there is always an element of sin in him which cannot enter the Kingdom of God and which must be burned up. Our sins are burned up by our sufferings.

Our love of God is measured by our willingness to accept sufferings and misfortunes and to see in them the hand of God. We can find support in the fact that these sufferings are also the measure of the love that God bears us.

Sweat, tears, blood ... If sweat is accompanied by inner rebellion, anger, murmuring; if tears are caused by pain, offence, rage; if blood is shed without faith — the soul will not obtain any benefit. But if all this is accomplished in a spirit of obedience, contrition and faith, it purifies and elevates us.

The world is crooked and God straightens it. That is why Christ suffered (and still suffers), as well as all the martyrs, confessors and saints — and we who love Christ cannot but suffer as well.

Illness has taught me a great deal. It has confirmed me even more deeply in the conviction that if a man is with Christ, then he is with suffering, and that there is no other way for the Christian than the way of pain, inward and outward. And as I thought of the innocent suffering in the world, I said to myself that through such undeserved, innocent suffering the invisible Kingdom of God is built up, his suffering Body — the Church of God — is created and gathered into unity.

The fast prescribed by our holy Orthodox Church for the Lenten period is as follows: during the first and last week of the fast, no meat, poultry, dairy products, eggs, fish, wine or oil are eaten.

On other days, we abstain from meat, poultry, dairy products (including eggs); but shell-seafood, wine and oil are permitted. With prayer and fasting, we can bring ourselves closer to God. With participation in the Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion, we become united with God.

Through our Lenten efforts, we look with anticipation and joy towards the coming of the Resurrection of Christ. Finally, our hearts are filled with joy because we realize the beneficence of God. In order to truly experience the joy of Resurrection, please make every effort to fast according to the best of your ability and to partake in the Sacraments of Holy Confession and Communion during this season on a regular basis. Most especially I urge the parents to prepare their children to receive Holy Communion as often as possible.

The Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts will be served on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lenten Season. The Presanctified Divine Liturgy will be served on Wednesdays at 10:00 am and on Fridays at 5:00am. The Great Cannon of St. Andrew will be served every evening during the First week of Lent at 7:00pm.

Details about Lenten services will be posted on our Web site on the monthly calendar.

FOOD COLLECTION PROJECT FOR HOMELESS AT OUR PARISH

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As most of you already know that in the month of October at the Orthodox Clergy meeting it was decided that all Orthodox Churches help the needy families in Orange County by preparing a meal for those who are in special centers due to the loss of jobs and houses. Our Church prepares a meal together with St. Mark Orthodox Church in Irvine every 6 weeks. The first time we served a meal on November 7th. Our next turn is the Sunday, December 19th. The last time we fed about 100 - 150 people in a center in Anaheim. I am very grateful to all the people who helped the last time. We need volunteers to help prepare the food, to serve the food in the evening and the people able and willing to donate food or money for this project on Dec. 19th.

No doubt that our Church is always ready to help the needy families from our Community first. In the past when both parents lost their jobs our church help them financially for the rent, food, etc. If there are any families in our community who need such or any other help please do not hesitate to call me right away. Various people have been calling asking for jobs and other needs and I have been assisting the needy in our community as much as I can, by making the contacts and asking other people who can help. To help the needy is the primary task of the Church and I want you to know that I as a priest and our Church is willing to help as much as we can the needy members and parishioners of our Church. The Church needs to help the community in general as well. It is a blessing for all of us to be part of the program and help the needy families by feeding them every six weeks. Also, every Sunday we have our own charity program where you can donate food which we take to Salvation Army in Santa Ana for the homeless. The 2011 dates our Parish is scheduled to serve at are January 30, March 13, April 24, June 5, July 17 and August 28. Please let me know in what way can you help!

May God bless you for your generosity and act of charity!

With love in Christ,

Fr. Blasko

More info. About FOCUS OC website; www.focus.org

Our Parish has sponsored an independent homeless project every Sunday. We collect any food, fresh or canned, which we ask you place on the table located next to the playroom. We gather all your donations along with the left-overs from our parish meals and the change from the collection box on the same table, and donate it all to the Salvation Army Shelter located in our neighborhood.

We urge you to leave food each week on that table. If you would like to help deliver it to the shelter, please tell Fr. Blasko, Danijela or Sanja. It is such a great help. Big thank-you's to Igor and John for delivering our donations. Check your fridge and cupboards before coming to Church on Sundays and bring whatever you possibly can donate.



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos
Serbian Orthodox Parish of Orange County, California
Invites You to a Dinner-Dance



SERBIAN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION!

Thursday, January 13, 2011

**SLAVICA
MOMAKOVIC
Orchestra**
from Chicago, Illinois

Cocktails: 6:30 pm
Dinner: 7:30 pm

Location:
**New Exclusive
Andrei's
Restaurant**
2607 Main Street
Irvine, California

- **Great Food**
- **Dinner & Admission**
- **Advance Reservations:**

\$75 Adults – Includes Dinner & Admission

- **Tickets @ Door:**

\$100 Adults – Includes Dinner & Admission

- I am unable to attend, enclosed is my donation

in the amount of \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Make Check Payable to Nativity of the Most Theotokos Church,
mail to 2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine CA 92612

PLEASE RSVP by Jan. 10th...

Email to: OBlasko@aol.com

OR Buy Advance Tickets
at Parish Center on

OR Mail Payment to the Parish @
2148 Michelson, Irvine, CA 92612

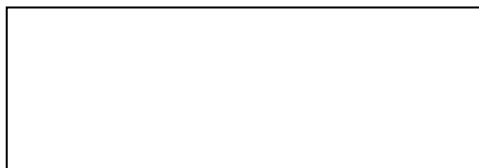
We Expect a Big Turnout!
Last Year Sold Out! RSVP Soon!

For More Information Call:

Fr. Blasko Paraklis at (949) 830-5480



Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos Serbian Orthodox Church
2148 Michelson Drive
Irvine, CA 92612



Tel: 949.415.5415

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DIRECTIONS...to the Parish Center:

Location: Irvine Corporate Park
2148 Michelson Dr., Irvine
Between MacArthur & Von Karman

Directions: From North take San Diego Fwy 405 South. Exit at MacArthur Blvd., south toward airport. Turn left onto MacArthur. Turn left onto Michelson Dr. Pass Dupont. Parish Center on right side of street.

From South take San Diego Fwy 405 North. Exit at Jamboree Rd. Left onto Jamboree Rd. Over the freeway bridge to turn right onto Michelson Dr. Pass Von Karman. Parish Center on left side of street.