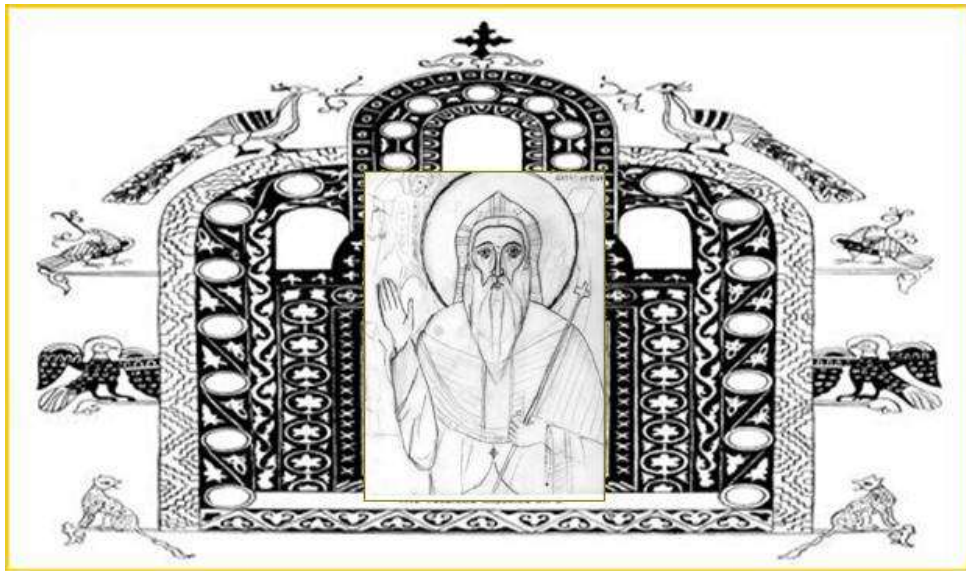


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CHURCH

(Orthodox Church in America, oca.org) saintmakarios.org
Fr. Elijah Mueller, Pastor (312) 714-9775 elijahmueller@sbcglobal.net

UPCOMING FEAST DAY SERVICES AT BOND CHAPEL

- St. Herman of Alaska: Vesperal Liturgy Monday Dec. 12, 5:30pm
- Vespers for the Prefeast of the Nativity, Evenings December 18-22, 5:30pm
- Vesperal Liturgy for the Eve of Christmas, December 23, 5:30pm
- Christmas Vigil and Liturgy, Saturday December 24th, 5-8:30pm
- Vespers for Synaxis of the Mother of God, Sunday December 25th, 10am.
- Theophany (Baptism of XC) Vigil, Water Blessing and Liturgy Thursday January 5th, 5-8:30pm
- Old Calendar Christmas Vigil and Liturgy, Friday January 6th, 5-8:30pm
- House/ Dorm Blessings will start on the 7th of January: Please, everyone schedule!

It is good to come to confession during this season. There will be many opportunities around Vespers.

Schedule over Winter Break: No Wednesday Matins or Thursday OCF, Normal Saturday and Sunday Schedule: Vespers 6pm Saturday at Calvert; Divine Liturgy 10am Sunday at Bond. Bible study will not recommence until January 14th. Inquirers' class meets this Thursday at 5pm, but will recommence on January 12th. Fr. Elijah and Rebecca will be out of town from 12/26-12/31 (back for Vespers). Still feel free to call Fr. Elijah as needed. Looking ahead: St. Makarios feast on 1/19 and Bishop Matthias visits Sunday 1/22.



As we move toward the feast of the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should remember the ancient connection between this feast and the feast of the Baptism of our Lord, the "Theophany". Originally, in the East, these feasts were celebrated together on the same day, January 6th. Christ's birth, as also his baptism, is about our new birth, the new humanity he creates through his

flesh, his being human, and the revelation of the Trinity in the revelation of the incarnate Word. The Father in his love for us remakes us, recreates us in the self-emptying sharing of our lot by Christ. The Word knows our inability to speak the true Words of life and love, and so becomes speechless with us, silent, a child.

Let my spirit be counted as nothing for the sake of the cross, which is a stumbling-block to those that do not believe, but to us salvation and life eternal. "Where is the wise man? where the disputer?" Where is the boasting of those who are styled prudent? For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Spirit. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water. Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown, which were wrought in silence by God. How, then, was He manifested to the world? A star shone forth in heaven above all the other stars, the light of which was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment. And all the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star, and its light was exceedingly great above them all. And there was agitation felt as to whence this new spectacle came, so unlike to everything else in the heavens. Hence every kind of magic was destroyed, and every bond of wickedness disappeared; ignorance was removed, and the old kingdom abolished, God Himself being manifested in human form for the renewal of eternal life. And now that took a beginning which had been prepared by God. Henceforth all things were in a state of tumult, because He meditated the abolition of death. If Jesus Christ shall graciously permit me through your prayers, and if it be His will, I shall, in a second little work which I will write to you, make further manifest to you the nature of the dispensation of which I have begun to treat, with respect to the new man, Jesus Christ, in His faith and in His love, in His suffering and in His resurrection. Especially will I do this if the Lord make known to me that ye come together man by man in common through grace, individually, in one faith, and in Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, being both the Son of man and the Son of God, so that ye obey the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but which causes that we should live forever in Jesus Christ.

(Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians 18 -20)

St. Gregory the Theologian explains to us how to allegorically live in, baptismally share in, the self-emptying of the incarnation of the Son and Word of God.

He lighted a candle – His own Flesh – and swept the house, cleansing the world from sin; and sought the piece of money, the Royal Image that was covered up by passions. And He calls together His Angel friends on the finding of the coin, and makes them sharers in His joy, whom He had made to share also the secret of the Incarnation? Because on the candle of the Forerunner there follows the light that exceeds in brightness; and to the Voice the Word succeeds; and to the Bridegroom's friend the Bridegroom; to him that prepared for the Lord a peculiar people, cleansing them by water in preparation for the Spirit? Do you reproach God with all this? Do you on this account deem Him lessened, because He girds Himself with a towel and washes His disciples' feet, and shows that humiliation is the best road to exaltation? Because for the soul that was bent to the ground He humbles Himself, that He may raise up with Himself the soul that was tottering to a fall under a weight of sin? Why do you not also charge upon Him as a crime the fact that He eats with Publicans and at Publicans' tables, and that He makes disciples of Publicans, that He too may gain somewhat...and what?...the salvation of sinners. If so, we must blame the physician for stooping over sufferings, and enduring evil odours that he may give health to the sick; or one who as the Law commands bent down into a ditch to save a beast that had fallen into it...

Now then I pray you accept His Conception, and leap before Him; if not like John from the womb, yet like David, because of the resting of the Ark. Revere the enrolment on account of which you were written in heaven, and adore the Birth by which you were loosed from the chains of your birth, and honour little Bethlehem, which has led you back to Paradise; and worship the manger through which thou, being without sense, wast fed by the Word. Know as Isaiah bids you, your Owner, like the ox, and like the ass your Master's crib; if you be one of those who are pure and lawful food, and who chew the cud of the word and are fit for sacrifice. Or if you are one of those who are as yet unclean and uneatable and unfit for sacrifice, and of the gentile portion, run with the Star, and bear your Gifts with the Magi, gold and frankincense and myrrh, as to a King, and to God, and to One Who is dead for you. With Shepherds glorify Him; with Angels join in chorus; with Archangels sing hymns. Let this Festival be common to the powers in heaven and to the powers upon earth. For I am persuaded that the Heavenly Hosts join in our exultation and keep high Festival with us today. ..because they love men, and they love God just like those whom David introduces after the Passion ascending with Christ and coming to meet Him, and bidding one another to lift up the gates.

One thing connected with the Birth of Christ I would have you hate...the murder of the infants by Herod. Or rather you must venerate this too, the Sacrifice of the same age as Christ, slain before the Offering of the New Victim. If He flees into Egypt, joyfully become a companion of His exile. It is a grand thing to share the exile of the persecuted Christ. If He tarry long in Egypt, call Him out of Egypt by a reverent worship of Him there. Travel without fault through every stage and faculty of the Life of Christ. Be purified; be circumcised; strip off the veil which has covered you from your birth.

(Oration 38.14, 17-18 on Theophany [Christmas])

So it is that at the birth of Christ we must enter into that most exalted humbling, that path to the cross of the God who makes himself seen in the flesh. We must see our humanity lifted up and mysteriously filled with the miracle of Life: impossibly resurrecting Adam from the Virgin's womb, creating Adam from the rib of the new Eve, planting the fruit of life in the new Eden, the Mother of God.

At this feast let us rejoice and gain that humble silence of the Word beyond speech and thought, who redeems us and gives us the new song of Creation and Salvation which dispels all sorrow and gloom.

Please join us for the Feast day and Advent services, whether it be for the first time or after long absence or to fulfill one's yearly vows to the Lord.

May God bless you and cause light to be born in you all!

Christ is born!

Glorify Him!

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Please consider making an extra Christmas donation during this season, to support the work of the Church. Dear students: please consider asking your parents to make a donation to the work of the Church, which helps to care for the student population in a more sustained and thorough way than a simple OCF. Checks can be made out to St. Makarios Church, Chicago.