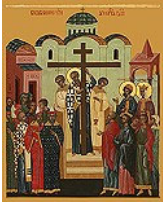


✠Bulletin✠

Week of September 7th to September 13th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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13th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 4

**Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos
Sunday before Elevation**

Martyr Sozón of Cilicia (ca. 304). St. John the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Novgorod (1186). Ven. Serapion of Spaso-Eliazar Monastery (Pskov—1481). Martyrdom of St. Makáry, Archimandrite of Kanev (Pereyasavl'—1678). Apostles Evodius (Euodias) and Onesiphorus of the Seventy (66). Martyr Eupychius of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (2nd c.). Venerable Luke, Abbot of Batheos Ryako (10th c.). Ven. Cloud (Clodoald), Abbot, founder of Nogent-sur-Seine near Paris (560). Venerable Cassiani the Hymnographer. (9th Century)

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday September 7th, 2025

9:10 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Saturday September 13th

3:30 pm — Feast of the Elevation of the Cross

Vespers with Bishop Gerasim

Weekly Schedule

Sunday September 7th, 2025

- Choir Practice for Sept 14th
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy

Friday September 12th — 6:00 pm

- Choir Practice for Sept 14th

**Sorrow and Joy on the Day of the Nativity of the
Most Holy Theotokos
By St. John of Kronstadt**

*"Your Nativity, O Virgin Theotokos,
proclaimed joy to the whole universe:
for from You arose the Sun of Righteousness,
Christ our God." (Apolytikion of the Feast)*

We solemnly celebrate, dear brothers and sisters, the Nativity of the Most Holy Virgin Mary from her barren parents, pious Joachim and Anna. The Holy Church established this feast during the first centuries of the Christian Faith. The event that we celebrate—the birth of the God-chosen maiden—brought joy to all the world, for the God-man, Jesus Christ, Who shone forth from Her, destroyed God's curse which weighed heavily upon the transgressing and accursed human race, and brought God's blessing upon it; having trampled down inherent death, He gave people eternal life. Thus, the Holy Church explains the cause of the present joy.

The righteous parents of the Ever-Virgin sorrowed long over their barrenness; they prayed long and fervently to the Lord that He loose this barrenness, which was considered a punishment from God for sins. They gave much alms in order to incline the mercy of the All-Merciful, endured the reproach of their countrymen, and through this sorrow and ceaseless prayer and good works, they gradually purified their spirits, and burned ever greater with love and dedication to God, thus being prepared by God's Providence to give blessed birth to the Most Blessed Daughter, chosen out of all people to be the Mother of the Incarnate Word.

The Lord leads His chosen ones to glory by a narrow and sorrowful path; for even She, the Mother of God according to the flesh, received the prophecy of Symeon that a sword shall pierce Her soul, and She will experience heavy sorrows in her soul during Her Son's suffering life, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed* (Luke 2:34–35). The path of all God's chosen is thus sorrowful and narrow, for the world and the prince of this world—that is, the enemy of God and people, extremely presses the people of God. The Lord Himself allows them to go by the narrow way, inasmuch as He enables them to strive for God and put all their hope in Him.

But let us turn our gaze from the sorrow to the joy. What joy does the Nativity of the Mother of God bring us? Let us explain in more detail the Church hymn which explains the meaning of this feast's joy. Through the birth of the Ever-Virgin, through Her only-begotten Son and God, cursed and outcast mankind makes peace with God Who is immeasurably offended by man's sins, for Christ became the mediator of this peace (cf. Rom. 5:10-11). Man is freed from the curse and eternal death, made worthy of the blessing of the Heavenly Father; he is united and co-mingled with the Divine nature; he is raised to his first inheritance by this co-mingling, according to the Church hymn. Mankind, once an outcast, has been made worthy of sonship to the Heavenly Father, received the promise of the glorious resurrection and eternal life in the heavens together with the angels.

This has all been and is being wrought by the Son of God incarnate from the Most Pure Virgin from the Holy Spirit, and by the intercession of His Most Pure Mother. How honored and magnified is mankind through the Holy Virgin Mother of God, for it has been made worthy of renewal and sonship by God; She Herself was made worthy by Her immeasurable humility and exceedingly great purity and holiness to be the Mother of the God-man! She is ever the most powerful Intercessor for the Christian race before Her Son and God! She is our Hope unshamed; She turns away from us the dark cloud of God's righteous wrath, opens to us the ancient paradise by Her powerful intercessions; She upholds the thrones of kings, and preserves them unshakeable to the ages. She is the Surety of Sinners for salvation. To Her do Christians direct their numberless prayers, requests, and praises, doxologies and thanksgiving; She has worked and continues to work miracles without number in the Church, to the ends of the world.

Let us brightly celebrate the feast of the Nativity of the Most Pure Virgin Mary, adorning ourselves with all the Christian virtues.

Quotes

Saint Augustine

"Take care of your body as if you were going to live forever and take care of your soul as if you were going to depart tomorrow."

Saint Isaac the Syrian

"Whoever hates his sins will stop sinning; and whoever confesses them will receive remission. A man can not abandon the habit of sin if he does not first gain enmity toward sin, nor can he receive remission of sin without confession of sin. For the confession of sin is the cause of true humility."

Holy Cross 50th Anniversary – September 14th

In preparation for the 50th Anniversary of Holy Cross and the visit of Bishop Gerasim, we have established committees for this big event. Please see the following people for more information & to help prepare for our big day!

John & Viktoria Graham - Lunch following Divine Liturgy

David Bartos – Exterior of the Church/Landscaping

Maria Flemmer & Svitlana Canko – Interior of the church/cleaning

Prayer Requests

Carolyn – Robert & Debra's Forster's daughter

Anne and Scott Peatross

Robert (John) Forster

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,

Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,

Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,

Roman, Mykola

Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to "donate". This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the women disciples of the Lord
learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection,
they cast away the ancestral curse
and elatedly told the apostles:
“Death is overthrown!
Christ God is risen,//
granting the world great mercy!”

Tone 4 Troparion (Feast)

Your nativity, O Virgin,
has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!
The Sun of righteousness, Christ our God,
has shone from you, O Theotokos.
By annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.//
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Sozón)

Thy holy martyr Sozón, O Lord,
through his sufferings has received an incorruptible crown from Thee, our
God.
For having Thy strength, he laid low his adversaries,
and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.//
Through his intercession, save our souls!

Tone 4 Kontakion (Resurrection)

My Savior and Redeemer
as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains.
He has shattered the gates of hell,
and as Master,//
He has risen on the third day!

Tone 2 Kontakion (St. Sozón)

Let us gather today and together sing to Sozón,
the true and divinely wise martyr,
an expert fighter for the faith,
the mystical seer of divine grace,
a generous provider of healing,//
who prays to Christ God for us all.

Tone 4 Kontakion (Feast)

By your nativity, O most pure Virgin,
Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness,
Adam and Eve — from the corruption of death.
And we, thy people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to thee://
“The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.”

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross)

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance! (Ps. 27:9a)

*V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!
(Ps. 27:1a)*

1 Corinthians 16:13-24 (Epistle)

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren – you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints – that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation with my own hand – Paul’s. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Galatians 6:11-18
(Epistle, Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross)

See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. I have exalted one chosen out of My people. (Ps. 88:19b)

*V. For My hand shall defend him and My arm shall strengthen him.
(Ps. 88:21)*

Matthew 21:33-42 (Gospel)

Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

John 3:13-17
(Gospel, Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross)

No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

33. Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Yet another parable He brings to them, showing that though they were deemed worthy to receive an immeasurable degree of care for their condition, they did not get better. The "man, a householder" is the Lord Who in His love for man calls Himself a man. The vineyard is the Jewish people, planted by God in the land of promise. For He says, "Bring them in and plant them in Thy holy mountain." The hedge is the law which prevented them from mixing with the Gentiles; or it is the holy angels who guarded Israel. The winepress is the altar; the tower, the temple. The husbandmen are the teachers of the people, the Pharisees and the scribes. The householder, God, went into a far country when He no longer spoke to them in a pillar of cloud. Or the departure of God into a far country is His long-suffering; for when He is long-suffering and not in hot pursuit of wrongdoers, demanding an account, He appears to be absent on a far journey.

34-39. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. "The time of the fruit drew near" during the years of the prophets. For the servants who were sent are the

prophets who were abused in various ways by the husbandmen, that is, the false prophets and false teachers of those times. One they beat, as they did to Micaiah, when Sedek struck him on the jaw; (III Kings (I Kings) 22:24) another they killed, as they did to Zechariah [the father of John the Forerunner] between the temple and the altar; another they stoned, as they did Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the high priest. (II Chron. 24:21) Later the Son of God was sent and He appeared in the flesh. He said, "They will reverence My Son," not unaware that they would kill Him, but signifying what ought to be. For, He says, they ought to honor the dignity of the Son even if they had killed the servants. But the husbandmen saw Him and said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him." The Jews, too, said, "This is the Christ," and they crucified Him. They cast Him out of the vineyard, for the Lord was slain outside of the city. But since we would also say that the vineyard is the people, Christ was slain by the Pharisees, the evil husbandmen, outside the vineyard, that is, outside and apart from the will of the guileless people.

40-41. "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." "When He comes." When? At the second coming? It seems to have this meaning, but a better meaning is this: the lord of the vineyard is God the Father Who sent His Son Who was slain by them. When He comes, that is, when He looks down on the lawlessness which the Jews committed, then He will miserably destroy them by sending the Roman army. And His vineyard, that is, His people, He will give to other husbandmen, that is, to apostles and teachers. Understand the vineyard to mean also the Divine Scriptures, in which the hedge is the letter, and the winepress that is dug is the depth of the Spirit; the tower is theology, lofty and exalted. These Scriptures, then, were first possessed by bad husbandmen, the Pharisees; but God has let them out to us who cultivate them well. But they slew the Lord outside the vineyard, that is, outside those things of which Scripture spoke.

42. Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" The stone means Christ Himself; the builders are the teachers of the Jews who rejected Him as if He were useless, saying, "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a demon." But when He rose from the dead, He was set in place as the head of the corner, that is, He became the head of the Church, joining Jews and Gentiles in one faith. For as the stone which forms the corner of a building makes continuous the walls leading to it and from it, so Christ has bound all together in one faith. This

corner is marvelous and is the Lord's doing. For the Church, which connects us and makes us one in faith, is the Lord's doing, and is worthy of all wonder, so well is it built. And in another sense is it marvelous, because the Word of Christ has been confirmed and substantiated by marvels, that is, miracles, so that the composition of the Church is marvelous.

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)

Tone 8

Magnify, O my soul, the most glorious birth of the Mother of God!

Virginity is foreign to mothers;

childbearing is strange for virgins.

But in you, O Theotokos, both were accomplished.//

For this all the earthly nations unceasingly magnify you.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!