



# **“ORTHODOX 9” PARISHES BULLETIN**

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:



**St. Mary’s (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE**

**St. John the Baptist - HOREN**

**Holy Ascension - CALMAR**

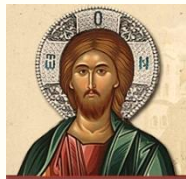
**St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)**

**Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY**

**Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)**

**St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)**



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***Christ is Born! – Let us Glorify Him!***

***Христос Рождается! – Славимо Його!***

We once again we find ourselves in the glory and grace of the great Feast which proclaims the Good News of our salvation – the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ.

*FOR GOD IS WITH US! - The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light!*

*FOR GOD IS WITH US! - Ye that dwell in the region and shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you!*

*FOR GOD IS WITH US! - For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, Who is pre-eternal God!*

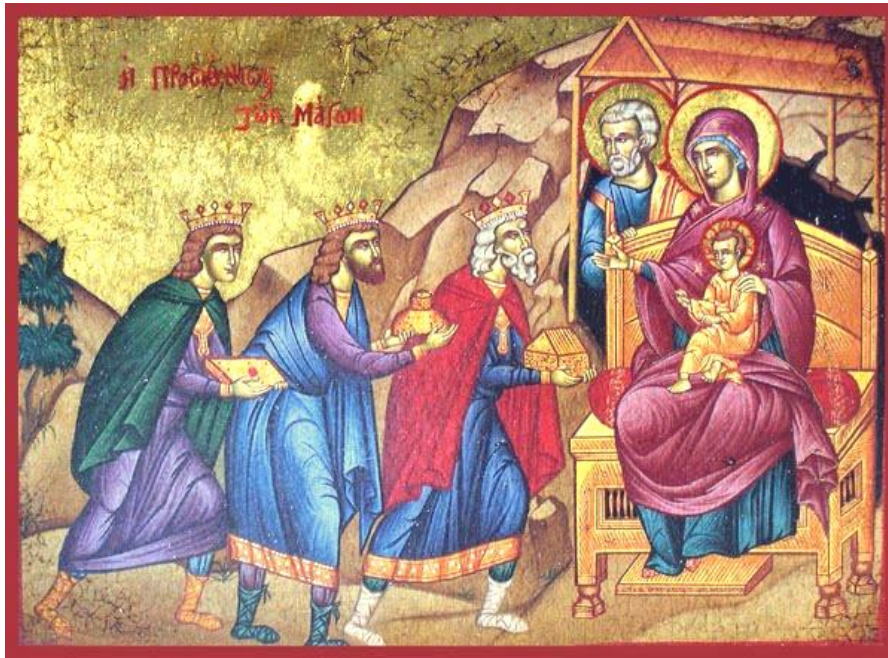
For us to celebrate the entry into God’s eternal kingdom, He Himself had to make straight this path by becoming unexpectedly and amazingly very close to us, taking not only all the glory and love of the Father’s providence about us, in the persons of his glorious Mother and righteous father, the meek and humble shepherds and wise and prophetic magi; but also all the cruel consequences of the violating of the God’s good will, in the form of the confined and inconvenient cave at the beginning, at the Birth...

This narrow place is the life of each of us, where the Lord wills to be born, and it’s the heart of each of us. Which He wants to make heavenly broad and bright by His humble Birth today and every day!

On this Feast Day of Christ’s Nativity & the New Year, we wish to extend our sincere greetings to His Grace Matthew, Bishop of Sourozh, the Reverend fathers and faithful of the Patriarchal Parishes and their families, the Church elders and executives of “Orthodox 9” Parishes, brotherhoods and sisterhoods, Church choirs and altar helpers, to all our faithful parishioners to all the faithful of this Canadian land! **May the Lord bless you for a joyous, peaceful and grace-filled festive season and the whole 2020 new year!**

**With love in the Newly Born Christ,  
f. Yevheniy Protsenko with the family**

# HOW DO WE CONTEMPLATE THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI



And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. (Matt. 2:11)



Not without reason, my brethren, were there three gifts at the manger Of Christ; three -- no more, no less. Was this a sign of the Most Holy Trinity as the essence of the Godhead; or did it symbolize the triune nature of Christ's future ministry: prophetic, royal, priestly; or was it perhaps an expression of the three parts of the nature of man: spirit, soul, and body? We leave it up to your faith and reasoning to consider this question. Here our attention rests upon the gift-bearing magi.

One could say that these pilgrims of the Orient stood before the manger of Christ for all mankind. Their gifts represent symbolically all that we, followers of the Saviour, bring to Him. The gold signifies material gifts; the frankincense--immaterial gifts, gifts of the spirit; and the myrrh represents those gifts that are at once both spiritual and material. There are, accordingly, persons who bring the Lord gold; there are those who bring frankincense; still others bring myrrh; lastly, some bring several gifts together. Who are these individuals? In examining this question, we shall see how we too, like the magi, can serve our Lord and Saviour. Who brings the Lord gold?

Gold is brought by those who, for the glory of God and the benefit of their neighbor, offer anything of their labors and possessions. For example, you bring gold to the Lord if you build, renew or adorn God's temple. Your gift pleases Him, for even though He sits now on the throne of glory, for the sake of our salvation He continues at the same time to appear in the manger as well. This manger is present in church upon the table of oblation, where at every Liturgy He is, as it were, born again so as to offer Himself anew as a sacrifice for our sins. How often He suffers want in this manger. Here He needs clothing and shelter, light and warmth. Therefore, if you do anything for the benefit of the church, your offering delights the Lord -- as much as did the gift of the magi who brought Him gold.



How much of this gold is brought to the Lord? Oh, if we were to compare what is brought with that which is spent to answer the demands of the passions, for the satisfaction not only of our needs, but of our very whims--or even with that, which is patently surrendered for the flesh and the world to consume--then it shall turn out to be the very smallest part... Before us a poor man shakes from bitter cold, hunger, and disease; we either rebuff him harshly or give him a measly pittance, and that same day we are ready to exhaust half our fortune in a senseless game, or to display our munificent squandering at some gaudy spectacle.

Such is our gratitude to Him Who, being rich, for our salvation is this day  
embeggared, *that we through His poverty might be rich* (2 Cor. 8:9).

Who brings the Lord frankincense? These are they who apply their abilities, knowledge, and talents to the glory of God and the benefit of their neighbors; for these are immaterial gifts of greater value than gold or silver. These are gifts which God gives to men but, they, also are--and should be made--men's gifts to God.



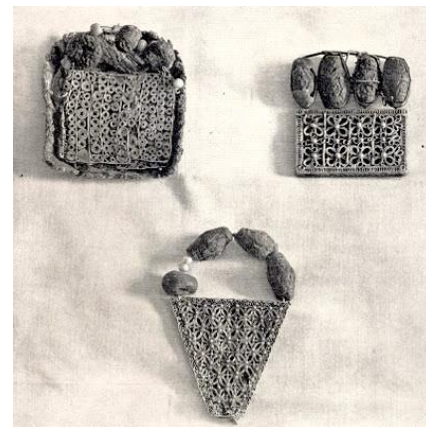
This costly frankincense is offered to the Lord by each one who, sparing not himself, serves his neighbor. Frankincense is offered to the Lord by that shepherd of the Church, who faithfully stands alert guarding souls and hearts against the confusions and temptations of the age, who ardently proclaims the ways of the Lord, who guides those who have lost their way, comforts those in despair, instructs all. Frankincense is brought to the Lord by that mother who does not rely upon servants, who does not spend time in idleness and vain amusements, but rather devotes her time and abilities to the rearing of her children in the fear of God, to nurturing in them the habit of self-denial, the spirit of meekness, of prayer, and of love for mankind. Permeating

the home, the fragrance of this frankincense is thereafter diffused everywhere by those who received in that home a pious upbringing. Frankincense is brought to the Lord by that artist who does not utilize his talents to pander to human lust in keeping with the spirit of the time, but rather, strives to turn all his creative powers into means of disseminating--with the refined and beautiful--what is True and Good; this frankincense envelops many with its heavenly fragrance. And just as there is no one who does not possess abilities or talents of some kind, neither is there anyone who is unable to bring the Lord frankincense by using his abilities to the glory of God and the true profit of his neighbors.

The third gift to the Lord from the magi was myrrh. This was the last gift and therefore more exalted than gold or even frankincense. What kind of gift is this, and why is it so important? Like frankincense, myrrh exudes a heavenly fragrance, but its distinguishing quality lies in its great bitterness; for this reason, it represents our trials and sorrows, our tears and sufferings.

Now it is clear who brings to the Lord the gift of myrrh. They bring it who patiently bear trials in life and, suffer blamelessly without giving in to bleak despair, nor fainthearted complaining, nor useless sighing; those who, in enduring their trials, are moved neither to prideful scorn towards others, nor to the desperate stifling in themselves of all human feeling, but to a lively hope in the living God--to the thought that through suffering he or she is cleansed from sins, made perfect in virtue, and, what is even more gladdening, made like unto their Saviour Who, died for them upon the Cross. Such endurance, in the spirit of faith and love, of the tribulations and sorrows of the age is also a gift to the Lord, a gift more precious than gold and of a sweeter savor even than frankincense.

May all those who suffer cruelly hear this, and may they come to fathom the advantage of their condition which is seemingly bitter, but actually not without its sweetness if only they consider their faith and the Cross of Christ. May they hasten to bring their myrrh to the Lord as a gift. Those who are satisfied in this world cannot do this; unacquainted with want, they seem to lack nothing; but they have no myrrh. Many of those who possess frankincense--that is, exceptional talents, also cannot do this: they have no heavy trials to bear, no myrrh. It is all with you, God's bloodless passion-bearers; you, who through no guilty act of your own--whether by the lot of your birth or by the perversity of circumstance, by human malice or by our corruptible physical nature--greet virtually every day, and also end it, with sighs; and who, it may be, this very morning greeted Christ's holy Feast day with tears. Those who look upon you disdain your hardship; you yourselves, perhaps, stumble at times beneath the weight of earthly trial. But we, in the name of our Saviour, greet you with the precious likeness of His Cross! Cherish the precious myrrh which you have received as your portion; do not exchange it for frankincense, and even more guard against trading it for mere gold. And do not rob it of its heavenly fragrance by complaint or fainthearted murmuring. What is the use of complaining? The Lord sees everything without it. Each of your tears counts with Him, each of your sighs knows its weight--and in time you shall receive for all of these a hundredfold. Amen.



**On the written sermon  
by St. Innocent (Borisov)**

In the pictures: 1) The icon of the Nativity of Christ with Magi; 2) St. Innocent (Borisov); 3 & 4) Picture and a close-up of the authentic Gifts of the Magi, at the Holy Monastery of St. Paul, in Holy Mountain of Athos

*Dear brothers and sisters let me today, in the midst of the Christmas grace, during the days of the New 2020 Year and in the context of such a beautiful sermon given above, **express my warmest thank you!** To all our parishioners – for having brought during the past year 2019 your ‘magi’ gifts to the Lord, His Holy Church, to each other, and to my family!*

*May God bless your gold!*

*For giving clothing and shelter, light and warmth, order, decoration and cleanness, generous and timely donations to the manger of the Christ’s Holy Gifts – our holy temple.*

*May God bless your frankincense!*

*For using your abilities – administrative, creative, vocal and other personal talents to the glory of God and the true profit of your neighbors.*

*May God bless your myrrh!*

*For bearing and sharing in the Lord, your trials and sorrows, tears and sufferings, and pacifying the tribulations of others. May God remember during these days all our and your beloved, departed in the past year elders – brothers and sisters.*



*f. Yevheniy and family*



# Lovely and loved Christmas carols to sing with children!

## JINGLE BELLS

Dashing through the snow  
In a one horse open sleigh  
O'er the fields we go  
Laughing all the way

Bells on bob tails ring  
Making spirits bright  
What fun it is to laugh and sing  
A sleighing song tonight

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one horse open sleigh

Jingle bells, jingle bells  
Jingle all the way  
Oh, what fun it is to ride  
In a one horse open sleigh



## SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin, mother and child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heav'nly hosts sing Alleluia  
Christ the savior is born  
Christ the savior is born

Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus Lord, at thy birth  
Jesus Lord, at thy birth



## Christmas Word Scramble

You've got a letter from Santa, but the road was shaky and the letters got mixed up... Unscramble the letters to find words which have to do with Christmas.

- 1. Scamsthir \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Naclorig \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Rats \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Scunttshe \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Porduhl \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Naast \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Skagceap \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Dressephh \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Gramen \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Galen \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Limesotte \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Vaniyitt \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Gotscink \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Virasou \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. Traweh \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. Gisehl \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. Wamsonn \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. Ejuss \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. Stranneom \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. Groceos \_\_\_\_\_

# January 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<u>5</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara's Cathedral	<u>6</u> Christmas Eve 2:00 p.m. – Christmas Vespers & Matins - Nisku	<u>7</u>   <i><b>Nativity of            Christ</b></i> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at Nisku	<u>8</u> <i>Synaxis of            the Most            Holy            Theotokos</i>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> The 14,000 Infants (Holy Innocents) slain by Herod at Bethlehem 
<u>12</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara's Cathedral	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> <i>Circumcision            of the Lord,            St. Basil the            Great,            Julian New            Year</i>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u> Epiphany Eve (strict fast) 
<u>19</u> <i>The Baptism            of our Lord</i> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at Nisku. Blessing of water & houses	<u>20</u> Synaxis of John the Baptist 	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> St. Martyr Tatiana 
<u>26</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy, Vegreville. Blessing of water and houses. <u>Afternoon</u> - Blessing of houses - at Thorsby	<u>27</u> Nina, the enlightener of Georgia 	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> Anthony, the Great 	<u>31</u>	

## 2019- Dates to remember

- **February 29.** Saturday – 10:00 am – Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara; 11:30 am – The Annual Diocese meeting will be held at St. Barbara Cathedral.
- **March 2.** Monday – **GREAT LENT BEGINS.**
- **March 7.** Saturday – 1:00 pm – The Annual St. Mary's Parish meeting - at Parish Hall, Nisku.
- **March 14.** Saturday – 10:00 am – The Annual "Orthodox IX" Parishes meeting - at St. Mary Parish Hall, Nisku.
- **April 19.** – Easter Sunday – **HOLY PASCHA – THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**