

Dec. 31, 2017: The Sunday after the Lord's Nativity (The flight into Egypt)

Epistle reading: Gal. 1, 11-19:

"But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother."

Gospel reading: Mat. 2, 13-23:



"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in

Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."

Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

First, let us focus on the first two sentences of the Epistle reading: "*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

St. Paul the Apostle makes clear to his readers from two thousand years ago, as well as to all readers of every generation throughout the two millennia, the fact that the Gospel is God's message communicated to the people under the divine inspiration. Being of divine origin, the Word of God (Gospel) is infallible and permanent, meaning that it is applicable (valid) for every generation until the second coming of Christ.

When I say that the message of the Gospel is valid for every generation I don't mean that it has to be presented (manipulated) in such a way as to accommodate the whim of every generation but rather that each generation must conform itself to the Gospel.

The Gospel reading for this Sunday is about the Holy family's flee to Egypt in order to avoid the destruction of the newly incarnate Son of God by Herod the king: "*Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.*"

I would like to draw a comparison between Herod's rage against the Son of God and some of our contemporaries who share in the same kind of rage against Christianity and against God and display their diabolic determination to destroy the divine inspired Word of God (the Gospel) and any notion of God from schools, the minds and practices of the people. Sadly, some of our **contemporary herods** are the politicians who invoke a self-imposed political correctness in order to achieve their goals. The result is a secularized society and a desacralized individual, devoid of any sense of personal responsibility, discernment and moral values, practically a robot who behaves under the influence of unprecedented violence spewed out by the Hollywood movies and the videogames available to the youngest of our children. No wonder then, that from time to time we hear about demonic outbursts from such individuals who kill innocent people without any remorse and respect for life.

Following the example of the Holy Family, let us take refuge under the protection of the One, Holy, Catholic (Universal) and Apostolic Church, where the whole family (parents and children) can grow spiritually in the infinite love of God the Father who gave His only-Begotten Son for the salvation of mankind!

Fr. George Bazgan

Sunday Fellowsh

There will be NO FELLOWSHIP this Sunday

Altar boys for this Sunday:

**Alexandru Mustea
Matthew Cottfasa**

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR MESSAGE

***The Board of Directors and the Ladies' Auxiliary
of our parish extend to all members and supporters
of our Church their best wishes for a MERRY CHRISTMAS
and a healthy, peaceful and HAPPY NEW YEAR!***

MEMBERSHIP / PLEDGE

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them to pay their membership as soon as possible.

This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations for the rest of the year.

We also encourage you to renew your financial pledge and be as generous as you can.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

HOUSE BLESSING

On January the 6th we celebrate the Epiphany (Theophany), the Baptism of our Lord and Savior. Following the Divine Liturgy and the Greater Blessing of Water, Fr. George will begin the blessing of homes.

Those who are interested, please sign in the sign up sheet or call Fr. George at 780-473-0029.