30/12/2024

Homily for the Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord – 2024



His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
Sunday after the Nativity of our Lord
December 29, 2024
Saint George Greek Orthodox Church
New Britain, Connecticut
My Beloved Christians of this beautiful Saint George Parish,

As we gather today in the blessed season of Christmas, our hearts are filled with joy and gratitude for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This sacred time transports us to Bethlehem and reminds us of the boundless love and mercy of God, who sent His only begotten Son into the world to bring salvation to all humanity.

These days between Christmas and Epiphany, which include the New year and the Feast of Saint Basil the Great, are a unique period of reflection and renewal .We call them: Τό Δωδεκαήμερον – the Holy Twelve Day of Christmas. These days that take us to Theophany, across thirty years of our Lord's earthly life. Only on January First do we even hear of events in the boyhood of our Lord, which has a special

meaning for the Theotokos.

In this sacred season – and especially before the New Year commences on the First, we look back on the year that has passed; with its challenges and blessings, and we look forward with hope and anticipation to the year ahead. This is a time to renew our faith, strengthen our commitment to Christ, and rededicate ourselves to living according to His teachings.

In the Gospel reading today, we hear the story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. This narrative reminds us of the trials and tribulations that even our Lord, His Holy Mother, and the righteous Jospeh faced. Every family knows its own struggles, and we should take comfort from knowing that our God understands this in a very experiential and existential way.

It is a powerful reminder that, in our own lives, we too may encounter difficulties and uncertainties. Yet, just as God protected and guided the Holy Family with His Holy Angels, He is always with us, guiding and protecting us through our own journeys.

As we prepare to enter the New Year, let us recognize that our journeys are unfinished, and that we all need the tender care and loving kindness of God Almighty. I encourage each of you to take this time to reflect on your spiritual journey. Consider how you can grow closer to God in the coming year. How can you serve your community and those in need? How can you be a beacon of hope and love to those around you?

Let us also remember to pray for our brothers and sisters who are suffering, whether from illness, poverty, or other hardships. Let us extend our hands and hearts to them, offering support and comfort in any way we can.

Let us follow the light of Christ within us; as did the Magi who followed the guiding star; as did Joseph heeding the words of the Angel in the sojourn to Egypt. Let this light shine brightly in our hearts and in our actions. Let us never forget to share God's love and mercy with the world.

Therefore, let us be instruments of His peace, love, and compassion in a world that so desperately needs it. We can begin small, right here in New Britain. In our parish and in our wider community. Like a pebble tossed into a still and quiet pond, the first ripple is only the first of many. Our small deeds of faith can become mighty acts of God, as we go forth in His love and in His mercy.

Thus, we shall celebrate the birth of Christ with integrity and sincerity and look

forward to the New Year with hope, being filled with the joy and peace that only God can bring. May His love inspire us to live lives of faith, hope, and charity.

May the blessings of the Lord, Who willed to be Born in Bethlehem of Judea, be upon you and your families, now and always.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

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