

December Notes: on Tuesday the 4th, we have the name day of *Barbara Sharobim* (Great Martyr Barbara) ... Thursday the 6th is *Nicholas Newsom's* (St Nicholas of Myra) ... *Nina Sandbothe's* birthday is on the 13th, *Tom Cox's* is on the 14th, and *Mary Teter's* is on the 15th ... on Sunday the 16th, we have three name days: *Jonathan Douglas* (Righteous Jonathan), *Sarah Harrison* (Righteous Sarah), and *Rachel Milman* (Righteous Rachel) ... the **Eve of the Nativity of Christ** is Monday, December 24: start with the 1:00 PM **Vesperal Divine Liturgy**, and then the **Vigil for the Feast** at 5:00 PM ... and before opening presents on Tuesday the 25th, give thanks at the festal **Divine Liturgy for the Nativity** at 9:30 AM ... *David Evans* celebrates his birthday on the 26th ... and *Steven Salmon* has his name day (Protomartyr Stephen) on the 27th ... while *Christina Salmon* celebrates her birthday on the 28th ... and *Luke & Jennifer Harrison* celebrate their anniversary on the 31st!

O Lord and Savior, preserve the Orthodox Church throughout this entire world in unity and right-belief, granting her peace, tranquility, love, and harmony. Look down upon the Holy Orthodox Church with compassion and mercy, and preserve her from division and schism, from enmity and disorder, grant that her unity be not diminished nor shaken, but that Thy Thrice-holy name be ever-glorified within her. With Thy mercies make glad the hearts of them that govern us, and strengthen them by Thy might. Rise up to our help and set to naught the evil counsels purposed against us by the evil ones. For Thou art the Help and Victory and Salvation of them that put their hope in Thee unto ages of ages. Amen.



DECEMBER 2018

Save Yourself a Merry Little ... Martyrdom?

The second day of Christmas in the Orthodox Church is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It is called the synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos. The Church assembles on this day to honor her through whom the savior has come. The entire creation is indebted to the Lord for its redemption, but the Lord Himself is indebted to Mary who, humanly speaking, by the grace of the Spirit, made possible His coming.

There then follow the three days of the postfeast of the Nativity dedicated to the memory of those who were killed for Christ. First is celebrated the memory of the first Christian martyr, the deacon Stephen. As the hymns of his festival declare, the persecution and death of Christians is an inevitable result of the coming of Christ. Jesus came to die for the truth of God, which is most perfectly actualized in the gift of one's life that others may live. This is the most Godlike expression of love possible to creatures. Christ's disciples imitate His example, which is their calling and command, finding within it their highest joy and fulfillment.

The third day of Christmas is dedicated to the memory of the holy martyrs of Nicomedia who refused to honor the earthly emperor as king in fidelity to the only King of heaven. Their blood also, according to the ancient Christian saying, has become the seed of the Church.

Finally, on the fourth day of the feast, the "pascha" of the innocent children slain by Herod is celebrated with praise. The question put to all who celebrate Christ's Winter Pascha concerns our own relationship to the Lord. Are we ready to receive Him, and therefore to love as He has loved us, even to the point of death? Or are we among those who receive Him not, numbered with those who murder Him through our hatred and neglect of our neighbors? As Christ's beloved disciple has said, "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still... Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, the He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren" (I John 2:9; 3:15-16).

*When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah,
 The sceptre of the house of Judah passed away.
 Infants who leaped in play were slaughtered for Christ.
 A voice was heard in Ramah,
 The lamentation of Judah's daughters,
 Rachel weeping for her sons, as it is written,
 For the lawless Herod murdered the infants.
 The land of Judah was soaked with innocent blood;
 The earth was reddened by the blood of babies.
 But the Church of the Gentiles is washed by this blood;
 Clothed in radiant purity, she cries in joy:
 The Truth has come!
 God is made manifest!
 He is born of the Virgin,
 Enlightening those who sit in darkness,
 For the salvation of the world!*



(Vespers of the feast of the Holy Innocents).

Excerpted from The Winter Pascha, by Fr. Thomas Hopko



Charity of the Month

St. John the Theologian Skete, in Hiram, Ohio, has had a varied history extending over almost eight decades. The property was acquired by “Brother” Ignatius Sudnick in 1942 and was incorporated in 1953 as the “Orthodox Catholic Christian Brotherhood of St. John Divine.” He had hoped to have a monastic brotherhood, but instead he developed an old age home that flourished until 1976. In June 1981, Bishop Boris blessed Archimandrite Alexander to begin a monastic community.

By 2012, advancing age and health problems led the two remaining monks – Fr. Alexander and his cell attendant, Fr. Daniel – to petition for retirement. A friend of theirs, the abbess of Holy Ascension Monastery in Mlinov, Ukraine (150 nuns), invited them to come there. This raised the question of the future of the Skete in Ohio. The monks at Holy Cross Monastery, a little over five hours away in Wayne, West Virginia, were contacted to see if they could take on the responsibility. Holy Cross Monastery is a very pan-Orthodox English-speaking community. The members come from a variety of jurisdictions; in fact, the first priest-monk assigned at St. John’s came from an OCA parish in the Diocese of the South. Also, the pilgrims that regularly keep their guesthouse full are from all jurisdictions and from all parts of the U.S. as well as Canada.

They responded with a joyful “yes!” As it turned out, a week earlier their spiritual father, Archimandrite Seraphim, had been praying to the Holy Mother of God about the overcrowding at their monastery, and the fact that many of the fathers were looking for a more quiet and peaceful monastic life. Even though the Hiram monastery was in the OCA and Holy Cross Monastery was under ROCOR, both communities felt that God’s Hand was directing all these events and everything would work out to His glory.

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only \$12!



FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

(unaudited)

	Oct. Actual	Oct. Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Income	6,212.25	4,245.00	57,247.42	43,950.00
Total Expense	4,863.67	3,960.35	45,233.71	42,093.86
Cash Flow	1,348.58	284.65	12,013.71	1,856.14
Building Fund (Net of Rent Reserves)			23,397.51	