

and afterwards, wishes to abolish in vain, it is our treasure that enriches and illuminates our life and leads us to salvation.

Receptive of divine illumination

This course of the star schematically and instructively assures us that "where God wills, nature is defeated". God's desire is always to crown with a bright star the effort generated by the good intention of the heart. The Magi from the East seemed inconsistent as regards their scientific knowledge, following a star in a strange course, however, they became receptive to its enlightenment, remembering, of course, the prophecy of Balaam that was familiar to them. So, brethren, let us also follow our own course. Amen.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2022 *THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST*, *The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, & Balthasar*, *The Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks and came to see the Lord*
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:4-7*

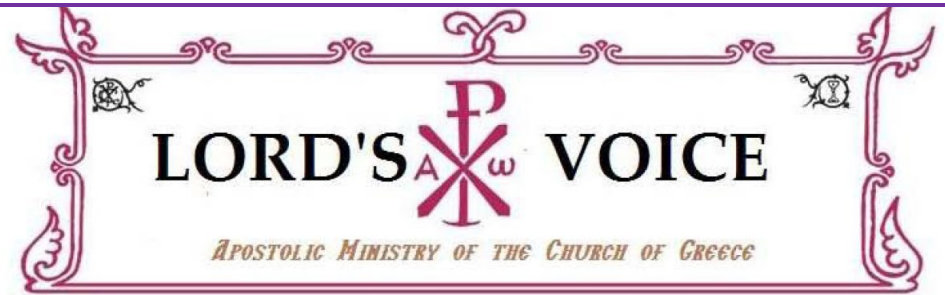
GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 2:1-12*

TONE OF THE WEEK :
EOTHINON :*Fifth Eothinon*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 01, 2023, CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, *Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Emmelia, Mother of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Makrina, and Peter of Sebaste*, *Gregory, Bishop of Nanzianzos, Father of Gregory the Theologian*, *Peter the New Martyr of the Peloponnesos, Theodotos the Martyr, Righteous Theodosios of Triglia*, *Telemachos the Martyr*, *Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Colossians 2:8-12*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 2:20-21, 40-52*



70TH YEAR DECEMBER 25 2022 PAMPHLET # 52 (36270)

CHRISTMAS, THE METROPOLIS OF FEASTS

"For we saw his star in the east"! The all-bright star of the "Birth of Christ" once again floods the entire world with light. "Let all the earth praise the Lord", the Theologian Father of the Church, Saint Gregory Archbishop of Constantinople exhorts in a psalmistic way. Let the song of thanksgiving, of gratitude, of joy, fill hearts and let it flow from the lips of all of us. Let us partake of light from the well-lit cave of Bethlehem, banishing the darkness from our lives.

Today is Sunday, December 25, 2022, and the Gospel of today's all gladsome day, of the metropolis of feasts, narrates with the majestic austerity of the pen of the holy apostle and evangelist Matthew, the subject of the feast, according which the plan of our salvation is fully implemented. The obedience and conscious participation of our Virgin Mary, as the representative of the human race, in the realization of this plan, opened to self-exiled man the way to the paternal embrace of the Triune God. These opened to the lost creature, the way back to the warmth of the paternal home. In the small but welcoming space afforded us here, let us try to be enlightened by one wonderful fact, among many others, which is intertwined from our young years with the

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL MATTHEW 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

holy icon of Christmas, according to the art of our East, but also with the holy icon of the Nativity of the Lord itself.

The star of Bethlehem

"For we saw his star in the east", we read in today's sacred Gospel. Giving the floor to Saint Chrysostom, let us benefit from his interpretive wisdom: "The star was not a star like the others. It was an invisible force that took this appearance, as can be seen from its course. There is no star that follows the path followed by the star of Bethlehem. Even if you call it sun and you call it moon you call it and by all the names of the stars you call it, they all move from the East to the West, and not from the North to the South.

However, this star did not have its own course, but it followed the course of the Magi, and when it saw them advancing, it advanced, and when it saw them stop, it stopped." But both Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint Romanos Melodos agree with Chrysostom that the star of Bethlehem was an angel of the Lord. It surely emitted as receiving light from a different light, the uncreated light that accompanied the unique miracle of the taking on flesh and incarnation of the Son and Word of God. Undoubtedly, however, the phenomenon of the star also served, from the viewpoint of created nature, the great event of the Birth of Christ.

"And behold the star which I saw in the east went before them until it came and stood above where the child was; and seeing the star, they rejoiced with very great joy." The joy of the Magi, illumined by the star of Bethlehem, is the joy of the Virgin Mary, which has since become the joy of the Church. That is, our joy, my brethren, the joy of the members of the body of Christ. It is the joy that the devil, for two thousand years now, from the moment of the Crucifixion