

## The shepherd praised and glorified God for all they had heard and seen

**Meditation:** Have you read the news today - the “good news” of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and son of Mary who was born for us and for our salvation. The word gospel literally means good news! Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would descend from David and be born in David’s city, Bethlehem (Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-2; Micah 5:2-4).

The first to hear the good news of the savior’s birth were not the rulers and religious leaders of Israel who were robed in riches and power. The angel’s first came to those who were humble and ready to receive the newborn king who was born in poverty and was now lying in a manger made for animals. Just as God had chosen and anointed David, a lowly shepherd of Bethlehem to become the shepherd king of Israel, so Jesus, likewise chose the path of humility and lowliness in coming to Israel as the good shepherd king who would lay down his life for their sake and salvation. After the angels had sung their hymn of glory in the presence of the shepherds, the shepherds made haste to adore the newborn king and sing their hymn of glory as well.

Many of the early church fathers have written hymns and homilies in praise of the Incarnation. John the Monk, an 8th century writer, in his Hymn of the Nativity, sings of the great exchange in the mystery and wonder of the Incarnation - God becoming man in order to bring man to heaven:

- *Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born! Today God has come upon earth, and humankind gone up to heaven. Today, for the sake of humankind, the invisible one is seen in the flesh. Therefore let us glorify him and cry aloud: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace bestowed by your coming, Savior: glory to you! Today in Bethlehem, I hear the angels: glory to God in the highest! Glory to him whose good pleasure it was that there be peace on earth! The Virgin is now more spacious than the heavens. Light has shone on those in darkness, exalting the lowly who sing like the angels: Glory to God in the highest! Beholding him [Adam] who was in God’s image and likeness fallen through transgression, Jesus bowed the heavens and came down, without change taking up his dwelling in a virgin womb, that he might refashion Adam fallen in corruption, and crying out: glory to your epiphany, my Savior and my God! [Stichera (hymn) of the Nativity of the Lord]*

Why was it necessary for the Word of God to become flesh? We needed a savior who could reconcile us with God. Throughout the ages Christians have professed the ancient Nicene Creed: “He became man for our sake and for the sake of our salvation.” The eternal Word became flesh for us so he could offer his life as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world through the shedding of his blood on the cross.

The Word became flesh to show us the infinite love and tender mercy of God for us sinners. In the feast of Christmas we celebrate present realities - Jesus Christ our redeemer who reigns in heaven and who also lives and reigns in our hearts through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit. And we commemorate past events - the birth of the newborn Messiah King and his manifestation to Israel and to the gentile nations. We thank and bless God for the way in which he has saved us from the power of sin and the curse of death and destruction by sending his son to ransom us and give us pardon and abundant life through the gift and working of the Holy Spirit. Today we celebrate the birthday of our King and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.



God wants to fill our hearts anew with joy and gratitude for the greatest gift he could possibly give us - his beloved son Jesus. What can we give thanks for in this great feast of the Incarnation? We can praise and thank God our Father for the fact that the Son of God freely and joyfully assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. Jesus came to release the captives from slavery to sin and to open the gates of paradise once again. This day the Holy Spirit invites us to make haste - as the shepherds of Bethlehem did - to adore Jesus our King and Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ is our eternal good shepherd who guides and cares for us unceasingly and who gives us abundant everlasting life and union with the triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This day the whole community of heaven joins with all believers of good will on earth in a jubilant song of praise for the good news proclaimed by the angels on Christmas eve: Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people, for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11)

The joy of Christmas is not for a day or a season. It is an eternal joy, a joy that no one can take from us because it is the joy of Jesus Christ himself made present in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who dwells within us (see Romans 5:2-5). The Lord gives us a supernatural joy which no pain nor sorrow can diminish, and which neither life nor death can take away. Do you know the joy of your salvation in Jesus Christ?

**“Lord our God, with the birth of your Son, your glory breaks on the world. As we celebrate his first coming, give us a foretaste of the joy that you will grant us when the fullness of his glory has filled the earth.”**

www.rc.net/wcc

### WE WELCOME THE NEW MEMBERS OF OUR ST. BASIL’S FAITH COMMUNITY

Our warmest welcome to all who worship with us!  
If you are not yet registered, fill out the form below and place it in the offering basket or mail it to the

Parish Center,

1225 Tuolumne Street, 94590.

Upon receipt of this form we will mail you the parish registration form to complete and return.

Thank you!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Check all that apply below:

Interested in Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

New Parishioner \_\_\_\_\_ New Address \_\_\_\_\_

New Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Send Envelopes \_\_\_\_\_

Moving/Remove from list \_\_\_\_\_



Christmas 2011



Dear Parish Family



This Christmas when you are gathered with your family, pause for a moment and say a prayer for all those who might not have a roof over their head or food to eat or gifts for their children. Be grateful for all the blessings you and your family do have. May this message be alive in us as we contemplate the words, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."



This year has brought much heartache and hardship for many families here in our Parish and throughout the lands. We are in much need for the gifts of the Prince of Peace this Christmas. We need to remember that all people are God's people, the likeness of God himself.



On behalf of Fr. Walter, Deacon Mike, Deacon Errol and the parish staff of St. Basil, I wish you a Christmas and New Year filled with love for God and for each other. May you feel God's love personally and experience comfort and peace, having a confidence and hope for a better tomorrow.



Yours in Christ,



Fr. Alfredo Tamayo  
Pastor



## Welcome

We are delighted to welcome each and every one who has come to worship with us at St. Basil Church on this blessed day. Whether you are a family member, friend, familiar face, or visitor, know that your presence enlivens our celebration and our parish community. Join us as we gather to praise and thank our generous God. We hope you return to celebrate Mass with us again soon.

### Schedule of our Holiday Masses

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve  
5:30 pm - Family Mass

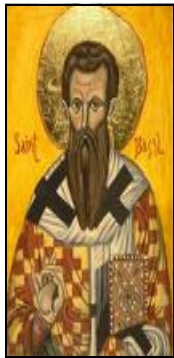
Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day  
Midnight Mass  
7:30 am, 9:30 am, 11:30 am and 1:30 pm

**THERE WILL BE NO 5:30PM MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY**

SATURDAY, December 31st - New Year's Eve  
5:30 PM

SUNDAY, January 1st, 2012 -  
New Year's Day  
Regular schedule of Masses

**THE FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT  
WILL BE CELEBRATED ON  
JANUARY 1, 2012  
11:30am Mass**



Our 11th Annual Mass to commemorate the Feast Day of St. Basil the Great, the Patron of our Parish, will be on **Sunday, January 1st, 2012 at the 11:30AM Mass**. A Potluck lunch will follow in the Annex. Please join us and bring a dish to share according to the following schedule: A - H: Finger Food or Main Dish  
I - P: Dessert  
Q - Z: Salad

**St. Basil  
the  
Great.  
Patron of  
Our  
Parish  
Family**

#### Prayer of St. Basil the Great

Steer the ship of my life, Good Lord, to your quiet harbor, where I can be safe from the storms of sin and conflict. Show me the course I should take. Renew in me the gift of discernment, so that I can always see the right direction in which I should go. And give me the strength and the courage to choose the right course, even when the sea is rough and the waves are high, knowing that through enduring hardship and danger we shall find comfort and peace. Amen.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

To all who worship with us  
today and  
celebrate the birth of Our Lord, Jesus  
Christ,  
Our Blessed Christmas  
greetings to all!

*Father Tamayo, Father Walter,  
Deacon Mike, Deacon Errol, and  
the Parish Staff:  
Lillian, Sheri, Rita, Julie, Neil, Cherry,  
Treeny, Clementina and Gena*

*St. Basil the Great Catholic Church  
1200 Tuolumne St., Vallejo, CA 94590-5251*

