

SS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
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December 31, 2006

SUNDAY/DEC. 31st (Tone 4)
Leave-Taking of the Nativity

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
6:30p.m. Vespers and Blessing of St. Basil's Bread

MONDAY/JAN. 1st

Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil the Great

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
6:30p.m. Compline and Akathist to
St. Seraphim of Sarov (Jan. 2nd)

TUESDAY/JAN. 2nd

4:00p.m. 40th Day Memorial for
Galina Orlovskaya

THURSDAY/JAN. 4th

7:00p.m. Royal Hours for Theophany

FRIDAY/JAN. 5th (Strict Fast Day)
Eve of the Theophany

7:00p.m. Matins
8:00p.m. Great Blessing of Waters

SATURDAY/JAN. 6th

Theophany of our Lord
(One of the "12 Great Feasts of the Year")

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/JAN. 7th (Tone 5)

Sunday After Theophany; Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour;
Book-for-the-Month of Spiritual
Reading from Parish Library



The Church celebrates this great event in the Feast of Theophany, or Epiphany, which means: the appearance of God. In the ancient Church, this was called the Feast of the Light, because the Three Lights of the Godhead were made manifest.

The Feast of the Theophany of our Lord

The celebration of the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River reveals wondrous salvific events:

- Any demonic influence over the waters was ended, as Christ crushed the heads of the invisible demonic dragons.
- The sin of old Adam was washed away and buried in the waters.
- The Forerunner John the Baptist was blessed by Christ.
- The Mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed.
- A model of Baptism was established for the followers of Jesus Christ.
- The waters were blessed by Christ and ceased to be waters of the fall and became waters of renewal (holy water).

The word "Theophany"

Comes from the apostolic passage "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16). Another expression of the Feast of Theophany is "Epiphany," "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). A third name is "The Feast of Lights."





The Theophany of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ
Celebrated on the 6th Day of the Month January

Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by the St John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine "those who sat in darkness," and "in the region of the shadow of death" (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind.

The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of St Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and St Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.



The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. St John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but "to bury human sin by water," to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify "the nature of water" and to offer us the form and example of Baptism.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Indivisible.

The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).

On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

Translation by Fr. Stephen Janos from the "Reference Book for Clergy-Server"

Troparion - Tone 1

When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee and called Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ, our God, Who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

Kontakion - Tone 4

Today Thou hast shown forth to the universe, and Thy light O Lord has shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee. Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O Light unapproachable.





Offerings for the Week of Dec. 31st

Olive Oil – in memory of Joan; for the health of Carol, Christine and Kyle (birthday); in memory of Emilia; for the health of Vaschen (namesday); for the health of Laurentiu and Liliana.

Wine – in memory of Michael.

Flowers – in honor of the Baptism of Our Lord; in thanksgiving and salvation of the Torrissi family and for John and Vera.

Winter Storm Cancellations

If it is necessary to cancel some service or parish event, the parish website will post the cancellation at least one hour before the scheduled activity. You may also call the rectory.

Parish Council Meeting

Jan. 18th, Thursday at 7:00p.m.

Annual Parish Meeting – Feb. 11th

At 12:00p.m. If necessary – due to weather – the meeting will be held on the following Sunday, Feb. 18th at 12:00p.m. All reports to be presented should be submitted to the rector no later than Jan. 31st.

Great Lent is Early in 2007

In planning winter vacations and other events, be mindful that the Great and Holy Lent begins on Feb. 19th. For all advanced planning, consult the Schedule of Services for the Year 2007 on the parish website.

Vessels for Holy Water

Be sure to bring an appropriate bottle when you come to church for Theophany to bring home the newly-blessed waters.

Icon Print Box on Vestibule Stand

For the month of January only, a box may be found on the vestibule stand for icon prints from your calendars, Christmas cards and other sources. Icon prints should not be disposed of as general printed materials.

Namesday Greetings

St. Melania/Dec. 31st: Mildred Mock
Sunday After Nativity/Prophet David:
David Peterson

St. Basil/Jan. 1st: Basil Kulick, Vassily Neudachin,
Charles Kachek, William Kuzemchak
St. Genevieve/Jan. 3rd: Genevieve Tindall
Many Blessed Years!

Sympathy Is Expressed

To members of the Chabra family on the repose of
Nicholas Chabra (+Dec. 21, 2006). Memory Eternal!

Winter Dance Party – Sun., Jan. 21st

Join us for Fun & Good Fellowship! All Young
People are invited, ages 18 and up. Time 2-6 at
parish hall. DEJU VU D.J. Refreshments are free of
charge. A great opportunity to meet each other and
new friends. For information call
Maria Torrissi 732-545-5642/Peter Parsells 908-
872-5657/Nick Parsells 908-642-4147.

The January Monthly Calendar & Home Blessing Schedule

May be picked up on the vestibule stand.
Information on house blessings.

The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Nicholas Chabra (40th day – Jan. 29th)

Dec. 31, 1942 Tikhon Yakovlev

Dec. 31, 1950 Nicholas Chmelik

Dec. 31, 1962 Jacob Hriniaik

Jan. 01, 1963 Peter Romanowski

Jan. 01, 1995 Michael Emilianov

Jan. 02, 1947 Chariton Kucher

Jan. 02, 1966 Mary Knaff

Jan. 02, 1989 Charles Specian

Jan. 03, 1962 Mary Tarby Adamcio

Jan. 04, 1963 Christine Sudillo

Jan. 04, 1970 Mary Dzurich

Jan. 04, 1978 Peter Wilhousky

Jan. 05, 1964 Nicholas Senko

Jan. 06, 1952 Michael Kuzimak

Fervent Prayers

Are sought for Ann Wasitowski (Somerset Medical).

2006-12-28 00:00:00

Russian Orthodox Church to be fully reunified May 17, 2006

Moscow, December 26, Interfax - The unity of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) will be fully restored on May 17, 2007, on Ascension Day, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, the Moscow Patriarchate's chief spokesman, told journalists following a Synod session.

Patriarch Alexy II and ROCOR Primate Metropolitan Laurus will sign the *Act of Canonical Communion* on this day, he said.

The signing ceremony is to take place at the Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow before a Divine Liturgy service, after which the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR will conduct a joint service for the first time in history.

First common divine service of Patriarch Alexy and Metropolitan Laurus to be celebrated untraditionally

Moscow, December 28, Interfax - The first common divine service of the Primates of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Church Abroad will be celebrated untraditionally: the Royal Gates in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour will be open throughout the service, that being done only during the Bright Week, the first week after Easter.

The service was announced in the joint release of the secretaries of the commissions of the two Churches, archpriests Nikolay Balashov and Alexander Lebedev.

The document received by *Interfax* explained that the Royal Gates (to the sanctuary - *IF*) would be opened on the day when the *Act on Canonical Communion* is signed for 'the people of God to fully share the joy of the first common communion of bishops and clergy of the One Russian Church.'

The document would be signed after a short prayer service in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour before the Divine Liturgy.

Two days later, on May 19, the commemoration day of St Job the Much-Suffered, St. Job of Pochaev and the birthday of the holy passion-bearer Emperor Nicholas II, Patriarch Alexy, Metropolitan Laurus, bishops and clergymen of the Russian Church Abroad would celebrate Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Moscow Kremlin.

On 20 May 2007, the seventh Sunday after Easter, Patriarch Alexy, Metropolitan Laurus, bishops and clergymen from Russia and abroad would consecrate the Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia in Butovo and celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the newly consecrated church which foundation was laid when Metropolitan Laurus was paying his first official visit to Russia in 2004.

'By the prayers of the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia the Lord has blessed the sacred cause of restoring the unity of the Russian Church that had suffered great pain in the twentieth century. We believe that through their heavenly intercession we would complete this cause to the glory of God and the joy of church people,' the document reads.



It is after the baptism that the world can know the three persons of the Trinity.* This is the mystery which allows us to call on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as one God. After the manifestation in the Jordan, we too can baptize "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19).

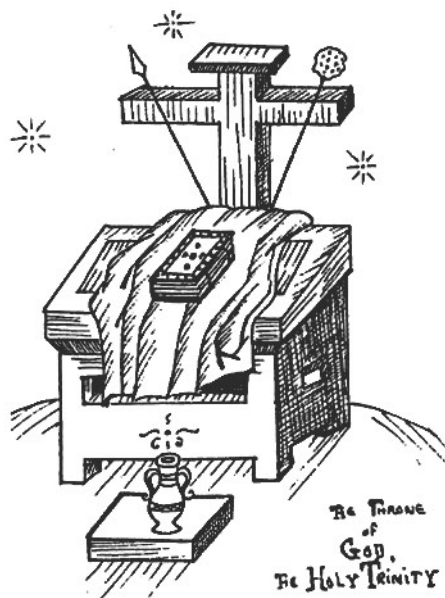


**THE FEAST OF THE HOLY THEOPHANY
A PERSONAL APPROACH TO THE FEAST
- by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafaktos**

The feast of the Theophany or Epiphany points to many great theological truths. As a personal approach to the feast we should now add a few more things relating to our own baptism. Three indicative points should be particularly emphasised.

First. Those who are baptised and anointed are called Christians, both because they are disciples of Christ and because they have received the chrism from the Holy Spirit. Neither takes away the other, since we are disciples of Christ through the Grace which we receive through the sacraments. As St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite says, all Christians can be called anointed of the Lord, "anointed with the perfecting chrism" meaning the grace and communion of the Holy Spirit. If the kings, priests and prophets in the Old Testament are called anointed of the Lord because they are anointed with the imperfect and ritual oil, much more so are those who have been anointed with the Holy Chrism. John the Evangelist writes: "But the anointing which you have received from him abides in you" (I Jn. 2,27). And the Apostle Paul affirms: "he who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

Here, the
Throne depicts
God the Father,
the Cross, God
the Son and the
vessel of Myrrh,
God the Holy
Spirit.



who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit" (2 Cor. 1, 1-22). Anointing by the Holy Spirit, which is connected with the illumination and enlightenment of the nous, is the pledge of the Spirit, the seal of God.

Second. Through Baptism one receives the pledge of the Spirit, but with the possibility of fulfilment. St. Gregory Palamas says that just as the infant receives from his parents the possibility of becoming a man and of inheriting the paternal estate when he reaches the appropriate age, but loses it if he dies in the meantime, the same happens with the Christian. Through Baptism he receives the power to become a son of God and an inheritor of the eternal goods, if in the meantime he does not die of intelligible death, which is sin. Consequently, if then man loses his communion with God, if he dies spiritually, he loses the possibility which he received through Baptism. To be sure, grace is not lost, it does not abandon the heart of man, but it does not effect salvation.

Christ gave a commandment to His Disciples to make disciples of all the nations "baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28, 19-20). "Baptising" and "teaching to observe" show the manner in which man is spiritually completed.

Third. When the Grace of Baptism is clouded by sin, then the baptism of repentance and tears must follow. The monastic tonsuring is called a second baptism, because it establishes the life of repentance and purification, through which man reaches his former glory. St. Gregory of Nyssa says characteristically: "Even one tear of repentance is equivalent to the water of baptism, and a painful groan brings back the grace which had departed for a while". Of course this tear must be shed in the atmosphere of repentance, as the Orthodox Church teaches and expresses it.

Christ was baptised in order to observe the law and to bring His Grace to the water, to the whole of creation and to man. So He gave to each one of us the possibility of attaining the Grace of adoption, of theophany in our personal life. This manifestation of God constitutes 'Theognosia' the knowledge of God, and since knowledge of God is an existential fact, it also brings salvation.

