

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
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BULLETIN OF JANUARY 6, 2008

SUNDAY/JANUARY 6th
THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD
(One of "the 12 Great Feasts")

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Liturgy
Book-for-the-Month
Church School Classes
Coffee Hour

MONDAY/JANUARY 7th
Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

9:30a.m. Akathist to the Baptist

WEDNESDAY/JANUARY 9th

7:00p.m. Vespers

THURSDAY/JANUARY 10th
St. Theophan the Recluse

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

SATURDAY/JANUARY 12th
St. Sava of Serbia

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Sava; Confessions
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/JANUARY 13th
Sunday After the Theophany
(Tone 8)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Church School Classes;
Teen Discussion Group;
Coffee Hour

MONDAY/JANUARY 14th
Leave-Taking of the Theophany
St. Nina, Equal-to-the-Apostles,
Enlightener of Georgia

9:30a.m. Akathist to St. Nina

Fasting Days

Wednesday, Jan. 9th
Friday, Jan. 11th (wine & oil)



AN INSTRUCTION OF ST. THEOPHAN
THE RECLUSE (+1894)

Do not live in a careless manner. A majority of Christians are lukewarm. They seemingly have nothing against God, but they also have no deliberate intention of pleasing God. For example, they drop into church; they drop in, they leave, they make no apology. When they pray at home they make a bow or two, and that is it. They are satisfied. That is how they are in everything with respect to God.

Such Christians are not obvious egotists, when it comes to the preservation of their own interests, in order to avoid making any self-sacrifice, they can always find a reason to avoid it. They also are not too blatantly vain, but have no objection to amusing themselves with worldly matters.

People of this sort are rather common. They are indifferent to the matter of pleasing God and salvation; they are neither hot nor cold. God turns away from them and rejects them.

Inclement Weather & Cancellations

Due to ice or snow may necessitate that some schedule service or event on the parish calendar may be cancelled or postponed.

Cancellations will be posted on the parish website at least one hour before the scheduled time. You may also call Fr. James (908-685-1452) or Mary Holovach (908-725-8978) to find out about cancellations before you set out.

2008 Offering Schedule for Olive Oil (\$5), Wine (\$10) and Flowers (\$20)

May be found on the vestibule stand. Please make your offering at the time you sign-up and mark a blank envelope with amount.

The Blessing of Homes 2008

With the Waters blessed on the feast of the Theophany, the homes of the faithful are blessed. The blessing of home will continue through Feb. 16th. Those that wish their home to be blessed, are asked to make arrangements with Fr. James in person, by phone or email.

Please consult the January Monthly Calendar for the purpose and order of home blessings.

Parish Wall Calendars For 2008

May be picked up in the vestibule. The saints for the day, fasting norms and daily scripture readings are provided in this calendar.

Offerings for the week of January 6th

Olive Oil – in memory of Joan; in memory of Basil Fetchko; in memory of Emilia; for the protection and healing from Gof of Gabriela-Antoaneta; for the health of Basil.

Wine – in memory of Ioan, Ion and Ileanna; in memory of Michael Kuzmiak.

Flowers – in memory of Joseph Onuschak; for the health of Justina.

Litya Breads – for the health of Mary and Zena.

St. Basil's Coin

The blessing this year of 2008 went to Peter Parsells.

Parish Synodicon

Jan. 06, 1952 Michael Kuzmiak

Jan. 07, 1959 Ufim Nesteruk

Jan. 07, 1963 Mary Borushko

Jan. 07, 1967 Helen Knysh

Jan. 08, 1963 Mathilda Blanchard

Jan. 08, 1967 Katherine Karpinski

Jan. 08, 1978 Eustafey Gumenuk

Jan. 09, 1995 Michael Hobora

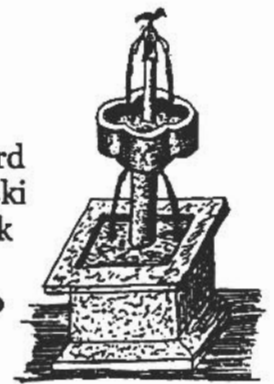
Jan. 10, 1983 Helen Zvonchenko

Jan. 11, 1979 Vassily Koles

Jan. 12, 1965 Alex Emilianov

Jan. 12, 1976 Julia Dzyban

Jan. 12, 1982 Xenia Kalevich



Parish Educational Classes

Teen Discussion Group (high school students) a brief 20 minute informal discussion to be held on the 2nd Sunday during the Coffee Hour.

Class A (K thru 3rd grade) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays during Coffee Hour.

Class B (4 thru 8 grade)

on the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays during Coffee Hour.

General Question & Answer Period on the 4th Sunday during Coffee Hour.

No classes on the 5th Sunday of the month.

Our Parish Website

Has posted an advanced calendar (schedule of services) for the entire year of 2008. You are encouraged to make use of it in your own calendar planning for and in the year 2008.

Icon Prints Being Collected

Every January month (and only for this month) a box is placed on the vestibule stand for you to bring icon prints from wall calendars, Christmas cards and other sources. This is done so that you do not "throw" away icon prints. They should not be disposed of as mere paper items.

Namesday Greetings

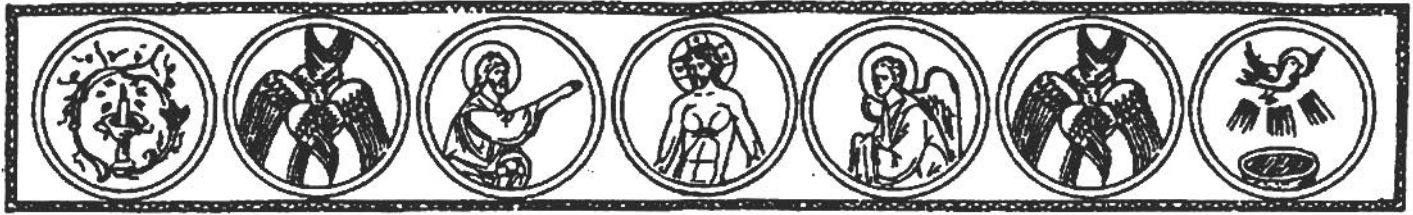
St. John/Jan. 7th: John Chabra

St. Tatiana/Jan. 12th: T. Onuschak, T. Hansen

Many Blessed Years!

Parish Council Meeting

January 24th, Thursday at 7:00pm.



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.





LESSONS FROM TREES

The Aromatic Tree is full of a wonderful fragrance, not in greens or in flowers but in the bark. When the bark is cut with an ax, the fragrance pours forth. In such a manner, we Christians are aromatic trees in Christ's Church, when struck by the sinful world, we pour forth the heavenly fragrance of divine forgiveness.

The Chinese Bamboo Tree for the first four years of its growth, only a small shoot appears above ground, yet miraculously, in the 5th year, the tree grows up in one year to some 80 feet. In our spiritual life, we need to pay the price to prepare the ground of our soul - plant the seed of virtue, cultivate it by righteous living, water it with the Sacraments; knowing that in the future, great growth will take place.

The Tree of the Holy Cross is the most precious tree in all the world. It provides heavenly shelter and divine shade. The fruit of this tree - is the Lord Jesus, if we eat of this tree, we shall not die, but live forever.

AN EXPLANATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

ON MATTHEW 9:16-17

BY ST. THEOPHAN THE RECLUSE (+1894)

No Man puts a piece of new cloth unto an old garment...nor do men put new wine into old bottles.

What does the Saviour wish to teach us by this comparison? By this comparison the Lord taught that strenuous labors, without the spirit of true life, brings no benefit to our moral character, but rather, confusion and corruption. A repentant sinner is given grace, which forms in him a determination to please the Lord, without sparing his own life. All labors are useful to a person with determination. However, should a person who lacks it, attempt on occasion, for example, to impose a fast on himself, he will strain and strain harder, but then he gives up his efforts. And after this his life becomes even worse.

ABOUT ORTHODOX PARISH LIFE

.....If people want a parish community, then they have to work to create it. As they say: no pain, no gain. Today, many people seem to have adopted a Welfare State mentality, a consumer mentality, towards the Church. As a result they expect church services and activities to be laid out for them, as if it were their right. This is totally unrealistic. We have to combat the mentality which says that 80% of church activities are carried out by 20% of the parishioners and the remaining 20% of activities are carried out by 80% of the parishioners.

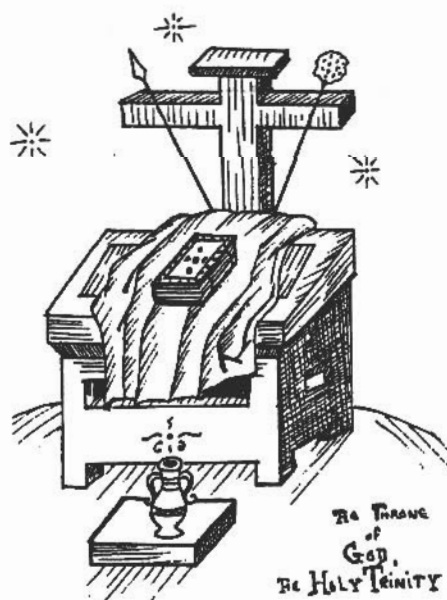
.....some are critical that Orthodox laity appear to have no role to play in church life, and seem to be mere passive spectators of services. This impression is sometimes founded in reality, but only in dying parishes where laity may indeed have reduced their role to passive spectatorship. Laypeople can only be passive if they wish to be passive.

**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.

