

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JANUARY 13, 2013

SUNDAY/JANUARY 13

Sunday After Theophany (Tone 7)

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour with Yolka

THURSDAY/JANUARY 17

9:30a.m. Memorial for Mary Kralovich
7:00p.m. Parish Council Meeting

SATURDAY/JANUARY 19

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/JANUARY 20

33rd Sunday After Pentecost

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Church School and Teen Class; Coffee Hour



The Commandments of the Church By St. Nicholas of Zicha (+1956)

Every Christian ought:

1. To go to church for public worship every Sunday, and on great holy days, besides the every-day private prayers;
2. To keep the fast periods and fast days as prescribed;
3. To respect the priests as spiritual fathers;
4. To confess sins with repentance before a priest.
5. To avoid association with unbelievers and to read no atheistic, vulgar books;
6. To pray for the living and for the dead.
7. To keep special fasts and prayers when they are ordered by the Church authorities in times of emergency such as war, pestilence, hunger, drought, etc.
8. To support the maintenance of the church, Church servants and Church institutions.
9. To educate children by the Faith of our Fathers, and to admonish sinners to return to the Faith.
10. To help in every respect the Orthodox Church's mission in this world.

Offerings Week of January 13

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael, Justina, and Rosalie; in memory of Vaschen and Emilia.

Parish Synodicon – Memory Eternal!

Jan. 13, 1953 Katherine Shwetz
Jan. 13, 1966 Peter Krenitsky
Jan. 15, 2000 Ekaterina Moroshan
Jan. 17, 1938 Fr. Elia Lilikovich
(Rector 1925-1929)
Jan. 17, 1953 Radion Tzarkov
Jan. 17, 1975 Mary Kralovich
Jan. 18, 1927 Anastasia Petrushevich
Jan. 18, 1963 Helen Trehubets
Jan. 18, 1990 Constantine Putyrskoe
Jan. 19, 1974 Vera Gromack
Jan. 19, 1999 Charles Basil Fetchko
Jan. 20, 1960 Nazar Pasechnik
Jan. 20, 1963 Charles Chabala

Coffee Hour Hosting

Jan. 13 Inga, Eka, Marina and Nona
Jan. 20 Motoviloff, Torrisi, Kachek and Stone
Jan. 27 Combs, Mantzafos, Parsells and Sokol

Ushers Schedule

Jan. 13 - T. Gorbatuk & J. Stone
Jan. 20 - P. Parsells & C. Dunaenko
Jan. 27 - E. Sarchisian and L. Khuzaurashvili

The Blessing of Homes Season – January 6th thru February 23rd

After the Great Blessing of Waters on Theophany, January 6th, it is the custom to have one's home blessed with the Precious Cross and Holy Water. All of the faithful are encouraged to arrange for a visitation of the priest to your home during the period of time indicated above. You may do so, by phone, e-mail or in person. It is best to arrange and schedule sooner, rather than later. It is best to have the blessing in the month of January rather than February if possible.

Namesday Greetings: Many Blessed Years!

St. Anthony/Jan. 17: Antoniu-Teodor Chirnoaga

A Container for Icon Prints on Table in the Vestibule

Colored printed icons from Christmas cards and wall calendars may be deposited in this container during the month of January (only). It is not a year round collection, your co-operation is appreciated.

The Calendar

Jan. 13 Sun: Church School Yolka
Jan. 17 Thur: Parish Council Meeting, 7:00p.m.
Jan. 25 Fri: March For Life, Washington, DC
Jan. 27 Sun: Metropolitan Tikhon Enthroned
Jan. 30 Wed: Deadline for Annual Mtg. Reports
Feb. 02 Sat: Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord
Feb. 03 Sun: Annual Mtg. Reports Distributed
Feb. 03 Sun: Scout Sunday
Feb. 08-10 Fri/Sun: Winter Teen Retreat, Dalton
Feb. 10 Sun: Annual parish Meeting, 12:00p.m.
Feb. 10 Sun: NY-NJ Diocese DDD, 5:00p.m.
Mar. 01-03 Fri/Sun: Diocese Altar Servers Retreat

Winter Teen Retreat – Feb. 8-10 for Grades 7 thru 12 in Dalton, Pa.

"The Adventures of the 12 Apostles," is the theme of this annual retreat sponsored by the OCA Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania. Information and registration forms are posted on the bulletin board.

The Parish Library

Parishioners are welcome to check out books and videos for the period of one month. Please return or renew after this period of time. A good number of books have been checked out for a long time. You are asked to return or renew what you presently have in your possession. Questions about the Library, may be addressed to Kathryn Motoviloff.

Parish Website Photos

Photos from the Feasts of the Nativity and Theophany are now on line for viewing.

Be Welcoming

Say hello. Introduce yourself. Engage in conversation.

**BISHOP MICHAEL'S ADDRESS TO THE DIOCESE
DECEMBER 11, 2012 (PART 3)
*"To Know Christ and to Make Him Known"***

People are starving for meaning in their lives. They are starving for love. They are starving for Christ. It's not hard to find a chance to talk to them. There are people in your life whom you know, who have no faith. Those are the people who need Christ. There are going to be opportunities that you have, to tell the story of what the Lord has done in your life, like the Hebrews so long ago ... How? Someone you know may say to you, "Christmas is coming. It's going to be a lonely time for me. My kids aren't going to be around." "Are you going to go to church?" "No – I don't have a church." There's your chance ... Someone says, "You know, I'm really afraid; I'm going to the hospital, I'm going to have surgery." You say, "Is your minister coming to pray with you?" "I don't have one." There's your chance. "We have a great priest – he'll come and say a prayer with you." ... Someone may say to you, "You know, I'm having trouble with my marriage; I'm having trouble with my son; I'm having trouble with my neighbors." "Well, you know, have you talked to your pastor?" "I don't really have one." There's your chance ... Please, each one of us bring one new person to our parishes! Each one, reach one! Each one, touch one! To help us in this effort, it is my plan that our Parish Council Workshops in 2013 will deal with this issue – Church Growth, Outreach, Evangelization – making our parishes stronger, by making Christ known to those who presently are not practicing the Faith.

There is another way of making Christ known – reaching out to those in need. And I have been humbled to see the love in the hearts of so many of you and your fellow parishioners, serving soup and sandwiches in the middle of Manhattan or growing the incredible soup-kitchen ministries that have taken root around the Diocese ... and most recently, raising thousands of dollars to support those in our parishes who sustained devastating losses in Hurricane Sandy. That is making Christ known ... in His own words: "In as much as you did it to one of the least of My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40).

We make Christ known when we give like He gives – the first, the best, as much as we are able, of what we have been given. That mindset of giving out of love, is the mindset of Stewardship that has been the theme of our Diocesan conferences this past year. In my first address as your Diocesan Bishop I stated that our system of dues is really unable to support our parishes in the 21st century ... and that I hoped we would move to a practice of proportionate giving. The convening of our Parish Council Conferences in 2012, with the theme of Stewardship as a Matter of Spiritual Growth, took us in decisive steps toward that needed, fundamental change.

Today you will hear a presentation about a parish in a sister diocese, a parish founded 90 years ago by Slavic immigrants, a community in the midst of the Rust Belt of Ohio ... how they made that transition. You also will receive a packet of "stewardship highlights" from various parishes. I pray that these resources will inform and inspire each of you to tell the story of stewardship in your parishes – and to share the message that giving in the church is not about money...it is about love: the love of Christ, and making Him known by our sacrificing to fund the ministries of His Church, to keep the legacy alive of the founders and builders of our parishes decades ago ... keeping our churches flourishing until He comes again.

And we make Him known as a Diocese by caring for each other within the Diocese. Woven through St. Paul's Epistles is the Apostle's insistence that the faithful of each local church community tend to the needs of the Christians in other communities, both near and far away. We are urged to do the same. And what a joy it has been for me to see the people of this Diocese rise to that challenge, time and time again.

Over the two years since the institution of the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactor initiative, nearly a quarter of a million dollars has been raised:

- to support the seminarians who are the future priests, deacons, and leaders in the Church...
- to help sustain parishes that are working hard to grow and to share the Faith while dealing with serious financial challenges...
- and to plant new missions, new spiritual lighthouses in places where, often, no other Orthodox church exists within an hour's drive.

You have just seen, in pictures, the success stories of the DDB initiative as well as the many other ministries that your stewardship in this Diocese has made possible in 2012. In the new year I am confident that this good work will continue. It is my hope that during 2013 we can, for example, gather both the dollars and the "doers" to help with plastering and painting at the new church being built for the Mother of God Mission in Rocky Hill, New Jersey. I am also keenly focused on the need to promote priestly and diaconal vocations among the men of this Diocese. Right now, there is only one Diocesan man attending seminary full-time. That number needs to grow, if our churches are to grow. Seminary scholarships will certainly help to encourage that growth. And I hope that we will be able to continue sharing the funds offered by our DDB donors with those parishes that demonstrate a genuine need for assistance, so that they may provide for their priests, and maintain their churches and properties in keeping with the vision of our ancestors who sacrificed so much to build them ... as we did so successfully with Operation: Buffalo.

I am humbled and proud of what the Diocese has done these past three years; and I pray we continue to do that in greater solidarity with one another – to make the Christ we know, known to others.

In conclusion, I wish to share one brief personal reflection. There were a few brief moments last month, when I thought about what it would mean if I wasn't the Bishop of New York and New Jersey anymore...

Then I saw the faces of the priests of our Diocese, whose efforts to "know Christ and make Him known" have been so admirable, so valiant, so valuable ... priests in the trenches fighting to save souls ... priests, each with their own talents, all of whom I love /.../ and I saw the faces of parishioners I have come to know and love, whose efforts to "know Christ and to make Him known" – to preserve and to grow the legacies of the founders, benefactors, and beautifiers of our diocesan churches have so inspired me to do the work that I have been called to do.

I realized in that moment, as I do so often when I stand at an altar with one of our priests or leave a parish community I have been visiting over a weekend ... what a joy and honor and blessing from God it is for me ... to be a part of this family of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

All I can say, in return, is I what said on the day of my consecration. I renew my pledge, by the grace of God, to do my best to fight the good fight, to run the race of salvation, by working as hard as I can, as fast as I can, for as long as I can, until the Lord calls me to pass the baton on to someone else (II Timothy 4)... working alongside all of you, my beloved Diocesan family, "to know Christ and to make Him known."

To Him be all glory unto ages of ages.

- Bishop Michael of New York

CALCULATING CHRISTMAS

Abbreviated from touchstonemag.com/William Tighe

Many Christians think that Christians celebrate Christ's birth on December 25th because the church fathers appropriated the date of a pagan festival. Almost no one minds, except for a few groups on the fringes of American Evangelicalism, who seem to think that this makes Christmas itself a pagan festival. But it is perhaps interesting to know that the choice of December 25th is the result of attempts among the earliest Christians to figure out the date of Jesus' birth based on calendrical calculations that had nothing to do with pagan festivals.

Rather, the pagan festival of the "Birth of the Unconquered Son" instituted by the Roman Emperor Aurelian on 25 December 274, was almost certainly an attempt to create a pagan alternative to a date that was already of some significance to Roman Christians. Thus the "pagan origins of Christmas" is a myth without historical substance.

A Mistake

The idea that the date was taken from the pagans goes back to two scholars from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Paul Ernst Jablonski, a German Protestant, wished to show that the celebration of Christ's birth on December 25th was one of the many "paganizations" of Christianity that the Church of the fourth century embraced, as one of many "degenerations" that transformed pure apostolic Christianity into Catholicism. Dom Jean Hardouin, a Benedictine monk, tried to show that the Catholic Church adopted pagan festivals for Christian purposes without paganizing the gospel.

In the Julian calendar, created in 45 B.C. under Julius Caesar, the winter solstice fell on December 25th, and it therefore seemed obvious to Jablonski and Hardouin that the day must have had a pagan significance before it had a Christian one. But in fact, the date had no religious significance in the Roman pagan festival calendar before Aurelian's time, nor did the cult of the sun play a prominent role in Rome before him...

As things actually happened, Aurelian, who ruled from 270 until his assassination in 275, was hostile to Christianity and appears to have promoted the establishment of the festival of the "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" as a device to unify the various pagan cults of the Roman Empire around a commemoration of the annual "rebirth" of the sun. He led an empire that appeared to be collapsing in the face of internal unrest, rebellions in the prov-

Touchstone

A Journal of Mere Christianity

inces, economic decay, and repeated attacks from German tribes to the north and the Persian Empire to the east.

In creating the new feast, he intended the beginning of the lengthening of the daylight, and the arresting of the lengthening of darkness, on December 25th to be a symbol of the hoped-for "rebirth," or perpetual rejuvenation, of the Roman Empire, resulting from the maintenance of the worship of the gods whose tutelage (the Romans thought) had brought Rome to greatness and world-rule. If it co-opted the Christian celebration, so much the better.

A By-Product

It is true that the first evidence of Christians celebrating December 25th as the date of the Lord's nativity comes from Rome some years after Aurelian, in A.D. 336, but there is evidence from both the Greek East and the Latin West that Christians attempted to figure out the date of Christ's birth long before they began to celebrate it liturgically, even in the second and third centuries. The evidence indicates, in fact, that the attribution of the date of December 25th was a by-product of attempts to determine when to celebrate his death and resurrection.

How did this happen? There is a seeming contradiction between the date of the Lord's death as given in the synoptic Gospels and in John's Gospel. The synoptics would appear to place it on Passover Day (after the Lord had celebrated the Passover Meal on the preceding evening), and John on the Eve of Passover, just when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Jerusalem Temple for the feast that was to ensue after sunset on that day.

Solving this problem involves answering the question of whether the Lord's Last Supper was a Passover Meal, or a meal celebrated a day earlier, which we cannot enter into here. Suffice it to say that the early Church followed John rather than the synoptics, and thus believed that Christ's death would have taken place on 14 Nisan, according to the Jewish lunar calendar or approximately April 6th according to the Roman calendar...

In contrast, 2nd-century Latin Christians in Rome and North Africa, by the time of Tertullian, had concluded that he died on Friday, 25 March 29...

Integral Age

So in the East we have April 6th, in the West, March 25th. At this point, we have to introduce a belief that seems to have been widespread in Judaism at the time of Christ, but which, as it is nowhere taught in the Bible, has completely fallen from the awareness of Christians. The idea is that of the "integral age" of the great Jewish prophets: the idea that the prophets of Israel died on the same dates as their birth or conception.

This notion is a key factor in understanding how some early Christians came to believe that December 25th is the date of Christ's birth. The early Christians applied this idea to Jesus, so that March 25th and April 6th were not only the supposed dates of Christ's death, but of his conception or birth as well. There is some fleeting evidence that at least some first- and second-century Christians thought of March 25th or April 6th as the date of Christ's birth, but rather quickly the assignment of March 25th as the date of Christ's conception prevailed.

It is to this day, commemorated almost universally among Christians as the Feast of the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel brought the good tidings of a savior to the Virgin Mary, upon whose acquiescence the Eternal Word of God ("Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten of the Father before all ages") forthwith became incarnate in her womb. What is the length of pregnancy? Nine months. Add nine months to March 25th and

you get December 25th; add it to April 6th and you get January 6th. December 25th is Christmas, and January 6th is Epiphany.

Christmas (December 25th) is a feast of Western Christian origin. In Constantinople it appears to have been introduced in 379 or 380. From a sermon of St. John Chrysostom, at the time a renowned ascetic and preacher in his native Antioch, it appears that the feast was first celebrated there on 25 December 386. From these centers it spread throughout the Christian East, being adopted in Alexandria around 432 and in Jerusalem a century or more later. The Armenians, alone among ancient Christian churches, have never adopted it, and to this day celebrate Christ's birth, manifestation to the magi, and baptism on January 6th.

Western churches, in turn, gradually adopted the January 6th Epiphany feast from the East, Rome doing so sometime between 366 and 394. But in the West, the feast was generally presented as the commemoration of the visit of the magi to the infant Christ, and as such, it was an important feast, but not one of the most important ones—a striking contrast to its position in the East, where it remains the second most important festival of the church year, second only to Pascha (Easter).

In the East, Epiphany far outstrips Christmas. The reason is that the feast celebrates Christ's baptism in the Jordan and the occasion on which the Voice of the Father and the Descent of the Spirit both manifested for the first time to mortal men the divinity of the Incarnate Christ and the Trinity of the Persons in the One Godhead.

A Christian Feast

Thus, December 25th as the date of the Christ's birth appears to owe nothing whatsoever to pagan influences upon the practice of the Church during or after Constantine's time. It is wholly unlikely to have been the actual date of Christ's birth, but it arose entirely from the efforts of early Latin Christians to determine the historical date of Christ's death.

And the pagan feast which the Emperor Aurelian instituted on that date in the year 274 was not only an effort to use the winter solstice to make a political statement, but also almost certainly an attempt to give a pagan significance to a date already of importance to Roman Christians. The Christians, in turn, could at a later date re-appropriate the pagan "Birth of the Unconquered Sun" to refer, on the occasion of the birth of Christ, to the rising of the "Sun of Salvation" or the "Sun of Justice."

