

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

605 Washington Avenue, Manville, New Jersey 08835-1856

Voice: 908-685-1452 Email: frjames@ssppoc.org Website: www.ssppoc.org

Face Book: Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Diocese of NY-NJ: www.ocanynj.org

BULLETIN JANUARY 1, 2017

SUNDAY/JANUARY 1

Circumcision & St. Basil the Great

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

Coffee Hour

WEDNESDAY/JANUARY 4

No Fast

6:30p.m. Confessions

7:00p.m. Royal Hours of Theophany

THURSDAY/JANUARY 5

Eve of Theophany – Fast Day

7:00p.m. Matins

8:00p.m. Great Blessing of Waters

FRIDAY/JANUARY 6

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

No Fast

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

7:00p.m. Compline

SATURDAY/JANUARY 7

Synaxis of the Baptist

9:30a.m. Akathist to Baptist; Confessions

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

SUNDAY/JANUARY 8

Sunday After Theophany

St. Isidore & Martyrs of Estonia

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

Coffee Hour

5:30p.m. First Service of St. Simon of Cyrene

Mission at 80 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick



Offerings Week of January 1

Olive Oil: in memory of Michael, Justina, Rosalie, and Anastasia; in memory of Sarchisian and Bocai families; for the health of Basil (names day); for the salvation and health of Vera and in memory of John and Marie; for the health of Carol, Christine and Kyle (birthdays).

Flowers for Theophany: for the health of church congregation.

Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Jan. 01, 1963 Peter Romanowski
Jan. 01, 1995 Michael Hobora
Jan. 01, 2010 Paul Lebedz
Jan. 02, 1947 Chariton Kucher
Jan. 02, 1966 Mary Knaff
Jan. 02, 1989 Charles Specian
Jan. 02, 2012 Vera Wilhousky
Jan. 03, 1962 Mary Tarby Adamcio
Jan. 04, 1963 Christine Sudillo
Jan. 04, 1970 Mary Dzurich
Jan. 04, 1978 Peter Wilhousky
Jan. 04, 2016 Alice Kulina
Jan. 05, 1964 Nicholas Senko
Jan. 05, 2005 Anna Sudia
Jan. 06, 1952 Michael Kuzmiak
Jan. 06, 2016 Frank Bongiorno
Jan. 07, 1959 Ufim Nesteruk
Jan. 07, 1963 Mary Borushko
Jan. 07, 1967 Helen Knysh

Coffee Hour Schedule

- Coffee Hour Hosts are reminded to prepare foods that are simple enough that you leave the church only after Communion.
- Coffee Hour Hosts, please place trash in the garbage cans outside, or if the cans are full, on top of the cans, but not on the ground.
- Please allow church school teachers and students to be first in line so they can prepare for classes.

Jan. 01 Kita, Keller, Turri, Torrisi, & Kachek
Jan. 08 Inga, Eka, Marina & Nona

Usher Schedule

Jan. 01 Timothy S. & Peter B.
Jan. 08 Jerome S. & Adrian M.

Counters

Jan. 01 Rebecca O. & Lisa K.
Jan. 08 Ciprian C. & Larissa M.

Sunday Readers Schedule

Jan. 01 John Z.
Jan. 08 Austin K.

Names Day Greetings: Many Years!

St. Basil/Jan. 1: Basil Kulick
St. Juliana/Jan. 2: Juliana Bakaltez

Fast Free Festal Season

From December 25th thru January 4th, we do not fast, kneel or make prostrations. The next fasting day – a strict one – will be Tuesday, January 5th, the eve of Holy Theophany.

2017 Parish Wall Calendars

The calendars are available for pick-up in the church. They are limited. Please only one per household.

Three Welcoming Videos to our Parish

Three welcoming videos, each about 2 to 3 minutes long have been produced as an introduction to our parish. These videos are posted both on our website and Face Book, "Friends of Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church." Please share these videos with others.

January 2017 Considerations

- The Blessing of Homes Season: Jan. 7th thru February 24th
- Parish Council Meeting, Jan. 19th.
- Adult Study Class, Jan. 24th.
- March For Life, Washington DC – Jan. 27th
- All Printed Reports for Annual Meeting Deadline, Jan. 31st.
- Annual Parish Meeting, Sunday, Feb. 12th at 12:30p.m.

The Parish Monthly Calendar For the Year 2017 may be viewed on our Website

By clicking on any month in the year 2017, you will find posted the services, study classes, church school, and parish events. All subject to change.

"John the Blessed": A New Year's Eve Tale by Photios Kontoglou

johnsanidopoulos.com/2010/01/new-years-eve-story-by-photios.html

Describes a visit of St. Basil on New Year's Eve, which is also the eve of his feast, years after his repose.

John the Blessed

A Tale of Photios Kontoglou

The Nativity Feast having passed, St. Basil took his staff and traversed all of the towns, in order to see who would celebrate his Feast Day with purity of heart. He passed through regions of every sort and through villages of prominence, yet regardless of where he knocked, no door opened to him, since they took him for a beggar. And he would depart embittered, for, though he needed nothing from men, he felt how much pain the heart of every impecunious person must have endured at the insensitivity that these people showed him. One day, as he was leaving such a merciless village, he went by the graveyard, where he saw that the tombs were in ruins, the headstones broken and turned topsy-turvy, and how the newly dug graves had been turned up by jackals. Saint that he was, he heard the dead speaking and saying: "During the time that we were on the earth, we labored, we were heavy-burdened, leaving behind us children and grandchildren to light just a candle, to burn a little incense on our behalf; but we behold nothing, neither a Priest to read over our heads a memorial service nor *kólluva*, as though we had left behind no one." Thus, St. Basil was once again disquieted, and he said to himself, "These villagers give aid neither to the living nor to the deceased," departing from the cemetery and setting out alone in the midst of the freezing snow.

On the eve of the New Year, he came upon a certain hamlet, which was the poorest of the poor villages in all of Greece. The freezing wind howled through the scrub bush and the rocky cliffs, and not a living soul was to be found in the pitch-dark night! Then, he beheld in front of him a small knoll, below which there was secreted away a sheepfold. St. Basil went into the pen and, knocking on the door of the hut with his staff, called out: "Have mercy on me, a poor man, for the sake of your deceased relatives, for even Christ lived as a beggar on this earth." Awakening, the dogs lunged at him.

But as they drew near him and sniffed him, they became gentle, wagged their tails, and lay down at his feet, whimpering imploringly and with joy. Thereupon, a shepherd, a young man of twenty-five or so, with a curly black beard, opened the door and stepped out: John Barbákos—a demure and rugged man, a sheepman. Before taking a good look at who was knocking, he had already said, "Enter, come inside. Good day, Happy New Year!"

Inside the hut, a lamp was suspended overhead from a cradle that was attached to two beams. Next to the hearth was their bedding, and John's wife was sleeping. As soon as St. Basil went inside, John, seeing that the old man was a clergyman, took his hand and kissed it, saying, "Your blessing, Elder," as though he had known him previously and as though he were his father. And the Saint said to him: "May you and all of your household be blessed, together with your sheep, and may the peace of God be upon you." The wife then arose, and she, too, revered the Elder and kissed his hand, and he blessed her. St. Basil looked like a mendicant monk, with an old *skoúphia*, his *rása* worn and paiched, and his *tsarouchia* [a traditional leather slipper, usually adorned with a pompom at the end of the shoe] full of holes; as well, he had an old empty-looking satchel. John the blessed put wood on the fire. Straightway the hut began to glisten, as though seemingly a palace. The rafters seemed to be gilded with gold, while the hanging cheesecloth bags [filled with curing cheese] looked like vigil lamps, and the wooden containers, cheese presses, and all of the accessories used by John in making cheese became like silver, as though decorated by diamonds, as did all of the other humble things that John the blessed had in his hut. The wood burning in the hearth crackled and sang like the birds that sing in Paradise, giving off a fragrance wholly delightful. The couple placed St. Basil near the fire, where he sat, and the wife put down pillows on which he could rest. Then the Elder took the satchel from around his neck, placing it next to him, and removed his old *ráson* (outside cassock), remaining in his *zostikó* (inner cassock).

Together with his farmhand, John the blessed went out to milk the sheep and to place the newborn lambs in the lambing pen, and afterwards he separated the ewes that were ready to birth and confined them within the enclosure, while his helper put the other sheep out to graze. His flock was sparse and John was poor; yet, he was blessed. And he was possessed of great joy at all times, day and night, for he was a good man and he had a good wife. Anyone who happened to pass by their hut they cared for as though he were a brother. And it is thus that St. Basil found lodging in their home and settled in, as if it were his own, blessing it from top to bottom. On that night, he was awaited, in all of the cities and villages of the known world, by rulers, Hierarchs, and officials; but he went to none of these. Instead, he went to lodge in the hut of John the blessed.



So, John, after pasturing the sheep, came back in and said to the Saint, "Elder, I am greatly joyful. I wish to have you read to us the writings about St. Basil [i.e., the appointed hymns to the Saint]. I am an illiterate man, but I like all of the writings of our religion [once again, the hymns and services of the Church]. In fact, I have a small book from an Hagioritic Abbot [i.e., from Mt. Athos], and whenever someone who can read and write happens to pass by, I get him to read out of the booklet, since we have no Church near us."

In the East, it was dimly dawning. St Basil rose and stood, facing eastward, making his Cross. He then bent down, took a booklet from his satchel, and said, "Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages." John the blessed went and stood behind him, and his wife, having nursed their baby, also went to stand near him, with her arms crossed [over her chest]. St. Basil then said the hymn, "God is the Lord..." and the Apolytikion of the Feast of the Circumcision, "Without change, Thou hast assumed human form," omitting his own Apolytikion, which states, "Thy sound is gone forth unto all the earth." His voice was sweet and humble, and John and his wife fell great contrition, even though they did not understand all of the words. St. Basil now said the whole of Matins and the Canon of the Feast, "Come, O ye peoples, and let us chant a song unto Christ God," without reciting his own canon, which goes, "O Basil, we would that thy voice were present...." Thereafter, he said aloud the entire Liturgy, pronounced the dismissal, and blessed the household. As they sat at the table, having eaten and finished their food, the wife brought the Vasilopeta [a sweet bread or cake baked in honor of St. Basil on the New Year] and placed it on the serving table. Then St. Basil took a knife and with it traced the sign of the Cross on the Vasilopeta, saying, "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He cut a first piece, saying, "for Christ," a second, afterwards, saying, "for the Panagia," and then "for the master of the house, John the blessed." John exclaimed, "Elder, you forgot St. Basil!" The Saint replied, "Yes, indeed," and thus said, "And for the servant of God, Basil." After this, he resumed: "...and for the master of the house," "for the mistress of the house," "for the child," "for the farmhand," "for the animals," and "for the poor." Thereupon, John the blessed said, "Elder, why did you not cut a piece for your reverendship?" And the Saint said, "But I did, O blessed one!" But John, this blissful man, did not understand.

Afterwards, St. Basil stood up and said the prayer, "O Lord my God, I know that I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under the roof of the house of my soul." John the Blessed then said: "I wonder if you can tell me, Elder, since you know many things, to what palaces St. Basil went this evening? And the rulers and monarchs—what sins do they have? We poor people are sinners, since our poverty leads us into sin." St. Basil said the same prayer, again—with tears—though changing it: "O Lord my God, I have seen that Thy servant John the simple is worthy and that it is meet that Thou shouldst enter into his shelter. He is a babe, and it is to babes that Thy Mysteries are revealed." And again John the blissful, John the blessed, understood nothing....

ST. BASIL'S BREAD

The tradition of Saint Basil's Bread dates to the fourth century, when St. Basil the Great, the father of philanthropy, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his diocese. He commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he placed gold coins. Thus the poor families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves were



pleasantly surprised to find the coins. This custom is kept to this day among Orthodox Christians, who on Saint Basil's Day, January 1st, place gold coins inside a loaf of sweetened bread in honor of the Saint's care for the poor. The one who finds the coin in his or her piece is considered commissioned by St. Basil to carry on his work for the poor, and in exchange he will ask the Lord for whatever is needful for the New Year.



THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

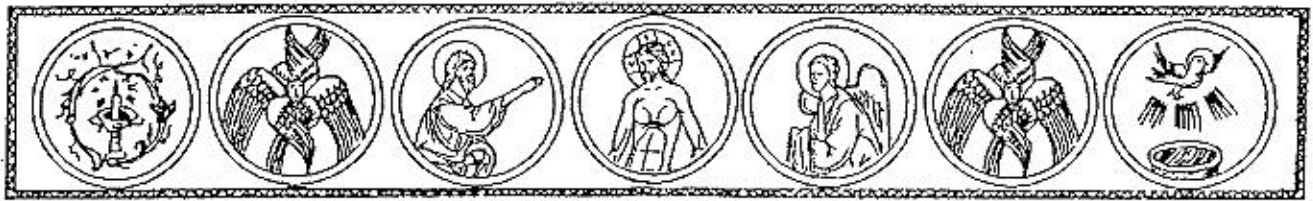
The Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River reveals wondrous salvific events:

- ❖ The Mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed.
- ❖ Christ blessed the water, making it holy; water for our renewal and regeneration.
- ❖ A model of Baptism was established for the followers of Jesus Christ, so that they could have their sins washed away and be freed from the tyranny of demons.
- ❖ The Forerunner, St. John the Baptist was blessed by Christ.

The word **Theophany** (meaning manifestation of God) 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 name for the Feast is **Epiphany** (meaning manifestation from above), "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). A third name is the "Feast of Lights", as Christ reveals Himself as the "Light of the World" (John 8:12).





THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
Celebrated on the 6th Day of the Month January, by Fr. Stephen Janos

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.

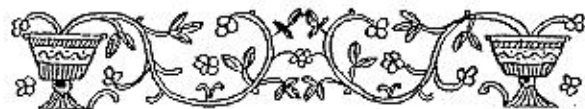


Troparion - Tone 1

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.



The Holy Hieromartyr Isidore and the 72 Martyred with Him in Yuriev of Livonia

January 8

In the 15th century internal strife and discord reigned in the Russian land, hard hit was the region of Novgorod and Pskov. In the city of Yuriev, the inhabitants were Orthodox Christians and had a church dedicated to the Great-Martyr George. It came to pass that German Catholics began to settle in the area and with the Latin bishop of the locality and civil officials began to pressure the Orthodox Christians to convert. It was a difficult time for Orthodox believers.

On January 6, 1472, the Priest Isidore went to the River Omovzha and there performed the usual outdoor blessing of Water. Here, gathered with his flock, the Germans descended upon the pious Orthodox believers and arrested them. In jail, the Priest Isidore and his parishioners were subjected to both flattery and threats. The German bishop strongly urged them to enter into the Latin faith.

Father Isidore replied to the bishop: "Why do you seek to persuade us with false and lying words? You cannot dissuade us from the true Christian faith. Do with us as you wish, for behold we stand before you and repeat that which we have previous have said previously."

Then like serpents, consumed with rage against the Orthodox, the stern bishop and the other judges ordered all of them driven into the River Omovzha in whatever clothing they had on. Saint Isidore, still arrayed in his sacred priestly vestments, was cast into the very hole in the ice through which he had sanctified the water on Theophany. Thus did they deal with them as criminals, executing them in a cruel manner for the Orthodox faith in Christ. 73 suffered who considered Isidore their instructor. They surrendered their pious souls into the hands of the living God and were crowned with crowns that fade not away.

Months later, when the Spring came, the River Omovzha overflowed its banks and the bodies of all the confessors of Christ appeared almost 3 miles upstream from the city of Yuriev. The bodies washed up under a tree near a mountain. They were all incorrupt and lay facing the east, as though arranged by human hands. The Priest Isidore lay in their midst in all his resplendent priestly vestments. Thus did the Lord glorify His saints. Then the Orthodox merchants of the city of Yuriev took up the relics of the saints and buried them in the city, around the church of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, where they shall rest until the Second Coming of Christ.

The feast of St. Isidore and his companion martyrs was established by the decree of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1897. Each year, this feast is celebrated on January 8th.

Tropar Tone 2

O blessed passion-bearers of the Lord, you preached the Orthodox Faith of Christ with boldness, and at the tribunal denounced the false doctrines of the enemy, wherefore, you were cast into the depths of the river, o holy ones, yet your souls have made their abode in the mansions of heaven, where, standing with the saints before the throne of God, the King of all, you pray to him for all Orthodox people who cherish yours struggles with honor.