

January 2, 2022
Sunday before Theophany



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! ~ Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jeho!

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 7: pg. 156 & for Pre-Theophany: pp. 309 - 312

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., JAN. 2
8:30 A.M.
SUNDAY before the THEOPHANY
DIVINE LITURGY
+ Margaret Raychevich, offered by Francis & Connie Hersh

WED., JAN. 5
6:00 P.M.
THEOPHANY of our LORD, Anticipated
VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY, Great Blessing of the Water
+ Philomena Rossi, offered by Francis & Connie Hersh

SUN., JAN. 9
8:30 A.M.
SUNDAY after THEOPHANY
DIVINE LITURGY
+ Joseph Jn. Baptiste, offered by Sr. Mary Virginia

Eternal Memory - Our Church family offers prayerful condolences to the family of + Lori (Dickey) Stevic who fell asleep in the Lord on December 17. Lori was the daughter of parishioners Dwight & Mary Dickey, sister of Dawn Dickey, and aunt of Ethan and Pressley Roush. In blessed repose, grant O Lord eternal rest to the soul of Your departed servant Lori and remember her forever! *Vičnaja jej pamjat'!*

Our Church family offers prayerful condolences to the family of + Richard Yassick who fell asleep in the Lord on December 15. Richard was the son of long-time parishioners Shirley Yassick and + Don Yassick. In blessed repose, grant O Lord eternal rest to the soul of Your departed servant Richard and remember him forever! *Vičnaja jemu pamjat'!*

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

January 2: Sandra Stewart, January 5: Betty Polas, January 6: Sarah Mingrino

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Mary Salamon, John Simunick

Ann Trombulak – **Rochester Manor:** (174 Virginia Ave., Rochester, PA 15074)

Josephine Maruhnich – **Beaver Elder Care** (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001)

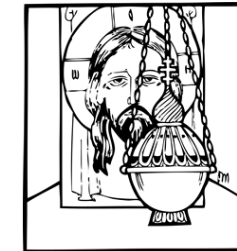
Betty Polas – **Apple Blossom Senior Living** (125 Apple Blossom Wy, #307, Moon Twp., PA 15108)

Carol Huchko – **Concordia at Villa St. Joseph** (1040 State St, Baden, PA 15005)

Epistle Readers – Jan. 2: Louisa Hersh – Jan. 9: Joanne Futato

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Jan. 2: M. Bobanic – Jan. 9: R. Mudron



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

January 2 - 8, 2022

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

+ Louis Rossi

(In Loving Memory)

Offered By:

Daughter, Isabel & Ed



Christ is Born! Glorify Him! ~ Christos Razdajetsja! Slavite Jeho!

Eve of Theophany

In preparation for the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord, the Eve of the Feast, which is Wednesday, January 5th is a day of fasting/strict abstinence for all Byzantine Catholics.



Feast of Theophany

For the Theophany of Our Lord, a Vespereal Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of Water will be celebrated here on **Wednesday, January 5 at 6:00 P.M.** Be here to celebrate this Major Feast Day (*obligation*) and to witness the Great Blessing of Water!

We celebrate the Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Theophany means the “Manifestation of God”. Our Lord's Baptism by St. John the Forerunner in the Jordan was the beginning of His public ministry. All three Persons of the Trinity were shown forth at one time and place: the Father testified from on high to the Divine Sonship of Jesus; the Son received His Father's testimony; the Holy Spirit was seen in the form of a dove descending from the Father and resting upon the Son.

Our holy father John Chrysostom in his Discourse on the Baptism of Christ explains clearly this Feast: “Why then is this day called Theophany? Because Christ made Himself known to all - not then when He was born - but then when He was baptized. Until this time, He was not known to the people and the people did not know Him.”

Seasonal Christian Greeting for the Theophany Feast

The greeting that we salute each other with January 6 - 14 is ***Christ is Baptized!*** The response is ***In the Jordan!*** And in Slavonic, ***Christos Krescajetsja!*** With the response ***Vo Jordani!*** Let us glorify the Lord this festive season by greeting and responding with this traditional custom celebrating the Lord Jesus' Baptism!

Excerpt from Christ our Pascha: The Incarnation of the Son of God

Theophany: The Son of God, “who covers himself with light as with a garment ... today is covered by the streams of the Jordan.” Christ himself “has no need to be cleansed by them; but through the cleansing that he himself receives he bestows regeneration on us.” “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness’ ” (Mt 3:13-15). The God-man enters into the Jordan waters: “As a man he came to be baptized, and the Jordan feared him as God and turned back. As a man he bared himself and entered the water, and the Father testified that he was God, saying: ‘This is my beloved Son.’”(#199)

A Note from Father Geoff

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we begin a Civic New Year, which we always do between Christmas and Theophany, we are reminded of the passage of time. As Christians, our time is not empty of meaning. We are not like those without hope, for whom time is merely the passage of meaningless moments in life. Rather, our understanding of time is full of hope, because it is in time and in human experience that our God has made himself known to us.

We live between the First Advent and Second Advent of Christ. He came 2,000 years ago as a baby born to a Virgin Mother in Bethlehem, and we believe that he will come again to fulfill and consummate all things at the end of the present age. As we look forward with hope and joy, the cycle of feasts, fasts, and seasons is a constant reminder to us of the meaning of time and history.

The theologian Father John Behr puts it this way:

Our life in Christ is one of continual movement, always moving forward, from grace to grace, or from glory to glory; we look backwards, and we strain forward to what lies ahead.... All human beings live in time. For the world, time is simply an empty horizon, waiting to be filled. For us, as Christians, time is punctuated by a cycle of feasts, always bringing us round to the same events, always experiencing them as "today," yet always experiencing them in a new manner as we ourselves grow in age and understanding.

Today, therefore, we prepare for the upcoming feast of Theophany. We hear the story of St. John the Baptist and his vocation as one who "prepares the way" for the coming King, Jesus our Lord. And soon we will celebrate our Lord's baptism: a "Theophany, an "Epiphany;" a time when we get to see in a fresh way the divinity of our Lord as the Father speaks, the Spirit descends, and Jesus is immersed in the waters of the Jordan.

How great is this mystery! That God emptied himself to be born as a weak, defenseless baby to live among us; that he consented to submit himself to the Law of Moses by circumcision; and that he "fulfilled all righteousness" by a baptism for the forgiveness of sins he never committed! This same God, by his Spirit, dwells in us through our baptism and is leading the Church into all truth!

"Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine! Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus forever!" (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Geoff

Sunday before Theophany

John the Baptist's life was fueled by one burning passion -- to point others to Jesus Christ and to the coming of His kingdom. Who is John the Baptist and what is the significance of his message for our lives? Scripture tells us that John was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15, 41) by Christ himself, whom Mary had just conceived by the Holy Spirit. When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth John leapt in her womb as they were filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41).

The fire of the Spirit dwelt in John and made him the forerunner of the coming Messiah. John was led by the Spirit into the wilderness prior to his ministry where he was tested and grew in the word of God. John's clothing was reminiscent of the prophet Elijah (see Kings 1:8). John broke the prophetic silence of the previous centuries when he began to speak the word of God to the people of Israel. His message was similar to the message of the Old Testament prophets who chided the people of God for their unfaithfulness and who tried to awaken true repentance in them. Among a people unconcerned with the things of God, it was his work to awaken their interest, unsettle them from their complacency, and arouse in them enough good will to recognize and receive Christ when He came.

Are you eager to hear God's word and to be changed by it through the power of the Holy Spirit? John the Baptist was more than a prophet (Luke 7:26). John was the voice of the Consoler who is coming (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:1- 3). He completed the cycle of prophets begun by Elijah (Matthew 11:13-14). What the prophets had carefully searched for and angels longed to see, now came to completion as John made the way ready for the coming of the Messiah, God's Anointed Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. With John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to the human race of the divine likeness prefiguring what would be achieved with and in the Lord Jesus.

John's baptism was for repentance -- turning away from sin and taking on a new way of life according to God's word. Our baptism in Jesus Christ by water and the Spirit results in a new birth and entry into God's kingdom as his beloved sons and daughters (John 3:5). Jesus is ready to give us the fire of his Spirit that we may radiate the joy and truth of the gospel to a world in desperate need of God's light and truth. His word has power to change and transform our lives that we may be lights pointing others to Christ. Like John the Baptist, we too are called to give testimony to the light and truth of Jesus Christ. Do you point others to Christ in the way you live, work, and speak?

Lord, let your light burn brightly in my heart that I may know the joy and freedom of your kingdom. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and empower me to witness the truth of your gospel and to point others to Jesus Christ.

Christos Raždajetsja! ~ Slavite Jeho!

The Holy Festival of Lights

Christ is bathed in light; let us also be bathed in light. Christ is baptized; let us also go down with Him, and rise with Him.

John is baptizing when Jesus draws near. Perhaps He comes to sanctify His baptizer; certainly He comes to bury sinful humanity in the waters. He comes to sanctify the Jordan for our sake and in readiness for us; He Who is spirit and flesh comes to begin a new creation through Spirit and water.

The Baptist protests; Jesus insists. Then John says: "I ought to be baptized by You." He is the lamp in the presence of the Sun, the voice in the presence of the woman in the presence of the Firstborn of all creation, the one who leapt in his mother's womb in the presence of Him Who has already come and is to come again. "I ought to be baptized by You"; we should add: "and for You," for John is to be baptized in blood, washed clean like Peter, not only by the washing of his feet.

Jesus rises from the waters; the world rises with Him. The heavens like Paradise with its flaming sword, closed by Adam for himself and his descendants, are rent open. The Spirit comes to Him as to an equal, bearing witness to His Godhead. A voice bears witness to Him from heaven, His place of origin. The Spirit descends in bodily form like a dove that so long ago announced the ending of the flood and so gives honor to the body that is one with God.

Today let us do honor to Christ's baptism and celebrate this feast in holiness. Be cleansed entirely and continue to be cleansed. Nothing gives such pleasure to God as the conversion and salvation of humanity, for whom His every word and every revelation exist. He wants you to become a living force for all humanity, lights shining in the world. You are to be radiant lights as you stand beside Christ, the great light, bathed in the glory of Him Who is the light of heaven. You are to enjoy more and more the pure and dazzling light of the Trinity, as now you have received - though not in its fullness - a ray of its splendor, proceeding from the one God, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory and power now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen!



St. Gregory Nazianzus

Baptized in the Spirit

Let us treat here briefly of the different kinds of baptism. Moses baptized, but in water, in the cloud and in the sea; but this he did figuratively. John also baptized, not indeed in the rite of the Jews, not solely in water, but also for the remission of sins; yet not in an entirely spiritual manner, for he had not added: "in the spirit." Jesus baptized, but in the Spirit; and this is perfection. There is also a fourth baptism, which is wrought by martyrdom and blood, in which Christ himself was also baptized, which is far more venerable than the others, in as much as it is not soiled by repeated contagion. There is yet a fifth, but more laborious, by tears; with which David each night bedewed his bed, washing his couch with tears.

(St. Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 39)

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Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate

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