

December 31, 2023  
Sunday after the Nativity



**SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

*Fighting the Good Fight with Faith*

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him! ~ Christos Raždajetsja! Slavite Jeho!  
Христос Рождается! Славите!*

Propers for this Sunday: Resurrectional Tone 6: pg. 152 & For the Nativity: pp. 302 - 305

Divine Services for the Week:

<b>SUN., DEC. 31</b> 8:30 A.M.	<b>SUNDAY after the NATIVITY</b> <b>DIVINE LITURGY</b> + Lori Foister, offered by Sr. Mary Virginia
<b>MON., JAN. 1</b> 9:00 A.M.	<b>CIRCUMCISION of our LORD &amp; ST. BASIL HOLY DAY</b> <b>DIVINE LITURGY</b> + Hermancia Ermay, offered by, Sr. Mary Virginia
<b>SAT., JAN. 6</b> 9:00 A.M.	<b>THEOPHANY of our LORD HOLY DAY, Obligation</b> <b>DIVINE LITURGY &amp; GREAT BLESSING OF WATER</b> + Repose of grandparents Mike & Margaret Tesla, offered by Prudy Peya
<b>SUN., JAN. 7</b> 8:30 A.M.	<b>SUNDAY after THEOPHANY</b> <b>DIVINE LITURGY</b> + George David, offered by Elaine Cevkovich
2:30 P.M.	<b>Blessing of waters at Bridgewater Crossing</b>

**Theophany Blessing:** On Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday after Theophany, Fr. Geoff will administer the Great Blessing of the Water at the confluence of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers at Bridgewater Crossing at **2:30 PM**. Bridgewater Crossing is located on Mulberry Street Extension, Beaver, PA. This will be *in addition to* the Great Blessing of Water that takes place in our parish.

**Happy Birthday Greetings:**

(Dec. 27: Phyllis Ozimok), January 2: Sandra Stewart,  
January 5: Betty Polas, January 6: Sarah Mingrino

**Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins**

Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan

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

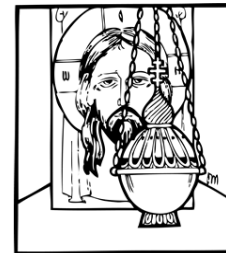
Betty Polas – **Apple Blossom Senior Living** (125 Apple Blossom Way, #307, Moon Twp., PA 15108)

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

**Epistle Readers – December 31: Joanne Futato – January 7: Prudy Peya**

**Ushers – Stand in as needed**

**Troica Holders – December 31: M. Bobanic – January 7: R. Mudron**



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP  
December 31, 2023 – January 6, 2024  
*Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:*  
**Our Parishioners**

**ON HONORING GOD**

Do you wish to honor the Body of the Savior? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honor it in church with silk vestments while outside it is naked and numb with cold. He who said, "This is my body," and made it so by his word, is the same who said, "You saw me hungry and you gave me no food. As you did it not to the least of these, you did it not to me." Honor him then by sharing your property with the poor. For what God needs is not golden chalices but golden souls.

*St. John Chrysostom "On the Gospel of St. Matthew"*

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!  
Christos Raždajetsja! Slavite Jeho!  
Христос Рождается! Славите!*

**Christ is born! Glorify Him!**

During the celebration of Christmas, it is our custom to greet one another with the joyous exclamation, “Christ is born!” to which the one greeted responds, “Glorify Him!

**Troparion of Christmas and the Ruthenian (Rusyn) Tradition**

An aspect of the liturgical tradition that many present-day Byzantine Catholics have lost and no longer manifest occurs in the Christmas Troparion. Some of you may remember your parents and grandparents bowing slightly and making the sign of the Cross over themselves each time the Christmas Troparion was sung. A slight bow with a sign of the Cross should be made during the phrase: “... have learned from a star to worship You (+) the Sun of Justice...” On the word worship we are to bow and bless ourselves. Let us revive the tradition of the founders and benefactors of our Byzantine Catholic Church and transmit this unique manner of glorifying the newly born Christ Child.



***Your Birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the Light of Knowledge. For through it, those who worshipped the stars, have learned through a Star to worship You, the Sun of Justice, and to know You the dawn from on high. glory be to You, O Lord!***

**He Became Man**

Jesus is said to have progressed in wisdom and age and grace, because He did increase in age and by this increase in age brought more into evidence the wisdom inherent in Him. By making what is ours altogether his own, He made His own the progress of people in wisdom and grace, as well as the fulfillment of the Father’s will, which is to say, man’s knowledge of God and his salvation.  
*(St. John of Damascus in "On the Orthodox Faith")*



**A Note from Fr. Geoff**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today is New Year's Eve, a day when the civil calendar turns a page, and many people make resolutions to better themselves in the year to come. For Christians, rather than simply "New Year's Day," January 1st also has liturgical significance. For Eastern Christians, it is the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord. For Latin Catholics, it is the Solemnity of the Mother of God (roughly equivalent to our Synaxis of the Theotokos on December 26). And for Anglicans, Lutherans, and some other Protestants, it is the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

Any one of these aspects of our faith - Christ's submission to the Mosaic Law, his being born of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, and his being named "Jesus" - are worthy of our contemplation. Yet unlike Christmas, this feast doesn't have much festivity and celebration associated with it. Instead, most Christians in the West are more likely to be thinking of the New Year and the possibilities that lie ahead.

The passage of time is itself is something that is worth pondering. On the Sunday before Christmas, we heard the Gospel passage of the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1). And in it, we saw something of the *providential nature* of the passage of time and history; that is, that God is mysteriously working his purposes out both despite us and through us, frail and fallible human beings. The Benedictine monk Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourrette put it this way:

*We can only begin to fathom the mystery of time when we look at it from God's perspective. For Him, time and eternity are intertwined. Today, we find ourselves firmly rooted in time but already looking ahead to eternity. With the passing of another year, our time on earth gets shorter, and eternity is much closer.*

*Christians do not cling to time, but learn to use it wisely. The reason for our life on earth, for our earthly pilgrimage, lies elsewhere. As a saint once put it, "We are given our time on earth for only one purpose, to gain eternal life." We look forward to the promised land, to our eternal home with God... All things earthly, including ourselves, pass away. God alone remains the same.*

As we enter the Year of our Lord 2024, go ahead and make resolutions if you wish. But let us not focus only on our earthly life, but on the life of the age to come. The things that will last into eternity are not money, wealth, prestige, honor or any of the vanities of this life. Instead, let us invest in heaven by participating even now in the life to come: worship, mercy, generosity, kindness, forgiveness, patience, humility, peaceableness, and the other virtues by which we are able to show love for God and our neighbor.

As St. Paul exhorts us in Ephesians, let us "make the best use of our time," seeking wisdom from God to order our days and our lives. And let us not forget the *sacred* meaning of time and history which the Church's liturgical calendar can help us to remember.

And may God bless you all in 2024.  
Yours in Christ,  
*Fr. Geoff*



## *Sunday of the after the Nativity*

### Christmas Story Continues; The Flight into Egypt - GOSPEL Matthew 2:13-23

We commemorate the flight into Egypt as we did on the day following Christmas. The Magi from the East, having worshipped the Lord in Bethlehem, were directed to return to their home another way by command of an angel. Herod, that wicked king, planned to slaughter all the children in Bethlehem, but God saw Herod's intention and sent His angel to Joseph. The angel of God appeared to Joseph in a dream and commanded him to take the young Child and His Mother and flee to Egypt. Thus, the words of the prophet were fulfilled: *"Behold, the Lord rides upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt"* (Isaiah 19:1). In old Cairo today, the cave where the holy family lived can be seen. Likewise, in the village of Matarea near Cairo, the tree under which the Most-Holy Theotokos rested with the Lord Jesus, as well as a miraculous spring of water under this tree, are visible. After having lived for several years in Egypt, the holy family returned to Palestine, again in response to a command of an angel of God. Thus, another prophecy was fulfilled: Out of Egypt have I called my Son (Hosea 11:1). Herod was dead and his wicked son Archelaus -a worthy successor of him in evil-sat on his bloodstained throne. Hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Jerusalem, Joseph returned to Galilee, to his town of Nazareth, where he settled in his own home. Herod's second son, Herod the Younger, who was somewhat less evil than his brother Archelaus, then reigned in Galilee.



### Fugitives with Christ

Even as He came in swaddling clothes we see a tyrant raging, a flight ensuing and a departure beyond the border. For it was because of no crime that his family was exiled into the land of Egypt. So do not be troubled if you are suffering countless dangers. Do not expect to be celebrated or crowned promptly for your troubles. Instead you may keep in mind the long-suffering example of the mother of the Child, bearing all things nobly, knowing that such a fugitive life is consistent with the ordering of spiritual things. You are sharing the kind of labor Mary herself shared. So did the Magi. They both were willing to retire secretly in the humiliating role of fugitive.

(St. John Chrysostom)

*Christ is Born! Glorify Him!*

*Christ is born! Glorify Him! Христос Рождается! Славиме!*

### Feast of Theophany

For the Theophany of Our Lord Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of Water will be celebrated here on **Saturday, January 6 at 9:00 A.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."

### Eve of Theophany

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

### 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 Krescjetsja!*** 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!

### January 1:

**The Circumcision of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ** Coming eight days after the birth of Christ, this feast commemorates his naming and his becoming a member of the Covenant of Moses.

**Our Holy Father Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia,** who is called "great" in learning and wisdom. He taught meditation on the Scriptures and manual work in obedience and fraternal love to his monks, and established a way of life for them in the Rules he wrote. He taught the faithful by his excellent writings and shone forth by his pastoral care for the poor and sick. (379)

### **Wishing you all a Happy and Blessed New Year 2024!**

*Bless us, O Lord, and bless the time and seasons yet to come. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart. And fill this New Year with Your kindness that we may be glad and rejoice all the days of our life.*

ST. GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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Religious: Sr. Mary Virginia O' Carm

Holy Protection Convent, 1000 Clinton St. 724-378-0238



Cantors: Jo Ann Hersh, Louisa Hersh, David Klacik, Dan Pinchot

Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff - Grounds Keepers: Rich Mudron, Rob Dzumba, Francis Hersh

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation ..... Before and after Liturgies, or by appointment

Holy Mysteries of Initiation ..... Contact the pastor

Holy Mystery of Anointing ..... Contact the pastor prior to surgery or in the event of illness

Holy Mystery of Marriage ..... Contact the pastor six months prior to wedding

Pirohi Sales ..... 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month

St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club ..... Everyone welcome to participate

Opportunities for Stewardship ... ..Church and grounds cleaning and maintenance: Every Saturday,

Pirohi making: 2<sup>nd</sup> week of each month.

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