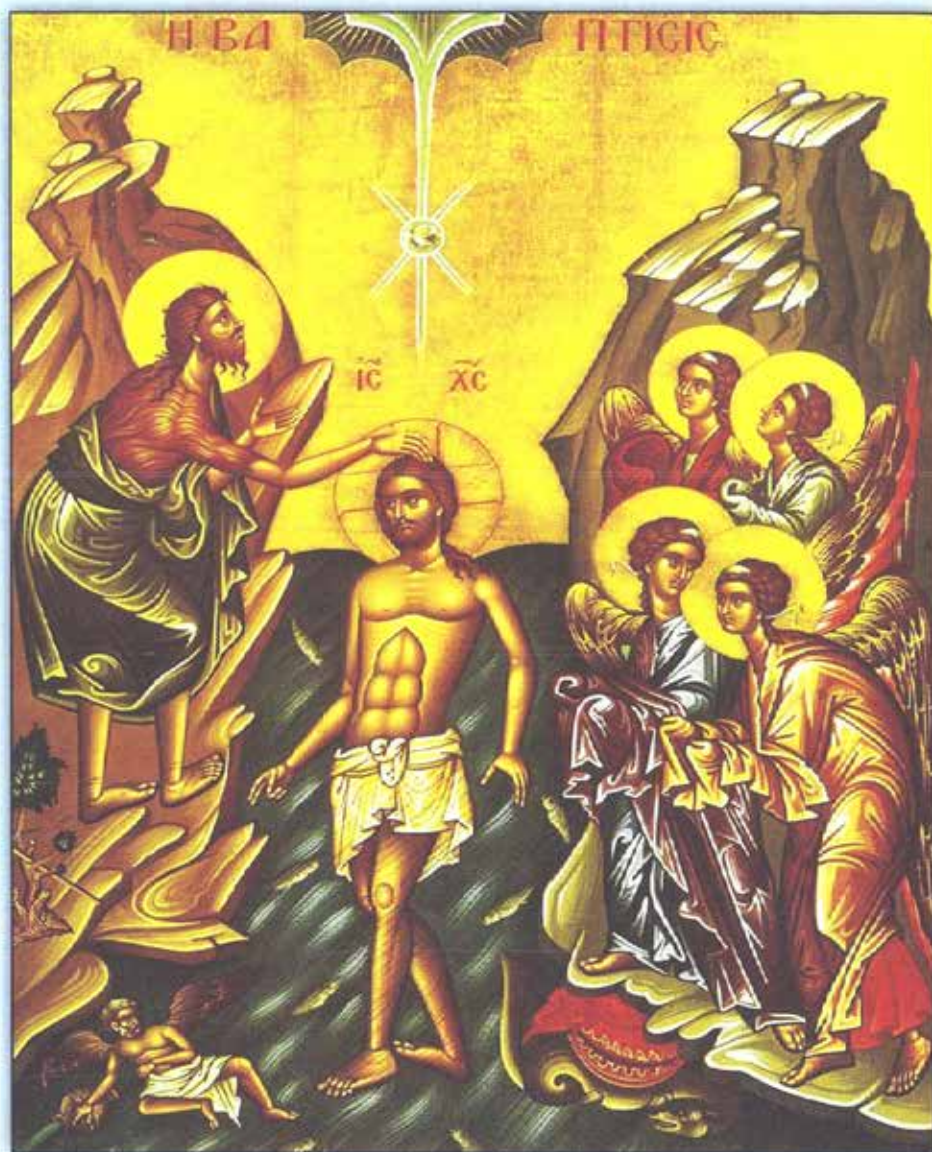


SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY



Icon of Theophany -- January 6th

January 5, 2014

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY – TONE 8

THE HOLY MARTYRS THEOPHEMPTUS, BISHOP OF NICOMEDIA AND THEONAS; OUR VENERABLE MOTHER SYNCLETICA OF ALEXANDRIA; PREFEAST (PARAMONY) OF THEOPHANY

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 5 – JANUARY 12

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5 – SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

4:00 PM – Vespers / Great Blessing of Water

MONDAY, JANUARY 6 – HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

9:30 AM – DIVINE LITURGY & BLESSING OF WATER

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11 – PREFEAST OF THEOPHANY; THE SYNAXIS OF THE SEVENTY HOLY APOSTLES; OUR VENERABLE FATHER THEOKTISTUS, HEGUMEN OF THE CUCUME MONASTERY IN SICILY

6:00 PM – **NO VESPERS THIS EVENING**

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12 – SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY: THE HOLY MARTYR TATIANA, DEACONESS

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy for all parishioners

Mark Your Calendars

Next Saturday, January 11, 2014

9:00 PM - Midnight.

Маланка (New Year's Celebration)
in the church hall.

Cost: \$20 when purchased on or before
January 5; \$25 at the door.

Hors d'oeuvres, borshcht, wine, beer and
champagne. Bring your dancing shoes!



House Blessings

It is our custom to have our homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed please let Fr. James know. If you have any questions about house blessings, what is involved, why we bless our homes, etc., please speak with Fr. James.

Liturgical Calendars for 2014 are available in the church hall. Special thanks to Goodbody Mortuary for once again sponsoring our calendars.

“We must not make the sentimental mistake of thinking Our Lord was just a poor man. He was a rich person who became a poor man. Rich he was in his divine nature because he was God, and Lord of heaven and earth. And yet despite that richness he became poor, principally because he became man. That is poverty of the worst kind, because it is limitation. He who was born poor in a stable could have been born rich in a palace by the Tiber. Roman legions might have guarded him at his birth, instead of an ox and an ass. No one would have expected that he who made the warmth of the sun would be warmed by the breath of oxen; nor that he who owned the earth would be homeless on the earth. It is no wonder then that the first to come to his crib were the rich Magi and the poor Shepherds. Two things happened to them – the rich lost their avarice, for they gave their wealth to the poor; the poor lost their envy, for they learned that there is another wealth than that which the rich give away.”

Venerable Fulton Sheen (Liberty, Equality and Fraternity)

Please Note:

When you are away, please don't forget that the church still relies on your contributions. Our bills do not go on vacation. Your absence on any Sunday does not negate your obligation to support your home parish.

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

Sunday offering for December 22

Amount	Number
\$10.00	2
\$15.00	3
\$20.00	4
\$40.00	4
\$42.00	1 (loose)
\$75.00	2
\$100.00	4
\$120.00	1
\$300.00	1
<hr/>	
\$1317.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1207.00

Visitor Total: \$110.00

Average / parish household (42): \$55.71

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Deficit: **(\$918.00)**

Christmas offering for December 24/25

Amount	Number
\$15.00	2
\$20.00	2
\$25.00	3
\$40.00	1
\$49.00	1 (loose)
\$50.00	7
\$60.00	1
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	4
\$300.00	1
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\$1424.00	

Parishioner Total: \$1284.00

Visitor Total: \$140.00

Average / parish household (42): \$30.57

Sunday offering for December 29

Amount	Number
\$9.00	1 (loose)
\$10.00	3
\$20.00	1
\$40.00	3
\$59.00	2
\$75.00	1
\$200.00	1
\$300.00	1
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\$854.00	

Parishioner Total: \$804.00

Visitor Total: \$50.00

Average / parish household (42): \$19.14

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Deficit: **(\$1321.00)**

We are Called to Bear Fruit

At the Last Supper, as we read in Chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, Jesus instructed His disciples, "I Am the Vine; you are the branches." He was telling us that the purpose of our abiding in Him is that we may bear fruit for God in the world. "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit..." (John 15:8). Just as the vine bears fruit only through its branches, so Jesus has chosen to work in the world through us. We are the members of His body – the branches through which the Vine must bear fruit. We bear fruit when we serve and support God and His Church.



What is Christian Stewardship?

Christian Stewardship is...

- learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work., for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.
- our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.
- caring for the needs of others.
- offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- what a person does after saying "I believe..." , as proof of that belief.
- devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as eparchy, as Church within a nation, and as Church universal.

What if Church was your New Year's Resolution?



THE STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

The norm for non-monastic Christians is to be moderate in our possessions, to have only what is absolutely necessary, to give away more than we need in concrete acts of mercy, and thereby to be godly and spiritually free. The question, of course, is about what and how much are truly necessary. What do we really need? *How much is enough?* Each of us will have to decide for ourselves and our families, as well as our churches and nations. We can do this only by the Holy Spirit's power, with the guidance of Scripture, participation in the Church's liturgical and sacramental life, the reading of the lives of the saints, and the counsel of wise and loving pastors and elders in the faith.

January Birthdays:

Nicholas Hirniak	–	1/7
Michael Miller	–	1/15
Anna Sywyj	–	1/16
Mark Hartman	–	1/23
Susie Boyko	–	1/23
Ephrem Tooma	–	1/24
Iryna Khanyk	–	1/24
Christian Hartman	–	1/26
Colin Hartman	–	1/26
Xenia Moore	–	1/26
Theresa Waldman	–	1/27

Многая і благая літа!
Many blessed years!

House Blessing: The Purpose

The blessing of homes is a custom of special beauty and significance. We ask Christ to enter into our homes and bless our lives. We ask Him to be with us, as we desire to be with Him. We ask that by the sprinkling of blessed water, the Holy Spirit renew us, our families and our lives in our homes. As Christ brought salvation to the house of Zacchaeus; we ask for the same for all dwelling in our homes.

House Blessing: The Order

The house being cleaned and ready, we dress in an honorable manner (as we would for church). On a small table before icons, a small bowl full of newly blessed water is placed. Together with a list of names of those who reside in the home, a lighted candle and censor (if you have one) are also placed on the table. These items are arranged prior to the arrival of the priest. When the priest arrives, we greet him at the door, having turned off any radio, TV, or other noise based element. Animals that may cause disruption should be placed out of the way. At the beginning of the service for the blessing of the home, a family member leads the priest throughout the home, carrying the lighted candle. The rest of the household follows and then returns to the table for the final prayer and blessing with water upon those present

Have you filled out your pledge card?

I give an offering on a regular basis. Why is it important that I pledge?

Answer: All offerings are appreciated; however, pledges are important to permit our parish to budget each year. We are planning a balanced budget, and we will use pledges for estimating revenue.

Does our parish receive financial support from the Eparchy?

Answer: No. The Eparchy provides certain non-financial resources but no financial support. Our parish is assessed a yearly sum (*Cathedraticum*) to support the operation of the Eparchy.

How much should I pledge? Is there a specific required or recommended percentage of income?

Answer: We ask members and other supporters to be generous with their pledges, taking into account the value of our parish and the importance of its mission. There is no required percentage of income; however, for this coming year, we are asking you to consider a goal of eventually pledging 5-10% of income.

If I want to pledge, how do I do it?

Answer: You can place your pledge card in the offering basket, or mail in your pledge card.

Can others see my pledge amounts, or is it confidential?

Answer: The amount of your pledge is confidential and is viewed only by the pastor and the financial committee. As part of their follow up efforts, the members of the Stewardship Committee will know who has pledged or not (but not the amount)

Is my pledge an enforceable contract? What if I am uncertain about the future and am reluctant to pledge?

Answer: Your pledge is not an enforceable contract. Although we ask that all pledges be a reflection of a real intent to give, if you have a change in circumstance, you can change your pledge at any time during the year by submitting a revised pledge card.

Does the amount of my pledge or offering affect my standing in the parish?

Answer: No. Neither membership nor opportunities to serve are conditioned upon your pledging a certain amount or at all.

When the offering basket is passed around, I notice that some don't put anything in. Why?

Answer: There are many ways to pledge and give. Some of our parishioners are pledging and donating electronically, so there is no need to place a check or money in the offering basket. Others may give an offering only periodically.

A PRAYER BEFORE READING OR LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

By St. John Chrysostom

O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart, that I may hear Your word and understand and do Your will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not Your commandments from me, but open mine eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of Your law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom. On You do I set my hope, O my God, that You shalt enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of Your knowledge, not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; that in reading the lives and sayings of the saints I may not sin, but that such may serve for my restoration, enlightenment and sanctification, for the salvation of my soul, and the inheritance of life everlasting. For You are the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from You comes every good deed and every gift. Amen.

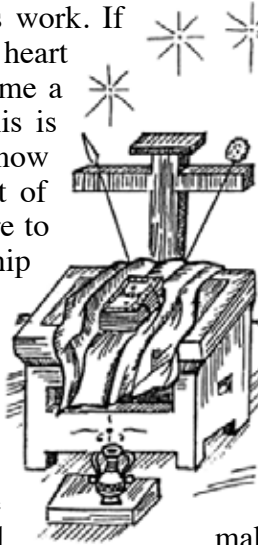
BEING CLOSE TO GOD BY GOING TO CHURCH: WHY DO WE STRESS CHURCH ATTENDANCE?

Adapted from Hieromonk John (Anderson)

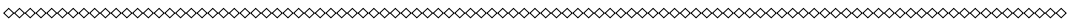
The Church is literally the Body of Christ. This means that corporately, not individually, we are Christ Himself still incarnate in the world doing His work. If a person desires with their whole heart one can unite to Christ and become a member of His Body. Ideally, this is motivated by a simple desire to know God and to be where He is. Out of this love for God comes the desire to follow his commands and to worship Him. However, this happens in a context which is not our own.

Catholicism and Orthodoxy maintain the ancient Jewish belief that God is manifest in the temple. We believe that the same glorious presence of God, the Shekinah Glory, that dwelt on the Ark of the Covenant now resides on each altar in every Catholic and Orthodox Temple. "God is with us, understand all ye nations." Isaiah 8:10, as the hymn from

Great Compline says. If we truly understood what this means – that the God "who is a consuming fire" is literally present in the Church – we would strive to worship before Him frequently.



Church attendance is not about obligation, guilt, or nostalgia. It is about being where the beloved is and worshipping Him simply because we love Him. It is about being the Body of Christ in oneness. By going to Church we learn to lay aside ego, we learn to love, we learn to live, and we learn how to be truly human. Christ Himself told us to make God the absolute center of our lives and to make all else secondary. Eternal life begins at the altar where we remain in His Presence without distractions, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt 6:21.



A PRAYER BEFORE A JOURNEY

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, the true and living way, be Thou, O Master, my companion, guide and guardian during my journey; deliver and protect me from all danger, misfortune and temptation; that being so defended by Thy divine power, I may have a peaceful and successful journey and arrive safely at my destination. For in Thee I put my trust and hope, and to Thee, together with Thine Eternal Father, and the All-holy Spirit, I ascribe all praise, honor and glory: now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church**

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Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com

Fr. James' cell phone: (619) 905-5278

The Christ

Now, in the mystery of Christ's Baptism in the Jordan River, we again encounter and represent the truth of the Lord's incarnation and His manifestation as the Christ. Jesus' Baptism is in fact His definitive manifestation as the Messiah or Christ to Israel, and as the Son of the Father to the entire world. Here we find the dimension of the Epiphany which was His manifestation to all nations. The Father's voice from heaven shows that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove shows the Trinitarian nature of the Christian God. The true and unique God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shows Himself in Christ, through Him, with Him and in Him.

The Baptism in the Jordan returns to the great Christmas theme of "Christification", Jesus of Nazareth's spiritual anointing, His presentation

as the Anointed One par excellence, the Messiah or the One sent by the Father for the salvation of mankind. The Spirit that descended on Jesus shows and seals in an incontrovertible way the "Christification" of Jesus' humanity that the Word had already fulfilled from the first moment of His miraculous conception by Mary. Jesus, from the very beginning, was always the Lord's Christ, He was always God. Yet, His one, true humanity, that which is perfect in every way, as the Gospel records, constantly grew in natural and supernatural perfection. "And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and with men" (Lk2:52). In Israel at 30 years of age, one reached full maturity and therefore could become a master. Jesus came of age and the Spirit, descending and remaining on Him, definitively consecrated His whole being as the Christ.