

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY



Icon of Saints George, Dominika and Elladius -- January 8th

January 8, 2012

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

OUR VENERABLE FATHER GEORGE THE CHOZEBITE; OUR VENERABLE MOTHER DOMINICA;
THE HOLY CONFESSOR EMILIAN

Tone 5

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 9 - JANUARY 15

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14 - LEAVE TAKING OF THEOPHANY; THE VENERABLE MARTYRS SLAIN AT SINAI AND RAITHO;
THE PASSING OF THE HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES NINA, ENLIGHTENER OF GEORGIA

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy Special Intention

4:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15 – 31ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; OUR VENERABLE FATHERS PAUL OF THEBES
AND JOHN THE HUT-DWELLER

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Welcome Visitors

We warmly welcome all those who are visiting us today. It is good to have you all with us!

Mark your calendars!

Next Saturday January 14 we will celebrate the New Year with a meal of Traditional Ukrainian foods including varenyky, holubtsi, borshcht and kutya.

Adults: \$25.00

Youth (13-18): \$15.00

Children (12 and under): \$5.00

Tickets are still available in the Hall

The discussion of “Come Follow Me” will continue this week after the Divine Liturgy. We will be discussing the third Chapter, “The Kingdom of God is at hand.”

Everyone is encouraged to participate.

Liturgical Calendars for 2012 are available in the church hall. Special thanks to Goodbody Mortuary for once again sponsoring our calendars.



**Synaxis of the Holy
Glorious Prophet,
Forerunner and
Baptizer John
January 7**

Troparion - Tone 2

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for you, O Forerunner. You were shown in truth to be the most honorable of the prophets, for you were deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan Him whom they foretold. Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy, you proclaimed to those in hell God who appeared in the flesh, who takes away the sin of the world, and grants us great mercy.

Kontakion - Tone 6

The river Jordan trembled and was driven back filled with fear at Your coming in the flesh, while John drew back in awe as he fulfilled the ministry of a prophet. The ranks of angels stood amazed, when they beheld You in the flesh being baptized in the streams. And we, who were in darkness, are filled with light as we praise You, who have appeared to enlighten all.

THE SERVANT LORD

By Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

“Now there was a dispute among [the apostles] as to which of them should be considered the greatest...’But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be like the younger, and he who governs as he who serves...Yet I am among you as the One who serves”- Luke 22:24,26

Jesus performed the demeaning act of washing the feet of His disciples in order to challenge the attitude of pride that afflicted them in jockeying for status over one another. It is imperative that spiritual leadership be expressed in humility. The leaders are to lead in displays of meekness, gentleness and acts of kindness. These are the ways of holiness. To be like the Lord Jesus is to imitate His humbleness. It’s not an attribute that comes easily to Americans.

Consider the qualities defining the various nations of the western world. We speak of English reserve. Scotch frugality. We may know a good German or an honest Dutchman. The French boast of their glory: “*la gloire du nom francais.*” We have heard of a true Irishman. Our nation never seems to tire of the self-labeled attribute: Proud American.

“Proud to be an American.” We are a people unashamed to praise ourselves over all the things we are proud of: Proud Parent of an Honor Student at [insert school]. Proud Owner of [something or other]. Proud [fill in state or sports team]. Even as I write this, I wonder if it will be read by fellow Americans with dismay and even resentment. Pride defines who we are. Never mind that our Lord, God and Savior expects another set of attributes from us. For Him humility is the flip side of pride, and yet it doesn’t appear to matter all that much for us. A basic ingredient of pride is self-confidence. We’ll decide who we are, what we believe and how we’ll prioritize our value system.

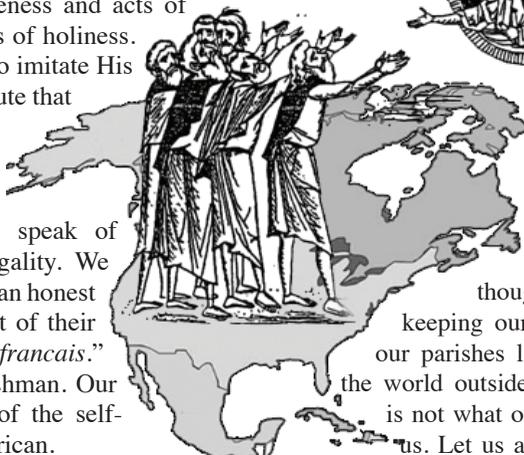
Can you imagine that we Christians might also campaign for the right to call our nation Holy America? Who would march with us? Where would we begin to make such a statement to the press and public? And how long would it be before we would attract notice as another weird group looking for attention from the media? And yet an argument might be raised to justify such a goal which for many or even most could be considered quixotic at best, perhaps even ridiculous.



We attend a holy Church. We worship a holy Trinity. We understand ourselves to be a holy people who honor our holy God and blessed saints. Why not live in a holy nation?

I would argue that like our Lord Jesus Christ we are called to make public, or in scriptural terms, to evangelize the gospel given to us to promulgate. Even though we are more comfortable keeping our beliefs to ourselves, treating our parishes like monasteries shut off from the world outside our walls, this attitude itself is not what our Lord wants or expects from us. Let us agree with the criticism and do something about it.

What do we do when we bring the non-Christian to the true faith in Christ? Teach them the real meaning of the Bible. Explain the workings of the Holy Spirit through history from Pentecost to the present. Show them how to pray. Point out the beauty and glory of iconography and the veneration of icons. But is it not the main purpose to lead them into holiness? The life in Christ that becomes Christ’s life in us, adoption into the Holy Family of the Trinity, learning what it is like to call the Almighty “Father,” “*Abba*”? How can that be if we are not holy ourselves? And if we love our fellow citizens, do we not want the very best for them? In humble faith, let us say: “Lord have mercy on us. Teach us the joy of humility.”



Christmas message from His Beatitude Sviatoslav
Most Reverend Archbishops and Metropolitans,
God-loving bishops, reverend clergy, reverend monks,
Beloved brothers and sisters, in Ukraine and in the diaspora

Christ is born! Glorify Him!
Christ descends from the heavens, welcome Him!
Christ is now on earth, O be jubilant!

– *Christmas Canon*

Dearly Beloved in Christ!

With these words of the Christmas Canon, I want to greet you all on the bright holiday of Christmas. Today the Church of Christ calls us not just to celebrate this holiday, but invites us to praise and meet God, who came to us in the human body, and draw strength from the presence of the heavenly child.

“Christ is born! Glorify Him!” This invitation takes on special significance when we unite with the direct participants and witnesses to the events of this wonderful birth. Those who praise the newborn Son of God are above all the angels of heaven. They are the ones who told the shepherds who guarded over their flocks the wonderful news about the birth of the Son of God, singing the great song: “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to people who enjoy his favor” (Luke 2:14). Is it not the first time angelic forces come close to people and with them form a single nation, a heavenly and earthly choir. This universal glorification, which is heard by the one polyphony of the heaven and the earth, shows in the sacrament of the Incarnation of the Son of God that the heavenly and divine reality will unite with human, with his history, past, present and future. In this sacramental

unification of God and human in the person of the newborn Jesus Christ, gifts are exchanged between them: the Creator offers his eternal life to man, and life of man completely opens up to God, becomes a space of his presence and actions. Therefore glorifying the newborn Savior means first of all to have His presence in our lives. Today, God really is with us, in today’s moment of history of our people, the united people of God, who learn from angels how to stand with dignity before God and praise Him. Glorifying the newborn Savior with Christmas carols, we are together with the angels proclaiming the coming of the heavenly joy that eliminates earthly sorrow and despair, giving human the gift of eternal life with God.

“Christ descends from the heavens, welcome Him!” Meeting the Son of God, who in the human body came to earth, we recognize that God Himself wanted to enter the life of each one of us to take on himself all our sins, sicknesses, pains and problems, and give us His eternal bliss and happiness. The moment when the Savior touches each of us, and with the power and actions of the Holy Spirit brings his eternal life to our human life, we call the Holy Sacrament. There are seven such sacraments in the Christian Church:

Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. These sacraments are the fruits and consequences of the birth of God in human flesh. Whenever we accept and take part in a Holy Sacrament, we are given a great gift of the meeting with the Lord Christ, and this meeting transfigures our lives, filling it with the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus God's presence through the Holy Sacraments makes us participants in God's life, in accordance with the words of St. Athanasius: "God became man so that man might become God." It is especially important for us to discover and evaluate the grace of Christ's Nativity in the new year of 2012, which our Church, in its preparations for the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'-Ukraine, devotes to the Holy Sacrament. To meet the newborn Christ today can be primarily in the Holy Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, which is the center and culmination of the life of the Church. By our lively participation in the sacraments, especially Penance and the Eucharist, we can best prepare for and celebrate this year's nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And during this New Year let us strive to understand more deeply and discover the priceless treasure of the Holy Sacraments in the Church of Christ and use them for our sanctification and salvation.

"Christ is now on earth, O be jubilant!" On this sacramental Christmas night, the heavenly angel tells us, like once was told to the shepherds: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people!" (Luke 2:10.) Today, unfortunately, we must affirm that in our Ukrainian society

various fears of the past are returning. Even after twenty years of building the Ukrainian state, we are still uncertain whether we will be able to keep its independence, freedom and our Ukrainian identity. We fear the world economic crisis and new forms of social and national oppression. Therefore, this angelic message of "Fear not!" has a special force to speak today to our hearts. "Christ is now on earth, O be jubilant!" the Church of Christ sings today. Let us all rejoice because the presence on earth of the incarnate Christ – our Savior – is for us a source of unspeakable power and hope in our earthly life with its competitions and challenges. Only in His birth, in the Nativity of the unchanging and eternal God, is a new and better future born, which gives substance and certainty to our present. Whoever today discovered their hope in a small child, the newborn Savior, has already found support and strength for his complicated, changing and uncertain present.

Dearly beloved in Christ! On this bright and cheerful day let us praise the newborn Jesus with our ancestral kolyada. Let it remove from our hearts all our fears and sadness. We meet today the Everlasting God with an open heart and a fill it with His heavenly grace, joy and peace. Let this Christmas joy and cheer give us strength in our daily work and prayer, give us unity and harmony in our communities. May the Christmas star, which once led the Wise Men to the manger, where slept the King of the Ages, show us the way to our future in Christ Jesus.

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
Христос Раждається! Славім Його!



“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

— Matthew 22:37-40

A MEDITATION ON ALMSGIVING

By Fr. Thomas Hopko

Christ commanded his disciples to give alms. To “give alms” means literally “to do” or “to make merciful deeds” or “acts of mercy.” According to the Scriptures, the Lord is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering, full of mercy, faithful and true. He is the one who does merciful deeds (see Psalm 103). Acts of mercy are an “imitation of God” who ceaselessly executes mercy for all, without exception, condition or qualification. He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Mercy is a sign of love. God is Love. A deed of merciful love is the most Godlike act a human being can do. “Being perfect” in Matthew’s Gospel corresponds to “being merciful” in Luke’s Gospel. “Perfection” and “being merciful” are the same thing.

To love as Christ loves, with the love of God who is Love, is the chief commandment for human beings according to Christianity. It can only be accomplished by God’s grace, by faith. It is not humanly possible. It is done by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Acts of mercy must be concrete, physical actions. They cannot be “in word and speech, but in deed and truth” (First letter of John and letter of James).

Acts of mercy are acts done to Christ himself who was hungry, thirsty, naked, homeless, in prison and sick in the form of being wounded for our transgressions on the cross, taking up our wounds, and dying our death.

Christian acts of mercy must be sacrificial. By this, we understand that we must not simply give to others what is left over. We have to be sharing our possessions with others in ways that limit ourselves in some way (The Widow’s Mite). And, acts of mercy should be done without qualification or condition to everyone, no matter who, what or how they are (Parable of the Good Samaritan).

Fr. Thomas Hopko is Dean Emeritus of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary and currently serves at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania.



From “Words of Life”

by Archimandrite Sophrony

Our spiritual progress depends first and foremost on our own attitude.

One day, a man who was visiting Mount Athos asked several wise elders the following question: “What is the most important thing in your life?” Each time he was answered like this: “It is divine love; to love God and to love one’s neighbor.” He said: “I don’t have love, either for prayer, or for God, or for other people. What must I do?” And then he decided by himself: “I will act as if I had this love.” Thirty years later, the Holy Spirit gave him the grace of love.

Lesson: God gives His grace to all who actively seek Him with patience.

A LEGITIMATE QUESTION



How can someone who has not been tithing begin to tithe? The simple answer, of course, is to trust God and start. Figure out

what a tithe of your income would be, and start donating it. The more involved answer is that moving abruptly from offering a small portion of one's income to offering 10 percent might be financially difficult. If one reviews family finances and finds it impossible to leap to a tithe, a plan to gradually implement tithing is an option. Move from a simple fixed amount to a proportion of income (e.g. 3%, 5%, 7%, etc.) with a goal of reaching 10 percent.

Most Christians who offer a fixed amount find that they are donating less than 1% of their income to the Church. Most people can certainly increase that proportion without financial difficulties. Doing so, of course, would entail a redefinition of priorities in the family's spending.

Sunday offering for January 1

Amount	Number
\$10.00	3
\$25.00	3
\$40.00	2
\$50.00	1
\$125.00	7
\$25.00	1 (loose)
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\$385.00	22 (2 guests)

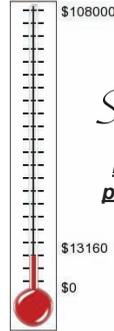
Parishioner Total: \$350.00

Average / parish household (38): \$9.21

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: -\$1,775.00

Proceeds from Christmas Bazaar: \$811.00



Stewardship Pledges

Pledges received: 5

**If you haven't returned a
pledge form, please do so.**

FOR CONSIDERATION

On one of the stones in the Church of Hagia Sophia, the following words were engraved: "Wash your sins, not only your face." Whoever entered this glorious church read this inscription and remembered that the Christian Faith requires of him moral purity: purity of the soul, purity of the heart and purity of the mind. Just as in the heart of man is concentrated the complete spiritual man, this is what the Lord also said, "Blessed are the pure of heart" (*St. Matthew 5:8*). Total external cleanliness does not help at all in gaining the kingdom of heaven. Oh, if only we would invest as much effort in washing ourselves from sins as we invest daily in washing our faces, then God would truly be seen in our hearts as in a mirror!

TO THINK ABOUT

The three temptations by which Satan tempted the Lord Jesus after His Baptism in the Jordan River:

1. Gluttony: The temptation with bread;
2. Pride: Lifting Him above the Temple;
3. Greed: Offering Him the possession of the entire world.



From January 8th of the Prologue of Ochrid By Saint Nikolai Velimirovich



**Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Святого Йоана Хрестителя
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Make Another Shot

So how many New Year's resolutions have you broken already? If you are like me, though you might be a little scared about even making a resolution. The experience of making resolutions, and failing to keep them again and again and again, can be somewhat off-putting: we have failed so much in the past that the prospect of another failure is more daunting than what we want to resolve to do or change in our lives. I ran into an expression from basketball the other day. It read, "You are 100% certain not to make the shots you don't attempt." How true that is! If you don't make the shot, you can't hit the basket! Similarly, if you don't make the effort, you never realize the success. This is such an ingrained part of human experience that it is no wonder that one of the central mysteries of our faith is repentance.

The New Testament word for "repentance" is, in Greek, *metanoia*, which literally means "change of mind" or "change of heart." St. John the Baptist's great message was "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" - a cry that was taken up by Our

Lord Himself as the first words of His public ministry.

The sacramental mystery of Holy Baptism means, first of all, the forgiveness of sins, becoming a new person, being born again. Likewise, the mystery of Confession recognizes that, even as committed, born-again, believing Christians, we continue to experience failure in our lives as we try to live out our baptismal commitments. Repentance, meaning that we recognize our failure and make a resolution to do better next time, is not something that happens once and for all, but something that becomes as natural and repetitive in our daily lives as breathing.

If you have not broken any of your New Year's resolutions, good for you! Give thanks to Almighty God for having preserved your good intention by His grace. If you have broken some, however, give thanks to Almighty God for giving you another chance, and make your shot one more time.

Bishop John Michael Botean