



WEEKLY BULLETIN

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

**The 30th Sunday after Pentecost,
January 3rd , Tone 5, Mark 1:1-8**

The Sunday Before Theophany

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

Troparion of Nativity, Tone 8

Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn yourself, O Naphtali; River Jordan, cease flowing and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized. Adam, rejoice with our first Mother and do not hide yourself as you did of old in Paradise; for having seen you naked, He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment. Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

For Nativity/Theophany: Feasts of Divine Illumination..

I know Thee, O Lord; I know Thee clearly. I know Thee, since I have been taught by Thee; for no one can recognize Thee, unless He enjoys Thine illumination.

Theophany is understood as a feast in which the event of the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan is commemorated and glorified (Mt. 3:13-17. Mk. 1:9-11. Lk. 3:21-22). This feast is called Theophany because during the baptism of the Lord the Divine, All-holy Trinity was revealed: God the Father spoke from heaven about the Son, the Son of God was baptized by John and was witnessed by God the Father, and the Holy Spirit descended on the Son in the form of a dove.

This explanation of the feast is given by the Holy Church in its troparion: "When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan"... Since ancient times this feast also was known as the day of illumination and the feast of lights because God is the light and reveals Himself to illumine "those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death" (Mt. 4:16) and to save according to grace, who has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior" (2 Tim. 1:9-10) and because on the Eve of Theophany it was the custom to baptize the catechumens, which actually is spiritual illumination and during which many lamps are lit... The Lord, according to the teaching of St. John of Damascus, was baptized not because He Himself needed cleansing, but in order, having taken our cleansing upon Himself, to destroy the heads of the serpents in the water, "to bury human sin through water" and all of the old Adam, to fulfill the law, to open the mystery of the Trinity and, finally, to consecrate "the essence of water" and to grant us a paradigm and an example of baptism.

Therefore the Holy Church, celebrating the baptism of the Lord, confirms our faith in the highest, incomprehensible mystery of the Three Persons in one Godhead and teaches us with equal honor to profess and glorify the Holy Trinity, One in Essence and Undivided; accuses and destroys the errors of the ancient false teachers: Patripassians or Sabellians, Arians, Macedonians and others who rejected the triunity of Persons in one Godhead, together with those false teachers who taught the human nature of the Son of God was a phantom; shows the necessity of baptism for the believers in Christ, inspires in us feelings of boundless gratitude to the Enlightener and the Cleanser of our sinful nature, teaches that our purification and salvation from sin is only by the power of grace of the Holy Spirit, and, specifying the necessity of the worthy use the gifts of grace of baptism and the protection in purity of those precious garments of which we are reminded on the feast of the Baptism by the words: "as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27), commands us the purification of our souls and hearts in order to be worthy of the blessed life ...Theophany arose in apostolic times. It is mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions, and from the 2nd century the witness of Clement of Alexandria about the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord and doing the night vigil, spent reading the Holy Scripture before this feast; in the 3rd century the Holy Martyr Hippolytus and Gregory of Neocaesarea; in the 4th century, the Holy Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, Augustine and many others talked about the event of Holy Theophany during the divine ser-

Announcements and Activities

Vigil for Theophany— Tuesday, at 6:30, in the courtyard...all are invited.

Divine Liturgy for the Feast— at 9AM on Wednesday, in the courtyard. All are invited.

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30 PM. With just our skeletal crew.

Divine Liturgy— Sunday, at 10AM, outside, in person.

Back outdoors: Doubtless all of you have read my latest Directive (11/20) informing you of our being back outside for Sunday Liturgies and doing feastdays and sacraments with a very small group of people in the Livestream style. On days when the Liturgy is being done in a livestream type of arrangement, you may still come to the door at the end of the Service for Holy Communion.

Parish Council— Next Sunday, after Liturgy.

Annual Meeting— With the end of the calendar year, our minds begin to turn to the Annual Meeting. Please mark your calendars to not be elsewhere on January 24

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)—battling cancer. **Natalia**—Olga's friend. Sunday's brother, **Joe**, ill. **Chance**— Kerri's nephew **Emory**—a young relative of Kirk and Kathy. **Linda**, Mary S.'s daughter. **Sarah**—the sister of John Deak who is battling cancer. **Theresa**, cancer, and husband **Ron**, the daughter-in-law and son of Linda D. Samir's friend, **Johnny**, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight. **Anna J.**, who is battling health issues related to her bone marrow transplant and battle with Lyme Disease. **Hanna**— a friend of April's who has a brain injury. **Darko**— who had surgery for cancer and has to undergo chemo. **Reposed Michael**, Brian R.'s cousin. **Barbara Ranjo**, cancer surgery and recovering. **David**, newly reposed. **Tony**, health and an upcoming surgery. **John**, health. **Dana and Era**, two young women who are battling health issues. **Carol**, **Mike Miller's friend**. **Julie**, a friend of Katherine M. **Michaela and family**— Heather's friend battling cancer. **George**—Sunday's husband who has been battling health issues. Mara's dad, **Ratp** who recently had surgery. **Fr. Paul Lazor**, sometime dean of St. Vladimir Seminary reposed.. **Vera**— Newly-Reposed. **Linda D.** post surgery pain. **Nicole**, **Aiden and Kate**. **Zoya**, who lives in Russia and is suffering from the covid virus. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **Reposed Mel R.** faithful member and husband of Marianne. **Jerry**— the husband of Elise, Katie and Anna R. Who passed last Thursday. **Metropolitan Theodosius** newly reposed. **Reposed Darrel**, Kyle's father. **Diane F.** recovering from Surgery. **Erika and Family**. And, finally, all those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic (which has been growing in numbers across the country and in the world), wildfires, hurricanes, and civil unrest. **Jerry**—Reposed.

vice for this feast; the Fathers of the Church: of the 5th century: Anatolius of Constantinople, of the 7th century: Andrew and Sophronius of Jerusalem; of the 8th century: Cosmas of Maium, John of Damascus and Germanus of Constantinople; of the 9th century, Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzas deposited many church hymns for this feast, that up to now are sung by the Church...

(taken from *The Server's Handbook*, by Bulgakov)

From the Lives of the Saints... THE PROPHET MALACHI

Chronologically, Malachi was the last of the prophets. He was born after the return of the Hebrews from the Babylonian Captivity in 538 B.C. He was unusually handsome in countenance. According to tradition, the people called him an angel, perhaps because of his external beauty or because of his spiritual purity, or even perhaps because of his association with an angel of God. On many occasions he spoke face to face with an angel. When this occurred, others heard the angel's voice, but they were not worthy to see the face of the angel. The young Malachi prophesied that which the angel proclaimed. He cried out against ungrateful Israel and against the lawless priests. Five hundred years before Christ, Malachi clearly prophesied the coming and the mission of John the Baptist: Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me (Malachi 3:7). Mainly, he is chiefly the prophet of the day of the Dreadful Judgment. Before the day of the Lord comes, the great and terrible day (Malachi 3: 23-24). He reposed in the Lord while still young. Following him, there were no more prophets in Israel until John the Baptist.

THE PRIEST-MARTYR GORDIUS

Gordius was born in Caesarea of Cappadocia. He was an officer in the Roman army during the reign of Emperor Licinius. When a terrible persecution of the Christians broke out, Gordius left the army and his rank and withdrew to the wilderness of Sinai. Alone on Mount Horeb, Gordius spent his time in prayer and contemplation on the mysteries of heaven and earth. He especially pondered the vanity and worthlessness of all that men strive and fight for on earth, and finally came to the desire to die and enter into the eternal and incorruptible life. With this desire he descended into the town at the time of certain pagan races and games. Gordius presented himself to the governor of that town, declaring that he was a Christian. In vain did the governor try, through flatteries and threats, to dissuade him from the Faith. Gordius remained unwavering and firm as a diamond, saying: "Is it not sheer folly to purchase, with this short-lived life, a life of eternal torment and spiritual death?" Being condemned to death, he joyfully hurried to the scaffold and, along the way, spoke to the executioners of the glorious and sweet teachings of Christ. With the name of Christ on his lips, Gordius offered his young body to the sword and his righteous soul to God, in the year 320 A.D.

Taken from the Prologue of Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)