



## Weekly Bulletin

# Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

### ***The Feast of the Circumcision and of St. Basil the Great***

#### ***The Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 4***

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind!

#### ***Troparion of the Circumcision of Christ, Tone 4***

Enthroned on high with the Eternal Father and Thy divine Spirit, O Jesus, Thou didst will to be born on earth of the unwedded handmaid, Thy Mother. Therefore Thou wast circumcised as an eight-day-old Child. Glory to Thy most gracious counsel; glory to Thy dispensation; glory to Thy condescension, O only Lover of man!

#### ***Troparion of St. Basil the Great, Tone 4***

Thy proclamation has gone out into all the earth, which was divinely taught by hearing thy voice. Thou didst expound the nature of creatures and didst ennoble the manners of men. O venerable Father of royal priesthood, entreat Christ God that our souls may be saved!

### ***The Feast of the Circumcision of Christ, January 1st, Matt. 2:1-12***

January 1st is the feast of the Circumcision of Jesus Christ; it is also the day dedicated to the memory of St. Basil.

Vespers for the circumcision, which are celebrated on the evening of December 31st, include three lessons taken from the Old Testament. The first (Gen. 17:1-17, 9-14) reminds us of the covenant which God made with Abraham: "Every man child among you shall be circumcised...my covenant shall be in your flesh an everlasting covenant." The second and third lessons taken respectively from the Book of Proverbs (8:22-30) and the Book of Wisdom (9:1-5). Sing the praises of Divine Wisdom; they are an allusion to the theological work of St. Basil. At Matins for January 1st, the Gospel (Jn. 10:1-9) which depicts the relationship of the good shepherd to his sheep—also refers to St. Basil, this time in his capacity as a bishop.

At the Liturgy, the Epistle (Col. 2:8-12) points out the new meaning that circumcision has taken on for a Christian: "In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off the body of sins of the flesh". The Gospel (Luke 2:20-21, 40-52) tells of Jesus' circumcision— "when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus— and of the episode when Jesus was lost, and found again in the Temple, during his parents' annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The feast of the circumcision of Our Lord— perhaps because it evokes the Jewish and pre-Christian character of the rite, perhaps because it coincides with the first day of the civil year— is one of the feasts which seems to speak least to the soul of modern Christians. However, its spiritual content is very rich. Our Lord, in submitting to the law of circumcision, wants both to humiliate himself in his flesh and to mark that He is the fulness and completion of the Old Covenant: the perpetual sign of the Covenant was on his flesh more than on any other flesh; his circumcision prefigured that other bloody consecration which His body was to receive on the Cross. Moreover, even if we no longer have to submit to physical circumcision, we still have to submit to a true spiritual circumcision.

Our covenant with God, the New Covenant in Jesus Christ, must bring about in us the complete submission of our flesh and of its desires to God, the complete consecration and sanctification of our body and of its natural functions, espe-

## **Announcements and Activities**

**Vespertine Liturgy of St. Basil for Holy Theophany with Great Blessing of Water**— Thursday, at 9AM. You may bring a clean jar or other sealable vessel to take Holy Water home in. If using the jar or another designated vessel for the first time, it should only be used for Holy Water from then on.

**Vigil for Holy Theophany with Litanies**— Thursday, at 6PM.

**Divine Liturgy for Holy Theophany**— Friday, at 9AM. The vigil is some of the church's finest hymnography teaching about Christ's baptism and the revelation of the Holy Trinity.

**House Blessings**— Father will have a sign up sheet for house blessings available, with explanation of the rite

**Church School/Adult Ed.**— January 15th, at 9AM.

**Coffee Hours**— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Mike Mi. and Luci. Next week's Coffee Hour is our Coffee and Bagels week

**Parish Council**— will meet for the last time before the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 8th, after Liturgy and Coffee Hour.

**Annual Meeting**— our year end meeting will take place after the Liturgy and a potluck meal on Sunday, January 22nd. All parish members should be present. Voting members are those who are at least 18 years old; have been to Confession and Communion at least once in the last 12 months; and regularly support the parish through their gifts of Time, Talent and Resources. We will need to establish a quorum so even those who may not have the strength to stay for the whole meeting, generally around 60-90 minutes can come long enough for your name to be counted. Your parish council and I thank you..

cially of those connected with the organ submitted to circumcision, which plays such an important part in the ascetic battle. And it is not only our flesh that needs spiritual circumcision; first, and before all else, it is our heart. Circumcision of the heart must reach all our thoughts, all our desires, all our feelings— and excise everything that is in conflict with the search for God. The great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart..." expresses very well, what this circumcision of the heart means and that it does not take place without very serious effort.

(Taken from, The Year of Grace of the Lord, by a Monk of the Eastern Church)

## **From the Lives of the Saints...THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

On the eighth day following His birth, the Divine Child was presented in the Temple and circumcised according to the Law existing in Israel since the time of Abraham. On this occasion, He was given the name Jesus, which the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Most-Holy Virgin Mary. The Old Testament circumcision was the prefiguring of the New Testament baptism. The circumcision of our Lord shows that He truly received upon Himself the body of man and not just seemingly, as was later taught of Him by heretics. Our Lord was also circumcised because He wanted to fulfill the entire Law, which He Himself gave through the prophets and forefathers. In fulfilling the written Law, He replaced it with Baptism in His Holy Church, as was proclaimed by the Apostle Paul: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (Galatians 6:15). (In the cycle of the liturgical calendar of the Church, this Feast of the Lord's Circumcision has neither a Forefeast nor an Antefeast).

## **SAINT BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA**

Basil was born during the reign of Emperor Constantine. While still unbaptized, he spent fifteen years in Athens, where he studied philosophy, rhetoric, astronomy and all other secular sciences of that time. His colleagues there were Gregory the Theologian and Julian, later the apostate emperor. In his mature years he was baptized in the Jordan River along with Ebulios his former teacher. He was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for almost ten years and completed his earthly life fifty years after his birth. He was a great defender of Orthodoxy, a great light of moral purity, a religious zealot, a great theological mind, a great builder and pillar of the Church of God.

Basil fully deserved the title "Great." In liturgical services he is referred to as the "bee of the Church of Christ, which brings honey to the faithful and with its stinger pricks the heretics." Numerous works of this Father of the Church are preserved; they include theological, apologetical, ascetical and canonical writings, as well as the Holy and Divine Liturgy named after him. This Divine Liturgy is celebrated ten times during the year: on the First of January, his feast day; on the eve of the Nativity of our Lord; on the eve of the Theophany of our Lord; all Sundays of Great Lent except Palm Sunday; on Great and Holy Thursday; and on Great and Holy Saturday. St. Basil reposed peacefully on January 1, 379 A.D., and entered into the Kingdom of Christ.

Taken from The Prologue, by St. Nikolai

*"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)*