

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST



Icon of the Circumcision and Saint Basil the Great -- January 1st

January 1, 2012

*SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY; SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY;
THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST;
OUR HOLY FATHER BASIL THE GREAT, ARCHBISHOP OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA;
THE HOLY RIGHTEOUS ONES: JOSEPH THE BETROTHED; DAVID THE KING;
AND JAMES, THE BROTHER OF THE LORD ACCORDING TO THE FLESH*

Festal Tone

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 2 - JANUARY 8

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5 - *VIGIL OF THEOPHANY – DAY OF STRICT FAST*

9:30 AM – Royal Hours

8:00 PM – Great Blessing of Water followed by *З Нами Бог!*” *Велике Повечір’я*
“God is with us” Great Complies

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6 - *HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST – OBLIGATORY FEAST*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy with Great Blessing of Water
For All Parishioners

SATURDAY, JANUARY 7 - *SATURDAY AFTER THEOPHANY – SYNAXIS OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy Special Intention
6:00 PM – Great Vespers

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 – *SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; OUR VENERABLE FATHER GEORGE THE CHOZEBITE; OUR
VENERABLE MOTHER DOMINICA; THE HOLY CONFESSOR EMILIAN*

9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy For All Parishioners

Let’s go Caroling!

Between December 25 and February 2 we will be organizing visits to our parishioners, shut-ins, and nursing homes. If you are interested in participating or you would like to be visited or you know of someone who would like to be visited, please contact Fr. James.

Welcome Visitors

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

Fast Free Period

During the twelve days of Christmas, Dec. 25th, through Theophany, Jan. 6th, we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Fridays. A one day fast is observed on January 5th, the Eve of Theophany.

Mark your calendars!

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

Adults: \$20.00 (\$25.00 after January 1)

Youth (13-18): \$15.00

Children (12 and under): \$5.00

Tickets are available in the Hall

The discussion of “Come Follow Me” will continue next 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.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early? Does God Mind?

September 7, 2011 by Fr. Angelos

I would like to share one of my experiences here as I begin this web page reflection. Once I was invited to one of my friend's family for a dinner and there were also other guests invited to the same. It was a beautiful evening of fun and everyone seemed to have a great time. Since we all knew each other, we enjoyed each others company and loved spending time together. When it was time for dinner, we realized that one of our friends had not showed up for the party and we were wondering as to why he had not come. He was very much part of the family and the group and we had expected his presence there. About half way through the dinner, he showed up offering excuses for his delay. Everyone was very understanding and compassionate to his excuses until he made an early exit giving new explanations. This behavior came across as rude and inconsiderate. My friend and we were all disappointed and hurt by his actions.

You must be wondering as to why I am sharing this incident with you all. As I was reflecting on what I should write on the web page, many thoughts crossed my mind. First I thought of posting my homilies but I don't really write them down. After much thought, I am sharing something that has been on my mind for a long time. Most of us have a busy life and in the midst of all our busyness, we find time to be with God. Its always a joy to see the pews filled when I process in for the Sunday Liturgy. Unfortunately I don't get that joy on most of the Sundays because when I begin the Liturgy, the Church is half empty. It slowly gets filled by the time the Gospel is proclaimed and I stand there wondering as to how did that happen! Often times the miracle of the multiplication of

the bread comes to my mind when I witness the miracle of the church getting filled after the Gospel reading. Just like the experience I shared at the beginning, we don't go to a party or important function when it is already half over. It is also not considered a good etiquette to leave a dinner or a function half way through it. Such behavior offends both the host and other invited guests.

Families with small children or elderly people might find it hard to be on time always and that is understandable. But when adults keep coming late to Divine Liturgy every single Sunday, it makes me wonder if they ever realize that they are coming late to God's party. It offends not only the Lord but also the community just as how my friend's coming late to and leaving early from the dinner offended the host and other guests. Everything meaningful and valuable in life requires a certain amount of sacrifice. If we truly value the Holy Eucharist and being part of a faith community, we would make the sacrifice to be there on time. When attending Sunday Liturgy is taken only as fulfilling an obligation, then one may not consider making that sacrifice to be on time as important. It has been my constant prayer that the good Lord will grant us the necessary grace to see how privileged and blessed we are to belong to the Catholic Church and to partake of His Body and Blood which nourishes our souls and leads us to life eternal. May God bless you all and keep everyone healthy and safe.

Blessings,
Fr. Angelos
St. Bonaventure Parish



Holy father Basil, you acquired the virtues of all the saints:

the meekness of Moses, Elijah's zeal, the faith of Peter, John's theological eloquence.

You cry with Paul the apostle:

who is weak, and I am not weak?

Who is made to fall, and I do not burn in indignation?

Now you dwell with them all in heaven.

Pray that our souls may be saved.

The God of all goodness did not disdain to be circumcised!

He offered himself as a saving sign and example for us all.

He made the law, and he obeyed his own commands

He fulfilled the words of the prophets concerning Himself.

He holds the world in his hands, yet is bound in swaddling clothes.

Let us glorify him!

— Aposticha Verses from Vespers

The Theophany of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ Celebrated on the 6th Day of 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”*

OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

by the Sisters of the Monastery of the Transfiguration

We all, every human being, share one purpose – to be so united to God that we become like Him in every possible way. “Like God” does not just mean a superficial resemblance, as in two sisters being alike with similar attitudes, habits, etc. The Christian life does not mean an external modeling of our behavior after what we think we see in God. Rather, it is a gradual process of becoming united to God in the most intimate way. God Himself wants to enter our hearts and transform us from within, so that He can dwell in us and we in Him in a union of love.

As this is difficult to imagine, to help us the Fathers of the Church give an analogy of a piece of iron placed in the fire. The iron, while remaining iron, takes on the qualities of fire. In a sense it becomes fire, although if taken out it loses its fiery qualities. So also we, living plunged in the ocean of

God’s grace, while remaining human, take on all the qualities of God: His love, joy, peace, eternal life. If we then separate ourselves from God, we lose all those godlike qualities, until through repentance we can again be transformed by the fire of God’s grace. Although this sounds very bold, this deification is what we were created for: to be united wholly to God, transformed by union with Him.

We may think that this transformation is impossible, that we are too weak, too sinful. For encouragement we look to the saints, who had the same problems and weaknesses we have. They, however, looked beyond these to God – and in proportion to their desire, God helped them by His grace. In the saints we meet people whose love, joy, and power are beyond human measure, because they are from God. And we can be like them.

House Blessing

It is the custom among many Eastern Catholic and Orthodox Christians to have their homes blessed with the holy water sanctified on or after Theophany (the feast which commemorates the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan River). If you would like your home blessed, please put your name on the sign-up sheet in the back of the church. If you have any questions about the purpose or order of how the service is done, please see below or ask Fr. James.

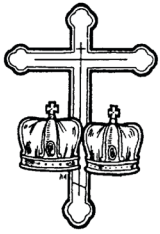
House Blessing: The Purpose

The annual blessing of homes is a custom of special beauty and significance. We again ask Christ to bless and enter into our homes and 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 ready, we dress in an honorable manner (as we would for church). 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 by being startled by the sprinkling water should be placed out of the way. On a small table before icons, a small but wide-mouthed 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. 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.

A PRAYER FOR MARRIED PEOPLE



O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who has taught us to pray without ceasing for each other, so that thereby we might be made worthy of Your mercy: look down with compassion on our married life and keep us from all perilous falls and from enemies both visible and invisible. Grant that we may pass the remainder of our days in oneness of mind and purity of heart. Grant us health, strength, and Your divine wisdom, so that we may be able to fulfill our duties all the days of our lives according to Your holy will and commandments. Protect and keep us from harm and enable us by Your grace to bear and conquer those temptations that come upon us. Strengthen us in true faith, unfailing hope, and perfect love, so that together we may order our entire life according to Your divine ordinances and commandments and thereby be found pleasing in Your sight.

O Greatly Merciful Lord, hear us who humbly pray to You, and send Your divine blessing on our married life and on all our good deeds, for Yours it is to hear and have mercy on us, O our God, and unto You do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR ONE'S ENEMIES



O Lord Jesus Christ, Who commanded us to love our enemies, praying for and forgiving those who persecute or wrong us; Who Yourself gave us the perfect example by praying for those who crucified You: grant us, we ask You, the spirit of Christian reconciliation and meekness, that we may completely forgive every injury and be reconciled with our enemies. Grant us to overcome all wickedness and offences through Christian love and the ever abiding awareness that we are all sinners. We further beseech You, O Lord, to grant to our enemies the same peace and forgiveness of sins which we ask for ourselves; and do not allow them or us to leave this life without heartfelt reconciliation. And help us all by Thy grace to repay evil with goodness, so that thereby we might all be found worthy of Your heavenly kingdom. Amen.

A PRAYER OF PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

O Lord, God of heaven and earth, Who in Your wisdom has created man from the dust of the earth, breathing into his face the breath of life and blessing him saying: "Increase and multiply, fill the earth and rule over it;" and Who in Cana of Galilee through Thine Only Son, Jesus Christ, blessed the union of marriage and thereby the bearing of sons and daughters – with deep humility we pray to You: help us by Your grace to fulfill our duties as parents according to Your holy will so that our children may grow to full maturity of soul and body according to the full stature of Your Christ.



·MARRIAGE·

O Greatly Merciful Lord, Who gives food to the birds of the sky and to all living things on the earth, Who watches over the flower that sprouts amidst the rocky cliffs; nourish, bring up, and protect our children also. Help us, O Lord, to plant in their souls what is good and useful for the Holy Church and our nation, and Yourself inspire our children with what is well pleasing to You, that Your holy name may be exalted through them. Fill them, O Lord, with the enlightened wisdom and holy understanding which come down from You. Protect them from all the snares of enemies both visible and invisible. Command Your angels to be their guides and counselors in all good works.

We pray You, O Lord, God of mercies, have mercy on us and on our home, and in Your great goodness, pour out Your abundant grace over all our children that together with us they may forever worship and glorify You, the only True God: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A PRAYER OF CHILDREN FOR THEIR PARENTS

O Holy Lord, King of heaven and earth, look down from heaven with mercy and compassion upon our home. Grant health and everything good to my father and mother, so that they may take care of us and everyone in our household. And help us all to do what is good and pleasing to You. Amen.



THE SYNAXIS OF THE BAPTIST
Commemorated January 7th

St. John's greatest role during his life was enacted on the day of Theophany, and because of this the Church has, from the earliest times, dedicated the day following that feast to his memory. This day is also connected with an event involving the hand of the Forerunner. The Evangelist Luke desired to take John's body from Sebaste, where the great prophet had been beheaded by Herod, to Antioch, his own birthplace. He succeeded, though, in acquiring and taking only one hand, which was kept in Antioch till the tenth century. It was then moved to Constantinople, whence it disappeared during the Turkish occupation.



St. John is commemorated several times during the year, but his greatest observance is on this day, January 7th. Among the Gospel figures surrounding the Savior, the person of John the Baptist holds a very special place, by the manner of his birth in this world and his earthly life, by his role of baptizer of men to repentance and his baptism of the Messiah, and, lastly, by the tragic manner of his departure from this world. He was of such moral purity that he indeed deserved the name "angel", as he was named in the Scriptures, rather than being thought of as just a mortal man. St. John differs from all other prophets in that he had the joy of showing forth to the world the One Whom he had foretold.

From the *Prologue of Ochrid* by St. Nicholas of Zicha



Sunday offering for December 25

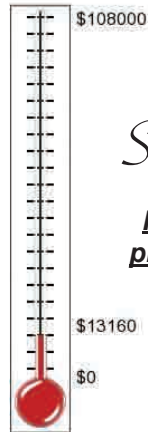
Amount	Number
\$10.00	1
\$20.00	2
\$25.00	2
\$40.00	3
\$50.00	4
\$80.00	1
\$100.00	7
\$200.00	1
\$65.00	1 (loose)
<hr/> \$1,465.00	<hr/> 22 (2 guests)

Parishioner Total: \$1,405.00

Average / parish household (38): \$36.97

Weekly Stewardship Goal: \$2125.00

Shortfall: -\$720.00



Stewardship Pledges

Pledges received: 5

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

**Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!**

**Христос Раждається!
Славіте Його!**



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

4400 Palm Avenue
La Mesa, CA 91941
Parish Office: (619) 697-5085

Website: stjohnthebaptizer.org

Pastor: Fr. James Bankston
frjames@mac.com

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

The Commemoration of the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ

On this day, the church celebrates the commemoration of the circumcision of the Lord Christ, to Whom is the glory. God had ordained the law of circumcision as a sign that His people would become a particular people over all others. This was that every male of the seed of Abraham be circumcised on the eighth day of his birth. God put every soul that did not obey this law under judgment.

As our Lord Jesus was born from the posterity of Abraham, according to the flesh, He willed to be circumcised on the eighth day, to fulfill the law of and to relieve us from the heavy burden of this commandment, as St. Paul says, "Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Romans 15:8). He also gave us the sign of the new covenant through baptism,

as St. Paul says, "In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in Baptism in which you also were raised with Him, through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the un-circumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Colossians 2:11-13).

Therefore, He demands from us to keep the spiritual circumcision, that is to say the circumcision of the heart, so that we may live for Him in righteousness and in holiness, for He says, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Glory be to our God forever. Amen.

Coptic source