

SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY



Icon of the Deisis -- Christ, Mother of God and Saint John the Baptist



*The Ukrainian Culture Center of
Los Angeles Presents*

An afternoon Concert of Traditional
Ukrainian Christmas Carols performed by the
Ukrainian National Choir of Los Angeles and
San Diego – "KOBZAR"

Conducted by Gregory Hallick-Holutiak
Saturday January 22, 2011
3:00 P.M.

**St. John the Baptizer
Ukrainian Catholic Church**

Join us for the afternoon
to hear your favorite carols

Suggested donation of \$15.00 at the door

QUESTIONS ABOUT HOLY WATER

Q. When should I drink holy water?

A. When you feel a spiritual need, that is when you find yourself strongly tempted; feel in an evil way; are about to set out on a journey; will miss the divine services; before a difficult encounter; in illness, afflictions, etc... It is the custom of some pious people to take a drink of holy water the first thing every day before they eat or drink anything else.

Q. Where should I keep the holy water?

A. Some keep the holy water in their icon corner and others in the refrigerator.

Q. Does holy water have magical powers?

A. No. But it is matter that is "spirit-bearing" which brings the blessing of God, cleansing, healing, and can be used for every purpose that is expedient.

In spite of our sinfulness, in spite of the darkness surrounding our souls, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, conferred by baptism in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, still shines in our hearts with the inextinguishable light of Christ ... and when the sinner turns to the way of repentance the light smooths away every trace of the sins committed, clothing the former sinner in the garments of incorruption, spun of the Grace of the Spirit.

– St. Seraphim of Sarov

BEGINNINGS

By Very Rev. Michael Koblosh

New Year is a time of beginnings. The beginning of the Bible relates two narratives of the beginning of the world.

In the first, the seven-day narrative, (Genesis 1:1 – 2:3) the primary image is water, or the "deep." Above this water, the Spirit of God hovers, and into it, God sends His Word: "*And God said.*" Through His Word, the dark, frightening unformed, chaotic 'deep' begins to gather into a coherent creation. Here, water is given as 'prime matter' of creation - as creation's womb.

In the second narrative, (Genesis 2: 4 – 3: 24), in the beginning is a desert in which God creates a garden-oasis. In this desert-paradise man and woman are created. This second narrative about Adam and Eve tells us that death and suffering are brought about by man's sin, by his 'No' to God's commandment.

In his book on creation, *The Hexameron*, St. Basil it is clear that the Church never understood these two narratives as literal, scientific explanations of the origins of the universe. Rather, their pre-figurative function is to establish a stage for Christ:

At Theophany, Christ, the Word of God, descends into the waters at the beginning of His ministry to be baptized, and the Spirit of God is revealed over the waters. This image fulfills the first narrative: Christ has come to a creation that has fallen back into darkness, chaos, corruption and death through man's sin. One again, God sends His Word into the 'deep,' this time to re-create the world, making it a "new creation." (2 Cor. 5: 17; Rev. 21: 5), filled –not with death and stench – but with His own glory.

After His baptism, Jesus goes into the desert to resist the devil's temptations. He goes there as the "Last Adam" (I Cor. 15: 45) do the fast that Adam failed to do and say 'Yes' to God, thereby reversing the first Adam's sin, Adam's 'No.' Through His fast in the primordial desert, Christ fulfills the second Genesis narrative.

Having done all that, He begins His public ministry with the words, "*Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.*" That means that paradise, our natural 'home,' is now opened for us; that in the desert, Eden is restored and we are invited to enter it by repenting of our sins and accepting Christ. At the beginning of the New Year, let's resolve to do just that.



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

СВЯТКУЄМО 50-років!

Celebrating 50 Years!

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The True Light of Revelation to the Gentiles

The Evangelist commemorated in this passage the prophet's words: "Beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." In what darkness? Certainly in the profound error of ignorance. What great light did they see?

The light concerning which it is written: "He was the true light that illumines everyone who comes into this world." This was the light about which the just man Simeon in the Gospel declared, "A light of revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for your people Israel." That light had arisen according to what David had announced, saying a light has arisen in the darkness to the upright of heart." Also, Isaiah demonstrated that light about to come for the enlightenment of the church when he said, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Concerning that light also Daniel noted, "It reveals the profound and hidden things, knowing those things which are in darkness and the light is with it," that is, the Son with the Father, for even as the Father is light, so too is the Son light. And David also speaks in the psalm: "In your light shall we see light," for the Father is seen in the Son, as the Lord tells us in the Gospel: "Who sees me, sees the Father." From the true light, indeed, the true light proceeded, and from the invisible the visible. "He is the image of the invisible God," as the apostle notes.

Saint Chromatius