

Celebrate and Be Glad

Let us strive to comprehend the mystery. The reason God is in the flesh is to kill the death that lurks there. As diseases are cured by medicines and assimilated by the body, and as darkness in a house is dispelled by the coming of light, so death, which held sway over human nature, is done away with by the coming of God. And as ice formed on water covers its surface as long as night and darkness last but melts under the warmth of the sun, so death reigned until the coming of Christ; but when the grace of God our Savior appeared and the Sun of Justice rose, death was swallowed up in victory, unable to bear the presence of true life. How great is God's goodness, how deep his love for us!

Let us join the shepherds in giving glory to God, let us dance with the angels and sing: Today a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ the Lord. The Lord is God and He has appeared to us, not as God, which would have been terrifying for our weakness, but as a slave so as to free those who live in slavery. Who could be so lacking in sensibility and so ungrateful as not to join all here present in our gladness, exultation, and radiant joy? This feast belongs to the whole of creation. Let everyone join in and be grateful. Let our voices too ring out in songs of jubilation!

St. Basil the Great

For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
www.ecpubs.com

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SUNDAY OF KING DAVID, JOSEPH AND JAMES



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord



Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Parish

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Pastor: Fr. Thomas J. Loya, STB, MA

Deacons: J. Timothy Tkach John Evancho

December 31, 2023 - Sunday After Christmas - King David, St. Joseph and St. James Schedule of Services

Sunday	31	<u>Sunday After Christmas - King David, St. Joseph and St. James</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners
Monday	1	<u>Circumcision of Our Lord and The Feast of St. Basil the Great</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - +Dr. John Joseph Lyon by Reba Lyon
Thursday	4	7:00 PM Divine Liturgy - +Mary Thompson by Christopher Thompson
Friday	5	<u>Vigil of Theophany of Our Lord - The Great Blessing of Water</u> 7:00 PM Vespers with Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Water - +Maria Loya McCloskey by Fr. Thomas J. Loya
Saturday	6	<u>Theophany - Baptism of Our Lord</u> 8:00 AM Divine Liturgy - +Anthony & +Alice Eterovich by Karen Eterovich Maguire 5:00 PM Vespers
Sunday	7	<u>Sunday After Theophany</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners

We pray for the sick and homebound of our parish, especially:

Kim Hughes	Ken Hrusosky	Jean Rusnak	Steve Bleniek	Gloria Selvy
Dot Wocho	Mary Ann Baran	Mary Ann Home	Mary Ellen Haber	Bob Zavada
Francis Hughes	Gloria Paulson	John Oreeluk	Abbie Sheedy-wc	Michele Lewis
William Davis	Marianne Horvath	Sally Hughes	Fr. Bernard Danber	Frank Miko
Debbie Lattuca	Teddy McManigal			

Annunciation of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Parish

In all decisions regarding parish membership and Sacramental life, the pastor exercises the final decision and the confidentiality of the persons involved must be respected.

Parish Membership is determined by three things:

1. Being registered in the parish for a sufficient amount of time
2. Faithful and consistent participation in the liturgical life of the parish especially on Sundays and Holy days.
3. Regular financial support of the parish. Use of offertory envelopes by parish members is required for weekly donations

The Sacred Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation and Matrimony are available only to those persons who comply with the above requirements of parish membership.

A Biblically based stewardship is part of the vision of Annunciation parish. Parishioners are encouraged to practicing tithing and also to consider Annunciation parish in planned giving such as trust funds, etc.

Couples who are planning to be married at Annunciation parish must be free to be married in the Church and must contact the pastor at least six months prior to their proposed wedding date. Persons applying for annulments of a previous marriage should not set a Church wedding date unless their annulment has been granted.

Couples who are cohabitating or involved in same sex civil unions or so-called same sex "marriages," as well as couples who are contracepting are asked to seek the pastor's help in understanding the Church's teaching and in conforming their lives to the moral teaching of the Church. Such persons **cannot receive Holy Communion** until their lives are reconciled with the Church.

Parish members entering the hospital or who are home-bound should contact the pastor or parish business office.

Prior to undergoing surgery or going under anesthesia parish members should contact the pastor.

No eulogies or public addresses by laity are permitted during funeral services.

Cremation is permitted but not encouraged. Ashes are not permitted in the church. Funeral services with the body of the deceased in the church must take place prior to cremation. Ashes are to be buried according to the burial rite of the Church. Ashes cannot be scattered or kept in homes.

Appropriate behavior and dress are required for all liturgical services. No audible conversations, or waving across the church. Electronic devices must be turned off. No food, candy, or gum chewing. Dress code is formal and modest for all services.

Abstinence from meat is to be observed every Friday. If this is not possible an equivalent penitential practice is to be observed.

Break free from your Pharaohs.

Our culture today has no shortage of 'modern Pharaohs' that hold us back from true unity with God. If we're ruled by these Pharaohs, how can we truly be free to become the men God made us to be? Exodus 90 gives you the tools to take control of your life.



Join other men from our parish as we take a 90-day journey through the Book of Exodus, diving deeper into understanding the similarities we share with the ancient Israelites and finding our path to freedom from our own 'Modern Pharaohs' holding us back from true unity with God.

We will focus on three core pillars: prayer, asceticism, and fraternity – a model witnessed to us centuries ago by the desert fathers in the early Church.

We start
Jan. 1, 2024:



To learn more about this fraternity of men, speak with Jim Brown at 815-919-4453.

MenOfExodus.com



Traditionally, at the feast of our Lord's Theophany on January 6th, we consecrate water which is used to sanctify the homes of all the faithful. In bringing the blessed water to our homes, and sprinkling it in each room, we rid our homes of any evil influence, and rededicate it to God in a special way. As we were once

renewed by the waters of our own baptism into Christ, so too our home, and our entire lives, are re-dedicated and renewed unto Christ our God each year at this time.

If you are interested in having Fr. Tom bless your house, please fill out the House Blessing Form in the Business Office.



Ring in the New Year Right!

New Year's Day Monday, Jan 1, 2024

Circumcision of our Lord & St. Basil the Great
10:00AM
Divine Liturgy of St Basil the Great

6th Annual Blessing of Lake Michigan Sunday, January 7, 2024

1:00pm



Christ has come to renew all of creation! Witness this yourself as the waters of Lake Michigan become the waters of the Jordan River!

Hammond Port Authority

701 Casino Center Dr - Hammond, IN 46320

Refreshments will follow inside at the Port Authority

We will be taking the new Church bus on this it's maiden voyage. If you would like to attend this event, please see the sign-up sheet in the Narthex.

Manifestation, illumination - with these two ideas there goes a third: renewal, regeneration, re-creation. Christ's baptism in Jordan renews our nature, for it is the prelude to our baptism in the font; and it renews and regenerates, not our human nature only, but the whole material creation.

To understand this idea of renewal, it is helpful to begin by asking a question which is, in fact, posed repeatedly in the texts for the feast. Why was Christ baptized? We are baptized because we are sinful: we go down dirty into the water, and we emerge cleansed. But what need had Christ, who is sinless, to undergo baptism in the Jordan? To this, the liturgical texts answer: 'Though as God He needs no cleansing, yet for the sake of fallen man He is cleansed in the Jordan' (Matins of the feast, First Canon, Canticle Five); 'As man He is cleansed that I may be made clean' (Compline on January 5, Canon, Canticle One). 'For the sake of sinful man': in reality it is not He who is cleansed in the Jordan but we ourselves. In taking manhood upon Him at His Incarnation, Our Lord assumed a representative role: He became the New Adam, summing up the whole human race in Himself, just as the first Adam summed up and contained all mankind in himself at the Fall. On the Cross, although sinless, Jesus Christ suffered and died for the sins of all humanity; and in the same way at His baptism, although sinless, He was cleansed for all men's sins. When He went down into the Jordan, as the New Adam, He carried us sinful men down with Him: and there in the waters He cleansed us, bearing each of us up once more out of the river as a new creature, regenerated and reconciled.

In Christ's baptism at the hands of John, our own baptismal regeneration is already accomplished by anticipation. The many celebrations of the Eucharist are all a participation in the single and unique Last Supper; and in a similar way all our individual baptisms are a sharing in the baptism of Christ - they are the means whereby the 'grace of Jordan' is extended, so that it may be appropriated by each one of us personally. As an indication of the close connection between Christ's baptism and our baptism, it may be noted that the prayer at the Great Blessing of the Waters on Theophany is almost identical with the prayer of blessing said over the font at the sacrament of baptism.

January 6

Theophany

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

But Christ's descent into the river has also a further significance. When Christ went down into the waters, not only did He carry us down with Him and make us clean, but He also made clean the nature of the waters themselves. As the troparion of the forefeast puts it, 'Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.' The feast of the Theophany has thus a cosmic aspect. The fall of the angelic orders, and after it the fall of man, involved the whole universe. All God's creation was thereby warped and disfigured: to use the symbolism of the liturgical texts, the waters were made a 'lair of dragons.' Christ came on earth to redeem not only man, but - through man - the entire material creation. When He entered the water, besides effecting by anticipation our rebirth in the font, he likewise effected the cleansing of the waters, their transfiguration into an organ of healing and grace.

If water acts as a means of grace pre-eminently in the sacrament of baptism, it is also used as a means of sanctification on many other occasions as well. That is why Orthodox are encouraged to drink from the water that has been blessed at Epiphany and to sprinkle themselves with it; they take it also to their homes and keep it there to use from time to time. In all this they are not guilty of superstition. If they act so, it is because they are convinced that in virtue of Christ's Incarnation, of His Baptism and Transfiguration, all material things can be made holy and 'spirit-bearing.' 'At Thine appearing in the body, the earth was



sanctified, the waters blessed, the heaven enlightened' (Compline on January 5, Canon, Canticle Four). This, then, is part of the meaning of Theophany: in the eyes of one who is a Christian, nothing should ever appear trivial or mean, for the redemptive and transforming grace of the Saviour extends to all things, however outwardly despicable.

At Theophany there is the same emphasis as at Christmas upon Christ's self-emptying - upon the contrast between the inward glory which as God He never ceased to possess, and His entire humility as man. God by nature, in His self-abasement He did not refuse baptism from John: 'As a servant Thou dost bow Thy head beneath the hand of the servant' (Compline on January 5, Canon, Canticle One); 'One of the Trinity bowed His head and received baptism' (Matins of the feast, First Canon, Canticle Nine). To emphasize the point more vividly, constant references are made to the bewilderment and hesitation of the Baptist: 'The Forerunner was seized with trembling and cried aloud, saying: *"How shall the lamp illuminate the Light? How shall the servant set his hand upon the Master? O Saviour, who takest away the sin of the world, sanctify both me and the waters"*' (Blessing of the Waters). This theme is specially developed on the day following the feast, which is observed as the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist.