

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

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



Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord



Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Parish

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Pastor: Fr. Thomas J. Loya, STB, MA
Parochial Vicar: Fr. Bruce Riebe
Deacon: J. Timothy Tkach

December 29, 2024 Sunday After Christmas - Relatives of the Lord Schedule of Services

Sunday	29	<u>Sunday After Christmas– Relatives of the Lord</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners
Wednesday	1	<u>Circumcision of Our Lord & the Feast of St. Basil the Great</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners
Saturday	4	<u>Saturday Before Theophany</u> 8:00 AM Divine Liturgy - +Maria Loya McCloskey by Fr. Tom 5:00 PM Vespers
Sunday	5	<u>Sunday Before Theophany</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners <u>Vigil of Theophany of Our Lord - The Great Blessing of Water</u> 6:00 PM Vespers with Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Water

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

Dot Wochok	Mary Ann Baran	Mary Ann Home	Mary Ellen Haber
Francis Hughes	Gary Dorencz	Michele Lewis	Kim Hughes
Jean Rusnak	Frank Miko	Ken Hrusosky	Fr. Bernard Danber
Mike Sheedy	Bob Horne		

We Pray for the Catechumens in our parish:

Patrick Doogan	Jeremy Pinkowski
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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.

Blessing Bags

Now that we have had our Christmas celebrations, it is time to focus on those who are in need of our help. On Sunday, Jan 26th the GCU will be hosting a service project in conjunction with our parish. We plan to make about 50 Blessing Bags that will be handed out to the homeless and less fortunate in the Chicago area. Between now and then, we will be taking donations for items we can add to these blessing bags. The GCU has already purchased socks for the bags and will be providing lunch for the volunteers who will be packing the bags.

We will have a box in the Narthex for the month of January to collect other items we can add to these bags. Below is a list of some items that would be helpful. Please make sure to buy travel size or individually packaged items.

- tissue
- band-aids
- deodorant
- mouth wash
- toothbrush
- toothpaste
- shampoo
- body wash
- fruit snacks
- granola bars
- tuna salad/crackers
- trail mix
- small bottle of water
- peanut butter & crackers
- chips
- jerky sticks
- wet ones
- chapstick
- tampons
- wash cloth
- hand/toe warmers
- alcohol swabs
- razors
- hand sanitizer

Annual Blessing of Lake Michigan at Whiting Lakefront Park

Saturday, January 11th

10:00AM

Lunch to follow at St Mary's Hall

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



See sign-up sheet in Narthex. Transportation will be provided.

Ring in the New Year Right!
New Year's Day
Wednesday, Jan 1, 2025

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



Next to Easter, Theophany is the second most important feast day on the Byzantine calendar.

This is the day when we celebrate the manifestation of God in three persons as Christ was baptized in the Jordan waters. This year, we will celebrate this Glorious Feast on the Eve of Theophany, Sunday Jan 5th, with Vespers/Divine Liturgy and the Great Blessing of Water.

This is a glorious feast, so start this Jubilee Year off right by coming back after our regular Sunday services to attend these beautifully, meaningful services.

Sunday, January 5th

6:00PM

Vespers/Divine Liturgy/Great Blessing of Water

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

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.