

## THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

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 Saint 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 Saint Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

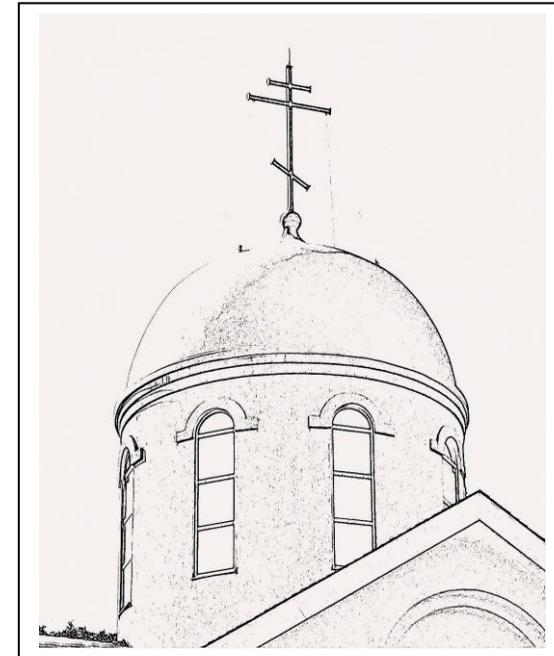
There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and Saint Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John 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. Saint 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 Undivided. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms.

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).

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

*Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!*

*Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos*

## ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Very Rev. Fr. Sergius Kuharsky, *Retired Attached Priest*

Fr. Deacon Alexander Smida, *Deacon*

Tara Paxton, *Senior Warden*

Matthew Hascha, *Choir Director*

January 6, 2019

THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF  
OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

*Tone 7. Ven. Macarius of Mt. Athos*

**Today's Readings:**

*Epistle:* Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7

*Gospel:* Matthew 3:13-17

**Upcoming Service Schedule:**

**Sunday – 9:00am** Divine Liturgy w. Great Blessing of Waters

**Saturday - 7:00pm** Great Vespers w. General Confession

**Sunday – 9:00am** Divine Liturgy

**Next Sunday's Readings:**

*Epistle:* Ephesians 4:7-13

*Gospel:* Matthew 4:12-17



*The Theophany of  
Our Lord*

**Coffee Hour Teams:**

*Today* – TEAM D (Paxton, May, Alpaugh)

*Next Sunday* – TEAM E (Bass, Petrides)

*The Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors program is an essential vehicle for funding the activities and programs of our diocese. Please consider participating in the program. Brochures are located by the bulletin board in the parish hall or at the diocesan website at [www.nynjoca.org](http://www.nynjoca.org).*

**Welcome** to our visitors who have joined us today for worship and prayer. We invite you to stay with us after today's services for an Agape Coffee Hour in our Parish Hall. Please sign our guest book before you leave, tell your friends and family members about us, and bring back one or two of them on your next visit!

**Special Prayers**

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are: **Betty James, Olga Kornafel, Deryl Tczap, Reader John Economou, Meni Mari, Tom Collins, Tom Kopec, Walter Romanofsky, Alan Diaz, Cathy Diaz, Ann Marie Gahr, Dennis Gahr, Ron Madensky, Dorothy Studier, Helen Ciurczak, Pauline Barnowsky, Elba Cinciarelli, and Catherine Ratushnuk.**

Annunciations

**TODAY** is the Great Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Great Blessing of the Waters will take place after the Divine Liturgy.

**TODAY** – The **Church School meets today** at 11:15am.

**TODAY** - **2019 Parish Wall Calendars** are located in the narthex and in the parish hall.

**TODAY** - **Parish giving statements for 2018** for individual donors are available today in the church narthex. Many thanks to all who have supported – and continue to support - the parish financially

**Sunday, January 20** is the date set by the Parish Council for the **Annual Parish Meeting**. Please mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend and participate.

As you plan your **parish giving for 2019**, please plan **intentionally**. Remember that we are called to give cheerfully according to our means and guided by our Faith. Please treat your giving as a response to God's love for you. Respond abundantly!

**Many thanks** to those who supported the visit of **Sister Marina of St. Elisabeth Convent** with your purchases, donations, and continued prayer for the work of the sisters in Minsk, Belarus. Donations may still be made to the sisters' ministry by writing a check to OCCA and designating the donation in the memo as "St. Elisabeth Convent".

The  **blessing of homes** will begin today. A sign-up sheet is located in the church narthex. Please indicate days and times that are most convenient for you to have Father Gary come and bless your home.

**Holy Water** will be available immediately after the water is blessed. Water may be drawn from the font through next Sunday's Divine Liturgy. After then, additional water can be obtained by request of Father Gary. Please **bring your own containers** if possible!

**OUTREACH**

- **Food Pantry donations** are *always* accepted. Place non-perishable food items in blue bin in the narthex
- **Clothing donations** are accepted on the last Sunday of each month. Place donations next to the food pantry bin.

**MANY YEARS!**

**Birthdays this week:**

Wednesday – Richard Hascha

**Wedding Anniversaries this week:**

Friday – Ron and Debra Madensky (#43)

*Keep up on OCA news by visiting [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org), diocesan news by visiting [www.nynjoca.org](http://www.nynjoca.org), and parish news by visiting [www.occa-brick.org](http://www.occa-brick.org).*