

SUNDAY BEFORE THE
THEOPHANY/EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD



Icon of the Theophany of Our Lord -- January 6th

January 3, 2021: Sunday Before Theophany		
Epistle: 2 Tim. 4: 5-8		Gospel: Mk. 1: 1-8
Mon., Jan. 4	9:00	+ Robert & Zenia Hooper & Baby Girl Hooper (Dolly Daniels)
Tues., Jan. 5	9:00	+ Carol Chaykosky (Lauren Telep)
Wed., Jan. 6		Theophany of Our Lord
	9:00	+ Eugene Himchak (Dorothy Zinsky) Solemn Blessing of Water
Thurs. Jan. 7	9:00	+ Eugene Hughes (Lois & Bob Rinaldi)
Fri., Jan. 8	9:00	+ Eugene Turko & Gene (Bob Yeck & Family)
Sat., Jan. 9		No Morning Divine Liturgy
	2:00 pm	Confessions.
	4:00 pm	+ Loretta & William Havrilchak (Family)
Sun., Jan. 10	10:00	For Our Parishioners

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

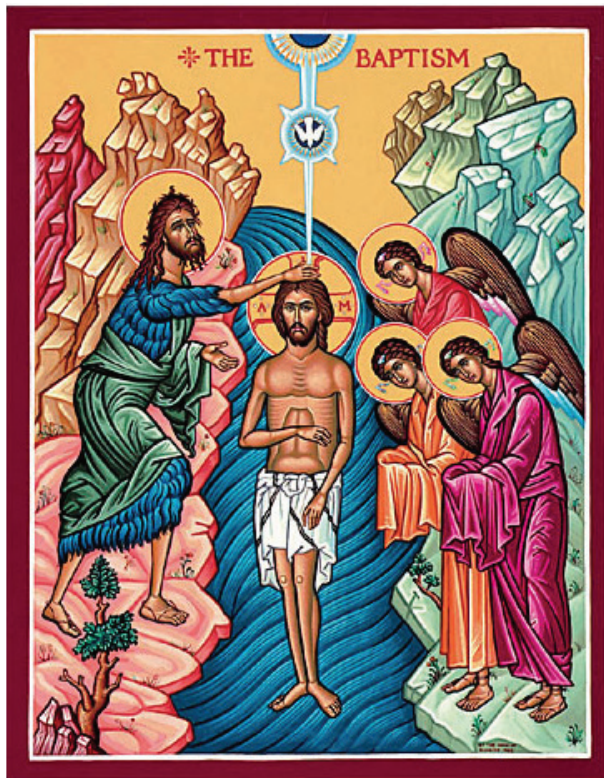
As we look into 2021 we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchased it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life. The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak— every man, woman and child has the same twentyfour hours every day. Another important thing about

time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on. And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it. Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the

kingdom of God. The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out the window, or will you make every minute count?

I would like to wish you, your family and loved ones a Healthy and Blessed New Year!

WHY DID JESUS ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE BAPTIZED?



John's baptism was not a baptism of salvation; it was a baptism of repentance for sinners. The Jews held a unique belief about repentance. This

belief held that if Israel could repent perfectly for even one day, the Messiah would come. It was only the hardness of their hearts that was delaying the coming of God's Redeemer into the world. John was aware of this conviction, and his actions cemented his reputation as the forerunner of the Messiah.

An interesting feature of John's baptism was the fact that Jews did not need baptism. Only converts to the Jewish religion were baptized. No Jew ever conceived that he or she, a member of the Chosen People, a son or daughter of Abraham assured of God's salvation, could ever need baptism. Yet Jews, after hearing John preach his message of repentance, were

submitting to his baptism as a way of demonstrating their change of heart and of experiencing God's forgiveness of sins. When Jesus requested baptism

from John, he wanted to demonstrate that he identified himself with his people's search for God.

Identifying with his people's sinfulness, Jesus allowed himself to be baptized at the hands of John to demonstrate his solidarity with the people and to signal the beginning of the Messianic Age that John had promised. After Jesus' baptism, John's

mission was accomplished and Jesus took center stage.

We know the rest of the story. Later, Jesus would commission his apostles to go baptize all nations. This baptism would not be a baptism of repentance but a baptism of water and the Spirit, which would signify that the baptized had found Jesus and were living in forgiveness and freedom.

Q & A

QUESTION: What is the symbolism of gold, frankincense, and myrrh that magi brought to Jesus?"

ANSWER: Gold is a precious metal and as such was a very valuable commodity. Its value could very well have financed Joseph and Mary's trip to Egypt. Gold is a symbol of divinity and is mentioned throughout the Bible. The gift of gold to the Christ child was symbolic of His divinity — God in the flesh.

Frankincense is a white resin or gum. It is obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark and allowing the gum to flow out. It is highly fragrant when burned and was therefore used in worship, where it was burned as a pleasant offering to God (Exodus 30:34). Frankincense is a symbol of holiness and righteousness. The gift of

frankincense to the Christ-child was symbolic of His willingness to become a sacrifice, wholly giving Himself up, analogous to a burnt offering.

Myrrh was also a product of Arabia, and was obtained from a tree in the same manner as frankincense. It was a spice and was used in embalming. It was also sometimes mingled with wine to form an article of drink. Such a drink was given to our Savior when He was about to be crucified, as a stupefying potion (Mark 15:23). Matthew 27:34 refers to it as "gall." Myrrh symbolizes bitterness, suffering, and affliction. The baby Jesus would grow to suffer greatly as a man and would pay the ultimate price when He gave His life on the cross for all who would believe in Him.

PLEASE PRAY FOR FATHER JOHN

Please remember Father John at:
Wysochansky in your prayers. This
past week he was admitted into
Abington Manor. Anyone wishing to
send him a “Get Well” card can do so

Rev. John Wysochanky
c/o Abington Manor
100 Edella Rd.
South Abington Township, P 18411

WE ARE THE CHURCH

So, why do we drag ourselves out of bed on Sunday mornings and make the trek to River Street? Habit? Obligation? Piety? Fulfillment? Our answers are often these and more, and may not be the same from week to week. It is also just as easy to do the contrary and stay home. Tired? Ill? Overcommitted? Angry? Newspaper and breakfast? There will always be a Liturgy again next week... These answers are equally varied and, at times, valid for those who are “absent with just cause,” but they are more often easily rebutted.

Do we come for the beauty of the edifice, the icons, the hymnody, the sermon? While these are often pleasant, what we tend to forget is they are only external aspects of the Liturgy. Our presence at Church should not be solely for our emotional support, or even for working on our salvation, important though they are, but the simple fact that without our presence the Church ceases to be. The

essence of the Church is the coming together of believers to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ our Savior, to join with Him, with the Saints, in communion with other believers, with all that have gone before and all that will come, in a singular point of time – outside of time. And we do that not simply by attending, but by ACTIVE PARTICIPATION in the Divine Liturgy. The priests, the deacons, the choir and the people all contribute. The people say the word “I” in only two places in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom – the Creed and the Communion Prayer, everything else said by the people is as a corporate act. To be Christian is to be in the Community, in the Church and of the Church.

We have a weekly opportunity to experience heaven on earth, to live momentarily in eternity “putting aside all earthly cares,” and to renew in ourselves a right spirit so that we may, by putting on Christ, be able to

keep the faith, fight the good fight, and be the proper Christian example to our families, our friends and our community. And maybe, take one more step on that long journey toward heaven.

My dear parishioners, in the New Year of 2021, don't just come for the services out of habit, don't just come to Church – **Be a part of the Church!** God bless you and stay safe!

WHICH CHRISTIAN ARE YOU?

Two runners prepare for a marathon. One prepares by racing over hills and down the highways and byways every day. He exercises, strengthening his legs. He runs further every day, building endurance.

The second runner prepares by sleeping two hours extra each day. He eats a lot and does nothing strenuous to upset the condition he feels he is in.

The day of the marathon race comes. The 26.2 mi. course lies just ahead of the runners at the starting line. The gun goes off; the race begins. And guess who wins'? Of course, the first runner who has done the right kind of preparation.

Two Christians prepare for a difficult time ahead. The first spends each day praying and communicating with God. He follows David's advice, committing to his memory the most helpful portions. And he keeps filled with the Spirit, adhering to Paul's suggestion.

The second Christian reads the

Bible, but only on Sunday morning when in church. He prays, but only when he is at church or with the family at mealtime. And he thinks the preacher is right when he talks about being filled with the Holy Spirit. He hopes his children will someday be filled with the Spirit like he was when he was a youngster.

Then trouble strikes. The first Christian was prepared. He takes the difficulty in stride knowing God will help him through every aspect of it. Peace soon attains a column, assured, and deserved victory. The second Christian panics. He lashes out at God, at church, at friends, at family. He doesn't know what God expects him to do. He doesn't have the assurance of the Word in his heart. He doesn't have the help of the Holy Spirit, the "friend who sticks closer than a brother." In desperation, after exhausting all other means of help, he remembers to cry to God for help. In time, God helps, because God loves...

And He hopes the man has learned a lesson. The first Christian wins an easy victory. The second

wins an agonizing, prolonged victory that could have been so much easier. My friends, which Christian are you?

KEEP GREETING ONE ANOTHER

A reminder to all: just as we prepared for Christmas with a 40-day preparation and fasting period, so now we celebrate the bright days of Christmas, New Year's, and Theophany for 40 days. Please continue to sing our beautiful Christmas carols, and to greet one another with our traditional "Christos Razhdayetsia! Slavite Yeho! Christ

is Born! Glorify Him!" During the darkness of the Winter months, do all you can to keep the bright light of Christ burning brightly! Let Christ shine through you!

Note: according to tradition, we continue to sing Christmas carols up until the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord on February 2nd.

2021 CHURCH CALENDARS

The 2021 Church Calendars are available in the back of the Church.

The Calendars are free, but any donations will be appreciated.

2021 PARISH DUES

We remind our Parish Family Members that at a Parish Meeting in February 2020, it was decided that

beginning 2021 Parish Dues will increase to \$50.00 per adult per year. This is less than \$1 per week.

COLLECTION PROCESSING TEAM...

The Collection Processing Team for the month of January 2021 is Team

#1: Jerry Sereditch, Michaelene Davis and Gloria Jablonski.

Sunday Collection for Dec. 24 - 27, 2020: \$

Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Parish financially in our weekly collections. If you are still staying at home due to the pandemic, and are able to send any amount, it would be a blessing.

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

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Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Celebrating Theophany Every Day

The Feast of Christ's Theophany (or Epiphany) is celebrated with great solemnity in the Byzantine Church. The word "theophany" means a divine "manifestation" or "revealing." Jesus of Nazareth - a carpenter - was revealed on the banks of the Jordan River to be the Son of God and the long-awaited Messiah - the "Christ." A voice came from the heavens that said, "This is My beloved Son, My favor rests on Him." (Matthew 3: 17)

Let us imagine ourselves standing on the banks of the River Jordan. We are witnessing the baptism of Jesus at the hands of Saint John the Baptist and the revelation of Jesus as God in the flesh. What a privilege that would have been!

Yet, God is revealed to us each and every

day. God manifests Himself to us not just on the banks of the River Jordan but at the bus stop, the grocery store, and in the work place. His image is within each of us. He is in our co-workers, our spouses, our children - even in our enemies.

The real challenge of Christian discipleship is to endeavor to see the image of Christ in all people and to allow them to see that same Godly image within us. The celebration of the Great Feast of Theophany is not a one-day occasion commemorating an event that took place some two thousand years ago. Rather, it is living, day-to-day, the conviction that God is within each human being, and that each human being ought to be treated as though he or she is the living image of Christ.