

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

January 9, 2022

8:40 AM Rosary
9:00 AM **H/B for All Parishioners**

DIVINE SERVICES/EVENTS FOR THE WEEK

Monday, January 10th

9:30AM **+ Joseph & Sophia Szabat** – by Bill Szabat

Tuesday, January 11th NO SERVICES

Wednesday, January 12th

9:30AM **+ James Robb** – by the Family
5:00PM Confessions in the Sacristy (or by appointment)
6:30PM BIBLE STUDY

Thursday, January 13th

9:30AM **H/B for Chance & Bryce** – by Katherine Taras

Friday, January 14th

9:30AM **+ James Robb** – by the Family

Saturday, January 15th

5:00PM **+ Anna, Joseph Sr. & Christopher Skubiak** – by Annette Dressler

Sunday, January 16th 34th Sunday After Pentecost

8:40 AM Rosary
9:00 AM **H/B for All Parishioners**

SAFE ENVIRONMENT:

Please, be advised that any instance of sexual abuse by a cleric, lay employee or lay volunteer within the boundaries of our parish should be immediately reported to the local police department, child protection services of the county, the pastor of the parish and the Chancery of St. Josaphat Eparchy. A sexual abuser port form is available in the church's vestibule and/or the parish office in English and Ukrainian. The bishop can be reached at the Chancery at 440-888-1522 or by writing to: Most Rev. Bishop Bohdan J. Danylo, Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma, P.O. Box 347180, Parma OH 44134. You may also file a report with Ms. Marika Zaliszczuk, Victim Assistance Coordinator of St. Josaphat Eparchy (412-215-5372). For more information on St. Josaphat Eparchy's safe environment policy and procedures and other pertinent info, please, log onto: <http://stjosaphateparchy.com/safe-environment/>

Celebrating Christmas means to say a firm no to those who want to follow Herod nowadays.

CONGRATULATIONS:

This week **Diane Sperko (1/12)** celebrates her birthday. We wish you a wonderful celebration, and **many blessed years... mnohaya i blahaya lita!**

SAVE THE DATE January – April 2022:

Our parishioners are invited to participate in upcoming series for parents & adults Fridays 6:30-8:00pm in Memorare Center at St. Francis Parish.

A generation ago, parents didn't have to worry about how to explain transgenderism to their 9 year-old. We want to protect innocence while forming a correct understanding of who we are as God's children.

Silence is not an option. If we are not teaching our children how to understand tough moral issues, then the world will!

This is an 11-week course beginning Jan 14 running through April 1. Come to as many sessions as you are able. Each week covers a different topic. This books equips parents of young children, as well as older children into adulthood with separate age-appropriate dialogue.

To register, contact Mike & Michelle Powers at mpower36@yahoo.com.

The only cost is for the book, which is \$5.

All are welcome.

Babysitting will be provided!

Today's Readings:

Tone 7; Vespers Readings: Isaiah 9:1-7, Jonah 3:1-10; Matins Gospel XI
Epistle: §224b; Ephesians 4:7-13
Gospel: §8, Matthew 4:12-17

The Jordan Water –The Very Sacred Object:

From very ancient times the Eastern Church has regarded the sanctified water as a great sacramental, possessing miraculous powers for healing both soul and body. It is a custom in our Church *to gladly receive the priest who blesses and sanctifies their home with Jordan Water.* The prayers of the Great Water Blessing call upon the Holy Spirit to come down upon the water to purify and sanctify it, and impart to it a healing power for the benefit of soul and body. *Please call or e-mail Fr. Vsevolod (Sal) to schedule a time for him to bless your home.*

Church Envelopes:

Unfortunately, due to some printing delays we have not yet received our new 2022 church envelopes. We should get them soon. Thank you for patience!

MOLEBEN FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE:

On January 21, 2022, at 6:30 PM, we will have a special Moleben for Peace in Ukraine, with clergy from our local parishes, at St. Josaphat Cathedral. All are invited to attend.

2022 Church Calendars

are available for you in the vestibule.

We also pray that the Holy Spirit may open the hearts and minds of all to wisdom and grace so that those in Ukraine and throughout the world will cease the acts of aggression and respect the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine, let us pray to the Lord.

During the month of January, each year we reflect on the Supreme Court's decision of *Roe v. Wade*. We pray for the preservation and protection of all human life from the time of conception to natural death.

Every human person who has ever lived, every human person who will be born today, and every human person who will come into existence in the future, is KNOWN and LOVED by our heavenly Father from all eternity. This loving Father in the knowledge, care and compassion that He has for each one of his sons and daughters, has made us unique and unrepeatable. He tells us...

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you." (Jer. 1:5)

From the Homily for the New Year By Saint John Chrysostom

A Christian should not merely celebrate appointed feasts, or new moons, or even merely the Lord's Day [Sunday], but, rather, a Christian should continually hold a feast throughout the whole of life. How should it be? Let us listen to the Holy Apostle Paul, who says: "Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:8)." Therefore, if you have a clean conscience, you are already holding a continual feast, because you are nourishing yourself with good hope and reveling in the delight of good things to come. Whenever you are restless in spirit and guilty of many sins, even if there be a thousand feasts and holy days, you would be no better off than those who are grieving. What is the benefit to me of bright days, if my soul is darkened in conscience? For what is the benefit to me of bright days, if my soul is darkened by reproaches of conscience? If, then, you wish to gain some benefit from the New Year, do the following: thank the Lord at the end of the year, because He has led you up to this point. Have compunction in your heart for every bad thing that you do. Reckon up the time of your life and say to yourself, "The days are fleeting, the years are passing, I have already lived through the greater part of my journey, and what good have I done? Will I be able to depart from this life without any virtue? Judgment is at the doors, and the remainder of life leads towards old age. "Let your light shine before others, so that, seeing your good works, they may give glory to your Father who is in Heaven (Matthew 5:16)." This light brings you much recompense. Do not crown the door of your house, but rather conduct your life in such a way, that you will receive a crown of righteousness upon your head from the Savior.

Christmas Pastoral Letter

"Rejoice, O heavens, and be glad, O earth, and shout for joy, ye mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and hath had mercy on them that are oppressed"
(Isaiah 49:13).

This prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled at Christmas – on the day the Messiah, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, was born. More than 2,000 years have passed since God came to be among us, and although the chronological distance increases with each passing year, the significance, triumph, and experience of this most joyous moment in the history of salvation remains the same as it was on Christmas Eve. It is today that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In the incarnation of the Son of God, people received the image of the invisible God the Father and His Word, who was always God before the creation of the world and became man (John 1: 1-2) to make us good, pure, and beloved children of Heavenly Father once again.

The coming of Christ into the world is such a great testimony and proof of God's love for us because no creature has received such an honor and care for its salvation as did the human race. God extended his mercy not because of our merits, but out of God's great mercy. Jesus did not come to give us a new or improved law of morality, because it had already been given to us through Moses and our conscience serves as a guardian to monitor how well we fulfill it. Jesus did not come to work miracles, heal the sick, or raise the dead, because the Old Testament prophets did. Jesus became man not to bring us any temporary prosperity and satisfaction of all our earthly desires and needs, because he himself did not have it - he was born in a poor nativity scene, lacked many of our daily comforts, experienced cold, hunger, abuse, and humiliation.

The reason for the coming of the Son of God is the complete renewal of the human race through the grace of God. He wanted to uncover the original beauty and value of man, which we had at the creation of the world, and, unfortunately, lost through sin. As He Himself said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" (Luke 5:31). He is the wonderful Doctor of the human nature Who heals and helps us to leave behind our attachment to sin and dependency on everything that is material, and make us think about Gospel message, values and principles that truly matter. He came to establish here the Kingdom of Heaven, where peace, not strife, reigns; love is present, not hatred; truth prevails, not lies; mercy and compassion are common, not selfishness and indifference. The practical implementation of these values and virtues radically changes the state and quality of human existence for better

– spiritually enriched. God's presence, His peace and grace are really felt. A person becomes the Human Being that the Lord has called and wants him or her to be.

God is with us and He is among us! Among the many difficult circumstances of today - the coronavirus epidemic, political and economic crises, instability, declining material quality of life, tension and the constant threat of large-scale war in our beloved Ukraine by Russia, force us to rethink the guiding principles and values of our lives. At this point we begin to understand infinite wisdom of God's law and love for us. His love is already manifested in Jesus' invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

So, let's come to Christ - let's go with our hearts, thoughts, and prayers to the poor stable of Bethlehem. Let us imagine the Baby Jesus lying in the hay, laughing, and holding out his arms, ready to hug us, calm us down, comfort us, encourage us and give us joy. And we will find true happiness there. As St. Augustine said, "our hearts are restless until they rest in You, Lord". We will experience the fullness of feelings and the high point of human experience while in the presence of the Lord God Himself.

The beauty of Christ's Nativity stems from the simplicity of Christmas Eve, - deprived of all human splendor, but rich in special awareness and conviction that God is truly with us.

In these bright and joyful days of Christmas, we wish you all to feel the peace and tranquility of the night of Bethlehem and the joy of the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world, praised by many angelic choirs, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2: 14). Being filled with this joy and grace in our hearts, let us share it with our neighbors, especially with the sick, those who are neglected, in need of attention and support. Let us be kind and generous, wishing everyone to have enough of earthly good things and God's grace. Let us sing carols loudly and everywhere, thus, announcing the coming of Christ the Savior to us!

May the newborn Baby Jesus bless you, your families, and communities this Christmas and every day!

Christ was born! Praise Him!

+Borys Gudziak

Archbishop of Philadelphia

Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM

Eparch of Stamford

+Benedict Aleksiychuk

Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+ Bohdan J. Danylo

Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma

+Andriy Rabiy

Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia (author)

December 2021

On the Human and Angelic Races

In Byzantine liturgical hymnography, there are two races: human and angelic. Since the wall of separation between heaven and earth has been healed by Christ, these two races now come together when, in worshipping, their praise and thanksgiving are offered up to God, One in the Holy Trinity. This is why it has been said that just as fish were meant to swim in water, so the human race was meant to be doxological and eucharistic. And so, "Master, Lord our God, who have established in heaven orders and armies of Angels and Archangels for the service of your glory, let there be with our entrance an entry of holy Angels, serving with us and joining us in glorifying your goodness. For to you belong all glory, honour and worship, +Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen." (Prayer at the Entrance at the Divine Liturgy). This idea is also expressed poetically, especially at the Litiya of the Lord's Nativity: "Let heaven and earth today prophetically be glad. Let us, Angels and mortals, spiritually keep festival, for God has appeared in flesh, ... Heaven and earth have been made one today, now that Christ is born. Today God has come upon earth, and humanity gone up to heaven". Furthermore, the human race is subdivided into two categories and this is not accomplished by God, but by each member using their free will and choice to respond to this invitation for uniting with heaven and fulfilling their destiny of praising and thanksgiving. On the one hand, there will be those who upon hear the invitation will choose to listen attentively to (i.e. obey) the clarion call for repentance (Mt. 3:2 with 3:8 and 4:17) and will therefore confess their faith in the Lord (Lk. 23:42 and Mt. 16:16), and then,

with whatever time and resources open to them, they will - by the grace-filled power, action and descent of the Holy Spirit upon them - proceed to establish their lives, offering their “most excellent deeds as the fruit of repentance” (Apostikhera of Theophany from Jan. 10), true faith and piety (Eph. 2:10, James 2:26, Titus 2:11-13), in such a way as to persistently and consistently “attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). On the other hand, there will be those who refuse with a similar persistence and consistency to listen and repent (Mt. 25:12 and 12:32). Christ prophesied regarding this division of the human race by word (Mt. 10-33-35) and by image (Mk. 15:38). It is a division to which the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, will also bear witness (Eph. 6:17 and Heb. 4:12) in front of the Lord, the Just Judge. Modern translations sometimes tend to “correct” the Litany of Supplication by adding “Lord” at the end of the petition: “for a good defense at the awesome tribunal of Christ, let us beseech the Lord”. However, unlike the other petitions of this Litany which do indeed address our Lord Jesus, the “Lord” being addressed in this particular petition, if one insists on adding the word “Lord”, is in fact the Holy Spirit acting as our Paraclete (Advocate, Consoler and Comforter) before the Lord Jesus, Who is the Just Judge. And so also, the Love of God, so often portrayed in icons of the Last Day as a river of fire emanating from the throne of God (Dan. 7:10), is one and the same towards everyone. However, the way it is perceived changes according to each recipient: whether it be experienced as a purifying and illumining light by the righteous or experienced as a scorching flame, darkening and tormenting the unrighteous.

INSTEAD OF THE SYNAXARION READING, we may reflect on this text:

“A Reading from the The Year of Grace of the Lord, by A Monk of the Eastern Church [Hieromonk Lev (Gillet)]”:¹⁹

“One could say that Epiphany — the first public manifestation of Jesus to men — corresponds in our inner life to the 'first conversion'. This must be understood as the first conscious meeting of the human soul with its Saviour, the moment when we accept Jesus as Master and as friend, and at which we take the decision to follow him. Easter (both the death and the resurrection of the Lord) corresponds to a 'second conversion' in which, confronted with the mystery of the cross, we discover what kind of death and what kind of new life this implies, and we consecrate ourselves more deeply to Jesus Christ, through a radical change in ourselves. Pentecost is the time of the 'third conversion', which is the baptism and fire of the Spirit, the entry into a life of transforming union with God. It is not given to every Christian to

follow this itinerary. Nonetheless, these are the stages which the liturgical year sets out for our endeavour.⁶⁶ ... This Sunday falls between January 7th and 13th. The gospel (Matt. 4:12-17) is like an echo of the feast of Epiphany. It starts by mentioning the imprisonment of the Precursor, something we shall speak of later on. At this news, Jesus leaves the region of the Jordan. He comes back into Galilee and stays at Capernaum. Thus, says the gospel, the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the land of Zabulon and the land of Nephthalim is fulfilled: 'The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up'.⁶⁷ This reminds us that Epiphany is the 'feast of lights'. The light manifested on the banks of the Jordan now spreads into Galilee. Little by little, it will spread to the whole world. Jesus begins to preach. The theme of his preaching is exactly the same as John's: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'. **But, for John, the kingdom was 'coming', whereas for Jesus, the kingdom is already 'at hand': the kingdom is now identified with him who announces it.**⁶⁸ Jesus is the essence and the power of the kingdom. Nevertheless, this kingdom is only at its beginning. We shall see it grow, and it will not cease from growing until the end of time. This is what the epistle read at the liturgy (Eph. 4. 7-13) announces, in which St Paul declares that when the edification of Christ's body is completed we shall 'all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'. The liturgical year, an abridgement of the history of salvation, represents this growth symbolically for us, from Christmas until the time after Pentecost. It thus outlines the development of our own inner life — the life of Christ in us.”

Edited and adapted from oca.org website:

The third day of the Afterfeast of Theophany falls on January 9. The hymns of this period invite us to purify our minds in order to see Christ.

Saint Polyeuktos was the first to be martyred for Christ in the Armenian city of Melitēnē. He was a soldier during the reign of Emperor Decius (249-251), and he later

suffered martyrdom in the reign of Valerian (253-259). He was a friend of Néarkhos (Νέαρχος) a fellow-soldier and a firm Christian. Polyeuktos, however, although he led a virtuous life, he remained a pagan. When the persecution against Christians began, Néarkhos said to Polyeuktos, "Friend, soon we shall be separated, for they will take me to torture, and you, alas, will renounce your friendship with me." Polyeuktos told him that he had seen Christ in a dream. The Savior took his soiled military cloak from him and dressed him in a radiant garment. "Now," he said, "I am prepared to serve the Lord Jesus Christ." Enflamed with zeal, Saint Polyeuktos went to the city square, and tore up the edict of Decius which required everyone to worship the idols. A few moments later, he met a procession carrying twelve idols through the streets of the city. Dashing the idols to the ground, he trampled them underfoot. His father-in-law, the magistrate Felix, who was responsible for enforcing the imperial edict, was horrified at what Saint Polyeuktos had done and advised him to obey the imperial edict. Polyeuktos told him that we must obey God rather than men. Felix declared that Polyeuktos must die for this. "Go then, bid farewell to your wife and children," he said. Paulina wept and urged her husband to renounce Christ. Felix also wept, but Saint Polyeuktos remained steadfast in his resolve to suffer for Christ. Bowing his head beneath the executioner's sword, he was baptized in his own blood. In the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, when the Church of Christ had triumphed throughout the Roman Empire, a church was built at Melitēnē in honor of Saint Polyeuktos. Many miracles were worked through his intercession. In that same church, the parents of Saint Euthymios the Great (January 20) prayed fervently for a son. The birth of this great luminary of orthodoxy occurred in the year 376, through the prayers of the Holy Martyr Polyeuktos. Saint Polyeuktos was also venerated by Saint Akakios, the Bishop of Melitēnē (March 31), who participated in the Third Ecumenical Council, and was a great proponent of orthodoxy. In the East, as well as in the West, the Holy Martyr Polyeuktos is venerated as the patron Saint of vows and treaties. The Polyeucte Overture of French composer Paul Dukas is only one of many pieces of classical music inspired by the

Saints. It premiered in January of 1892. The French dramatist Pierre Corneille has also written a play, "Polyeucte" (1642), based on the Martyr's life.

Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, was a brother of Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory of Nyssa (January 1 and January 10). His older sister, Saint Macrina (July 19) played a large role in his upbringing. Saint Basil the Great ordained Saint Peter as presbyter, and later he was made Bishop of Sebaste (in Armenia). Saint Peter was present at the Second Ecumenical Council in the year 381, convened at Constantinople against the heresy of Macedonius.

By the prayers of the Holy Martyr Polyeuctus of Melitene in Armenia, and of our venerable Father Peter, Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, brother of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, whose day it is, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

¹⁹ This commentary, and footnotes 66 and 67 below, are excerpted from: A Monk of the Eastern Church [Hieromonk Lev (Gillet)], *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, (ISBN 0-913836-68-0), (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980, pp. 85, 86-87, 105). Fr. Lev (Gillet) explains the meaning of today's Gospel and Epistle for the Sunday after Theophany in light of our Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church's liturgy and calendar. (Fr. Lev, a French convert to Ukrainian Catholicism, was a Studite monk in L'viv, ordained to the priesthood by our Venerable (*Pravednyi*) Father, Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, in 1924. (For more information about Fr. Gillet, please read: Brian R. Keleher, "Sheptyts'kyi and Three Converts from the West", in Paul Magosci, et. al., ed., *Morality and Reality: The Life and Times of Andrei Sheptyts'kyi*, (Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1989), pp. 227-243).

⁶⁶ This theme of the three conversions has been developed by several masters of the spiritual life. Although it accords as a whole with the classical theme of the three ways — the way of

purification, the way of illumination, and the way of union — it cannot be superimposed on them exactly.

⁶⁷ Isa. 9. 2.

⁶⁸ **Note by Father John Chirovsky:** In 2011, Father Thomas Hopko provided a teaching, in http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko/the_new_year_and_the_end_of_the_age, that demonstrated that this is one of the reasons why the Byzantine Church decided to liturgically use that Greek version of the text of Luke 23:42, where the good thief does NOT say “inTO Your kingdom - εις την βασιλειαν σου – у царство Твое”, but rather he DOES say: “in Your kingdom - ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου – у царстві Твоїм.” Thus, St John Chrysostom (+ AD 407) quotes this Greek phrase in his Prayer before receiving Holy Communion, which in both Old Church Slavonic and in the 1968 Ukrainian translation reads exactly as “remember me, O Lord, when You come in Your kingdom - Пом’яни мене, Господи, коли прийдеш, у царстві твоїм”. (The 1960’s and 1988 Ukrainian translations apparently understand and keep this point, as do the English publications of His Grace Bishop Robert Moskal, but it is rather unfortunate that the 1988 English translation entirely misses this important teaching). In any case, Father Hieromonk Lev (Gillet) is correct when he writes: “the kingdom is now identified with him who announces it.” This will have a great bearing on our ability to properly understand the next of the Twelve Major Feasts, which culminates our celebration of our Lord’s Incarnation: the Major Feast of the Lord’s Encounter / Meeting with Simeon and Anna, on February 2.