

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

9230 Old Bustleton Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19115

215-676-3311

Rev. Nicholas Dellermann – Rector (860-861-7468)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

Sunday After the Theophany

Afterfeast of the Theophany

Synaxis of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John

Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

*The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin,
granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead,
glory to Thee.*

Tone 1 Troparion (Feast)

*When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee,
and called Thee His beloved Son;
and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself
and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.*

Tone 2 Troparion (Forerunner)

*The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner.
Thou wast shown in truth to be the most honorable of the Prophets,
for thou wast deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan Him Whom they foretold.
Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy,
thou didst proclaim to those in hell God Who appeared in the flesh,
Who takes away the sin of the world,
and grants us great mercy.*

Tone 6 Kontakion (Forerunner)

*The river Jordan trembled, and was driven back,
filled with fear at Thy coming in the flesh,
while John drew back in awe
as he fulfilled the ministry of the Spirit.
The ranks of Angels stood amazed
when they beheld Thee baptized in the stream.
And we who were in darkness are filled with light.
We praise Thee, O God made manifest, as Thou dost enlighten all.*

Tone 3 Kontakion (Feast)

*Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises:
"Thou hast come and revealed Thyself,
O unapproachable Light."*



Tone 8 (Feast)

Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee; / let it praise Thy Name, O Most High! (Ps. 65:3)
 V. Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His Name, give glory to His praise! (Ps. 65:1)

Tone 4 (Righteous Ones)

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel. (Ps. 67:35a)

ON THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
 St. Theophan the Recluse

Celebrating holy Theophany, we are transported in thought to the very place of this event, and we shall intelligently attend to what is happening there! There it is—Bethabara! You can see St. John standing on the shore, in clothes made of camel’s hair, with a girdle of a skin about his loins (Mk. 1:6). He is surrounded by a countless multitude of people from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the lands around the Jordan. The Baptism of the Lord has just finished, and all eyes are fixed upon the Son of man just emerged from the waters. They see nothing else. But sharpen by faith the eye of your mind, and following after John, passing over what is seen by all, turn an attentive gaze upon what is not seen by all—on the opened heavens, the dove descending, and the voice saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mk. 1:11). Fix your gaze, and do not tear your attention away from this wondrous vision! O! Who will give power to our words, that they might worthily sing praises to God in three hypostases, revealed at the Jordan!

Along with lost paradise, the heavens were shut closed by God’s righteous judgment. But as a strong gate cannot hold back a powerful surge of water, so did the fortress of righteous judgment finally melt from the fire of Divine love—and now the heavens are opened. Brethren, let us also open the forces of our nature, let us insatiably receive the revealed God, and delight in Him. Let us soak all our senses with Him, all our thoughts and desires.

We are sunk in darkness; but here is abundant light. We are immersed in dismal separation—from heaven and from ourselves—but here is an all-enlivening peace. We are exhausted by our powerlessness, but here is the inexhaustible source of all strength!

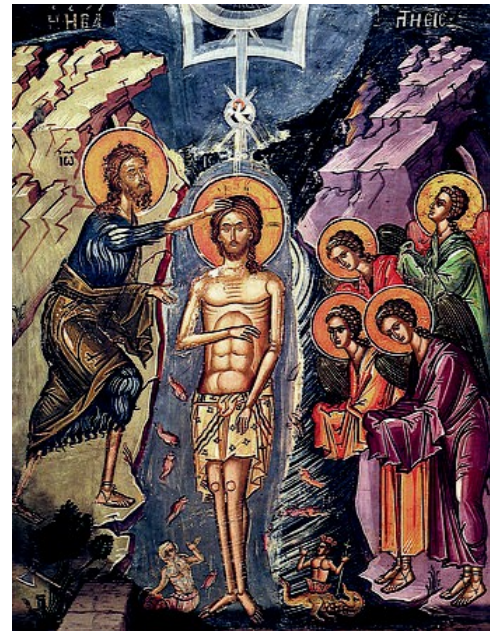
And as after the darkness of night all creatures long for the light and strive with desire to receive the first rays of the rising sun, so do we turn the illuminated eye of our mind toward the Theophany, desiring to receive the comforting rays of the Divine economy of our salvation, redeemed by the merciful Word of God the Father—and delight in them.

As a creature constricted by the cold of winter greedily meets the spring, which looses the bonds of cold, and again finds harmonious vivification, so do we, vivified by the hope of salvation, with our hearts receive peace shining forth from the baptized Lord—and we delight in Him!

As during the summer heat the thirsting soil drinks in with a thousand lips the rain falling from the sky, so do we with every desire of our souls receive all the strength that is ready to pour upon us from the Spirit descending in the form of a dove—and we delight in it!

Why should we even invite ourselves to this? For, aren’t we all led into the economy of salvation? Shouldn’t we all therefore be enlightened, and conciliated, and enlivened? But O! When has it been so? Once the Lord, recalling John the Baptist, said reproachfully to the Jews, He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light (Jn. 5:35).[1] Every year in our holy church the Lord brings also to us the light of His Theophany before John in the Jordan. Doesn’t He say to us through this, “Here is the burning and shining light!” Make sure that that you be willing to rejoice only in his light while it is shining.

Be careful, brethren, for you walk in danger![2] (Eph. 5:15). Doesn’t the deceptive call of the enemy of our salvation at times seductively strike our ears?



The Epistle Reading

Acts 19:1-8

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

Veprat e Apostujve 19:1-8

Edhe kur ishte Apolloi në Korint, Pavli, pasi shkoi nëpër anët e sipërme, erdhi në Efes; edhe si gjeti disa nxënës, u tha atyre: A morët Frymë të Shenjtë, kur besuat? Edhe ata i thanë: Por as nuk kemi dëgjuar në ka Frymë të Shenjtë. Edhe ai u tha atyre: Në se pra u pagëzuar? Edhe ata i thanë: Në pagëzimin e Joanit. Edhe Pavli tha: Joani pagëzoi pagëzim pendimi, duke i thënë popullit t'i besojnë atij që do të vinte pas atij, domethënë Jisu Krishtit. Edhe ata si dëgjuan, u pagëzuan në emrin e Zotit Jisu. Edhe si vuri Pavli duart mbi ata, erdhi Fryma e Shenjtë mbi ta, dhe flisnin gjuhë e profetizonin. Edhe gjithë këta ishin rreth dymbëdhjetë burra. Edhe si hyri në sinagogë, u fliste me guxim, duke kuvenduar tre muaj me radhë e duke i bindur për punët e mbretërisë së Perëndisë.

Деяния 19:1-8

Во время пребывания Аполлоса в Коринфе Павел, пройдя верхние страны, прибыл в Ефес и, найдя [там] некоторых учеников, сказал им: приняли ли вы Святаго Духа, уверовав? Они же сказали ему: мы даже и не слышали, есть ли Дух Святой. Он сказал им: во что же вы крестились? Они отвечали: во Иоанново крещение. Павел сказал: Иоанн крестил крещением покаяния, говоря людям, чтобы веровали в Грядущего по нем, то есть во Христа Иисуса. Услышав это, они крестились во имя Господа Иисуса, и, когда Павел возложил на них руки, нисшел на них Дух Святой, и они стали говорить [иными] языками и пророчествовать. Всех их было человек около двенадцати. Придя в синагогу, он необязанно проповедывал три месяца, беседуя и удостоверая о Царствии Божиим.

Tone 5

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. *(Ps. 88:1-2)*

V. For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens. *(Ps. 88:3)*

Tone 5

V. Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. *(Ps. 96:12)*

Continued from page 2



The Jordan River near Bethabara

False wisdom says: "Come to me, I have the light." But it does not have the light, only a phantom light, and those who listen to it call light darkness and darkness light.

The world says: "Come to me, and I will give you peace!" But it has no peace, only a phantom peace, and those who are lured by it and discover the lie only too late reproachfully condemn it saying, "Peace! Peace! And where is peace?"

The prince of the world promises wide berth and life, and power and pleasure. But he has neither power, nor freedom, nor pleasure—only a phantom of these, and those who are seduced by them can only call themselves alive, free, and satisfied, while in fact they are wearied slaves, tormented by deprivation.

Continued on page 4

The Gospel Reading

John 1:29-34

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water." And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Joanit 1:29-34

Të nesërmen Joani sheh Jisuin duke ardhur tek ai, dhe thotë: Ja Qengji i Perëndisë, që ngre mëkatin e botës. Ky është ai, për të cilin unë thashë: Pas meje vjen një njeri, i cili është më i lartë se unë, sepse ishte përpara meje. Edhe unë s'e njoha; po që t'i shfaqet Izraelit, për këtë erdha unë duke pagëzuar me ujë. Edhe Joani dëshmoi, duke thënë se pashë Frymën duke zbritur nga qielli si pëllumb, edhe ndenji mbi të. Edhe unë nuk e njoha; por ai që më dërgoi të pagëzoj me ujë, ai më tha: Ai mbi të cilin të shohësh Frymën duke zbritur e duke qëndruar mbi të, ky është ai që pagëzon me Frymë të Shenjtë. Edhe unë pashë e dëshmova se ky është i Biri i Perëndisë.

От Иоанна 1:29-34

На другой день видит Иоанн идущего к нему Иисуса и говорит: вот Агнец Божий, Который берет [на Себя] грех мира. Сей есть, о Котором я сказал: за мною идет Муж, Который стал впереди меня, потому что Он был прежде меня. Я не знал Его; но для того пришел крестить в воде, чтобы Он явлен был Израилю. И свидетельствовал Иоанн, говоря: я видел Духа, сходящего с неба, как голубя, и пребывающего на Нем. Я не знал Его; но Пославший меня крестить в воде сказал мне: на Кого увидишь Духа сходящего и пребывающего на Нем, Тот есть крестящий Духом Святым. И я видел и засвидетельствовал, что Сей есть Сын Божий.

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos,
more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts.

No tongue knows how to praise thee worthily, O Theotokos;
even angels are overcome with awe praising thee.

But since thou art good, accept our faith;
for thou knowest our love inspired by God!
Thou art the defender of Christians, and we magnify thee.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Continued from page 3

Hasten, brethren, to acquire the skill of discerning all of this in the light of the Theophany and do not be lured by what is only called light, and peace, and power but is not. Strive instead ever harder towards the One Who is the way, the truth, and the life, also righteousness, and illumination, and deliverance.

Well, we have almost gotten to judgment and self-condemnation. What is there to be done? That is how the Lord wants it to be. He has ordered that the Church brightly celebrate His Theophany, and wills that each of us enter into the joy of the feast only through the judgment of conscience. Whoever has tasted the gifts that are the cause of the Church's present celebration will rejoice; but whoever has not tasted them—first taste them, and then you will rejoice. Amen.

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		
<p>Newly Departed Gregory Newly Departed Alexander Newly Departed Stephen, Newly Departed Miriam, Newly Departed Theodore</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p>January 7 – 13 John Rubis (N) Sotir Vesho (B)</p> <p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Llukan Dylgjeri – health Michael Mogilevich - health</p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Church Lectionary</u></p> <p><u>Today</u> Acts 19:1-8 John 1:29-34</p> <p><u>Monday</u> James 2:14-26 Luke 17:20-25</p> <p><u>Tuesday</u> James 3:1-10 Luke 17:26-37</p> <p><u>Wednesday</u> James 3:11-4:6 Luke 18:15-17, 26-30</p> <p><u>Thursday</u> 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Matthew 11:27-30 James 4:7-5:9 Luke 18:31-34</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>		
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Nina, Sophia, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Llukan, Marina, Sophia, Fr. Maxwell, Donna, Christina, Anastasia, Mary, Martin, Elena, Tatiana</p>		
<i>Prayers In General</i>		
<p>The community of Ss. Peter & Paul Miami, Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe, Marsha, Ann, Lilly, Stephen, Gela, Gabriel Joseph, Lombrino, Kondakciu</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the conflicts in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East.</p> <p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities in Ukraine, Armenia, and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish in these places, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p><u>January</u> 07 14 21 28</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><u>Friday</u> 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10 Luke 19:12-28</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> Ephesians 6:10-17 Matthew 4:1-11 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23 Luke 10:19-21</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p> <p>Jan 07: Genesis 25-28 Jan 08: Genesis 29-32 Jan 09: Genesis 33-36 Jan 10: Genesis 37-40 Jan 11: Genesis 41-44 Jan 12: Genesis 45-48 Jan 13: Genesis 49-50</p>

Christ IS Baptized

BY FR. BARNABAS POWELL



All of us come to moments in our lives that turn out to be crossroads in our future. Many times we can see these moments coming, like a marriage proposal, or that first purchase of a home, or career advancement, some (maybe even many) of these moments sneak up on us and surprise us with their importance even years after the event. I can think of several moments in my life that, looking back, had a profound effect on the trajectory of my life. As I look at these moments, I am filled with all kinds of emotions: gratitude, shame, regret, fear, joy, and everything in between. What about your life?

What were the crossroads in your life? Successes? Mistakes? Milestones? Wrong turns? I imagine all of these and more ring a bell for you. But there are moments in history that are turning points for the whole human race, and that's what we are confronting today.

Look at our lesson today in Matthew 3:13-17:

At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

This Feast is actually one of the oldest feasts in the Church, maybe even the oldest commemoration among us Christians besides the Resurrection. In fact, and this may surprise you, the Feast of Theophany is a higher ranking Feast than Christmas and history tells us that the Nativity Feast and Theophany were all celebrated together initially. And that makes perfect sense in light of the theology preserved by these ancient celebrations. What theology, you ask? Very good, a perfect question.

The unique and controversial theology that God took on Flesh so that Flesh (and all creation) could be deified. A big word, I know. But with the dual rise of both secularism and Islamic theology in our day, our children are going to need to be prepared to face an increasingly hostile environment for the Christian Faith with serious and robust, and purposeful Orthodoxy! And that starts with the true identity of Jesus Christ!

In this passage, we discover that very identity!

When St. John the Baptist, inspired by the Holy Spirit, recognizes the Lord, he rightly declares "I need to be baptized by you." St. John sees what many today refuse to see; Jesus is not just a great teacher. He isn't just a powerful prophet. Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world! St. John's insight causes him to see himself as needing Christ first and foremost.

But the Lord's response reveals another aspect of the Lord's identity. He wants to "fulfill all righteousness." The hymns of today's feast show that creation longed for its Creator to enter into the water so that the water could be restored to its original purpose: not just to satisfy physical thirst or clean physical bodies or refresh physical hungers, but to go further and to actually make the Creator "present" to Creation. Jesus comes to not just tell us about the Father but to "show" us the Father. Jesus comes and enters into the River Jordan so that all creation could be made what it was intended to be: A Divine Mystery of God's presence and love!

Finally, the dove and the Voice from heaven reconfirm all this. The dove symbolizes the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Voice of the Father witnesses to His Son's identity: "This IS my beloved Son!" And because Jesus is beloved of the Father, so we, too, connected to Christ are also invited to experience being beloved by the Father through Christ!

Today, as we celebrate this Timeless Feast, let's truly celebrate the deep and profound theology we Orthodox declare. God has become Flesh for our sake so that our flesh can be grafted into His eternal and Divine grace. In a world increasingly gripped by confusions of identity and a loss of knowing the "faith, once, for all, delivered to the saints" being Orthodox on Purpose has never been more important!

<https://faithencouraged.org/christ-is-baptized/>

December Events	
<p>January 07 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy 10 – 12:00pm 6th Hour 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets 14 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy 17 – NO 6TH HOUR 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets 19 – 6:00pm Fun Night 21 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy 24 – 12:00pm 6th Hour 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets 28 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Education Sunday</i> 31 – 12:00pm 6th Hour 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets</p> <p>Can't join us in person? We stream our services on our YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxhurch01810</p> <p>Want to donate by Venmo? St Peter St Paul Alb Orth Ch James Schaeffer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">• • •</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">DESIRE AND EFFORT MUST COME FROM YOU. GOD WILL PROVIDE THE POWER AND THE RESULT. <small>—ELDER PAISIOS OF MT. ATHOS</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">• • •</p>

PRAYER AS A FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

But know that by himself, left to his own devices, in the work of salvation without the grace of God, a Christian can't even think anything good; but all his satisfaction is from God. He especially doesn't know how and for what he should pray; and only the Holy Spirit instructs him about what he should pray for, and intercedes for him with unutterable groanings (Rom. 8:26). Knowing all this, a Christian turns to the Holy Spirit with the prayer "O Heavenly King" and the rest.

Having invoked the Holy Spirit into his heart and soul, purified from every defilement of flesh and spirit by His grace, and placed by Him on the path of salvation, the Christian thus

establishes the ascent to God in his heart, raises his heart and mind to Him; and having renounced all things earthly and ascended, as it were, to the first heaven, sends up the thrice-holy hymn to God, once heard by a boy who was enraptured from Earth to Heaven: “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal” (3x).

Having sung the angelic Trisagion hymn, the Christian, aware of himself not as a heavenly holy angel, but an earthly sinner, boldly goes further, higher, closer to God with his mind and heart, and ascends as it were to the second heaven, tremulously, with reverence, crying out: “Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit;” and deeply aware of his sinfulness, his iniquity and his infirmities, he prays with a strong cry and tears, or, at least, he should pray: “O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us,” and the rest.

Not stopping there, with the prayer: “Lord, have mercy” (3x), a Christian aspires higher, with praise in his heart and on his lips; with “Glory, both now,” he mentally ascends as if to the third heaven, before the face of the Lord God Himself, eternally abiding in glory unspeakable, incessantly hymned by the archangels, angels, and all the saints of God; he ascends to this immeasurable height with a golden key from the very heart of God, so to speak, with the Lord’s Prayer, given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ; and with a living, sincere faith in the merits of the Cross of the Redeemer of mankind, having crossed himself, with filial boldness, he prays to the Heavenly Father: “Our Father, Who art in Heaven...”

Thus enraptured to the third heaven, like the holy Apostle Paul, and realizing he was sprinkled with the blood of the Son of God, embraced by the favor of God the Father and quickened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Christian again cries out from the depths of his soul: “Lord, have mercy (12x). Glory to the Father and to the Son, and the Holy Spirit...” And knowing Who gave him such grace, he falls into the dust before his Savior, calling out to Him with all the strength and feelings of his spirit: “Come, let us worship” (3x).

Then, calmly, consciously, with deep feeling, he reads the prayers in order, beginning with Psalm 50 and the Creed, in fulfillment of the first Gospel commandment: Repent and believe in the Gospel (Mk. 1:14).

This is not only at the beginning of our prayers, but also in the middle, and more than once—nine times a day, and more than twenty times during Great Lent; and this is so that our attention, which sometimes weakens, might be constantly kept at a prayerful height.

Such is the meaning and significance of the entrance prayers and usual beginning! The first gathers our scattered thoughts and feelings and focuses them on the incarnate economy of our salvation, without which no prayer is conceivable; and the second establishes the ascent to God in our heart, which is absolutely necessary for proper and saving prayer.

O, my beloved, if only you would delve into the meaning of our prayers, understand their meaning and acquire the spirit of prayer! Then, inspired by fasting and prayer, we would irresistibly strive for God; then we wouldn’t have this unfortunate lethargy, dullness, laziness, or unwillingness to pray. On the contrary, then we would be burning in spirit and would strive for prayer with unquenchable thirst. In a word, then the words of the Psalmist would be realized in us: As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted for God, the mighty, the living; when shall I come, and appear before the face of God? (Ps. 41:1-2).

St. Justin (Polyansky) of Ufa and Menzelinsk