

Sts. Peter and Paul Albanian Orthodox Church

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

Rev. Nicholas Dellermann (Rector) (860) 861-7468 - Very Rev. Dennis Rhodes

fnicholas490@aol.com - <http://sspeterpaulphila.org/>

January 3, 2021

30th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: FOREFEAST OF THE THEOPHANY
HOLY PROPHET MALACHI
TONE 5

Today 10:00am Divine Liturgy
Tue. 05 7:00pm Vespers Liturgy
*Theophany & The
Great Blessing of the
Waters*
Wed. 06 7:15pm Bible Study
Sun. 10 10:00am Divine Liturgy

One must be baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian to receive Holy Communion. Guests are invited to receive a blessing at the chalice and partake of the post-Communion bread (Antidoron).

Fast Days: Strict fast on Tuesday and Friday.(fasting from meat, fish, eggs, dairy, oil, wine and hard spirits as you are able.)

**Troparion – Tone 4
(Forefeast)**

*Prepare, O Zebulon,
and adorn thyself, O Naphtali!
River Jordan, cease flowing,
and receive with joy the Master
coming to be baptized!
Adam, rejoice with our first Mother,
and do not hide yourselves as you did
of old in Paradise;
for having seen you naked,
He has appeared to clothe you with
the first garment.
Christ has appeared to renew all
creation.*

**Kontakion – Tone 4
(Prophet Malachi)**

*Endowed with the gift of
prophecy, O Malachi,
thou didst clearly proclaim
the saving coming of Christ to
the world.
His brightness has brought
light to the whole universe.*

Prayers for those in our Sts. Peter and Paul community (parishioners, family, friends) can be listed for remembrance in our litanies during the Liturgy. Feel free to give names to Fr. Nicholas - please indicate how each person listed is connected to us (parishioner, family, friend, etc.), as well as why we are praying for them (health, memory, travel, etc.).

Confessions can be heard by appointment. If you need, I will come to you during the week. Please do not hesitate to call for a time to drop by the church or to have me visit you.

Remembrances for both the living and the dead during the prayers of preparation of the Eucharistic Lamb and during the Augmented Litany should be given the week before the desired remembrance so that the names can be put into the bulletin and given to the Deacons for the prayers. Any names of the living that are not marked as sick or traveling will be listed under general prayers.

SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK

Church Lectionary

Today

2 Timothy 4:5-8
Mark 1:1-8

Monday

Hebrews 11:17-23, 27-31
Luke 17:20-25

Tuesday

1 Corinthians 9:19-27
Luke 3:1-18

Wednesday

1 Corinthians 10:1-4
Mark 1:9-11

Thursday

James 1:19-27
Luke 18:31-34
Acts 19:1-8
John 1:29-34

Friday

James 2:1-13
Luke 19:12-28

Saturday

Ephesians 6:10-17
Matthew 4:1-11
Colossians 1:3-6
Luke 10:19-21

Reading the Bible in a Year

Jan 03: Genesis 9-12
Jan 04: Genesis 13-16
Jan 05: Genesis 17-20
Jan 06: Genesis 21-24
Jan 07: Genesis 25-28
Jan 08: Genesis 29-32
Jan 09: Genesis 33-36

God's grace always assists those who struggle, but this does not mean that a struggler is always in the position of a victor. Sometimes in the arena the wild animals did not touch the righteous ones, but by no means were they all preserved untouched.

What is important is not victory or the position of a victor, but rather the labor of striving towards God and devotion to Him.

- St. John Maximovitch

Fr Tomas Hopko **on the Blessing of the Waters**

from *The Orthodox Faith* series

Sometimes people think that the blessing of water and the practice of drinking it and sprinkling it over everyone and everything is a "paganism" which has falsely entered the Christian Church. We know, however, that this ritual was practiced by the People of God in the Old Testament, and that in the Christian Church it has a very special and important significance. It is the faith of Christians that since the Son of God has taken human flesh and has been immersed in the streams of the Jordan, all matter is sanctified and made pure in Him, purged of its death-dealing qualities inherited from the devil and the wickedness of men. In the Lord's epiphany all creation becomes good again, indeed "very good," the way that God Himself made it and proclaimed it to be in the beginning when "the

Health of the Parish



\$15,000.00

\$10,000.00

\$5,000.00

Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen 1.2) and when the "Breath of Life" was breathing in man and in everything that God made (Gen 1.30; 2.7).

The world and everything in it is indeed "very good" (Gen 1.31) and when it becomes polluted, corrupted and dead, God saves it once more by effecting the "new creation" in Christ, his divine Son and our Lord by the grace of the Holy Spirit (Gal 6.15). This is what is celebrated on Epiphany, particularly in the Great Blessing of Water. The consecration of the waters on this feast places the entire world—through its "prime element" of watering the perspective of the cosmic creation, sanctification, and glorification of the Kingdom of God in Christ and the Spirit. It tells us that man and the world were indeed created and saved in order to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3.19), the "fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1.22). It tells us that Christ, in Who in "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily," is and shall be truly "all, and in all" (Col 2.9, 3.11). It tells us as well that the "new heavens and the new earth" which God has promised through His prophets and apostles (Is 66.2; 2 Peter 3.13; Rev 21.1) are truly "with us" already now in the mystery of Christ and His Church.

Thus, the sanctification and sprinkling of the Epiphany water is no pagan

January Events

January

03 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

05 – 7:00pm Vespertal Liturgy & Great Blessing of
Water for the Feast of Theophany

06 – 7:15pm Bible Study

10 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

13 – 7:15pm Bible Study via Google Meet

17 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

20 – 7:15pm Bible Study via Google Meet

24 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy

27 – 7:15pm Bible Study via Google Meet

ritual. It is the expression of the most central fact of the Christian vision of man, his life and his world. It is the liturgical testimony that the vocation and destiny of creation is to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3.19).

You can find this and much more information about our faith here:

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith>

Children's Word

2 Timothy 4:5-8 (Epistle, Sunday Before Theophany)

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Mark 1:1-8 (Gospel, Sunday Before Theophany)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The best bath ever

You've probably taken lots of baths in your life. But do you remember the best, most important one you ever took? Probably not, if you were baptized as a baby.

This week, we celebrate Theophany, one of the greatest feasts of our Church! That's the day our Lord, Jesus Christ, was baptized in the Jordan River. The Bible tells us that Jesus was baptized, and then He started his ministry. He started telling people about God. He started doing miracles— like helping blind people to see, healing sick people, feeding hungry people, and even raising dead people so they could live again! Christ's baptism was at the beginning of all of this.

Did you know that when YOU were baptized, you started YOUR service to the Church too? You haven't been preaching and doing miracles, but even as a kid, you are a part of Church, and you have work to do! When you pray, ask God to show you how you can help Him and His Church.

In the epistle today, we hear about how Saint Paul did the work God wanted him to do. He writes, "So there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord...will award all who have loved His appearing." Saint Paul tells us that when we do the Lord's work, God will reward us too! What could be better?!

SAINT GENEVIEVE OF PARIS "GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD"

Have you ever heard a grown-up make a prediction about a kid? Maybe a little kid who loves to play with blocks or Legos, might hear somebody say, "He's going to be an engineer!" Usually those predictions don't mean anything, do they? Kids change!

But when Saint Genevieve was 8 years old, a bishop kissed her on the head and said, "She will be great in the sight of God." He said many people would become Christian because of her.

That was a prediction that really did come true! St. Genevieve lived during the 400s, when France was really changing from being pagan (idol worshipping) to becoming Christian. And St. Genevieve was a big part of that change!

Saint Genevieve lived a life very close to God. She became a nun, and she led some other nuns to pray for the city of Paris, France (where they lived). God listened to their prayers again and again, and He saved Paris from awful invaders when they prayed. The people of France asked Genevieve to help them, because they knew she had a gift from God. She could work miracles because of her closeness to God.

Saint Genevieve lived 1,500 years ago, but she is still alive in Christ! That means she will still listen to our prayers today. Would you like to ask her for anything?

We celebrate St. Genevieve today, January 3rd.

A New Year And A Renewed Obedience

Fr. Barnabas Powell

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

“Do as I say, not as I do!” I remember thinking “Well, that’s not very convincing.” How can someone who refuses to follow their own advice have any credibility at all? My mom drove that point home to me as I watched her follow her convictions when it would have been temporarily easier for her to “bend” her convictions to bring her some temporary comfort. She just pressed ahead with what she believed and that lesson has stuck with me my whole life. To this day, my goal is always to press out the implications of my convictions to test whether they are true or not.

Oh, Happy New Year! (I almost forgot!) And what a perfect time to be confronted with a moment to do an internal inventory of our unchangeable beliefs and convictions. This is a good time to stop and evaluate what convictions we will take with us into this new year. I hope and pray you are scheduling periods of time when you do this interior work, because if you don’t do this from time to time, you are going to find yourself in places you never intended. It is the purposeful living of life that produces the best living!

Look at our Lesson on this New Year’s Day in Luke 2:20-21, 40-52:

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day’s journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously.” And he said to them, “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

Two scenes are given to us to teach us about priorities, faithfulness, and purposeful living.

The First Scene sees our Lord, small and helpless, being carried to the Temple for the rite of circumcision. Imagine the Lawgiver obeying the Law He gave to Moses! And obedience abounds in this scene as the Lord is named Jesus just as the angel commanded Joseph! There’s a hint here for you and me as to the power of obedience in faithfulness.

The Second Scene is even more amazing as we see the Holy Family going to Jerusalem for the Lord’s “bar mitzvah.” And while He is there, He enters His Temple and astonishes the elders there. The family leaves without Him and then goes back in a panic to find Him teaching in His Temple. But watch; Jesus, after reminding His mother and foster father of His true purpose, leaves His Temple and returns with His earthly family in obedience. If the Lawgiver leaves us this kind of example, shouldn’t we do the same?

Today, as we begin a New Year, stop, even for a moment, and inventory your unchangeable convictions. What are they? Do they include your unwavering faithfulness to a purposeful practice of your faith? A whole new year lays before you; choices, convictions, plans, and events. Your convictions will shape everyone of these realities and make you (or “unmake” you) into the person you were created to be. So, Happy New Year and let’s practice being Orthodox on Purpose in 2021!

2-е Тимофею 4:5-8

Но ты будь бдителен во всем, переноси скорби, совершай дело благовестника, исполняй служение твое. Ибо я уже становлюсь жертвою, и время моего отшествия настало. Подвигом добрым я подвизался, течение совершил, веру сохранил; а теперь готовится мне венец правды, который даст мне Господь, праведный Судия, в день оный; и не только мне, но и всем, возлюбившим явление Его.

От Марка 1:1-8

Начало Евангелия Иисуса Христа, Сына Божия, как написано у пророков: вот, Я посылаю Ангела Моего пред лицем Твоим, который приготовит путь Твой пред Тобою. Глас вопиющего в пустыне: приготовьте путь Господу, прямыми сделайте стези Ему. Явился Иоанн, крестя в пустыне и проповедуя крещение покаяния для прощения грехов. И выходили к нему вся страна Иудейская и Иерусалимляне, и крестились от него все в реке Иордане, исповедуя грехи свои. Иоанн же носил одежду из верблюжьего волоса и пояс кожаный на чреслах своих, и ел акриды и дикий мед. И проповедывал, говоря: идет за мною Сильнейший меня, у Которого я недостоин, наклонившись, развязать ремень обуви Его; я крестил вас водою, а Он будет крестить вас Духом Святым.

2 Timoteut 4:5-8

Por ti rri syçelë në çdo gjë, duro vuajtjet, kryeje punën e ungjilltarit, përmbushe plotësisht shërbesën tënde. Sa për mua, po derdhem si ofertë pije, dhe koha e nisjes sime arriti. Luftën e mirë e luftova, e përfundova vrapimin, e ruajta besimin. Pas kësaj më pret gati kurora e drejtësisë që Perëndia, gjykatësi i drejtë, do të ma japë atë ditë, dhe jo vetëm mua, por edhe gjithë atyre që presin me dashuri të shfaqurit e tij.

Marku 1:1-8

Fillimi i Ungjillit të Jezu Krishtit, Birit të Perëndisë. Ashtu si është shkruar tek profetët: “Ja, unë po dërgoj lajmëtarin tim para fytyrës tënde, i cili do të përgatit udhën tënde përpara teje. Ka një zë që bërtet në shkretëtirë: "Përgatitni udhën e Zotit, drejtoni shtigjet e tij".” Gjoni erdhi në shkretëtirë duke pagëzuar dhe duke predikuar një pagëzim pendese për faljen e mëkateve. Dhe gjithë vendi i Judës dhe ata nga Jeruzalemi shkonin tek ai, dhe pagëzoheshin të gjithë nga ai në lumin Jordan, duke rrëfyer mëkatet e tyre. Por Gjoni ishte i veshur me lesh deveje, mbante një brez lëkure përreth ijëve dhe ushqej me karkaleca dhe me mjaltë të egër. Ai predikonte duke thënë: “Pas meje po vjen një që është më i fortë se unë. Unë nuk jam i denjë as të ulem para tij për t’i zgjidhur lidhësat e sandaleve të tij. Unë ju pagëzova me ujë, ndërsa ai do t’ju pagëzojë me Frymën e Shenjtë.”