

Holy Scripture Lessons for the Day

Epistle Lesson: Second Epistle to Timothy 4:5-8

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Gospel Reading: St. Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight' John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

THE EPIPHANY [THEOPHANY] OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

When our Lord reached thirty years from His physical birth, He began His teaching and salvific work. He Himself signified this "beginning of the beginning" by His baptism in the Jordan river. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "The beginning of the world - water; the beginning of the Good News - Jordan." At the time of the baptism of the Lord in water, that mystery was declared to the world: that mystery which was prophesied in the Old Testament; the mystery about which in ancient Egypt and India was only fabled; i.e., the mystery of the Divine Holy Trinity. The Father was revealed to the sense of hearing; the Spirit was revealed to the sense of sight, and in addition to these, the Son was revealed to the sense of touch. The Father uttered His witness about the Son, the Son was baptized in the water, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove hovered above the water. When John the Baptist witnessed and said about Christ, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world" (St. John 1:29), and when John immersed and baptized the Lord in the Jordan, the mission of Christ in the world and the path of our salvation was shown. That is to say: The Lord took upon Himself the sins of mankind and died under them [immersion] and became alive again [the coming out of the water]; and we must die as the old sinful man and become alive again as cleansed, renewed and regenerated. This is the Savior and this is the path of salvation. The Feast of the Epiphany [Theophany in Greek] is also called the Feast of Illumination. For us, the event in the Jordan river illuminates, by manifesting to us God as Trinity, consubstantial and undivided. That is one way. And, the second: everyone of us through baptism in water is illumined by this, that we become adopted by the Father of Lights through the merits of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit.

From the Prologue of Ochrid by St. Nicholas Velimirovich

Devote yourself to stillness and know that I am God - Psalm 45:10 (LXX)

Archangel Gabriel Greek Orthodox Church

Traditional Worship for Modern Life

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PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, 3 January
Orthros Eothinon 8
Apolytikion Tone 5

Sunday Before the Theophany
9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11:15 AM Church School
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour—Cutting of the Vasilopita

Monday, 4 January

Synaxis of the 70 Apostles

Tuesday, 5 January

Eve of the Theophany of the Lord
Strict Fast Day
8 AM Royal Hours
10 AM Vespers and the Liturgy of St. Basil
5:30 PM Compline

Wednesday, 6 January

Theophany of the Lord
No Fast Day
8 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
10 AM Great Blessing of Waters
5:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Thursday, 7 January

Synaxis of St. John the Baptizer
8 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos

Friday, 8 January

Afterfeast of the Theophany
Strict Fast Day

Saturday, 9 January

Saturday After the Theophany of the Lord
9 AM Great Water Blessing of West Bay at Great Lakes Maritime Academy Pier
11:30 AM Youth Bowling Event
4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Sunday, 10 January
Orthros Eothinon 9
Apolytikion Tone 6

Sunday After the Theophany
9 AM Orthros and Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11:15 AM Church School
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour



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Service of the Vasilopita This Morning. Our parish will celebrate the cutting of the vasilopita in honour of St. Basil this morning in the community centre. St. Basil's Day (1 January) saw our church community celebrating the ritual of the cutting of the special St. Basil's bread. A Greek custom, the bread is a special formulation used only at this time of year. Baked into the bread is a coin. As the bread is cut, everyone is in suspense as to who will receive the piece with the coin in it. Folk customs teach that whoever receives the coin will have good luck and special blessings throughout the year. Receiving coins at our January 1st celebration were: Karen Hadley (in baptism Vasiliki) and Donna Psaros. Perhaps you will be the lucky one today? Join us for this fun filled custom. *Καλη Χρονια!*

Vasilopites were baked by our parishioners, some of whom attended a class on the topic provided by our religious education department last Wednesday evening.

Youth General Topic Discussion and Pizza Party Planned. Our religious education department has planned a general topic discussion that will take place within the context of a pizza party for our youth. This will take place on Saturday, 9 January following the out-of-doors blessing of water at the Great Lakes Maritime Academy pier. After the blessing junior high and high school aged youth are invited to join us back at the church community center for some pizza and an open forum on current topics as well as an opportunity to deal with "tween" and "teen" issues. Youth may bring their friends and it is not necessary to be Orthodox to attend. On hand for the forum will be Fr. Iakovos and various other adults from our church school. Following lunch we'll car pool to the bowling alley for an afternoon of fun and bowling. Parents are encouraged to make their young people available for the blessing of the bay as well as this event that provides an opportunity for the young people to engage our priest on current issues that affect them. For more information, contact the parish office at 668-6583.

Fellowship Hour Hosts Needed for 1st Quarter 2010. The fellowship hour following the Holy Services is an excellent community building exercise. It provides an opportunity for us to interact on a social level to continue building bridges between one another and galvanize our unity as a parish. These opportunities are important to our longevity and parish help. While sometimes they can devolve into "gossip sessions" or "cliques" for the most part they are healthy occasions for people to integrate into the community. Over the years these events have been hosted by one or two families and consist of providing some kind of sweet or savory to enjoy with coffee or tea. These foods are not meant to be a substitute for breakfast, but rather some nourishment to help people who have been fasting to receive the Holy Communion have some sustenance in order to get home and have a proper meal. Some people have used the fellowship hour to honour family members or to celebrate family events with the parish. The reality, however, is that it is not necessary to cater a meal. As we head into Great Lent (14 February) the coffee hour becomes even more simplified. A sign up sheet has been placed in the community centre and people are encouraged to pair up and sign up for a Sunday. For more information on this project, please contact Fr. Iakovos.

Adult Class on Liturgics to Begin 11 January. Our religious education department will be offering a three class series dealing with the liturgical life of the Church and the sanctification of time beginning one

week from tomorrow. The class will be held in our community centre and will begin at 6 PM winding up at 8 PM. Classes are scheduled for: 11 January, 1 February and 22 February. Topics to be covered include: the nature and theory of worship in the Orthodox Church; integration of worship into daily life; examination of liturgical "building blocks" and understanding their use in the structure of services; understanding the liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church; a survey analysis of the Holy Liturgy and the Mystery of Holy Communion. There is no particular text for the course and no required reading. There will be handouts and materials available for those that would like to have them. This class will follow the same format as other classes successfully offered in the Fall semester. Join us to expand your appreciation of your faith.

Father Arseny Class to Meet 25 January. Our book discussion group will finally have it's first meeting to address the book on Father Arseny at 6 PM on Monday, 25 January. Everyone is expected to have read the book BEFORE coming to class so that they can engage in a discussion of it. Books are available free of charge through our bookstore by a grant provided by one of our parishioners. Please see Fr. Iakovos to get a book if you do not already have one.

The Dennis museum at Northwestern Michigan College is hosting an exhibit on Russian gulags opening on 16 January and running until 20 February. Fr. Iakovos is working with Leon Lysaght of our parish to bring in Dr. Peter Bouteneff to give one or two lectures tying in with the book and the exhibit. Dr. Bouteneff is the son of Vera Bouteneff who translated the Fr. Arseny book. He is also on the faculty of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY.

Frostbite Food Drive Comes Early This Year. Our neighbors at Father Fred will be sponsoring the 16th Annual Frostbite Food Drive in conjunction with a promotion at Meijer beginning 15 January and wrapping up on Sunday, 24 January. Volunteers will be stationed at the Garfield Plaza in front of Agave Mexican Grill ready to receive your donations of food and cash from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. to 6 PM on weekends. Persons interested in volunteering should speak with Fr. Iakovos

Don't Throw Out Those Old Church Calendars. If you have a 2009 Ecclesiastical Calendar you are asked to please return it to the church. We will cut out all of the icons and use them on church school craft projects. The balance of the calendar will be recycled. Please help provide craft materials for our education programme by bringing in your calendars by next Sunday.

2010 Parish Council to be Installed Next Sunday. With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas, we will be installing our new parish council for 2010 next Sunday, ahead of their reorganization meeting which will take place on the following Wednesday. Returning council members for 2010 are: John Batsakis, Karen Kain, Stephanie Long, Doug Partlo, Theresa Patterson, Bob Underwood and Judy Weston. New for 2010 to the council are Andrew Foster and Nikki Sobkowski. After taking the affirmation of office, council members will have a meeting in order to reorganize electing President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary for the year as well as assigning various portfolios to council members. Please pray for our incoming council members, that Our Lord will support them as they apply their energies to this important service to the Church.