

SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR THE DAY

Epistle Lesson: St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy 4:5-8

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill 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 Lesson: 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: every one of us through baptism in water is illumined by this, that we become adopted by the Father of Lights through the goodwill of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit.



TRAVERSE CITY ORTHODOX MISSION

A Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit

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Sunday, 4 January 2009

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✠ PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS ✠

- Sunday 4 January** **Sunday Before the Theophany of the Lord. Synaxis of the Holy Apostles of the Seventy.**
9 AM Orthros
10 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11:15 AM Trisagion for the Repose of the Soul of +Phyllis Moutsatson
11:30 AM Vasilopita Service and Fellowship Hour to Follow
- Monday 5 January** **Forefeast of the Theophany of the Lord.**
8:00 AM Royal Hours
10:00 Vespers and Liturgy of St. Basil the Great and Water Blessing
5:30 PM Great Compline
- Tuesday 6 January** **Feast of the Theophany of the Lord. St. Theophan the Recluse.**
9:00 AM Orthros
10:00 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11:15 AM Great Blessing of Water
5:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers for the Feast of the Synaxis of St. John
- Wednesday 7 January** **Synaxis of St. John the Baptizer.**
Fast Day—Fish Allowed
9:00 AM Orthros
10:00 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
- Thursday 8 January** **St. George the Chozebite.**
- Friday 9 January** **St. Polyeucthos the Martyr of Meletine.**
Strict Fast Day

Saturday 10 January Saturday After Theophany. St. Gregory of Nyssa.
9 AM Out-of-Doors Blessing of Water at Great Lakes Maritime Academy Pier
10:30 AM Youth Discussion Group followed by Lunch at the Church
4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers

Sunday 11 January Sunday After the Theophany of the Lord. Righteous Theodosios.
9 AM Orthros
10 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos
11:15 AM Installation of 2009 Parish Council
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour
4 PM 9th Hour and Vespers (at Petoskey)

Condolences to the Batsakis and Moutsatson Families. Our parish joins in lamenting the loss of Pauline Graphos Batsakis Moutsatson, who passed away on 29 December 2008 at her home. She is the daughter of Helen and Peter Batsakis of blessed memory and sister-in-law to Fran Batsakis of our parish. The funeral service was held at Helm's Funeral Home in Mt. Pleasant just yesterday. Memorial contributions may be made to St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Saginaw.

This morning we offer a trisagion service for the repose of her soul and the comfort of her family. Please remember +Pauline and her extended family in your prayers this week.

Vasilopita Services for St. Basil's Day. 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. This year, the piece of bread reserved for our parish had the coin in it. The Vasilopita used on the feast day was prepared by Rebekah Olechnowicz. Today we will also celebrate this wonderful custom with breads prepared by Antonia Psaros, Karen Kain and Holly Olszewski.

Thanks to all of our Vasilopita bakers for providing these wonderful celebratory breads for our enjoyment! Καλη Χρονια!

2009 Parish Council to be Installed Next Sunday. With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas, we will be installing our new parish council for 2009 next Sunday, ahead of their reorganization meeting which will take place on the following Wednesday. Returning council members for 2009 are: John Batsakis, Karen Kain, Helen Knapp, Stephanie Long, Doug Partlo, Theresa Patterson, Bob Underwood and Judy Weston. New for 2009 to the council is Ray Ealy. 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.

2008 Stewardship Payments are Now Past Due. Persons who have not fulfilled their pledged stewardship obligations for 2008 are encouraged to contact Mrs. Helen Dalbo to make arrangements to complete their pledge for 2008. If done this week, with a check dated 31 December, you may still take this final amount as a charitable deduction on your 2008 taxes (if you itemize). After Wednesday, it will be impossible to do this and have it help your tax position.

Recognizing that economic conditions in the state and the nation are very difficult, it is also understood that there may be some that cannot fulfill their original 2008 pledge. These people are asked to contact Fr. Iakovos at the parish office in order to discuss their situation in confidence. Adjustments will be made to our parish receivables so as to eliminate the outstanding obligation going into the New Year.

Thanks are extended to all of our stewards who have supported the important missionary work of this parish. We look forward to an even more exciting and faith-enriching 2009.

Don't Throw Out Those Old Church Calendars. If you have a 2008 Ecclesiastical Calendar you are asked to please return it to the church so that we can dispose of it properly. 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.

Revised January Calendar Available. Please note that our calendar of services and meetings for January has recently been revised. It was forwarded via e-Mail and is also available in the narthex of the church. Please make sure that you recycle the January calendar dated 27 December and replace it with the revision dated 2 January 2009.

Fr. Iakovos to Make Theological Presentation at St. Francis High School. Our priest has been invited to present to the Senior Theology students at St. Francis Traverse City who are in the midst of course work entitled Major World Religions. Father was invited by Ms. Jan McCall, the instructor of this programme, to make a presentation on the Orthodox Faith to her four classes of seniors. In his talk he was asked to provide them with insight into the Eastern Church; especially highlighting differences and similarities between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic churches. The presentation will be made at classes meeting on Tuesday, 13 January.

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, 10 January immediately 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 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. To wrap up the morning's activities our youth will be treated to a pizza lunch at the community center. 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.