



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JANUARY 13, 2008

Congratulations!

To Maxim and Svetelena on the birth of their new baby boy, Allen Maxim Oganyan, who was born on January 5, 2008 at 7 lbs 14 ozs! May God grant them many years!



SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
Parish Council Meeting

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19TH

6:00p.m. Compline

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20TH SANCTITY OF LIFE SUNDAY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Chrismations
Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour



Do all your work in the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ, and thus shall your fruits be carried up to heaven. A man begins to go astray when he withdraws from humility.

St. Ephraim the Syrian



READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, Jan. 20th

Hours: Jen Alexion
Epistle: Jen Alexion

Sunday, Jan. 27th

Hours: Sandy St. Germain
Epistle: Sandy St. Germain



Parish Council Meeting

Today, Sunday, January 13th, following the Divine Liturgy. This meeting will focus on preparation for the Annual Meeting.

Next Sunday – 3 Chrismations

On Sunday, January 20th, Todd Leasure, Michael McFarland, and Paul St. Germain will be entering the Orthodox Church through Chrismation. The service will begin at 9:00am with the Divine Liturgy to follow. Please be sure to be a little early for this special day.

Baptism of Isabella Georgiana

On Sunday, January 27th, Isabella Georgiana, daughter of Gerald and Camelia Milite, will be baptized following the coffee hour. All are encouraged to attend this great event!

Orthodox 101 – A Class On Our Faith

will resume tomorrow, Monday, January 14th, at 7:00pm at our new church. This class will be the third and final part of our look at Church history: Slavic Christianity, Fall of Byzantium, Turkish Yoke, Missions to North America, Orthodoxy and the West, Jurisdictions in America, Future of Orthodoxy. All three of the Church history classes will be repeated sometime in the near future for those who missed them



Pledge Sheets for 2008

are available for pickup in the back of the church. If you make offerings to help support our Mission, please consider filling out a pledge form. Your pledge: 1) will be kept confidential, 2) will help us budget better for next year, and 3) will help our Mission grow. Should you have any questions about pledging, please speak with Fr. John or Susan Pappas, our treasurer.



The Parish Website

Our website has undergone a graphical "makeover" in honor of our move to Vines Creek. Check it out: orthodoxdelmarva.org.

The 2008 Wall Calendars and Pocket Planners

are available for pickup in the back of the church. If you haven't ordered a calendar or pocket planner, please sign your name to the list and we will order one for you.



The Church Phone

has been transferred to a wireless line but the number remains: 302-537-6055. Should you need to reach Fr. John, please try him at this line or at home: 302-988-1138.

ABOUT THE BAPTISM OF SAINT JOHN

Saint John the Baptist plays one of the most important roles in the history of salvation. He was a man of great fame for his asceticism, spiritual purity, and preaching, and this is witnessed to by the fact that "Jerusalem and all Judea went out to him, and all the region round about Jordan". But he is known primarily for his role as Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord.

As Forerunner, he:

- ❖ comes in the spirit of Elias (see below)
- ❖ preaches repentance for the coming Messiah
- ❖ calls for the bearing of fruit, warning that those who do not bear fruit will be "cut down and cast into the fire"
- ❖ fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah by serving as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight" (Is. 40:3)
- ❖ fulfills the prophecy of Malachi, "Behold, I send My messenger (angel) before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (Mal. 3:1)

As Baptist, he:

- ❖ baptizes for the remission of sins (literally "to let go" of sins – Mark 1:4)
- ❖ points to one greater than he, Who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire
- ❖ after first hesitating, he baptizes the Lord, in order to "full all righteousness"

The ax is laid to the root of the trees: The axe means the judgment of Christ, and the trees stand for each one of us.

When asked who he was, St. John very clearly explained that he was not the Christ, but that that One was coming, "whose sandal strap he was not worthy to stoop down and loose" for the Christ would baptize not with water, but with the Holy Spirit and with fire.



FROM NATIVITY TO THEOPHANY

From the birth of Christ to the Lord's baptism in the Jordan River a period of thirty years passes. In the Scriptures very little is said about this period.

- ❖ On the eighth day, the Lord was circumcised in fulfillment of the Law of Moses (Luke 2:21).
- ❖ On the fortieth day, He was presented to the righteous Simeon in the Temple. (Luke 2:22-24)
- ❖ And then following this, the Lord was brought into Egypt to escape the wicked plot of Herod; only to return to Judea after the death of Herod and settle Nazareth. (Matthew 2:13-23)
- ❖ Then at age twelve, the Lord was brought to Jerusalem for Passover (as He was every year) and was found teaching the elders, attending to "His Father's business." (Luke 2:42-52).

DID YOU KNOW?

Q. Why did Christ say that St. John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elias?

A. The Prophet Elias, who ascended into heaven on a fiery chariot, was believed to come back to earth just before the coming of the Messiah. In Matthew 11:14, the Lord says that St. John is this Elias who was to come. Even in appearance St. John looked like Elias, as "John had his clothing of camel's hair and a leather girdle about his loins" (Matthew 3:4) and Elias "was a hairy man who wore a leathern belt around his loins." (2 Kings 1:8).



TINY GAZA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY PRAYS FOR PEACE IN ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS LITURGY

Posted on *DirectionsToOrthodoxy.org* on Wed Jan 09 2008

Associated Press – GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip: Gaza's dwindling Eastern Orthodox community attended Christmas services in the ancient church here Monday, their holiday darkened by the killing of a Christian activist several months ago.

Only 200 worshippers sang Christmas hymns and lined up to receive communion at the 4th-century Greek Orthodox Church of St. Perfidious. Youths milling around the church saluted relatives and lamented the small size of the gathering this Christmas.



The tiny Christian minority in Gaza, estimated at no more than 3,000, has been unsettled in recent months by attacks on their churches by Islamic extremists. In October, a Greek Orthodox activist, Rami Khader Ayyad, 32, was killed.

Christian community leaders said emigration has accelerated following Hamas' violent takeover of Gaza in June. Some 400 Christians, fearing persecution under Gaza's Islamic Hamas rulers and hoping to escape economic hardship, left the territory to celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem last month, some planning not to return. The Christian community has never publicly accused Hamas of persecution, and its leaders have reassured the Christian community that it is safe in Gaza. But Christians say they fear radical Islamic groups will feel impunity under Islamic rulers. No one has been arrested yet in Ayyad's death.

Israel's sealing of its border with Gaza, and the privation that has caused, also marred the celebration, as did continued clashes with Israeli troops, which killed two civilians and three militants on Sunday. Infighting among rival Palestinian factions deepened the holiday gloom.

Christmas falls on Jan. 7 for Orthodox Christians in the Holy Land, Russia and other Eastern Orthodox churches that use the old Julian calendar instead of the 16th-century Gregorian calendar adopted by Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Outside the chapel door, Leena Dabbagh said the Christmas spirit had been all but extinguished in Gaza. Dabbagh, 19, traveled to the West Bank town of Bethlehem last month to celebrate Christmas there, and bought new clothes, chocolate and holiday items back to Gaza to guarantee herself some Christmas cheer. "It is as if there is no feast here," Dabbagh said.

Majd and Amir Shaheen, 6-month-old twins, came to church dressed in miniature Santa Claus costumes. "We are trying to feel the Christmas," their father, Samer Shaheen, said.

With Christians leaving the area, and rising fear of Gaza's Islamic radicalization, Rizk Suri, a worshipper at the church, said the community was concerned.

"We are a small community," Suri said. "We want to live in peace with all. We always pray for peace."

FOR CONSIDERATION

From the Prologue of St. Nikolai Velimirovich

A man who is open to a bribe cannot be a Christian. The Orthodox Fathers of the Church were not given to bribery nor to be intimidation. Bribery in matters of the Faith is equal to Judas's betrayal of Christ for money. Such bribery was characteristic only of certain heretics. When Emperor Anastasius succumbed to the heresy of Euthychius, Emperor Anastasius rose up against the decisions of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon, 451 A.D) and wanted to outlaw those decisions. In order to win over the most distinguished representatives of the Church for himself, the emperor began to send them various gifts. St. Theodosius, by his fame, was the first in all of Palestine. The emperor sent him thirty liters of gold as a gift, supposedly for the needs of the monastery. By this, Theodosius immediately understood that the emperor wanted to bribe him. How wisely this saint of God acted! He did not want to keep the money for the monastery even though it was in great need; neither did he want to return it to the emperor so that the emperor would not become more embittered against Orthodoxy; thus he immediately distributed all the gold to the poor in the emperor's name. This charity strengthened his prayer to God for the correction of the emperor and return to the true path.





FROM GLORY TO GLORY

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

“But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18)

To understand what St. Paul means by unveiled face we must recall Moses descending from Mt. Sinai where he had been speaking with the Lord (Exodus 34:33). His face shone with light, and it frightened Aaron and the people. So he wore a veil when talking with them, but he removed the veil when speaking with God. Paul takes it to mean that the glow of glory eventually faded from Moses' face, but the Holy Spirit is transforming Christians into a fuller awareness of God's glory. Rather than fading away, Christ's glory transforms true believers into ever-brighter icons of His image in us.

Another meaning is that while in the Old Testament God's glory was seen through a veil, with Christ there is no need for a veil, since what was opaque and obscure is now clear and brilliant. Once baptized and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, those who continue to open their hearts to all the implications of being in Christ polish His image and progress from one stage of glory to another. There is no end of the possibilities to become like Christ, and to grow in grace. We are dust and earth invited to become like God in all ways except to share the essence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Even after this life on earth is ended, we have the potential to continue growing in glory.

As for us, when we look at ourselves in a mirror, do we recognize the image of Christ staring back at us? We are called to be living icons, examples like those on our walls of true Christians with God's likeness shining from their faces. But there are veils:

- A. Dreadful to admit that our churches harbor those with prejudice against people who are unlike them in some way. Maybe our parishes would grow if all of us were more accepting of what makes humanity different in various ways.
- B. Some pick and choose what they like about the Orthodox Church and ignore the rest. They may like the music and ritual but not the personal confessions, fasting rules or tithing. Cafeteria Christianity is part of the American scene, but it hardly fits the discipline of true believers.
- C. Others are simply unteachable. They are determined to follow their own stubborn rules set by themselves and will be buried with the same blind irrational opinions that not even God can soften.

The critical challenge is to wage a spiritual war against our sinful nature and the demonic thoughts that impair our good intentions. The priest Elias who lived about eight centuries ago wrote that our task is to make our hearts fertile and pure, so that the virtues and fruit of the Holy Spirit will multiply there. But we have two basic categories of spiritual foes to deal with: Passions of the body, such as sexuality, anger, depression, hatred, prejudice and other so-called natural emotions, and our thoughts which are even harder to suppress, because we think of them as somehow part of who we are.

Just when we feel that we have surrounded the garden of our heart with a fence that has no openings for the wild animals of lust, greed, laziness, overeating – after all the passions that afflict us have been kept out – the birds of the air alight on our hearts and invade us with ideas that are meant to confuse and bewilder us with all sorts of contradictory proposals.

From a human point of view, such a vision of glory seems out of reach. But when we make the effort and prove our desire to grow into the fullness of grace, God comes to us in the Holy Spirit, pointing us to Jesus Christ Who leads us to the Father.