

January 1, 2017: The Sunday before Epiphany

Epistle: Hebrews 11:9-10, 32-40:

By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8:



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 Feast of the Epiphany or Theophany is the manifestation or the revelation of the Holy Trinity to the world: Christ, the incarnate Son of God is in the river Jordan, the Holy Spirit

descends upon Him in the form of a dove and God the Father recommends the Son: *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

In the beginning, all three persons of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) participated in the creation of man from the dust of the earth, as we read in the book of Genesis: *“Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness”* (1:26). Now, when the fullness of time had come (Gal. 4:4), man is being re-created or created anew and again, all three persons of the Holy Trinity take part in this act of man's restoration.

The presence of the Holy Spirit announces the approaching of the Era of Grace, which will start on the day of the Pentecost, fifty days after the Lord's Resurrection and ten days after His Ascension into heaven.

The event also marks the beginning of the Lord's public ministry and by His Baptism He establishes the first Sacrament, the Holy Illumination, the gateway into the Church.

All of these aspects constitute the manifestation of the Divine Providence of God for His creation and especially for man.

How wonderful to have such a loving God who never gives up on His creation!

To Him be the glory forever and ever!

Fr. George Bazgan

New Year Message

**The Board of Directors and the Ladies Auxiliary
extend their best wishes for a Happy, Healthy,
Peaceful and Prosperous New Year to all members
and supporters of our parish!**

**Special thanks to those who chose to spend the last
hours of 2016 and the first hours of 2017 at
the Romanian Center as part of our
major fundraising event of the year,
The New Year's Celebration!**

THANK YOU ALL! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HOUSE BLESSING

On January the 6th we celebrate the Epiphany (Theophany), the Baptism of our Lord and Savior. Following the Divine Liturgy and the Greater Blessing of Water, Fr. George will begin the blessing of homes.

Those who are interested, please sign in the sign up sheet or call Fr. George at 780-473-0029.

MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors would like to thank all those who paid their membership and honored their financial pledges for 2016!

Please keep in mind that \$35.00 from each membership is sent to the Archdiocese.

THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH!

The Sermon on line

**The Sunday's Sermon is being posted on line.
To access it, go to our parish's website (bisericaedmonton.org),
click on "Multimedia" and then on "Audio."**

A Christian's conduct in Church

Before I begin to address the topic of „church conduct,” it is important to address the question „Why do we come to church?”

We come to church on Sundays (the Day of the Lord) in order to reaffirm our vocation as liturgical beings, to continue our spiritual growth and to strengthen our communion with Christ and His Church which began when we were accepted into the community of the faithful through the Sacraments of Christian Initiation: Baptism, Christmation and Holy Eucharist (Communion).

For an Orthodox Christian, attending the Divine Liturgy is not only a privilege but an obligation as well. It is a privilege in as much as we, as members of the visible Church are called to bring the Eucharistic elements (bread and wine), be part of their transformation into the Body and Blood of Christ and then, partake of them in the form of the Holy Eucharist, all this in the context of the Divine Liturgy, the highest form of prayer we can offer to God. It is also our obligation to attend the Divine Liturgy, obeying thus one of the commandments of the Church.

In order to benefit the most from our presence in Church we must keep in mind a few rules:

- 1. Come to Church on time (before 10:00) in order to participate in the entire Divine Liturgy.**
- 2. If the service is already in progress, you must stop and see what is going on. If you came in during the Scripture readings (Epistle or the Gospel), you should wait at the back of the church until the reading is over and then, quietly, take your seat.**
- 3. Pick up the liturgical book and follow closely the service, reading all of the prayers.**
- 4. During the Divine Liturgy you are not allowed to talk to other people. You can do that at the end, during the fellowship.**