

January 5, 2014: 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

Sunday Fellowship

**The following families are scheduled to look after
this Sunday's fellowship:**

Claudiu & Irina Nanu

Dan & Cătălina Voicu

Marius & Alina Bratu

Thank you all very much!

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 2013 and the first hours of 2014 at
the Romanian Center as part of our
major fundraising event of the year,
The New Year's Celebration,
which was a great success!**

THANK YOU ALL! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HOUSE BLESSING

**On January the 6th we celebrate the Epiphany
(Theophany), the Baptism of our Lord and Savior.**

**On Sunday, January the 5th, following the Divine Liturgy
and the Greater Blessing of the 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.**