

January 5, 2020: The Sunday before Epiphany

Epistle: II Timothy 4: 5-8:

But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry. For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

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 Fellowsh

There will be NO FELLOWSHIP this Sunday

Altar boys for this Sunday:

Gavriș Arsenie
Mustea Alexandru

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.

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, Chrismation 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.**