

From the Divine Office for the Paramony of Theophany (Jan. 5)

Make ready, O River Jordan: for behold, Christ our God draws near to be baptized by John, that He may crush with His Divinity the heads of the dragons in your waters. Rejoice, O wilderness of Jordan! Dance with gladness, O mountains! For the eternal Life has come to call back Adam. O voice crying out in the wilderness, O John the Forerunner, cry out: "Make ready the way of the Lord, clear Him a straight path!" (Vepsers)

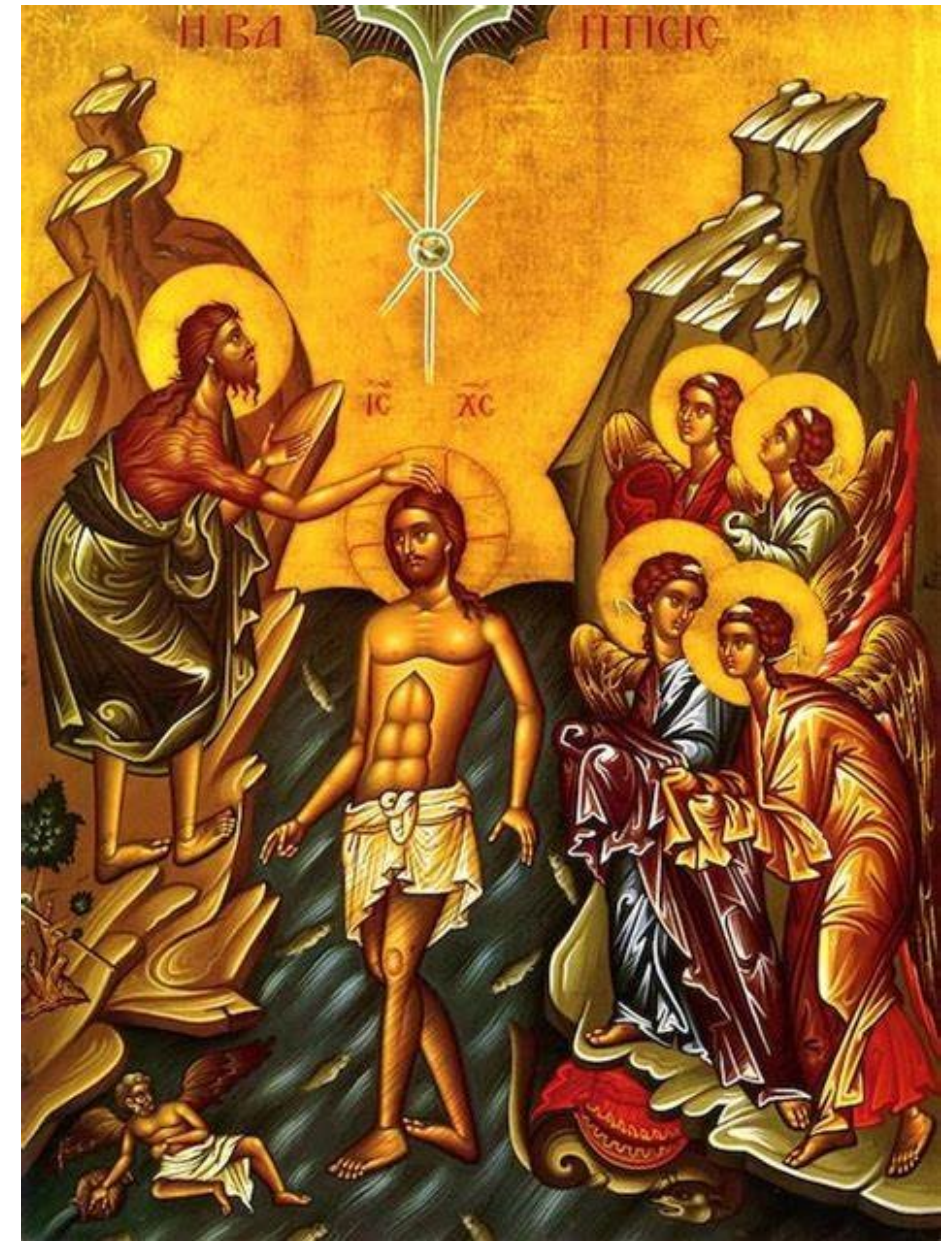
With your hand, you have touched the head of the Master (3X)

And with that hand, you have shown Him to us as our Savior. O Baptist, stretch out that hand before Him in prayer on our behalf, for you have great boldness in His presence. For He bore witness that you are the greatest of the prophets. With your eyes, you saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him in the form of a dove. Lift up those same eyes to Him, O Baptist, that He might be merciful to us.

Come and stand among us,(3X) setting the seal upon our hymns and beginning our feast. (Ninth Royal Hour)



**SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
JANUARY 2, 2022**



**THEOPHANY
JANUARY 6**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
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Worcester, MA 01604
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Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (978) 314-1962
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7) pg. 42

You destroyed Death by Your cross. You opened paradise to the thief. You changed the weeping of the myrrh-bearers, and commanded Your apostles to proclaim that You, O Christ God, have risen, granting to the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Paramony (Tone 4)

After Elias had gone up to heaven, Eliseus threw his mantle in the Jordan River which separated, opening a way, a dry path between two walls of water where he could pass: a true symbol of our baptism by which we pass through this passing life. Christ has been at the Jordan River to sanctify the waters.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 15

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Paramony (Tone 3)

Today the Lord Christ has appeared in the Jordan's waters, and He has cried out to John: "Fear not of baptizing me, for by my own will I have indeed come to save Adam, the first created man.

Baptism in Christ Jesus

At the beginning of His ministry the Lord Jesus also made use of the baptism of repentance. We read in the Gospel of St John that "...when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee" (Jn 4:1-3). With His death and resurrection, however, baptism became a vehicle for the imparting of the Holy Spirit. Appearing to His disciples in the upper room, the risen Christ had bestowed His Holy Spirit upon His disciples unto the forgiveness of sins. Baptism would no longer be merely an expression of a person's repentance; it would actually convey the remission of sins by the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers in Christ would be baptized into His death and rise in His resurrection, becoming temples of the Holy Spirit who dwells in Him and in His People. Before His ascension Christ commissioned His followers to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Mt 28:19, 20). The power of the Holy Spirit would enable them to begin a mission which is still being undertaken by the Church all over the world. Early Christians recognized the difference between the baptism of John and baptism in Christ. We read in the Acts of the Apostles, "...it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' So they said to him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said to them, 'Into what then were you baptized?' So they said, 'Into John's baptism.' Then Paul said, 'John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them..." (Acts 19:1-5). This passage also witnesses to the complementary element in baptism, the laying-on of hands, which we call chrismation.

The Baptism of John Today

Around the year 1290, an Italian Dominican, Fra Ricoldo Pennini, encountered a small group of people in Mesopotamia who called themselves Sabaeans, whom he described as "A very strange and singular people... Their writing is a sort of middle way between Syriac and Arabic. They detest Abraham because of circumcision and they venerate John the Baptist above all." In the sixteenth century Portuguese Jesuits came upon a similar group in Bahrain. Like the disciples St Paul met in Ephesus, this latter group of Sabaeans accepted baptism in Christ. A tiny fragment of this people still exist called Mandaean, who appear to have incorporated Gnostic beliefs into their tribal lore. They practice the baptism of John every Sunday at their worship service which has elements in common with Christian liturgy. No one is sure when this community came into being. Nor is it certain whether they will survive the current destruction of their homeland in northern Iraq.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness has gone forth: "O mountains, rejoice! Exult with joy, all mankind! For the eternal Word took flesh and is coming to be baptized in the Jordan by hands that He created, in order to take away the sin of the world! Exapostilarion of the Fore-feast

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today Healing of Archie Opatka
 Health & Salvation of our Families and Friends
Jan 9 +Dorothy Rumberg. Requested by Maria Filewicz

This morning's coffee hour is hosted by Marilyn & Zenon Tencza
Next Sunday's coffee hour is hosted by Maria Filewicz

Last Week's Collection

Weekly \$1,390
Candles \$ 70
Coffee Hr. \$ 21
Christmas Flowers \$ 50
Christmas Donations \$ 10
TOTAL \$1,541

God bless you for your generosity!

Christmas Collection

Christmas Liturgies \$1,607
Mailed in \$ 760
Total \$2,367

FINANCIALS

<u>12/2021</u>		<u>YTD(10/2021-12/2021)</u>	
Income	\$11,526	Income	\$23,470
Expenses	\$ 7,924	Expenses	\$17,695
Net	\$ 3,601	Net	\$ 5,775



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THEOPHANY

Wed 1/5, 6PM - Vespers

Thu 1/6, 6PM—Divine Liturgy followed by the Great Blessing of Water

Please go to archiesarmy.net to see updates on Archie Opatka's battle heptoblastoma. "O Christ, Physician of our souls and bodies, heal, bless and have mercy on Your child Archie!"

2022 Calendar

The 2022 calendar is available at the back of the church. Please pick one up. We will not be mailing the calendar *en masse* this year. I will be sending the calendar to folks I know who cannot get to church. If you or someone you know cannot get to church to pick up a calendar, please let me know and I'll be happy to send them one.



THEOPHANY HOUSE BLESSINGS

I would like to do house blessings this year. It will be dependent upon the covid situation at the time. I am fully vaccinated and have also gotten a booster. If you are fully vaccinated, boosted, and wear a mask, I can come and bless your home. There is no need for a meal; a cup of coffee or a cold drink is fine.

Please reach out to me if you want your house blessed. If the covid or your personal situation changes, we can cancel.

Fr. Bryan

Lord Jesus on the banks of the Jordan River. Its first verses introduce us to the figure of St John the Baptist whom it proclaims to be the fulfillment of two prophecies. The first prophecy is “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You” (Mal 3:1). In this prophecy three characters are mentioned. The speaker is God who promises to send His messenger, whom the New Testament says is John the Baptist, and who prepares the way for the third person, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus. The second prophecy quoted is Isaiah 40:3. “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.’” The verses that follow describe John as a dweller in the wilderness, a kind of ascetic singularly dedicated to preparing for the One who would come to usher in the Kingdom of God. The Precursor coming before the One sent by God is a sign in the Old Testament that the Messiah is at hand. All four Gospels cite this prophecy as fulfilled in John who sets the stage for the appearance of the Lord Jesus. John prepares for the coming of Christ by calling people to repentance. He was specific in identifying the faults of his hearers. He confronted the Jewish religious elite, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who felt that they did not need to repent: “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones” (Mt 3:8-10). It is not enough, John told them, to be physically descended from Abraham; one must trust in God whole-heartedly as Abraham did. The call to repentance continues in Luke’s Gospel as people ask John, “‘What shall we do then?’ He answered and said to them, ‘He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.’ Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, ‘And what shall we do?’ So he said to them, ‘Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages’” (Lk 3:10-14). To be ready for the Messiah people in authority could not bully those over whom they had power, and no one could ignore the poor and needy.

The Baptism of John

John contrasts his own ministry with that of the Messiah in several ways. One of them concerns baptism: “I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mk 1:8). Matthew and Luke have the same words but add, somewhat cryptically, “and fire.” Baptism in water was not unknown to first-century Jews. The Torah prescribes it for ritual purification in a number of cases such as contact with a corpse, discharge of blood or other fluids, or eating meat improperly slaughtered. Some people regularly immersed themselves before the high holydays. Converts to Judaism were also required to immerse themselves on joining the worshipping community. Orthodox Jews still practice these immersions today. John had given a new twist to the ritual cleansing. His baptism was not concerned with ritual impurity but with repentance for moral failings like the faults mentioned in Mt and Lk quoted above. Also, people accepting this baptism did not immerse themselves; the rite was administered by John. Submission to the hand of the Baptizer was an act of humility expressive of whole-hearted repentance.



Prokimenon

Reader: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

Verse: To You, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

People: O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.

Reader: O Lord, save Your people

People: And bless Your inheritance.

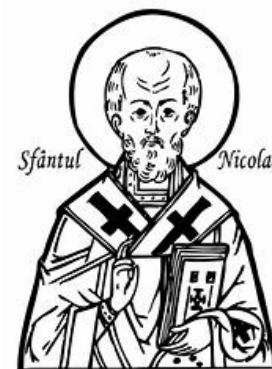
Epistle: 2 Tim. 4:5-8

Alleluia Verses

May God have mercy on us and bless us.

Verse: May He let His face shine upon us and have mercy on us.

Gospel: Mk. 1:1-8, Sunday Before the Theophany of our Lord



ORDER OF SAINT NICHOLAS

Bishop Nicholas has reactivated the Order of Saint Nicholas. The Order has done much to support the work of the Eparchy over the years. Please see the flyers in the back of the church for the bulletin boards for more details. Please prayerfully consider joining the Order.