

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN

JANUARY 1, 2017

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

TODAY IS NEW YEAR'S DAY. We celebrate the memory of **St. Basil the Great and Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord.** Matins and Divine Liturgy will begin at usual times of 9:00 am and 10:00 am respectively.

THEOPHANY SCHEDULE. This coming week we also will celebrate the **Lord's Baptism in the Jordan** by the hand of John the Baptist. **We will have services on Thursday evening, the Eve of Theophany.** Royal Hours: 3:30 pm; Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil: 6:00 pm, followed by the Great Blessing of Water. Don't miss this spiritually powerful celebration!

THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY will begin on Monday, January 9th, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please e-mail or call (508-845-0088) Fr. Nick to arrange it.

FOOD PANTRY. Help is needed to staff our monthly responsibility at the Orthodox Food Center **next Saturday, January 7th, from 9 am - noon.** About 4 people are needed. Likewise, donations of food are always needed, and may be dropped off at the Food Pantry housed at St. Spyridon Cathedral. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with **Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola.** Likewise, we want to **thank the people who staff the Food Pantry yesterday.** This fifth Saturday was our Parish's responsibility.

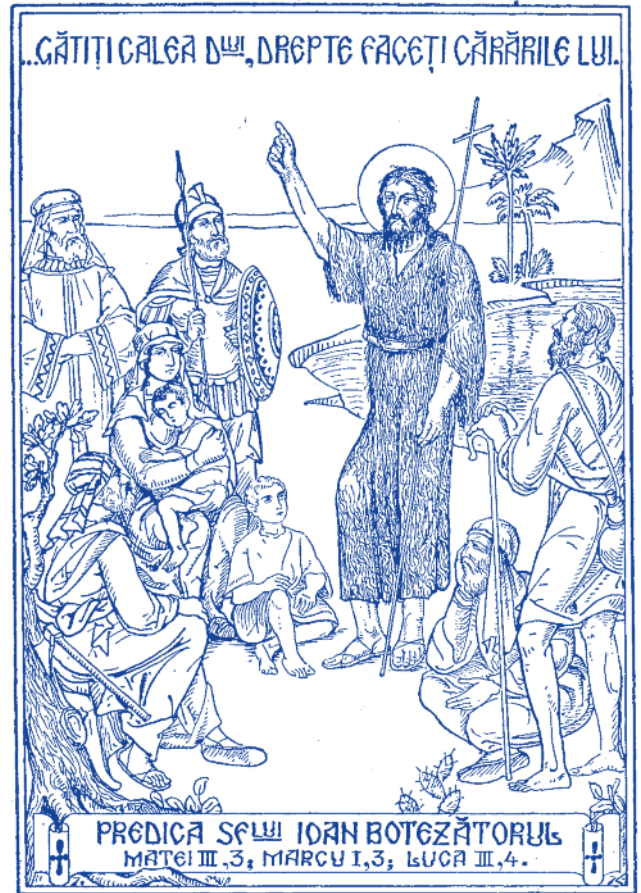
GREETERS TEAM 1:
V. GERALD BELBA AND MARGARITE LANDRY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW B:
KARADIMITRIU/KALPIDO FAMILY

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED

A NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED IN JANUARY, (the two-year term of the Parish Council expires this year). Please consider offering a stewardship of your time in this important ministry. We also are asking for people to serve on other Parish committees, if you would like to focus your efforts in just one area. However you'd like to serve, please speak with **Fr. Nick.**

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you would like to sponsor one.



THE SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY
ST. BASIL THE GREAT/THE LORD'S CIRCUMCISION
EPISTLE: 2 TIMOTHY 4:5-8 ☩ GOSPEL: MARK 1:1-8
TONE 3 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 6

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

The residents wish to thank the parishes for the wonderful Christmas gifts they brought to Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, which brought them delight and comfort to their holiday season. The staff and residents are

DATES TO REMEMBER

Sat, Dec 31 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry
Sun, Jan 1 New Year's/St. Basil, Lit, 10:00 am
Thurs, Jan 5 Theophany/Great Blessing of Water
Vespers Liturgy, 6:00 pm
Sat, Jan 7 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry

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A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

very grateful for the thoughtfulness of the parishes and *wish everyone a Blessed New Year!*

NAMEDAYS

January 1

St. Basil the Great

William Dino Cavanaugh
William Cocavessis
Bryan Donabed
William Keimig
Vasia Lolo
Vasilika Lolo
William Polymeros
Valarie Stamoulis
Vasilika Tanko
William J Tsoules

January 6

The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Francis Polymeros
Jordan Sparages

January 7

The Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist

Rev. Fr. John Daly
Nita Dumitriu
John Ermilio
Sean Fahey
Ian Mayer
John David Thoren



BAKING STATISTICS

During the Fall Holidays and Events, the St. Nick's Kitchen baked and sold:

260 Pitas
2,500 Bakalva
2,800 Kourabia
3,800 Koulourakia
87 Pastry Platters
24 Holiday Breads

WOW!

A PRAYER AT THE NEW YEAR

O MASTER, LORD OUR GOD, the Fountain of life and immortality, the Creator of all things both visible and invisible, who governs the seasons and the years and guides all things with Your wise providence; we thank You for all the blessings You have poured out upon us during the past year of our lives, and we beg You, O all-bountiful Lord, bless this coming year with Your goodness. Direct our civil authorities in the path of goodness, bestow Your heavenly blessings upon all Your people: health, salvation, and growth in virtue. Deliver Your Holy Church and this city from every assault of the devil, and grant us peace and tranquility. Remember Your Holy Church, strengthen and establish Her, enlarge Her and give Her peace, preserving Her forever unscathed by the gates of hell and impregnable against all the assaults of visible and invisible enemies. Deliver us throughout the coming year, and all the days of our life, from famine, earthquakes, flood, epidemics, hail, fire, the sword, the invasion of enemies, and from civil war, from sudden and unprovided death, from sickness, calamity, and distress, from faithlessness and hard-heartedness, and from grievous temptations; and grant that we may always offer You thanks: the Father who is without beginning, together with Your Only Son, and Your Most Holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit: God glorified in three persons; may we joyfully praise Thine all-Holy Name. Amen.

LONGING FOR HIS APPEARANCE

THE Epistle Lesson for the Sunday before Theophany is taken from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8. This letter was probably written by Paul while under arrest in Rome, and the tone of it reads like a last will and testament. He knows there is almost no possibility of release. On the contrary, it is very likely that he will be put to death. The reason this passage is chosen to be read today, just before Theophany, is a phrase in verse 8 where St. Paul speaks of those who long for the appearance of Christ, His epiphany. Even though it is the Lord's second-coming to which Paul is referring in this verse, it still has meaning when we think about God's Self-revelation on January 6th at Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan by John's hand.

Knowing that Timothy is worried, if not grieved, over St. Paul's situation, he wants to offer words of both encouragement and comfort. He says to Timothy, "always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully." (v. 5) He wants Timothy, who in many ways he considers his heir in ministry, to focus on the task at hand, namely his ministry. He tells him to "be sober." Other translations use words such as 'watchful' and 'steady.' What St. Paul is saying is that Timothy should be absolutely resolute, unaffected by winds that may blow.

He then advises him on the difficulties of ministry. He doesn't mince words; he tells him directly: "endure suffering." Ministry has always had its challenges. In times of persecution it can mean imprisonment, torture and even a horrible death, the kind of death St. Paul himself was facing. Even in peaceful times grief and affliction can come even from 'faithful' members of one's own community. St. Paul is offering Timothy some very practical advice for someone who wants to preach the Gospel.

"Do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully." Here he is speaking of preaching the Gospel faithfully; being true to the message given us

by the Lord Himself.

Then St. Paul turns to his own situation. He wants Timothy to understand that he is clear about what will happen to him and rejoices in it. It is the fulfillment of his life. St. Paul uses two different metaphors to help Timothy understand. The first is the holy sacrifices offered to God, and the second is the sacrifice of a warrior or athlete.

"I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come." (v. 6) A libation is a liquid offering, usually wine or oil. Unlike other kinds of sacrifices or offerings where only a portion was offered up, a libation was poured out totally. St. Paul is telling Timothy that his whole life has been such an offering. He is also telling him that he realizes the time for his total sacrifice is at hand.

And then he introduces the image of an athlete: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day." Any athlete knows what it means to compete. He or she must train. Training means sacrifice — giving up things that one might like to do, in order to achieve the desired goal. This is not the only place where St. Paul compares the physical example of an athlete to the commitment and discipline needed for the spiritual struggle. It is very apt, because it gives concrete form to a contest that is by definition ethereal. It helps us to understand the importance of regular and faithful spiritual "training" using the exercises given us, such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. By putting our faith into practice through these and other similar activities we enable our whole person to become true reflections of who God created us to be.

However, in this verse St. Paul is speaking not of the beginning of the race, but its end. Having "kept the faith," he tells us, "there is reserved for me the

crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (v. 8) In St. Paul's day, the winner of the race received a laurel crown. In the spiritual race he envisions not a crown of leaves, but one woven with branches of virtue.

He says that this same crown awaits not only him, but "all who have longed for his appearing." I said at the outset that this verse is the reason why this reading is chosen for today, to prepare us for the Feast of the Lord's Epiphany. The Greek word "epiphany" (appearance or manifestation) was frequently used to describe the "manifestations" of pagan gods, or emperors making divine claims. St. Paul uses it to speak of the Lord's Incarnation or, as in this case, His Second Coming.

Each morning at the opening of the Matins service we sing: "God is the Lord, and has revealed (epiphany) Himself to us! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." (Psalm 118) God revealed Himself not only in the past: to Abraham and the Patriarchs, to Moses and the Prophets, to the Apostles and the Saints. He reveals Himself to us each morning, each time we awaken from the death of sleep. In this same Psalm we say, "I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord." (v. 118:17) To know God is to live. God reveals Himself so that we can share in His life.

In just a few days we will celebrate that event where God reveals Himself in the fullness of His Tri-Personal reality: Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus in the Jordan hears the voice of His Father while the Holy Spirit descends as a dove. This is joy for all who have longed for his appearing!

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

CHRISTMAS & THEOPHANY SCHEDULE

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2016

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
 Children's Christmas Program after the Liturgy

FRIDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016

Royal Hours 9:30 a.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2016

Great Vespers 5:00 p.m.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 a.m.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD ❄️ FEAST OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 a.m.

EVE OF HOLY THEOPHANY THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2017

Royal Hours 3:30 p.m.
 Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00 p.m.
 Great Blessing of Water at end of Liturgy

SUNDAY AFTER HOLY THEOPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2017

Matins 9:00 a.m.
 Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.



HOUSE BLESSINGS. The blessing of homes at Theophany will begin on Monday, January 9, 2017, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times when we will be coming to bless your home. If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please call Fr. Nick to arrange it (508.845.0088).

