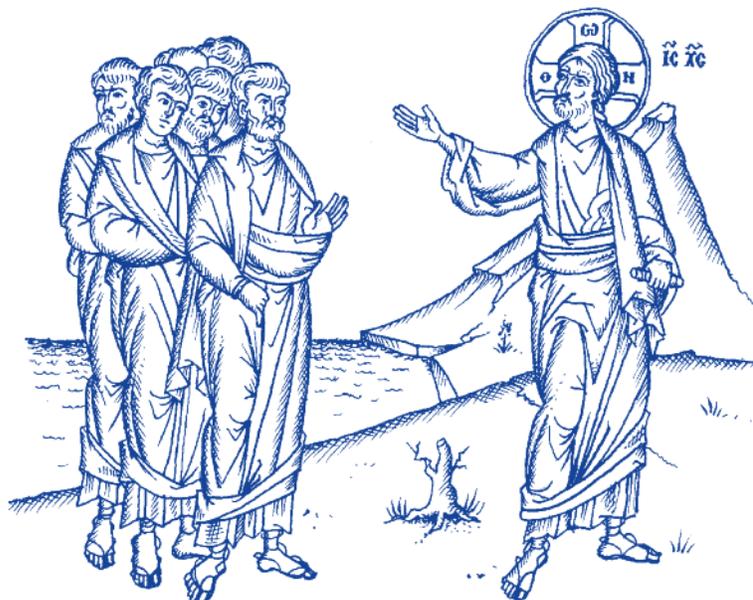


# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 7, 2018 THIS WEEK'S NEWS



## THE SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

### ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

APOSTOLIC READING: EPHESIANS 4:7-13 ☩ GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:12-17

(THE LORD BEGINS HIS MINISTRY)

TONE 6 ☩ MATINS GOSPEL 9

### CALLING ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ...

**Want to help with hurricane relief?** We are joining with Sts. Anargyroi Church to assist the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) in their Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria response. We will be creating "clean up buckets" to assist those in need. These buckets will be used to help the IOCC replenish their supply of buckets to respond as quickly and effectively to areas of need as they arise. **Join us Friday, January 12th at 6:30pm at St. Nicholas Church** for pizza and discussion about this service project. Please RSVP to Valarie Stamoulis at Valarie.stamoulis@gmail.com, 617-803-3798; or Deb Sedares at dsedares@pinehills.com, 508-509-6678.

**THE WONDERWORKING ICON** of the **Theotokos** will bless our parish on Saturday, January 6th. Please look below for more information.

**THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY** will begin on Tuesday, January 9th, and continue until all homes are blessed. As in the past, we will be setting times to bless your home.

#### GREETERS TEAM 3:

EVANS TSOULES AND TOM FITZPATRICK

#### COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP CREW A:

MARGARITE LANDRY,  
CHRISTINE MASTERJOHN

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**

If there is a specific time that is more convenient for you, please e-mail or call (508-335-7378) Fr. Nick to arrange it.

The latest issue of the Metropolitan quarterly **CREDINȚA / THE FAITH** is available at the candles. **Pick one up and take it home!**

**THE 2018 CHURCH CALENDARS** are here, in both English and Romanian. Pick them up at the candles. Please consider a small donation to cover the costs.

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by **Evan and Irene Tsoules** who would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**Holy Trinity has RN, LPN and CNA job opportunities on all shifts.** For more information, call Michelle Williamson at (508) 852-1000, ext. 218 or e-mail:

mwilliamson@htnr.net. You may also stop by Holy Trinity and fill out an application.

**HOLY TRINITY** has revamped its website. It's packed with information in a very attractive format. Check it out at: [www.htnr.net](http://www.htnr.net). And while you're there, take a look at the newly designed Newsletter, by clicking on the "**Monthly Newsletter**" button.

**REMEMBER:** Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is an Orthodox Charity and relies on your donations to continue its mission of providing the best care possible.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat, Jan 6 Theophany. Lit 10 am, Blessing of Water  
Visit of Miracle-working Icon  
Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9am-noon
- Sun, Jan 7 Sun after Theophany, St. John Baptist
- Fri, Jan 12 Teen IOCC Hurricane Project, 6:30 pm

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*A Parish of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas*

## NAMEDAYS

### January 1

#### *St. Basil the Great*

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

### January 6

#### *The Holy Prophet and Forerunner*

#### *John the Baptist*

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

### January 12

#### *St. Tatiana the Martyr of Rome*

Tatiana Sofia Karadimitriou

### January 17

#### *St. Anthony the Great*

Anthony Theodore Christo  
Scott Anthony Maynard  
Anthony Rucho  
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

### January 18

#### *St. Athanasios*

#### *Patriarch of Alexandria*

Thanas Lolo  
Arthur Peterson

### January 22

#### *The Holy Apostle Timothy*

Rev. Fr. Timothy Lowe  
Timothy Rucho

### January 25

#### *St. Gregory the Theologian*

Rev. Fr. Gregory Christakos  
Dr. Gregory Tsongalis

### January 28

#### *St. Ephraim the Syrian*

Rev. Fr. Ephraim Peters



### A PRAYER OF FR. LAURENCE

LET US PRAY TO THE LORD,

**O LORD, OUR GOD, LIGHT OF ALL THE WORLD:** The brilliance of this feast of lights dazzles the eyes of our souls. For today you enlighten us with the intimate knowledge that you are three in one. Today, you enlighten us by the appearance and manifestation of the Lord Jesus in the Jordan. Today, you enlighten us with the understanding that your salvation is for all peoples without exception. Therefore, by the never-fading radiance of your light, rescue us from the power of darkness and make a place for us in your kingdom. Fill us with your glory and reveal the splendor of your presence to every nation, that we may all find forgiveness of our sins and true freedom.

For you are indeed our God, the Father of lights, and we give glory to you, your co-eternal Son, and your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.



*When the Lord descended today into the waters of the Jordan, He cried aloud to John: "Do not be afraid to baptize me: for I have come to save Adam the first-formed man."*

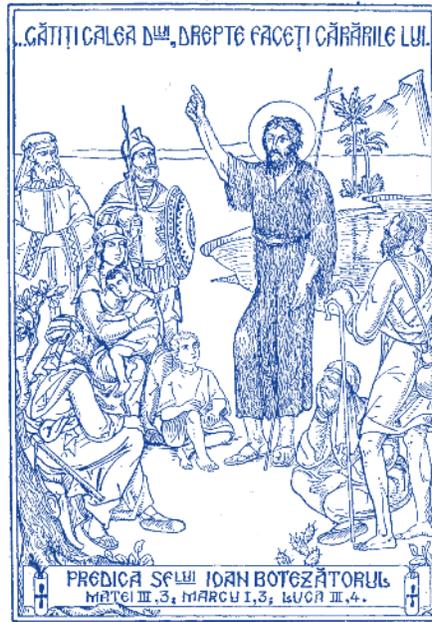
— Kontakion of the Forefeast

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

ON THIS SUNDAY, FOLLOWING THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY, we read how our Lord started his earthly ministry (Matthew 4:12-17). Immediately after his Baptism in the Jordan River by John, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days and nights, and there He was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). He did not begin to preach immediately, but, like the prophets before him, he withdrew to the desert to fast and pray. St. John Chrysostom adds that the Lord wanted to give us an example: after our own baptism we should expect to be tempted and put to the test, and that private prayer in solitude, along with fasting, were critical to the spiritual life.

Even after his trial in the desert, Jesus does not begin his ministry. He will not begin preaching while John is still active. John's prophetic ministry was intended to prepare the way for people to be receptive to Jesus' call, but while he was still preaching and baptizing, most people thought that John was the Messiah. John had a great following, including a number of disciples that gathered around him. Chrysostom says that the Lord was careful, in this way, not to divide and confuse the people. He waited for John to complete his ministry before beginning his.

So, only when the Lord hears that John has been arrested and imprisoned does He begin his ministry. St. Matthew says, that "when Jesus heard that John had been arrested ... he left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea" (v. 12-13). To emphasize the importance of this move, St. Matthew then quotes the Prophet Isaiah (9:1-2) who says, that "the people [of Galilee] who sat in darkness have seen a great light." Then Matthew tells us that Jesus begins his ministry by proclaiming: "Repent,



for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (v. 17).

The move from Nazareth to Capernaum was significant in a number of ways. Practically speaking, Nazareth was a small village and Capernaum was one of a number of busy and prosperous small cities on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. If he wanted to reach a large and diverse population with his message, Capernaum was the logical place to go. There is another reason as well, a spiritual reason alluded to by St. Matthew when he quotes Isaiah. The original territory of the Tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali was the first to be separated from ancient Israel. Therefore, the first part of Israel that had experience the destructive wrath of God now should be the first to hear the good news of salvation.

Jesus' message is a little softer than John's. John was the "voice crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'" (Matthew 3:3). The Lord takes up the central theme of

John's preaching: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1, 4:17), but His call for repentance is surrounded by the warmth of His love and the comfort of God's forgiveness.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is easy to misunderstand, especially in the English translation. We normally translate the Greek word "βασίλεια" (vasilia) as "kingdom." However, a much more accurate translation would be "reign," as in the reign of a ruler. "Kingdom" gives the sense of a territory or a nation. "Reign" evokes the sense of the way in which a ruler rules. When Jesus speaks of the Reign of God or the Reign of Heaven, he's not talking about a place, but rather a way of understanding how God should become the ruler of our hearts. "Once Jesus was asked ... when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is within you.'" (Luke 10-21)

Perform this small exercise. Go back and read again the passage from St. Luke quoted above. Only, this time substitute the word "reign" everywhere you read "kingdom." Can you see how it changes your perspective on where to look for the "kingdom" of God? God reigns from the inside, not the outside. He knows that only way to change how we act toward one another is to change who rules our hearts.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA