

ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 6, 2019

THIS WEEK'S NEWS

THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY will begin this coming week. If you have a specific date and time that is more convenient, please contact him by e-mail (frnick@stnicholaschurch.org) or on his cell: 508-335-7378.

THE PARISH COUNCIL will hold its regular meeting on **Monday, January 14th at 6:30 pm**. Parish Council Members, please let George Demake know if you are unable to attend.

THANKS TO THE FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEERS for working the Orthodox Food Center on behalf of our parish yesterday. Our regular commitment is the first Saturday of the month from 9AM to noon. About 4 people are needed. If you can help in this worthwhile ministry, please speak with Lisa Mielnicki or Nicole Apostola. Our next Saturday is February 2nd.

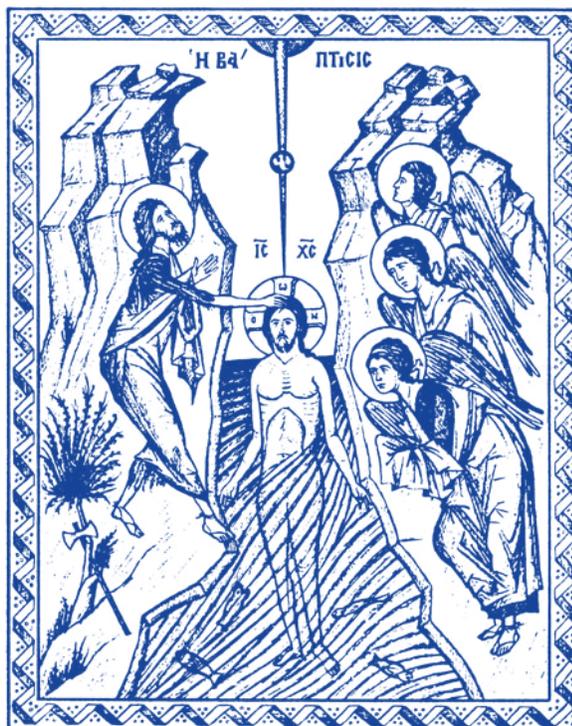
COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS ARE NEEDED for the coming weeks. Please speak with Presvytera Maria if you would like to sponsor one.

WE'RE CELEBRATING A 40-DAY BLESSING TODAY for the servant of God **Theologos Patrick Tsoules**, son of

GREETERS TEAM 4:
DIMITRI SAFFRON & SEAN FAHEY

COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:
HELP NEEDED
PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED



THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

APOSTOLIC READING: TITUS 2:11-14; 3:4-7
GOSPEL: MATTHEW 3:13-17

EVERYTHING OF THE FEAST

William and Dana Tsoules, and younger brother to **Evans Tsoules**. Born on November 19th. Height: 18" and weight: 6 lbs, 9 oz. **God bless them with long life and every happiness!**

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR is sponsored by the **Tsoules Family** in honor of Theo's Churching.

HOLY TRINITY NEWS

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU to the good faithful of our parishes that bought Christmas gifts for the residents of Holy Trinity. Thoughtful gestures such as these really make a difference in the lives of those who live in our nursing home. It shows

that they are not forgotten. *God bless you and all those who support Holy Trinity in so many ways!*

THE DECEMBER ISSUE of the *Holy Trinity Times* is available at: www.htnr.net. Check out the latest news.

DIVINE LITURGY is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30AM. And please always keep Holy Trinity Nursing Home, it's staff, directors, residents, and families in your prayers. And remember: you can always visit!

NEVER FORGET: 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 5 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-noon
Eve of Theophany. Liturgy 10:00 AM
Sun, Jan 6 Theophany. Baptism of the Lord
Mon, Jan 14 Parish Council, 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

Vasia Lolo

William Polymeros

Valarie Stamoulis

William J Tsoules

January 6

The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Francis Polymeros

January 7

The Holy Prophet and Forerunner

John the Baptist

Rev. Fr. John Daly

Nița Dumitriu

John Ermilio

Sean Fahey

Ian Mayer

John David Thoren

January 12

St. Tatiana the Martyr of Rome

Tatiana Sofia Karadimitriou



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 WATERS SAW YOU, GOD, THEY WERE AFRAID”

THIS SUNDAY IS THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY. Theophany is a Greek word that means “God’s Revelation or Appearance.” This holiday celebrates the Lord’s Baptism in the Jordan River by the hand of the forerunner and Baptizer John. After Pascha and Pentecost, it is the most important Feast on the Christian calendar. It also concludes the twelve-day celebration of the early life of our Lord. (These are the “Twelve Days of Christmas” that we sing about: Christmas to Epiphany; NOT the twelve days preceding Christmas!) In His thirtieth year, the Lord comes to the Jordan to receive baptism by John and so inaugurates His earthly ministry. This is Scriptural importance of the Feast we keep. For most of us, we particularly remember this holiday because we bless water and the priest comes to visit and bless our homes.

On many levels Theophany is a remarkable Feast and close to our hearts, or at least it should be. There is no more basic element for our existence than water. Life as we know it would not be possible without water. Human beings are composed of around 60% water. We were formed in the water of our mother’s womb. If we believe the scientists, we evolved from the water. If we read Scripture, water was created from the beginning (Genesis 1:2). Water is central to our existence. It is not surprising that God’s first act of salvation was to save the water.

You might wonder: “How does this work exactly?” “What does it mean to ‘save’ the water?” We can find a hint in one of the hymns we sing during this Feast. In it we find the Jordan River speaking to us. In answer to the question as to why it stopped its flow when the Lord stepped in to be baptized, the Jordan says, “I am not used to washing

him who is clean; I have not learned to bathe the sinless, but to purge the filthy. Christ who is baptized in me teaches me to burn the thorns of sin.” The hymnographer uses a poetic device of giving voice to a force of nature, namely the Jordan. The hymnographer explains to us that water’s nature — to clean that which is filthy — has been finally fulfilled. Because Christ entered the Jordan, water doesn’t clean just our outward dirt, it cleans our inner spiritual dirt as well.

Scripture and theological reflection agree that restoring water’s ultimate purpose was a necessary pre-condition for our own salvation. Our fate and that of the whole of creation are inextricably bound together. There is a deep inter-relatedness. St. Paul reflects on this question in his Letter to the Romans, when he says: “the whole creation has been groaning in travail” (Romans 8:22) waiting for our liberation. Today, we know a great deal more about the extent of the effect human activity has on the world around us than did St. Paul. Yet, his fundamental observation was exactly on target: human sin has had a devastating effect on the Creation God entrusted to us. Creation is trapped by our sin. Global warming, the pollution and poisoning of our environment, the exploitation of natural resources — all these are the consequences of our greed and our sin. Water needs a Savior. If we are going to be restored to Grace, it must by necessity be through water.

Christ descends into the waters of the Jordan as a way of restoring the primordial harmony between God and Creation, and between Creation and human beings. It is a powerful sign when we bless the water, asking God to restore it to its original beauty. It is a powerful sign when we take this re-

stored water and drink it, sprinkle it, and use it to restore all of Creation, as our Lord has charged us to do. Through our baptism we are all priests of Creation. We are all called by our baptism to restore harmony between Creation and God, between us and the rest of the created order.

A small point that you might want to make note of is that throughout the hymns and prayers of this Feast we hear that the Jordan “stopped its flow.” Of course this is just poetry. Each of the Gospel accounts clearly say that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan. But the intent is to remind us of other Biblical events, such as when Joshua commanded the Ark of the Covenant to be carried over the Jordan and when it touch the water the riverbed became dry (Joshua 4:15ff), or when the prophet Elisha, after the ascent of Elijah in the fiery chariot, parted the Jordan by striking it with Elijah’s mantle (2 Kings 2:13ff).

Finally, we should always remain in awe of our Lord’s humility. The baptism John offered was a baptism of repentance. Can we even attempt to imagine what this means that the God who made all that is descends into the waters of Jordan to receive this washing from the very hand that He created? It is like when at the Mystical Supper the Lord washes the feet of His disciples. Each of us complains at times about some act of servitude that we are forced to endure (washing dishes? shoveling the walk?). Can we imagine the depth of God’s love for us as He descends into the Jordan to take our sins on His shoulders? Here is where we find the meaning of love, self-sacrifice, and yes, salvation through water.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA

Thanks to the Bakers!

Our baked goods have become a significant support for our Parish. It's a team effort and a lot of our parishioners and friends are involved. It's only fitting that we send out a "thank you" to the people who work very hard producing all of the baked goods we sell. Here they are. Offer each one a personal "thank you" when you see them.

Ken Anderson
Ted Belba
Lillian Chachi
Katina Cocavessis
Maria Dumitriu
Eileen Favata
Phil Favata
Mary Feeny
Michael George
Bessie Kyros
Margarite Landry
Lisa Mielnicki
Maria Mossaides
Sandra Nedelescu
Florence Rucho
Tim Rucho
Maclynn Saffron
Janice Samara
Deb Sedares
Eleanor Sedares
Carol Soter
Natasha Zhaka

*And especially our
baking superheros:*
Chris Toda
Betty Anderson



We've always suspected that our Pitas were the best, but it's good to hear it from some of our outside "taste testers" ...

One satisfied buyer wrote us to say ... Hello! Your spinach pie was the best I've ever had and I certainly want to buy some more.

Another said ... It was so delicious, and we've had many spinach pies, and it was great to find out that you are the same people who do the Park Ave festival in September.

And another, with an experienced "pita palate" said ... I just wanted you share with you how happy everyone was to eat it. One cousin made one also, so we had a taste off. St Nick's won. Of course! The comments were unanimous that St Nick's is just like Grammy's, old school and delicious.