

# ST. NICHOLAS WEEKLY BULLETIN JANUARY 13, 2019

## THIS WEEK'S NEWS

**THE BLESSING OF HOMES AT THEOPHANY** has begun. If you have a specific date and time that is more convenient, please contact Fr. Nick by e-mail (frnick@stnicholaschurch.org) or on his cell: 508-335-7378.

**PLEASE BRING IN YOUR EMPTY HOLY WATER BOTTLES.** If you have empty bottles, please bring them with you to Church.

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

**A NEW PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE ELECTED 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 **George Demake or Fr. Nick.**

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

**A MEMORIAL SERVICE** is celebrated

### **GREETERS TEAM 5:**

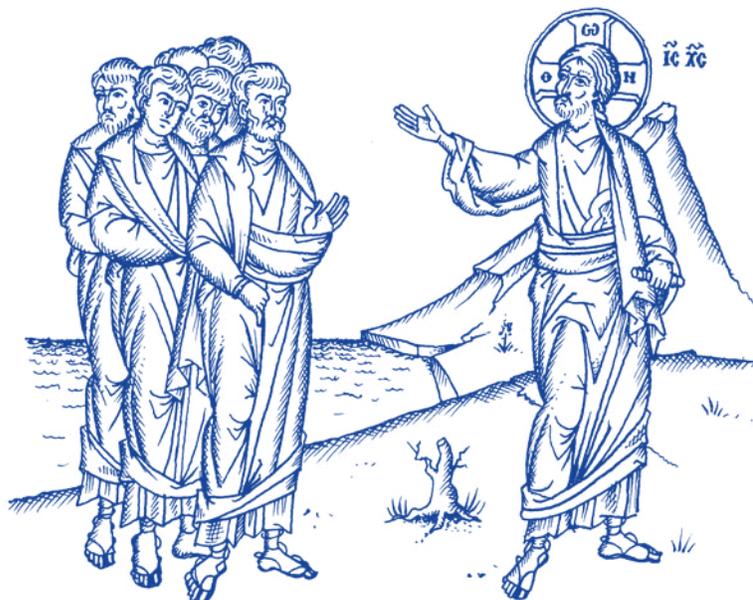
DEBORAH SEDARES & EVAN STAMOULIS

### **COFFEE HOUR CLEAN-UP:**

**HELP NEEDED**

PICK UP A CUP - LEND A HAND

**ALL ALTAR SERVERS INVITED**



### THE SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

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

(THE LORD BEGINS HIS MINISTRY)

⊕ TONE 8 ⊕ MATINS GOSPEL 11

today for the servant of God, **Angela Prizio Demake**, fallen asleep two years. *May our loving Lord rest her among the saints!*

**TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR** is sponsored by the **Demake/Prizio families** in memory of Angela.

## HOLY TRINITY NEWS

**THE ANNUAL TREASURE GENERATIONS** appeal was sent out to the recently. Please consider a donation to Holy Trinity. None of us realizes the importance of a place like Holy Trinity until the need arises. Consider this: A sudden illness or injury can happen at any age. Studies have shown that everyone will experience a nursing facility in their lifetime, whether through a family member, a friend, or for themselves. 1 out of 4 individuals, or 25%, will need nursing services or rehabilitative care in their lifetime following a hospitalization. Moreover, the

Commonwealth only covers 70% of costs for nursing home care. We must make up the difference. You may donate directly by phone or through our website: [www.htnr.net/donate](http://www.htnr.net/donate). *Help make Holy Trinity the kind of place that we know every home should be.*

Holy Trinity has an opening for the **DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**. If you are interested or know of someone who is, please contact **Jerry Shaffer**, the Administrator of Holy Trinity, at 508-852-1000.

**DIVINE LITURGY** is celebrated every Wednesday morning at 9:30AM. And

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Mon, Jan 14 Parish Council, 6:30 PM

Sat, Feb 2 Staff Orthodox Food Pantry, 9AM-noon

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

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.

## NAMEDAYS

### January 1

#### *St. Basil the Great*

William Dino Cavanaugh  
William Cocavassis  
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

### January 17

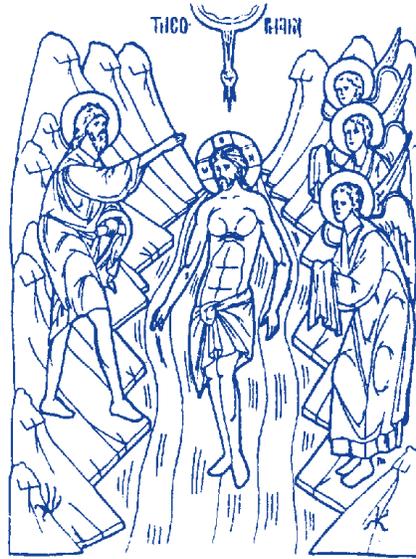
#### *St. Anthony the Great*

Anthony Theodore Christo  
Scott Anthony Maynard  
Anthony Rucho  
Tony Nicholas Trakadas

### January 18

#### *St. Athanasios Patriarch of Alexandria*

Thanas Lolo  
Arthur Peterson



About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Saviour according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Saviour also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvelous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized and the voice was heard from the Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

## 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.



## GROWING INTO OUR POTENTIAL

**T**HE Lord's Epiphany at his baptism in the Jordan by John marks the beginning of his earthly ministry. Very soon after this, John will be imprisoned and put to death. Jesus will begin preaching and healing. Slowly people will recognize that Jesus is the Messiah. The Scripture readings for this Sunday following the Feast of Epiphany — the Gospel lesson is Matthew 4:12-17 and the Epistle lesson is Ephesians 4:7-13 — speak of the Lord's ministry, and the ministry given to those who have chosen to follow him.

The selected reading from Ephesians is taken from a section of St. Paul's Letter where he speaks of the unity of the Body of Christ and how each of us can contribute to building it up. He says, "each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift" (v. 7). In other words, each of us has been given something by Christ that is essential for the well-being of the whole Church. Christ shares his gifts with us. We are essential participants in Christ's work of salvation. No gift is better or more important than another. Each is needed; all are critical. Our task is to understand our gift and use it for the well-being of others.

In order to emphasize both the power and humility of the Lord Jesus he quotes Psalm 68:18 adding insights from both Jewish Biblical scholars of the time as well as his own. So he says: "When he ascended on high he made captivity [entrapment by the Evil One] itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (v. 8) Here is how St. Paul explains this verse: "When it says, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things". (v. 9-10)

St. Paul wants us to appreciate how the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, God's Son, "descended" to the earth. He

came and lived among us. Some Biblical scholars say that when St. Paul says he "descended into the lower parts of the earth" this is also a reference to his death and descent to Hades to liberate the souls of the righteous held captive there. St. Paul's central point is that by both descending and ascending Jesus defeated the Evil One. "He made captivity itself a captive." And, "he gave gifts."

What are these gifts that Christ gave us? "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers" (v. 11). St. Paul gives us other lists of gifts given us, for example in Romans 12:3-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31. However, the list he gives in Ephesians has to do with the Church, particularly offices in the Church. These are not 'personal' gifts. Rather, they are gifts "for building up the body of Christ;" and, "to equip the saints [that is us, average Christians] for the work of ministry" (v. 12).

When God gives us gifts they are always meant to be used for the well-being of others. They don't belong to us, to use narrowly or even selfishly. This is particularly evident in the four gifts that St. Paul names here: apostles, prophets, evangelists; and pastors/ teachers. Each of these gifts represents a position of responsibility within the Church. The apostles were those with a direct, first-hand experience of Jesus and given a commission to preach Him. A prophet is an inspired preacher who encourages, warns or stimulates the community. An evangelist is an itinerant preacher, proclaiming the Gospel from community to community. The pastor/teacher is the presbyter (priest) or bishop; the one responsible for ministering to and guiding the local community. These gifts, and the responsibilities that come with them, have as their sole purpose the edification, the building-up, of the Body of Christ.

The gifts and offices are given, "until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (v. 13). You can see from what St. Paul says that these gifts are not intended to be permanent; that is to say, they are given to us for a purpose and toward an end. The end is that all of us should come to maturity, the full stature of Christ.

Let's look at some of the phrases St. Paul gives us. He tells us that we are expected to come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. The "unity of the faith" means that we, each of us in the Church (that is, the whole Church) and each of us in the church (that is, our home parish), come to a common and correct faith. The "knowledge of the Son of God" does not mean to "know Jesus." Rather, it means to know what Jesus knows; to think and understand as Jesus does.

When we are able to take on "the mind of Christ," we become mature. We become fully human. When we say that Jesus became fully human, we are not only saying that the Son of God became like us; we are also saying that Christ became what we were intended to be — when He created us. He has come to give us the opportunity to become fully human — but, only if we want to.

God gives us gifts to help one another. He asks us to learn, grow, and fully develop into the kind of persons who look like Adam and Eve in Paradise. He invites us to live up to our full potential. He give us the gifts we need and the grace to realize it.

FR. NICHOLAS APOSTOLA