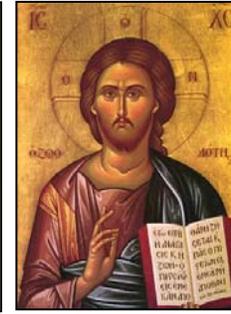




GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org
St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, January 6, 2019

ON THIS DAY, WE REMEMBER THE HOLY THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST and St. Theophan the Recluse. *To Him be glory and dominion forever and always. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. ***You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!***

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG TODAY:

1./3./5./10. Hymn of the Theophany of our Lord – (Hymnal-pp.208-211):

This hymn is sung *after* the Great Doxology, *before and after* the Small Entrance, and instead of *Ithomen to fos*, “*We have seen the true light*” after the distribution of Holy Communion): “At Your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the Father’s voice bore You witness, by calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove, confirmed the truth of the Father’s Word. O Christ our God, You have appeared to us and enlightened the world. Glory to You.”

2. Hymn for Second Antiphon – (Hymnal-p.28):

On the occasion of Theophany feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the regular Sosen imas, “*Save us, O Son of God*”: “Save us, O Son of God, Who was baptized in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist, as we sing to You, Alleluia.”

4. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:

On the occasion of today’s feast, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: “Blessed in He Who comes in the Name of the Lord. God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Save us, O Son of God, Who was baptized in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist, as we sing to You, Alleluia.

6. Kontakion of the Holy Theophany of our Lord – (Hymnal-p.-248-249):

This hymn is sung *after* the Small Entrance: “You have revealed Yourself to the world today, and Your light shines forth on us, who sing Your praise with full knowledge: You have come to us, O Lord; You are made manifest, O inaccessible Light.

7. Trisagion Hymn – (Hymnal-p. 292-293):

On the occasion of today’s feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the Trisagion hymn: “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ. Alleluia. (3)”

8. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301):

Today, instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”, we sing: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you

9. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-p. 327):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": "The grace of God has appeared, for the salvation of all people. (Titus 2:11) (3) Alleluia."

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES
FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

<i>The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts.</i> – St. John Chrysostom

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Mark 1:9-11)

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as He was coming up out of the water, he saw the Heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on Him. And a voice came from Heaven, "You are My Son, the Beloved; with You I am well pleased."

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matthew 3:13-17)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as He came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with Whom I am well pleased."

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with Whom I am well pleased." (Mt. 3:17)

The Holy Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ
(continued from Back Cover)

This depiction is very important, because here we have the revelation of the Holy Trinity to Saint John the Forerunner. From here we will make much reference to the book by His Eminence Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos titled *The Despotical Feasts*. The manifestation of the Triune God to man shows among other things that only man is an earthly initiate and worshipper of the Holy Trinity, and the only one created by the Triune God in His image. Saint Gregory Palamas teaches that animals do not have a mind and reason but an animated spirit, that is not self-subsistent, which means that when animals die they lose their spirit, since they don't have essence but only energy. However, man has a reasonable mind and a spirit that animates attached to the body, which is why he alone is in the image of the tripartite God.

Saint Gregory Palamas interprets the phrase "in Whom I am well-pleased" as how the grace of God is one, but sometimes it acts in good pleasure, since God wills it, and sometimes by concession. God knew that the fall of man would take place, and did not create him for this but separated him, because God Himself willed it for man. God does not abolish the freedom of man. So there is the will of God according to good pleasure and the will of God according to concession. With this in mind the affirmation of the Father: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well-pleased" shows that the incarnation was the will of God according to good pleasure.

The testimony of God the Father for His Son shows that the Son is the "radiance of the glory of the Father", since there is a common essence and energy in the Triune God.

The appearance of the Holy Spirit "like a dove" shows us that the Holy Spirit is not a dove, but He appeared as a dove because the Holy Spirit is not created but uncreated like the other persons of the Holy Trinity. That the Holy Spirit together with the voice of the Father sat on Christ shows that the persons of the Holy Trinity are consubstantial, and it also shows that the Messiah was not Saint John the Forerunner, but Christ.

It is known that Christ had no need for baptism, since the baptism of John led people to become aware of their sins. Christ, writes Saint John of Damascus, was not baptized because He had need for purification, but "to bury human sin by water," to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify "the nature of water" and to offer us the form and example of Baptism. Christ was baptized to crush the heads of the dragons in the water, because it was

believed that demons dwell in the water. This is why we see in the icon of the Baptism water monsters that have turned their backs on Christ because of the fire of the deity. Christ was baptized to wash away sin and bury the entire old Adam in the water.

Many icons of the Baptism in conjunction with the hymnography of the feast present Christ completely naked, thus indicating how Christ humbled Himself for the sake of people. He became naked that He may clothe man in an incorruptible garment.

Another main person who took part in the baptism was Saint John the Baptist. He was made worthy by God to hear the voice of the Father, and to see the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The “and behold the heavens were opened to Him” of Matthew the Evangelist, and the “He saw the heavens tear apart” of Mark the Evangelist indicate the superiority of the uncreated over the created, as well as the restoration of an “open” relationship between God and man after its “closure” due to sin.

Many things can be said based on the teachings of the Fathers of the Church regarding a theological analysis of the icon of the Baptism. My main point though is that Christ gave us each the possibility to acquire the Grace of sonship, a Theophany in our personal life.

[Source:](#) *Ekklesiastiki Paremvasi*, "Επεφάνη η χάρις του Θεού η σωτήριος", December 2003. Translated by John Sanidopoulos.

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

THE FEAST OF LIGHTS

The celebrations of the events of the life of Jesus Christ as they are celebrated today were not instituted at the very beginning of the Christian era; they were held by the believers of the early Church as vivid commemorations without a connection with certain days and hymns, but as a real event of the Lord Who was present in the Church.

Later on, when the Church was firmly established and its believers were free to worship the True God, they decided to commemorate and observe annually in the calendar year the events of the life of the Church and especially those of the Life and Person of Jesus Christ, Whom they worshipped along with the Father and the Holy Spirit with prayers, hymns, and readings appropriate for the occasion. The reason why the first Christians did not institute these celebrations and observances at the very beginning is mainly because of the persecutions of the Church and its believers.

For three entire centuries, the Church of Christ was underground, in catacombs, where under the grass and flowers of the earth was nourished the tree of faith and worship. The Church extended the Kingdom of God to the hearts of its faithful without pompous expressions. These winding underground centers, the catacombs, were both the

workshop of the rebirth of the Christians and also their burial places. It is not our purpose here to develop further the struggles and faith of the early Church of Christ which, since then, has made the Church of the Living God “the pillar and bulwark of the truth.” What we wish to emphasize is that during the first three centuries, the Church of Christ developed a clear ecclesiastical conscience, both in theory and in practice; the Church formulated the principles of faith and worship and defended them with enormous sacrifices, fighting off both external and internal falsifications.

For three centuries, the Church developed its roots under the earth and watered them with the moisture of its catacombs and the blood of its martyrs. The Church spread its roots from Antioch to Rome. Alexandria, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Thessalonica, and Athens also opened underground centers of the Christian faith which were warmed and brightened by the torches of devotion, sacrifice, and the cultivation of Christian character and conscience.

When the fullness of time came, that is, when the roots were ready to present an incorruptible trunk above the earth, then Divine Providence appointed political conditions and a remarkable personality, Constantine the Great, who not so much from a religious outlook as from a political foresight gave to the Church of Christ the right of free exercise in matters of faith and worship. This action of expediency was initiated and imposed by the emperor.

The Church of Christ came out of its refuge from the persecutions armed with the strength of love among its members and equipped for defense and for missionary endeavors. Now the Church could freely apply its principles.

The Church’s first concern was the development of its prayer and worship, which ratify the faith and cultivate the relations of its members. This is why the 4th century is the golden link which connects the underground life of the Church with its later course on the surface of the earth. The celebrations of Theophany and Christmas, the writing of divine liturgies, the formulation of faith in the Creed, and so many other incidents are permanent foundations which took place during the 4th century and which developed as flowers springing from roots which had existed beforehand.

The life of the Church has kept the fragrance of these unwithering flowers until today, and their aroma has given to civilization the precious Christian atmosphere which we breathe today. If we of today hold lamps and torches in our hands and in our hearts, this light has been transmitted from the lamps and torches which were held burning by the men and

women of the catacombs who gave this inheritance of faith from their hearts. (from Fr. George Mastrantonis)

Holy Theophany and the Blessing of the Waters

During yesterday's church services on the Eve of the Feast and today's Feast of Holy Theophany, water is blessed and given to the faithful to carry home and use throughout the year. By His Baptism in the Jordan, Jesus Christ touched our lives, the environment, and our whole world, revealing His Divinity and desire to make all things, nature and the world, holy. This is a sign that our lives are precious to the Lord and we are immersed in His love. Following today's Blessing of the Water (*Agiasmos*), Fr. George will bless all present. Parishioners may fill their bottles to take home with them. Thank you for helping us recycle prior year bottles.



Today is "Parish Thanksgiving Sunday"

... the custom of offering the Five Loaves monthly reminds us of the generosity and multiplication of the gifts of fish and bread that our Lord multiplied and shared with all present. Through this Orthodox Service, we return thanksgiving to God for multiplying our own gifts and hence, the icon of this miracle has been selected as our logo for

"Parish Thanksgiving Sunday" ... the first Sunday of every month!

On this third of our "Parish Thanksgiving Sundays," we thank **Susan Kleto** for making and offering on behalf of her and her family our five Artos (loaves of bread).

Likewise, today we thank God and celebrate Name Days, Birthdays, Wedding Anniversaries, and other special occasions that occurred recently or will occur during the month of January. **The Artos (blessed sweet bread) will be distributed to everyone during our Vasilopita Luncheon.** Join us! Congratulations to everyone celebrating their special events today and thanks to all who offered our parish their gifts for God to use and multiply.



 ["Follow" & "Like" our Facebook page.](#) *Be sure to check our status for updates and photos.*

On this the 737th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

Vasilopita Luncheon

 Sunday, January 6, 2019 

After Blessing of Five Loaves & January Commemorations

All donations will benefit St. Basil's Academy



St. Christopher parishioners are invited to share
a soup, sandwich & dessert smorgasbord!



Invite your friends, family & neighbors!



COMMUNITY SCHEDULE *(CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)*

Sunday, January 6 (Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ):

- 7:45 a.m. Orthros Service
- 9:00 a.m. Blessing of the Waters – *Agiasmos*
- 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil
- 11:00 a.m. Blessing of Five Loaves & January Commemorations
- 11:30 a.m. Philoptochos Vasilopita Luncheon

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!