

Holy Resurrection Serbian Eastern Orthodox
Church 'Visoki Decani'

Herald

January, 2004

God's Peace - Christ is Born!



Мир Божији - Христос се роди!

Holy Resurrection Herald

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K.S.S. SVETA PETKA (Steubenville-Mingo)

First Thursday — 11:30 am

K.S.S. VIDOVDAN (Weirton)

Second Thursday — 12:00 Noon, Serbian-American Cultural Center

SERBIAN ORTHODOX MEN'S CLUB

Second Thursday — 7:00 PM Picnic Grounds

PETAR KRSTICH CHOIR

Practice Tuesday Evenings — 7:00 PM

4-C'ers CHURCH SCHOOL PARENTS' ASSOC.

Third Sunday — after Liturgy

CHURCH EXECUTIVE BOARD

Second Sunday — After Liturgy

HOLY RESURRECTION TAMMIES

Mondays — Tiny Tots 6 PM, Reg. 6:30 PM Sept.-May

SERBIAN-AMERICAN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

First Monday — 7:30 PM at the Cultural Center

HOLY RESURRECTION TEEN GROUP

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President — Nicholas Zatezalo

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Director — Slobodan Zelich

President — Milena Karas

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President — Martha Zatezalo

President — Jennifer Kosanovich

President — Michael Merick; Advisor — Mary Bahney

CHURCH SERVICES

Divine Liturgy — Sundays and Holidays: 10:00 AM

Great Vespers — Saturdays and Eves of Feasts: 6:00 PM (5 pm Saturdays during Great Lent)

Confessions — After Vespers or by appointment

Church office: (740) 282-4463 (9 am-Noon, Mon through Fri)

Rectory: 264-4809

Fax: 282-0313

Herald elves — Dorothy Bossert, Mary Drzayich, Joanne Jenikovsky, Fran Kosanovic, Ann Roberts, Bess Simpson, Mary Lynn Ricci

The Editorial Staff of the *Holy Resurrection Herald* assumes the responsibility and reserves the right to reject, edit or rewrite any article submitted to the *Church Herald* for publication.

From the Church's Records...

Deaths:

- Dolores Evkovich** of Weirton, on November 9. Burial at Chapel Hill Cemetery, Weirton.
Mary (Radakovich) Kvočka of Steubenville, on November 20 at age 88. Burial at Holy Resurrection Church Cemetery, Steubenville.
Kathy Sarah Prica of Steubenville, on November 24 at age 54. Burial at Union Cemetery, Steubenville.
Nicholas Lonchar of Weirton, on November 25 at age 58. Burial at Serbian Cemetery, Weirton.
Zora (Borovich) Busic of Oakdale, PA, on December 13 at age 83. Burial at Union Cemetery, Steubenville.
Ann Helen (Mahfood) Sarap of Steubenville, on December 18 at age 84. Burial at Holy Resurrection Church Cemetery, Steubenville.
Diane (Prtljaga) Jokovich of Shadyside, OH, on December 20 at age 79. Burial at Holy Resurrection Church Cemetery, Steubenville.
Lillian (Merrick) Haines of Darien, GA, on December 17 at age 85. Burial at Union Cemetery, Steubenville.
Mileva (Hamovich) Bayat of St. Clairsville, OH, on December 21 at age 93. Burial at Union Cemetery, St. Clairsville.
Ann (Borovitz) Prica of Escanaba, MI, on December 23 at age 89. Burial at Union Cemetery, Steubenville.
Mildred Munis of Mingo Junction, OH, on December 26 at age 90. Burial at Holy Resurrection Church Cemetery, Steubenville.
- Grant rest eternal in blessed falling asleep, O Lord, to the souls of Thy departed servants, and make their memory to be eternal! Vecnaja pamjat!*

Jan.–Feb. Altar Servers/Epistle Readers Schedule

<u>January 4</u> Richard Fair Sam Busic Sam Bruich Sonny Guarino Epistle: Brittany Rodgers	<u>January 11</u> George Martich Nick Jovonovich Ben Rodgers Nicodimus Karas Epistle: Sam Bruich	<u>January 25</u> Richard Fair Sam Busic Sam Bruich Sonny Guarino Epistle: Michael Merick	<u>February 8</u> Michael Merick Milan Martich Nicklas Battista Strati Maragos Epistle: Natalie Jovonovich
<u>Christmas Eve & Day</u> ALL SERVERS Epistle: Natasha Povich & Maria Karas	<u>January 18</u> Michael Merick Milan Martich Nicklas Battista Strati Maragos Epistle: Jelena Povich	<u>February 1</u> George Martich Nick Jovonovich Ben Rodgers Nicodemus Karas Epistle: Meya Potenzini	<u>February 15</u> Richard Fair Sam Busic Sam Bruich Sonny Guarino Epistle: Jennifer Zatezalo

Please be sure to serve or read as scheduled. If you cannot be present that day, it is your responsibility to arrange for your replacement.

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendar now for these upcoming events...

- Tues, Jan. 6 **Badnje Vece. Christmas Eve. Burning of badnjak and Nativity Vigil, 8 pm**
Wed, Jan. 7..... **Christmas Day Feast in the Lyceum after Liturgy. All invited! Sign up in advance.**
Sun, Jan. 11..... **Annual Congregation Meeting and election of officers, Lyceum, after Liturgy**
Wed, Jan. 14 **Julian New Year, Circumcision of Christ & St. Basil. DL 10 am**
Mon, Jan. 19..... **Theophany. Home blessings begin in Mingo.**
Sun, Jan. 25..... **St. Sava banquet & church school program, Serb-Am Cultural Center, 12:30 pm**
Feb. 22, 2004..... **Great Lent begins**
April 11, 2004..... **Pascha (Easter)**



From Father Rade

The true miracle of Christmas is not the virgin birth, or the star, or any of the other signs and portents that surrounded that wonderful event. The true miracle is that, out of perfect, complete and self-sacrificial love, Love Himself is born into our world. God is love, and He pours out His love upon us by giving us the greatest gift of all—the gift of Himself.

That is why our Lord told His disciples, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples—if you love one another."

To be a Christian, a "little Christ", each of us must "love the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and with all our mind." But our Lord doesn't stop there. He gives another commandment which He says is like this first one: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." And St. John tells us, "He who does not love His brother abides in death," and then goes on to say, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Then he is even more plain: "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"

So, brothers and sisters, how should we celebrate this glorious and holy feast? Is it not by being Christians in our actions, and not just our words? And doesn't that mean that we must put behind us all our differences, all our hurt feelings and emotional baggage, for the sake of Christ's love for us? Doesn't that mean that we must forgive and ask forgiveness of each other, for the sake of Christ? Doesn't that mean that we need to show the love He has shown us to one another? Of course, we know it does. But will we do it?

As we enter into a new year, let us also enter into a renewed and healed relationship with Christ and, through Him, with one another. May His Peace indeed be upon us!

Peace from God—Christ is Born!

Muz Bozju—Xpucmoc ce pogu!

And a most blessed New Year!

Yours in His love,

*Father Rade, Protinica Donna,
Nikola & Mihajlo*

Nativity Troparion

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world the light of wisdom! For by it those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Daybreak from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Christmas Service Schedule

The services of the Christmas season are among the most beautiful of the year. All of you are urged to attend as many of the services as possible, as we confess in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs that God has become a man for us and our salvation.

Christmas Eve (Badnjidan):

Christmas Eve is called Badnjidan in Serbian, because this is the day when the Badnjak (yule log) is cut and brought into the home. On the morning of Christmas Eve, we have a special Divine Liturgy. In the evening we bless and burn our church badnjak and then have the Christmas vigil, during which we welcome in the feast. At this service the five loaves of bread as well as wheat, wine and oil are blessed and distributed to the faithful. Hot refreshments will be served following the service.

Strict Fast Day.

Tuesday, January 6

Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am

Blessing of Badnjak and Vigil, 8:00 pm

Christmas Day (Bozic):

The Great Feast of the Nativity in the flesh of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Divine Liturgy is served with the special Christmas antiphons and hymns. All those who have prepared themselves by fasting and who have received Holy Communion during Advent are welcomed and encouraged to receive Holy Communion at this Liturgy, and so partake of



the true feast. From this day until the Eve of Theophany (January 18) there is **NO FASTING**.

Wednesday, January 7.

Divine Liturgy, 10 am.

Assembly to the Birthgiver of God

The day following Christmas is dedicated to the Most Holy Birthgiver of God and ever-Virgin Mary. We assemble as the Church in her honor at the Divine Liturgy.

Thursday, January 8

Divine Liturgy, 10 am.

St. Stephen the Protomartyr:

The third day of Christmas is also the feastday of St. Stephen the Apostle, Archdeacon, and First Martyr. His feastday is combined with the continuing celebration of the Nativity of Christ.

Friday, January 9

Divine Liturgy, 10 am.

Home Blessings Begin January 19

Home blessings this year will begin on Monday, January 19, Theophany, with blessing of homes in Mingo Junction and adjacent areas. Homes will then be blessed in the order of Steubenville and Wintersville, Weirton, and then remaining areas. We will call a day or two ahead of time to let you know when we will be by. Please attempt to cooperate by leaving us as much leeway of time as possible.

Why an annual Home Blessing?

As Orthodox Christians, we regard our homes as a kind of church. We traditionally have icons and candles or lamps, and sometimes burn incense in our homes as part of our prayer life. The "baptism" of the home by the priest at Theophany reaffirms the connection of the home church with the Church of the whole community of the people of God.

Just as our home needs to be cleaned periodically as dirt and dust accumulate, so our homes need a

spiritual house cleaning periodically as a rededication to God and His presence in our lives and homes. We often in our day to day lives "desecrate" the sanctity of the home church by our sinful attitudes and behavior, and it is important that we rededicate our homes and our lives to Him. This is the purpose of the home blessing: to purify, to cleanse, to rededicate, and to strengthen our lives and the place we live out our lives in Christ.

After the service the water may be saved for future use. It may be drunk or sprinkled on persons or in the home in time of sickness or temptation, or it may be used in preparing holiday foods such as chesnica or slavski kolac. It should never be poured down the drain.

When Father comes, please have a table prepared with a bowl of water, a candle and an icon if possible. All should gather for the blessing,

If your home has not been blessed before, or if it has been missed in recent years and you would like it to be blessed, please call Fr. Rade or the Church office.

Communion at the Christmas Liturgy

Those who have received Holy Communion previously during the Advent season are encouraged to receive Holy Communion again at the Christmas Day Divine Liturgy, as the most fitting feast at the end of the fast. They should prepare themselves as usual with fasting and prayer, be present for the Christmas Eve vigil if at all possible, and come for confession/absolution if they have not had this recently.

Fasting during the Christmas Season

January 6, **the eve of Christmas**, and January 18, **the eve of Theophany**, are days of **strict fasting** in the Orthodox Church. No meat or dairy products should be eaten on these days. Of course, the Advent season (November 28–January 6) is also a time of fasting to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Savior in the flesh which should be kept.

The time from **Christmas Day through January 17 is a fast-free time**. There is **no fasting** during this time, even on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Parish Christmas Feast open to all

All parishioners are again invited to share in a traditional Christmas Feast in the Lyceum on Christmas Day, January 7, following the Liturgy. Roast pig and much more will highlight the feast. This is for anyone who would like to share the day with other parishioners. The cost will be \$15 per person, plus everyone is asked to bring a side dish to share. Those wishing to attend **must** let us know **immediately** by calling Mary Bahney at 304-224-1811 so that preparation can be made. Thanks go to her for organizing this event.

Annual Congregational Meeting January 11

The annual meeting of the Holy Resurrection Serbian Orthodox Church School Congregation of Steubenville, Ohio will take place on Sunday, January 11, 2004 in the Holy Resurrection Church Lyceum, 528 N. Fourth St., Steubenville following the Divine Liturgy.

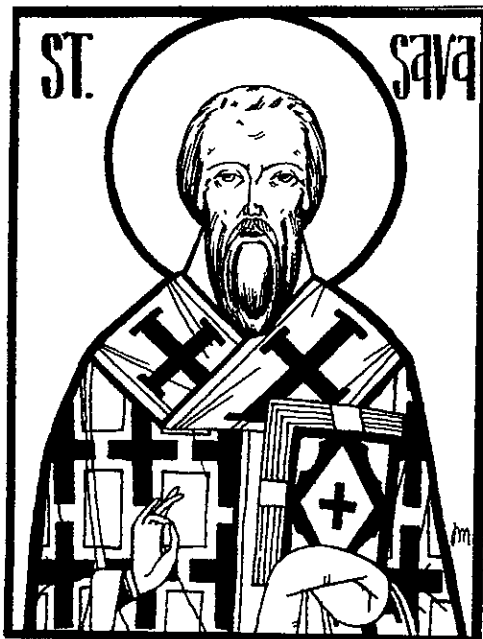
The annual meeting hears the reports of the parish priest and executive board on the previous year's activities, adopts an operating budget for the coming year, and elects executive board officers and members at large for the coming year. The annual meeting also gives the congregation the opportunity to ask questions, receive more information about the state of the church, and enact other business as may come before the meeting.

Members of the congregation who have fulfilled all the responsibilities of membership during the previous year, including sacramental, moral and financial qualifications as enumerated in the congregation bylaws and Uniform Rules and Regulations of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the US and Canada, will have the right of voice and vote at the meeting.

Light refreshments will be provided. All members are urged to attend.

The Church Board has formed a nominating committee to seek out those willing to take on an office for the coming year. Those interested in serving the congregation in a position on the Church Board are asked to notify President Mark Zatezalo or Secretary Barbara Matey for inclusion on the nominating committee report. Everyone is encouraged to consider offering their services to God and our Church as an officer or board member for the coming year.

Annual
St. Sava Dinner & Program



Sunday, January 25

- Divine Liturgy at Church, 10:00 am
- Cutting of the Slavski Kolac & Delicious Festal Banquet
at the Serbian-American Cultural Center, 12:30 pm
- Church School Program following banquet

Your free will offering will be greatly appreciated!

***Come honor our Patron and Father,
Saint Sava of Serbia!***

Orthodox Christians need to remain faithful to their traditions.

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Johannes L. Jacobse

In the Christian tradition of both east and west, the twelve days of Christmas refer to the period from Christmas Day to Theophany. The days leading up to Christmas were for preparation; a practice affirmed in the Orthodox tradition by the Christmas fast that runs from November 15/28 to Christmas. The celebration of Christmas was reserved for these twelve days.

As our culture became more commercialized however, the period of celebration has shifted from Thanksgiving to Christmas Day. Christmas celebration increasingly conforms to the shopping cycle while the older tradition falls by the wayside. It's a worrisome shift because as the tradition dims, the knowledge that the preparation imparted diminishes with it.

Our Orthodox traditions – from fasting cycles to worship – exist to teach us how to live in Christ. The traditions impart discipline. These disciplines are never an end in themselves but neither can life in Christ be sustained apart from them.

The traditions only make sense only when they have the Gospel as their reference. If we forget that these traditions are given to us to help us lay hold of Christ, then the traditions appear to be superfluous and the disciplines they impart seem to serve no real purpose. We start to evaluate them by the values of the dominant culture – by a cost-benefit calculus, rather than seeing them as ways by which we morally reorient ourselves towards Christ.

This is happening with Christmas. Rather than preparing for the birth of Christ through inward reorientation and discipline, we follow the direction of the dominant culture and skip any preparation altogether. We party instead of fast. We get caught up in the commercial energy of the season rather than waiting on the Spirit of God.

It's a dangerous path. Our culture is becoming increasingly secularized; the sacred dimension of creation is slipping from view. This loss of this sense of the sacred has grave ramifications for society that are expressed in different ways such as the desecration of religious art to reducing an unborn child to a commodity, to name two. If this view prevails our culture will inevitably view man as nothing more than an animal or machine.

But man is more than an animal or machine. The scriptures reveal man as created in the image and likeness of God, a phrase that means that man is not complete unless he partakes of God – God must be part of his life. This longing – this innate knowledge that man is created for God – never leaves man although a person can fight against it if he chooses.

A secularized mind is blind to the inherent holiness of life. Maintaining our traditions is one way to avoid this debilitating blindness. Christmas is not just "Jesus' birthday" (an impoverished notion heard more and more even among Orthodox faithful), but also much more.

The birth of Christ and His baptism ought never to be divorced. Both events define the Christmas season. It imparts to the Christian the knowledge that Christ's coming into the world and Christ's sanctification of the waters makes our new life possible -- a sonship by adoption accomplished through baptism.

When the link between Christmas and Theophany is broken (and by neglecting the proper preparation we break it), the cultural memory of the promise of new birth expresses itself in weakened and ultimately insufficient cultural forms. These forms function as a new tradition.

Take the way our society celebrates New Year's Day for example. More partying fills the space that is created when celebration culminates on Christmas Day. At the same time, the start of a new year is also the time for resolutions, which recalls the promise of a new start that was the mainstay of the original tradition for many years.

There is of course nothing wrong with making resolutions, but their tie to New Year celebrations is blind to the original promise that all new beginnings depend on the power of God. Moral self-reflection is good and necessary. The secularized tradition however, does not reveal from where the power comes that makes real and necessary change possible.

Religion is not the product of culture; religion is the source, writes philosopher Russell Kirk. "It's from an association in a cult, a body of worshipers, that human community grows...when belief in the cult has been wretchedly enfeebled, the culture will decay swiftly. The material order rests on the spiritual order."*

Orthodox Christianity can contribute to the recovery of the moral foundation of American culture by imparting knowledge that can strengthen and deepen that foundation. It won't happen however, if the Orthodox faithful adopt the practices of the dominant culture in place of their own tradition.

*Russell Kirk "Civilization with Religion" The Heritage Foundation Report (July 24, 1992).

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Source: <http://www.3saints.com>

-Compiled and edited by Fr Vladimir Demshuk

Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

December 25 / January 7



Introduction

The Feast of the Nativity of Jesus is one of the most joyful days of the Orthodox Church. It ranks next to the greatest holiday, the Resurrection of Jesus. The Feast of the Birth of Jesus is also known as the "Incarnation of Christ." This means that Jesus became a man and came into the world to save us. We also refer to this joyous feast as Christmas.

Biblical Story

The story of the Nativity of Christ is beautifully told in the Holy Scriptures. The story is found in Matthew 1:18-25 and in Luke 2:1-20. No matter how often the Birth of Jesus is told, we realize that it is an important event.

As the story is told by the Apostles, the Roman Empire was powerful. The Romans had conquered much of the then known world. Judea and Samaria, what we know today as Israel, were included in their conquests. Emperor Augustus ordered that a census be taken in all his lands. He needed to know how many people lived in the empire so he could tax them. Everyone had to go to the town of their family's origin to register for the census. This meant that Mary and Joseph had to go

to Bethlehem. They were descendants of King David and Bethlehem was the City of David.

Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth and it was a great distance from Bethlehem. It was about 100 miles over very rugged roads. Moreover, Mary was expecting the baby and it was almost time for her to give birth. Bethlehem was a small town and there were many descendants of David who had come to register for the census. By the time Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem there was no place for them to stay. Joseph tried very hard to find a place to sleep that evening. There was no room at the inn. Finally, Joseph found a cave-like place where they could rest. This place was used by shepherds to protect their sheep in stormy weather. It was here that Mary gave birth to Jesus. The baby was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the straw in the manger.

Now, that night the shepherds were out in the fields guarding their sheep. Suddenly, there was a bright light which startled the shepherds. The light was so bright that it turned the night into daylight. Of course, the shepherds were frightened. Nothing such as this had ever happened. Soon an angel appeared and calmed them. The angel said:

"Fear not for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior; which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11-12).

Then a larger group of angels appeared. They praised and glorified God and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). When the angels finished singing, they disappeared and the light began to fade. It became dimmer and dimmer until it was dark again. The shepherds were awed. They didn't know what to do. Finally, they decided to leave their flocks of sheep and go to Bethlehem. They decided that they wanted to see for themselves what the angels had told them. When they got to Bethlehem, they found Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus. They fell to their knees and adored Jesus.

Some Wise Men came from the East for they knew of the coming of Jesus. They had seen a star that told them that a new king had been born to the Jews. They followed the star and were looking for the child. At this time the governor of Judea was King Herod. He was a wicked man and was feared and hated by the people. When Herod heard about the Wise Men looking for the child, he invited them to his palace. Herod asked the Wise Men to find the child so that he, too, could worship Him. But Herod was lying. He did not want anyone to take his place. The Wise Men went on to look for Jesus. The Star led them to Jesus and Mary. When the Wise Men found Jesus, they fell to their knees and worshipped Him. They gave Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Wise Men left but did not return to Herod. They had a dream that warned them that Herod wanted to harm Jesus. Instead, they returned to their native country by a different route.

Icon of the Nativity

The icon of the Nativity tells the story of Christ's birth from the Scriptures. It also shows that all creation is taking part in Christ's birth. The angels give thanks with their song; the heavens give the star; the Wise Men give their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The poor, humble shepherds give their praise and amazement; the earth gives the cave, and humanity gives the Virgin.



1. The icon of the Nativity stresses the importance of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus (detail).



2. The Christ Child, seen here in swaddling clothes, lies in a manger guarded by the ox and donkey (detail).

This Holy Icon is an icon with many scenes. First, it stresses the importance of the Theotokos, the Mother of Jesus (1). She is placed in the center and is the largest figure in the icon. In this icon, she is kneeling with crossed arms, looking at the Christ child. The three stars, denoting her virginity before, during, and after the Nativity, are on her garments. The Christ Child (2), in the center of the icon, is in swaddling clothes and is lying in the manger. In the background is the dark cave where He was born. In the cave are an ox and a donkey guarding the newborn Babe. Even though the Gospels say nothing of the cave, this information is from Holy Tradition. Neither do the Gospels speak of the ox and the donkey, but all icons of the Nativity include these animals. Including the animals in the icon fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 1:3, "The ox knows his master, and the donkey his master's crib; but Israel does not know me, and the people have not regarded me." The long ray of light from the star points directly to the cave. This ray comes from the star and travels to all parts of the world. It teaches that this bright star is an astronomical happening, and is a messenger from heaven announcing the birth of Jesus.



3. The Wise Men, are seen in the icon riding towards the light from the star (detail).



4. Opposite from the Wise Men sits a young shepherd boy plays music for his flock (detail).



5. An angel gives glory to God and announces the good news of His birth (detail).

On the left hand side of the icon is another scene. The Wise Men (3), who were led by the star, are riding horses to bring their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus. The Wise Men are of various ages. One is without a beard. In those days, young men did not wear beards. The other Wise Man has long hair and a long beard, which indicates that he is much older. These details teach that regardless of age and appearance, the Good News was given to each and everyone. Opposite the Wise Men is the scene with the humble shepherds. An angel proclaims the glad tidings. A young shepherd plays a reed instrument (4). This scene reveals that the music of the humans was added to the hymn of the angels. Across from the shepherd's scene is the heavenly choir of angels (5). They are giving glory to God. The angels serve two purposes in the Nativity of Christ. They give glory to God and announce the good news to all mankind.

The background shows a very rugged terrain. This is not a true representation of the land in this area. Joseph could not find room in Bethlehem, so they went outside of Bethlehem to a cave. This rocky mountain formation only serves as a background for the event.

In the lower part of the icon are two more scenes. In the right hand corner are the two women Joseph brought to take care of the Christ child (6). They are bathing Him just as any baby is bathed. The humanity of Jesus is clearly shown in this setting.



6. Satan is depicted as an old man who is tempting Joseph not to believe in the virgin birth of Jesus (detail).



7. In the right hand corner are the two women Joseph brought to take care of the Christ child. (detail).

Opposite the bathing of Jesus scene sits a sad and worried Joseph (7). He is not part of the central group the Christ Child and the Theotokos. Joseph is not the natural father. Joseph is troubled and despondent. There is an old man talking to Joseph. The old man is Satan. Satan can appear in many forms. Here he is as an old man who is tempting Joseph and disturbing him. Satan is telling Joseph that virgin birth is impossible. He's telling Joseph that he's a fool if he believes this. This story comes to us from Holy Tradition. The sad Joseph shows us not only his personal predicament but the dilemma of all mankind the difficulty of accepting that which is "beyond words or reason."

The tree, which is in the middle of the lower part of the icon, is a symbol of the Tree of Jesse. This tree refers to Isaiah 11:1-2, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him." King David was often mentioned as the son of Jesse and Jesus was from the House of David.

The Holy Icon of the Nativity reminds one to praise and glorify the Birth of Christ. The celebration of Christmas each year serves to remind each and everyone of us that Christ came for you and me.

The Orthodox Celebration of the Feast of the Nativity

As with Pascha, or Easter, the Feast of the Nativity begins with a period of preparation. It is preceded by a fast corresponding to Lent and lasting for forty days. The fast begins on November 15/28.

On the Sundays immediately before December 25/January 7, special commemorations emphasize the link between the Old Covenant and the New as we remember those who helped prepare the way for our Lord on the Sundays of the Holy Forefathers and the Holy Fathers. On December 20/January 2 the Forefeast of the Nativity begins, and the daily liturgical texts are directed toward the Feast itself. On Christmas Eve, services include the Great or Royal Hours, the Great Vespers, and the Liturgy of Saint Basil, held in the morning. The Great Compline and Matins of the Feast makes up the festal vigil on the evening before Christmas Day.

On Christmas Day the service commemorates the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, the adoration of the Shepherds, and the arrival of the Wise Men with their gifts. The service held on this day is the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

The days following Christmas are associated with the Theotokos and Joseph. December 26/January 8 is the Synaxis of the Mother of God, and the first Sunday after the Feast commemorates "Joseph the Betrothed." December 29/January 11 commemorates the Massacre of the Innocents, and January 1/14 the Circumcision of our Lord. The Nativity season concludes on December 31/January 13, but the spirit of the festival extends to the celebration of Theophany (Epiphany), the feast commemorating the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River.

Hymns of the Feast

Festal Troparion: (Fourth Tone)

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world the light of wisdom. For by it those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on High. O Lord, glory to You.

Kontakion: (Third Tone)

Today, the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him! The Wise Men journey with a star. Since for our sake the Eternal God is born as a little Child.

Resources

Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ written by the hand of Athanasios Clark and used with permission. © Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The Story of the Icons by Dr. Mary Paloumpis Hallick. Article on the web site of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. <http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article8162.asp?action=show>

The Festal Menaion translated by Mother Mary (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1969) pp. 52-55.

The Incarnate God: The Feasts of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, Cathering Aslanoff, editor and Paul Meyendorff, translator (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995) pp. 103-121.

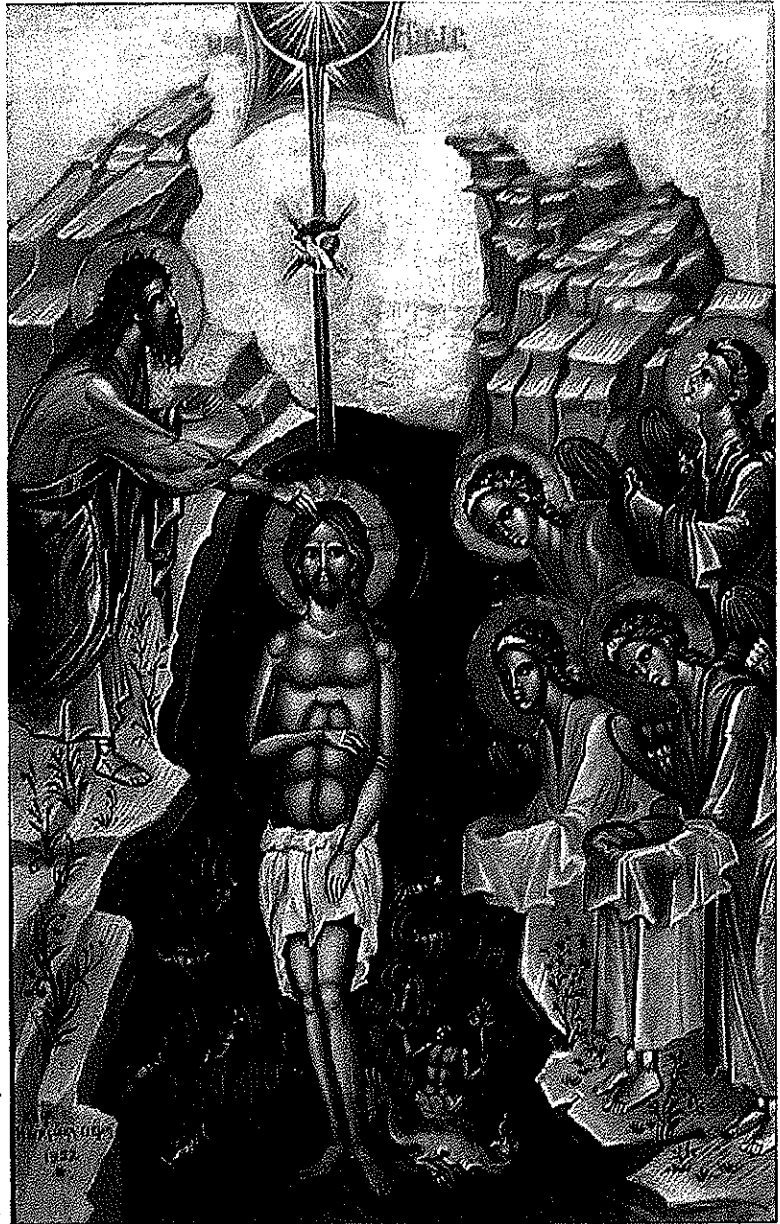
Epiphany (Theophany)

January 6/19

The sixth [nineteenth OS] of January is the feast of the Epiphany. Originally it was the one Christian feast of the "shining forth" of God to the world in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth. It included the celebration of Christ's birth, the adoration of the Wisemen, and all of the childhood events of Christ such as his circumcision and presentation to the temple as well as his baptism by John in the Jordan. There seems to be little doubt that this feast, like Easter and Pentecost, was understood as the fulfillment of a previous Jewish festival, in this case the Feast of Lights.

Epiphany means shining forth or manifestation. The feast is often called, as it is in the Orthodox service books, Theophany, which means the shining forth and manifestation of God. The emphasis in the present-day celebration is on the appearance of Jesus as the human Messiah of Israel and the divine Son of God, One of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Thus, in the baptism by John in the Jordan, Jesus identifies himself with sinners as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29), the "Beloved" of the Father whose messianic task it is to redeem men from their sins (Lk 3:21, Mk 1:35). And he is revealed as well as One of the Divine Trinity, testified to by the voice of the Father, and by the Spirit in the form of a dove. This is the central epiphany glorified in the main hymns of the feast:



When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan the worship of the Trinity was made manifest! For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, calling Thee his Beloved Son. And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of his Word. O Christ our God, who hast revealed Thyself and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee (Troparion).

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, and Thy Light, O Lord, has shone on us, who with understanding praise Thee: Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, O Light Unapproachable! (Kontakion).

The services of Epiphany are set up exactly as those of Christmas, although historically it was most certainly Christmas which was made to imitate Epiphany since it was established later. Once again the Royal Hours and the Liturgy of Saint Basil are celebrated together with Vespers on the eve of the feast; and the Vigil is made up of Great Compline and Matins. The prophecies of Epiphany repeat the God is with Us from Isaiah and stress the foretelling of the Messiah as well as the coming of his forerunner, John the Baptist:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Is 40:3-5; Lk 3:4-6).

Once more special psalms are sung to begin the Divine Liturgy of the feast, and the baptismal line of Galatians 3:27 replaces the song of the Thrice-Holy. The gospel readings of all the Epiphany services tell of the Lord's baptism by John in the Jordan River. The epistle reading of the Divine Liturgy tells of the consequences of the Lord's appearing which is the divine epiphany.

For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds (Titus 2:11-14).

The main feature of the feast of the Epiphany is the Great Blessing of Water. It is prescribed to follow both the Divine Liturgy of the eve of the feast and the Divine Liturgy of the day itself. Usually it is done just once in parish churches at the time when most people can be present. It begins with the singing of special hymns and the censuring of the water which has been placed in the center of the church building. Surrounded by candles and flowers, this water stands for the beautiful world of God's original creation and ultimate glorification by Christ in the Kingdom of God. Sometimes this service of blessing is done out of doors at a place where the water is flowing naturally.

The voice of the Lord cries over the waters, saying: Come all ye, receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, even Christ who is made manifest.

Today the nature of water is sanctified. Jordan is divided in two, and turns back the stream of its waters, beholding the Master being baptized.

As a man Thou didst come to that river, O Christ our King, and dost hasten O Good One, to receive the baptism of a servant at the hands of the Forerunner (John), because of our sins, O Lover of Man (Hymns of the Great Blessing of Waters).

Following are three readings from the Prophecy of Isaiah concerning the messianic age:

Let the thirsty wilderness be glad, let the desert rejoice, let it blossom as a rose, let it blossom abundantly, let everything rejoice ... (Is 35: 1-10)

Go to that water, O you who thirst, and as many as have no money, let them eat and drink without price, both wine and fat ... (Is 55:1-13)

With joy draw the water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall you say: Confess ye unto the Lord and call upon his Name; declare his glorious deeds... his Name is exalted ... Hymn the Name of the Lord ... Rejoice and exult ... (Is 12:3.6).

After the epistle (1 Cor 1:10-14) and the gospel reading (Mk 1:9-11) the special great lityany is chanted invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit upon the water and upon those who will partake of it. It ends with the great prayer of the cosmic glorification of God in which Christ is called upon to sanctify the water, and all men and all creation, by the manifestation of his saving and sanctifying divine presence by the indwelling of the Holy and Good and Life-creating Spirit.

As the troparion of the feast is sung, the celebrant immerses the Cross into the water three times and then proceeds to sprinkle the water in the four directions of the world. He then blesses the people and their homes with the sanctified water which stands for the salvation of all men and all creation which Christ has effected by his "epiphany" in the flesh for the life of the world.

Sometimes people think that the blessing of water and the practice of drinking it and sprinkling it over everyone and everything is a "paganism" which has falsely entered the Christian Church. We know, however, that this ritual was practiced by the People of God in the Old Testament, and that in the Christian Church it has a very special and important significance.

It is the faith of Christians that since the Son of God has taken human flesh and has been immersed in the streams of the Jordan, all matter is sanctified and made pure in him, purged of its death-dealing qualities inherited from the devil and the wickedness of men. In the Lord's epiphany all creation becomes good again, indeed "very good," the way that God himself made it and proclaimed it to be in the beginning when "the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2) and when the "Breath of Life" was breathing in man and in everything that God made (Gen 1:30; 2:7).

The world and everything in it is indeed "very good" (Gen 1:31) and when it becomes polluted, corrupted and dead, God saves it once more by effecting the "new creation" in Christ, his divine Son and our Lord by the grace of the Holy Spirit (Gal 6:15). This is what is celebrated on Epiphany, particularly in the Great Blessing of Water. The consecration of the waters on this feast places the entire world -- through its "prime element" of watering the perspective of the cosmic creation, sanctification, and glorification of the Kingdom of God in Christ and the Spirit. It tells us that man and the world were indeed created and saved in order to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19), the "fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:22). It tells us that Christ, in who in "the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily," is and shall be truly "all, and in all" (Col 2:9, 3:11). It tells us as well that the "new heavens and the new earth" which God has promised through his prophets and apostles (Is 66:2; 2 Peter 3:13, Rev 21:1) are truly "with us" already now in the, mystery of Christ and his Church.

Thus, the sanctification and sprinkling of the Epiphany water is no pagan ritual. It is the expression of the most central fact of the Christian vision of man, his life and his world. It is the liturgical testimony that the vocation and destiny of creation is to be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19).

Fr. Thomas Hopko
The Orthodox Faith, Worship

From the President's Desk:

Although the year is drawing to a close, the amount of activity in the parish has not lessened. We are starting the new year at full pace. I would like to wish all parishioners a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Mir Bozhji, Hristos Se Rodi!

We are happy to inform the parish that fellow parishioner Nick Jovonovich has accepted the position of Director of the Cultural Center. As before, Nick brings his 20 plus years of experience in the catering/restaurant business along with an enhanced knowledge of the local marketplace, based on his years at Mountaineer Park. Welcome back Nick.

As part of the new focus on generating revenue and involving the parish, the Center returned to the "American Christmas" buffet. Members of our parish served as cooks waiters and cashiers to let the staff who are not Orthodox enjoy the holiday. We received many compliments on the food and a few expressions of gratitude for being open.

The board and the new director have been meeting and will continue to develop a plan to move the Cultural Center forward in the coming year. There is much to do and there will be more ways in which the parish may become involved. A few immediate ways to help are as follows:

January is an historically the slowest month of the year at the Center. A way in which our parishioners can help the Center in the short term would be the purchase of gift certificates. Those purchasing certificates during the month of January would be able to obtain Sixty dollars worth of certificates for each fifty dollars that is invested. Purchasing the certificates now will help cash flow in the lean winter months.

Another way that persons in the parish may help the effort would be to volunteer some time. The staff is usually involved heavily in day to day operations and has very little time to answer the telephone. While someone is in the office most days, a volunteer to answer the telephone on Tuesday and Saturday would help alleviate cost and free the staff to more efficiently perform tasks designed to maximize client satisfaction. Please consider helping out for a few hours once a month.

Some ideas that have been tossed around is the institution of barbeque lamb day once a month. As is envisioned, lamb would be available once a month in the lounge along with Serbian music and fellowship. Look for more details in the coming month

Just before the Herald went to print, we learned of the death of Mildred Stepanovich of Steubenville. Millie was for years a tireless worker for the parish and the Petar Krstich choir who she served on a local and national level as a longtime member of the Serbian Singing Federation executive board. She was extremely organized and, I can tell you from personal experience, was instrumental in keeping the finances of numerous projects in order while those involved were busy working. She will be missed.

I hope to see you all in church on Christmas.

Mark

Holy Resurrection Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church Wellness Program

January 2004

Gospel of St Matthew, 25:40 "The King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it to me.'"

Focus on Health Wellness Program is a great benefit to all our members and we thank WVU for all their participation and assistance in this educational program for our church. WVU will be contacting us in the near future so look for upcoming events soon.

Thanks to the Church Board's unanimous approval, the Holy Resurrection Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church Wellness Program is now a Health Ministry Association member. This status will help our church grow in recognition through out the country. This will also assist us in additional grant opportunities, as they become available. We are the ONLY Orthodox church to be a part of this important network of health ministry at this time. We are most definitely the forerunner in this program among the Orthodox.

The Church Board has also been asked to consider sending a representative to participate in each Conference for Orthodox Health Professionals.

The Church Board has also been asked to consider sending a representative to participate in each Orthodox women's conference.

The Wellness Program would like to become more active in the congregation activities, if your group would have any suggestion for the wellness program, please let us know how we can be of assistance to your group or what you would like us to consider beginning to be of service to the community at large.

The Weirton Daily Times continues to list our weekly activities in their Saturday Church schedule edition on the Community page. Please look for it and refer to it for the following week if you don't get a messenger on Sunday morning at Liturgy.

Blood pressure screenings are available on a monthly schedule, watch your weekly messenger, and listen to the announcements after Liturgy for day, time & place.

The Weekly Messengers continue to be completed and emailed to Proto each week for editing and additions as needed, prior to printing for each Sunday.

Members of the wellness program are attending the outreach meetings and we encourage the congregation to get involved in reaching out to our lost sheep as well as newcomers to the Orthodox faith.

Diane will be in the church office every week. If you want to talk to Diane or need health information please call the office (740-282-4463) between 9am & 12noon Monday through Friday and leave your name & number where you can be reached & Diane will get back to you when she gets in. If you need to talk to Diane at any other time please call her at **304-723-6019 (24/7)** and leave a personal phone message.

Check out the Wellness Board in the Lyceum for current medical updates located.

New programs are always needed and volunteers are always welcome. Together WE can do ALL things in CHRIST who strengthens us.

Thank you all for this opportunity to serve our God in this way by helping you.

Until next time --- See you Sunday. Diane◊-<