

**SS. Cyril & Methodius
Bulgarian Orthodox Mission**

www.bocdc.org



SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

Sunday, January 3, 2010

Our services are held at:
St. Luke Orthodox Church
6801 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101

His Beatitude, Metropolitan JONAH
The Very Reverend Timothy Perry
Orthodox Church in America
Diocese of Washington

www.oca.org

Theophany

Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by the St John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine "those who sat in darkness," and "in the region of the shadow of death" (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind.

The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of St Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and St Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which is sung at Orthodox services even today. St John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, 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.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Indivisible. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms.

The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27).

On the day of Theophany, all foods are permitted, even if the Feast falls on a Wednesday or Friday.

† **May Their Memory Be Eternal** †

The newly departed servants Patriarch PAVLE and Magdalena;
the Archbishop GREGORY;
the Priests Peter, Ishmael, Leo, Homer, Victor, and Thomas;
the Matushki Mary, Platonida, and Barbara;
the Readers John, Philemon, John, and Robert Michael; and
the servants of God Alexander, Sophia, Shafik, Michael, Steven, Christo, Radka, Anna,
Dale, Mary, Carmel, Thomas, Vasili, Mary Ellen, Andrew, Irene, Stamatia, Peter,
Steven, Olivera, George, Marianthe, Panaigiotti, Christophor, George, Rada, Stephen,
Stefan, & Julia.

Those Who Are In Need of Prayer

Priests Photius, Anthony, Milorad, and Joseph;
Presbyteras Artemis, Marie, Miriam, & Alexandra;
The servants of God Catherine, Albana, Mathew, Helen, Venko, Tanya, Charlie,
Vera, Bojanka, Yekaterina, Sasha, John, Carmeta, Charlie, and Patricia.

(If you wish to add a name to this list, please contact Fr. Timothy)

Local Bulgarian Churches

The OCA is hopeful that SS Cyril & Methodius and St. George Church will join their ranks into one parish this year. The Bulgarian Diocese has ordained Deacon Chterion to serve St. George and SS Cyril & Methodius temporarily until he may be ordained priest of the re-combined parish.

Saints Commemorated Today

30th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—Tone 5. Sunday Before the Theophany. Forefeast of the Theophany. Holy Prophet Malachi (400 B.C.). Martyr Gordius at Cæsarea in Cappadocia (4th c.). Ven. Genevieve of Paris (5th c.).

Schedule of Services

Jan. 10 – SERVICES AT ST. GEORGE BULGARIAN CHURCH

Jan. 17 – St. Timothy, Disciple of St. Paul

Jan. 24 – SERVICES AT ST. GEORGE BULGARIAN CHURCH

Jan. 31 – Following Liturgy, Annual Parish Meeting of SS Cyril & Methodius

January Parish Council Meeting

The next Monthly Parish Council Meeting will be held Thursday evening, January 13 at St. Luke Orthodox Church in MacLean, VA. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM and will end promptly at 9:00 PM.

The Council will be preparing the Agenda for the Annual Meeting.

2010 Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 31, 2009. The Annual Parish Meeting agenda will include, 1/ Treasurer's Financial Report on 2009, 2/ Priest's Report on 2009 and Outlook for 2010, 3/ Adoption of 2009 Annual Parish Meeting Minutes, 4/ Budget for 2010, 5/ Election of 2010 Parish Council members, and 6/ New Business (items proposed and accepted by the Parish Council by January 13). Only members of good standing may either stand for nomination to the Parish Council and vote on issues.



His Eminence, Archbishop JOB fell asleep in the Lord on December 18, 2009.
May his memory be eternal!

Parish Bulletin

The Parish Bulletin is prepared bi-weekly by Fr. Timothy. Should you have any questions regarding contents, please contact him or consult www.oca.org. The website of the Orthodox Church in America contains news, articles, explanations of Orthodox belief, and links to other autocephalous churches.