



ΙΕΡΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ ΜΑΓΔΑΛΗΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΚΕΛΛΗΣ



STS. MARY MAGDALENE & MARKELLA GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

2020 JANUARY NEWSLETTER



3714-16 Dublin Road, Darlington, MD 21034

PRESIDING PRIEST

THE REV. FR. ELEFTERIOS PLEVRAKIS

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OFFICE HOURS

TUESDAY - FRIDAY

10:00 A.M. - 2:45 P.M.

QUESTIONS? CALL OR VISIT US

(FOR OFFICE VISITS PLEASE CALL IN ADVANCE)

LETTER FROM THE PRIEST

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I hope and pray that all of you had a fun and safe New Year celebration. With the New Year having arrived, we are now fast approaching the great Feast Day of Holy Theophany, where we see our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ being baptized in the Jordan River and blessing the waters that continue, even to this this day, to transform all of creation. This powerful event of God can be understood by studying the word *Theophany*, which means revelation of God. We learn from the Church Tradition that the moment Christ was immersed in the waters, a great voice of the Father speaks and the Holy Spirit comes down in the form of a dove. The Trinity is revealed and the blessings of God become a great force that acts in history. We witness God in all His Glory, and through baptism we become one body with His. Thus, God is not the impersonal God that other faiths and philosophies speak of, but the personal God that makes salvation attainable in this life. His blessings of the waters elevate us to a higher understanding of God.

The life in Christ is meant to be transformative. If we call ourselves Christians, then we are supposed to also grow in the life of Christ. Christ never remained static, but always moved to bring a greater understanding of what is the will of the Father. Through His miracles, day-to-day sacrifices, and, ultimately, His death and resurrection, He teaches us that to be a follower of Him is to grow in His life.

The Feast Day of Holy Theophany is a Day in which all of creation celebrates a new life. It was referred to in ancient times as the Feast of Lights because the Light of God that shines and brings brightness where there was before darkness. Let us all work hard to come towards that light and to see this New Year as a gift from God so that we can grow stronger in our faith.

God bless all of you and may you all have many blessed years!

In Christ,

Fr. Elefterios

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Parish Council would like to take this opportunity and wish everyone a Happy and Blessed New Year 2020.

Each New Year we always think and hope of new beginnings and we all make resolutions; we want to leave the old and look forward to new and exciting changes in our life. In these changes we should include the growth of our spiritual awakening. That can only happen if we dedicate the time to be in God's House which is our Church. Each person has a different outlook on life and defines things differently. It can happen at any moment or period in your life. We need to thank Almighty God for directing every movement and every thought, for giving us what we have today. By being in the Church we can continue enriching our spiritual growth and thank Him for the countless blessings He has offered us and continues to offer us. Our Church has been blessed with such heart-warming parishioners and a spiritual Father that his motivation and energy should be an example to us. The church has grown so much in the last two years and all of us can share the pride.

With that said let all of us make a New Year's resolution to become more attentive to our Church and the Lord. As a Family in Christ we can receive His offerings.

The Parish Council is excited to start the New Year with new and old faces that are ready to conquer new beginnings.

With Love in Christ,

Fotini Kaminaris

President of the Parish Council

STS. MARY MAGDALENE & MARKELLA PHILOPTOCHOS CALENDAR

09/08/2019- General Meeting: Welcome new board members. Review calendar and finalize dates. Brainstorm about Charitable opportunities and plan upcoming year. Discuss Apple Festival preparations. Brainstorm about other Fundraisers and add to calendar. Start calendar for Coffee Hour duties

10/13/2019- General Meeting: Discuss annual Thanksgiving Food Drive

11/10/2019- General Meeting: Discuss and plan for Agia Barbara's celebration which falls on Wednesday - 12/04/2019. Decide when to host luncheon and various duties. Discuss and plan for Christmas Cookie and Vasilopita Fundraisers

December Fundraiser: Sell Christmas cookies and Vasilopitas

01/05/2020- Cutting of the Vasilopita and our yearly passing of tray to collect money to benefit St. Basil Academy.

02/09/2020- General Meeting: Discuss and decide about annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser. Start planning for our yearly church Festival

03/08/2020- General Meeting: Discuss and plan for Easter activities. Decide when to start the Easter Bread and Easter Flower fundraisers. Greek Easter 4/19/20. American Easter 4/12/20. Discuss and prepare for High School Graduate Scholarship. Select actual date for scholarship presentation. We will meet in May due to the Easter holiday?

4/12/2020 is Greek Palm Sunday and American Easter

04/12/2020 Palm Sunday: Easter Bread and Easter Flower Fundraisers

04/17/2020 Holy Friday: Meet at church to decorate the Epitaphio and our church for Easter.

05/10/2020- General Meeting: Final discussions for Festival and Sts. Mary Magdalene and Markella name-day celebration. Plan our yearly Philoptochos party.

June 2020- Philoptochos Group Dinner- Date to be Determined

June 2020- Our Church Festival

Donations of Poinsettias

(The following families donated the Poinsettias that beautified our Church during Christmas.)

Mrs. Meropi Batsis	in memory of John, Sevasti and Manolis Stalas In memory of George, Meropi and Amalia Batsis In memory of Emmanuel Psaros
Mary & Lee Caprinolo	in memory of Cleo & George Harris In honor of their children
Demedis Olympia	in memory for her Father Stelios & Brother Kosma
Diniakos Family	in memory of Anna, Demetrios, Orthodoxia, Antonios
Mr. & Mr. K. Fokianos	in memory of Christos& Ekaterine Fokianos in memory of Emmanuel & Despina Hatzidiakos
Helen & Louis Foudos	in memory of Dina L. Foudos
John & Lola Gikas	in honor of Christos Katsikadacos
Dr. Angela Kaitis	in memory of Dorothy and Nicholas Kaitis And in honor of Dr. Robert Padousis
Mr. & Mrs. Kaminaris	in memory of Eleni, Despina, Emmanuel and Fotini
Mr. Peter Karas	in memory of Father Steve Karas & Mother Mary
Mrs. Noni Kechagias	in memeory of her loate husband Stylianos Hadgis
Nick & Shellie Kioutas	in memory of Alexa & Hayden, and Stamo
Mr. & Mrs. Kougianos	in memory of Gerasimos Kougianos and kosta, Vasillia Xenakis
The Mimaros Family	in memory of Andreas, Petro, Christos
Spiros & Despina Nikitaras	in memory of Christos & Anna Antoniathis
Spiros Prapas	in memory of his parents.
Roros Family	in memory of Father George Roros And in honor of Mother Nicoletta Roros
Stavros & Marina Sarapis	in memory of Evangelos, Francesca and Anthimos
Paula & Christopher Steber	in memory of George & Stavroula Karalekas
Mrs. Irene Tsambikos	in memory of Pete and Bill Tsambikos

Theophany (Or Epiphany)

johnsanidopoulos.com/2012/01/theophany-or-epiphany.html



By Protopresbyter George Dion Dragas, Phd, Dd, Dth

1. Theophany (or Epiphany) and Christmas

Theophany is one of the great Feasts of the Lord of the ecclesiastical year. It is also called Epiphany and the Day of Lights and is celebrated on the 6th of January. The names of this Feast indicate the understanding of the ancient Church concerning this Feast. This understanding is connected with the revelation of God, that is, the manifestation of the One God in Trinity through the Incarnation of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, Theophany comprises the birth of Christ and the related events (e.g. the visitation of the Magi) and also the beginning of the public manifestation of the incarnate economy of the Son of God which is connected with the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan by John the Baptizer.

In the 4th century AD, Christmas was separated from Theophany and constituted a separate Feast, which was celebrated on the 25th of December. This separation had been adopted in the Western Church, which was at that time united with the Eastern Churches. Since then Theophany was specifically connected with the Baptism of Christ, i.e. with the commencement of the public ministry of Christ through which he became the Savior and Redeemer of the world. The question that arises here is why was Christ baptized? Why did this take place and what is its deeper meaning?

2. The Baptism of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism

a) The witness of John the Evangelist. In the Gospel of St. John we find the first hints regarding the relation between the Baptism of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism. St. John the Forerunner speaks about the Baptism in water which he administered according to the divine calling and explains that the coming Christ would transform it into baptism in the Spirit so that through it human beings would enter into the kingdom of God: "John bore witness and said that he saw the Spirit descending like a Dove from heaven and resting upon Christ. He also said that he did not know him [i.e. Christ – until that point], but He who sent him to baptize had said that on whom he would see the Spirit descending and resting upon him, he would be the One who will baptize in the Holy Spirit. John also said that he saw this and bore witness to it, namely, that he is [the Christ] the Son of God" (1:32-34). Exactly the same was confirmed by the Lord himself when he said to Nicodemus: "Amen, amen I say to you, unless one is born of water and Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5). These words of the Lord constitute the institution of the holy sacrament of Baptism, through which human beings become Christians. The descent of the Holy Spirit, then, at the Baptism of Christ, revealed the sacrament of Christ which Christ instituted and operates through the Holy Spirit. It is the Baptism which the Lord delivered to his holy disciples as a basic element of their ministry in the world.

b) The witness of the Evangelists Matthew and Mark. In the two synoptic Evangelists, Matthew and Mark, there is an explicit statement about the necessity of the sacrament of Baptism as a means of participation of human beings in the salvation which Christ offers. This appears in the command of the Risen Lord to his Disciples to preach the Gospel and baptize human beings throughout the world. In other words, he asked them to initiate human beings into their new and saving relation with the one God in Trinity which was definitively revealed at his Baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptizer in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. "Go, then, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all those things which I commanded to you" (28:18-20). Mark the Evangelist states the same in a briefer way. "Go to the whole world and preach the Gospel to the entire creation. Whoever believes you and is baptized will be saved" (16:15-16).

It is clear, then, that the sacrament of Baptism which Christ instituted by fulfilling and transforming the Baptism of John the Baptizer is the commencement of our reconnection with our creator, who is the leader and perfecter of our salvation. To understand the deeper meaning of this salvation we must pay attention to the details that the Gospel narratives supply concerning the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan.

3. The deeper meaning of the Baptism of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism.

a) Man's return to the true God. The Baptism of the Forerunner was a "baptism of repentance," which signaled man's return to God by obedience to the divine will. It was necessary in view of the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God which He would bring into the world. It was a kind of prelude and preparation which looked towards God's intervention through the Messiah, that is, the justification of human beings and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is most clearly manifested in the words of Christ to John the Baptist, "This is necessary, so that all righteousness might be fulfilled" (Matth. 3:15). So, when Christ came forth to receive the baptism of John as a man, he accepted the

divine will on behalf of the entire humanity. And then, the witness of the heavenly Father which recognized him as His beloved Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit in a bodily manner "in the form of a Dove" signaled the acceptance of Christ by the Father as the Messiah who would bring the kingdom of God into humanity. This kingdom was mainly and primarily represented by the communion of the Holy Spirit, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold: "Jacob is my son and I will take him up. Israel is my elect, whom my soul has accepted, and to whom I gave my Spirit so that he might judge among the nations"(42:1).

b) The humanity of Christ as the basis of man's salvation. Both the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah as well as the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him refer to his humanity, which he assumed for our sake, and made it the basis of our justification and salvation. As the ecclesiastical hymnology declares:

"Having put on the form of the servant, O Christ, you came forth to be baptized by a servant in the waters of Jordan, so that you may redeem from the ancient slavery and sanctify and enlighten all of us human beings" (Vespers of the eve of Theophany).

"It is redemption that Christ is coming forth to bring to all believers through his baptism. Because through this, he purifies Adam, he raises the fallen, he puts to shame the tyrant who caused the fall, he opens the heavens, he brings down the Holy Spirit, and he grants incorruption and participation" (8th Praise).

"Today the Lord comes to the waters of Jordan, and says to John: Be not shy for baptizing me, because I came to save Adam the protoplast" (Oikos).

"As man you came to the river, O Christ, King, and you hasten to receive baptism from the hands of the Forerunner, for our sins, O Lover of mankind" (Sophronios of Jerusalem)!

c) The revelation of the one God in Trinity and his communion with man. In the last analysis, however, what happened in the Jordan refers to the divinity of Christ, and especially to his eternal filial identity, which reveals the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Christ is the eternal Son of the Father who also became man in order to bring man back to the kingdom of the Holy Trinity. It is for this reason that the Sacrament of Baptism which grants to us regeneration and brings us into the life of Christ is celebrated in the name of the Holy Trinity, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The feast of Theophany, then, refers not only to man's return to the true God, the creator and Savior through Christ, but also to the revelation of the mystery of God, i.e. to the truth that God is one in Trinity and as such he must be worshiped. As the ecclesiastical hymnology states it:

"When you were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, it was then, that the worship of the Holy Trinity was manifested. Because it was then that the voice of the Begetter bore witness by calling you His Beloved Son. And then also, that the Spirit in the form of a Dove confirmed the assurance of the word. We glorify You in Your Epiphany, O Christ, as the God who enlightens the world" (Apolytikion).

"You manifested yourself to the world today, and your light, O Lord, was marked upon us who praise you with full understanding" (Kontakion).

The enlightenment about the One God in Trinity is also the reason for the feast of Theophany being called the feast of "The Lights." The Lights in this case are the three blessed persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are one divine Light unapproachable!

4. The Great Sanctification of the Waters

The Great Sanctification of the Waters, which is observed on the eve and on the day of Theophany, is a calling to remembrance of the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan by John the Baptist and the sanctification of the waters which was done by Christ at that time. Saint John Chrysostom speaks about this Great Sanctification of the feast of Theophany and says that the sanctified water was kept by the faithful and used for purifications, support, healing, etc. We realize its importance when we recall the words of the prayer which the priest offers at the epiclesis (invocation) of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the water: *"...and make it a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a release of sins, a cure of maladies, a extermination of demons, unreachable to the opposing powers, a plenitude of angelic potency..."* What is particularly important in this case is the repentance and the fasting which is observed on the eve of the Feast. When we receive the sanctified water of the Great Sanctification with contrite spirit and true faith, then it truly becomes a healing means of soul and body and undoing of all opposing powers.

The feast of the Theophany is an invitation to renewal and return to the Lord of glory, who humbled himself, though he was God, and became man – a true man, sinless, forgiving and merciful, the way, the truth and the life. Let us follow him on the path of righteousness, along with his all-holy Mother the Theotokos, St. John the Baptist, the holy Apostles and all the Saints.

BLESSING OF THE HOMES



THE FEAST DAY OF HOLY THEPAHNY IS A TIME IN HISTORY IN WHICH GOD, THE TRINITY, MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO ALL OF CREATION AND TRANSFORMS IT. WITH CHRIST'S BAPTISM, LIFE BECOMES ONCE AGAIN ANEW AND MAN FINDS HIS TRUE IDENTITY. THE DARKNESS OF OUR FALLENNESS FADES AWAY AS THE LIGHT OF GOD SHINES BRIGHT.

TO CELEBRATE THIS GREAT EVENT FATHER HAS ASKED THAT ORTHODOX FAMILIES MAKE IT A PRIORITY TO GET THEIR HOMES BLESSED.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE REACH OUT TO FATHER ELEFTERIOS BY EMAIL HIM AT FRELEFTERIOS@GMAIL.COM TO SCHEDULE A DAY AND TIME.

JANUARY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

January 1: Wednesday - St. Basil the Great & Circumcision of Christ

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

January 3: Friday - Royal Hours of Theophany

- † 9:00 a.m. - Royal Hours of Theophany

January 5: Sunday - Sunday before Theophany

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy
- † 11:15 a.m. - Great Agiasmos

- † 6:30 p.m. - Great Vespers

January 6: Monday - Holy Theophany

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy
- † 11:00 a.m. - Great Agiasmos

January 7: Tuesday - Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

January 12: Sunday - Sunday after Theophany

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

January 19: Sunday - 12th Sunday of Luke

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

January 26: Sunday - 15th Sunday of Luke

- † 9:00 a.m. - Orthros
- † 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy

CUTTING OF THE VASILOPITA



We ask all the faithful to join us on **Sunday, January 5th** as we celebrate the New Year by cutting the Vasilopita.

May everyone's year be filled with love and good health!



“Mystagogy” Resource Center

-By John Sanidopoulos

<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/>

STS MARY MAGDALENE & MARKELLA

PARISH LIBRARY



MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT THE ORTHODOX FAITH. FOR THIS REASON, WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT OUR PARISH HAS PUT TOGETHER ITS COLLECTION OF BOOKS FOR CHECKOUT. BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL STEWARDS OF THE CHURCH. THEY CAN BE CHECKED OUT LIKE YOUR TYPICAL LIBRARY. WE ALSO HAVE THE CHECKOUT PROCESS AVAILABLE THROUGH OUR WEBSITE.

**STS. MARY MAGDALENE AND MARKELLA YOUTH
BAKLAVA CHEESECAKE BAKE SALE**



CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAY SEASON WITH A DELICIOUS BAKLAVA CHEESECAKE THAT WE GUARANTEE WILL BRING A SMILE TO YOUR FACE. CAKES HAVE 14 SLICES AND THEY COST \$35.00. ALL PROCEEDS WILL HELP THE YOUTH PROGRAM OF THE PARISH. PLEASE CONTACT FATHER ELEFTERIOS AT FRELEFTERIOS@GMAIL.COM IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

****IF YOU BUY 5 OR MORE WE WILL EVEN DELIVER THEM TO YOU****

“OI LEVENDES” MEN’S CLUB IS GOING BOWLING!



LET’S CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR WITH A LITTLE FUN AND EXCITEMENT

JOIN US ON **MONDAY, JANUARY 13TH** AT FOREST HILL LANES @ 7:00 P.M.

IT HAS FULL SERVICE FOOD AND BEVERAGES, SO COME WITH AN APPETITE AND READY TO PLAY.



WE WANT TO LET THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY KNOW THAT WE ARE ALSO ACCEPTING ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS FOR YOUR NEXT DONATION TO THE CHURCH. HERE IS A LIST OF DEPARTMENTS THAT YOU CAN DONATE TO:

**BUILDING FUND
CHURCH SUPPLIES
GENERAL DONATION
LADIES OF PHILOPTOCHOS
STEWARDSHIP
YOUTH GROUP**

JUST VISIT THE WEBSITE AND PRESS "DONATIONS." IT IS FAST, CONVENIENT, AND GREAT FOR RECORD KEEPING.

*FOR GREEK SCHOOL, PLEASE SPECIFY BY WRITING THAT IN THE NOTES; OTHERWISE, YOUR DONATION WILL BE ADDED TO THE GENERAL YOUTH FUND.

STS. MARY MAGDALENE & MARKELLA PARISH DIRECTORY



WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF PRINTING A DIRECTORY FOR THE STEWARDS OF OUR CHURCH. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO THE DIRECTORY, PLEASE EMAIL FATHER ELEFTERIOS AT FRELEFTERIOS@GMAIL.COM WITH THE ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, AND EMAIL. THIS DIRECTORY WILL HELP PEOPLE IN STRENGTHENING THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

2019 PLEDGED STEWARDS

Alatzas, George & Rene	Gikas, John & Lola **
Alatzas, Triffon & Stacia	Gyoni, Llambros & Kaliopi **
Alivizatos, Asimina & Karl, Robert	Harris, Christina
Alsup, Andrew & Vasilias	Harris, Gus & Jacklyn **
Bahadouris - Walters, Demetra	Hondrelis, Padelis & Effie **
Babiak, Christopher & Leslie	Hyde, Michael & Maryann
Batis, Nikolaos & Maria	Kaitis, Dr. Angela
Batsis, Meropi & Komninos Psaro	Kalamaras, Efstatios & Milicent
Batsis, Nick & Nomiki	Kaliakoudas, Evangelos & Eleni
Bilis, Amalia	Kaminaris Gus & Fotini
Bontzos, Stylianos & Kalliopi	Kanaras, Louis & Eleni
Butterworth, Greg & Kalia	Kanaras, Thomas & Penny
Caprinolo, Lee & Mary	Karas, Aimee
Cioloa, Bogdan & Anca	Karas, Andy
Conway, Joseph & Jennifer	Karas, Bethany Anne
Demedis, Olympia	Karas, Daphne **
Dermatis, Minas & Panagiota	Karas, John & Belinda
Diamandaras, Helen	Karas, Katie
Engleson, Jeanette	Karas, Michael & Linda
Fafalios, Ava	Karas, Peter & Kim
Fokianos, Konstantinos & Maria	Karas, Scott
Giannaras, Chris	Karas, Steven **
Giannas, Apostolos & Maria	Karellas, Eugenia
Giannas, Erene	Kechagias, John & Noni
Giannas Stylanos & Maria	Kinder, William & Michelle
Giannas, Yianni	Kioutas, Nick & Shellie

2019 PLEDGED STEWARDS

Konstant, Eugenia	Sarris, Sam
Konstant, Gus	Sitaras, Dr. Peter & Diane
Kornias, Christos & Irene	Stakias, Stellios & Tina
Kougianos, Alex **	Stavrou, George & Tina
Kougianos, Dionisios & Argiro **	Stavrou, Stamatios
Kramer, Bernie & Marsha	Steber, Christopher
Logothetis, Nikolaos & Maria	Steber, Paula
Mayer, Francis & Maria	Stelato III, James **
Mavrelis, Vasilios & Efthymia **	Sudeck, Virginia
Mimaros, Dimitrios & Argie	Tillman, Ezra
Mojarrad, Deanna	Trikoglou, Carole
Nikas, George & Diane	Tsambikos, Irene
Nikitaras, Andreas & Nicole **	Tsiatsoulis, Leonidas & Eirini Anastasiou **
Nikitaras, Christos & Angela **	Varkarota, Christina
Nikitaras, Spiro	Yiannouris, Ioannis & Shawn
Pappas, Basil & Linda	
Perdikakis, George & Zoe **	
Pikounis Emmanuel & Helen	
Plevrakis, Fr. Elefterios & Esther	Total 2019 Stewards: 93
Prapas, Spiros	Number of New Stewards for 2019 (**): 14
Rahaniotis, Takis & Ioanna	Pledged: \$75,130.00 / Collected: \$66,985.00
Rajewski, Leonard & Anastasia	Outstanding Balance: \$8,145.000
Roros, Bill & Mary	Average Stewardship Pledge: \$ 807.85
Saliaris, Panagiotis & Evangelia	
Sarapis, Stavros & Marina	
Sarris, Gregory	