



Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church

54 Walnut Street
Manchester, New Hampshire 03104
Parish email: pbvm@comcast.net
Parish website: www.pbvmnh.org

Rev. Father Ihor Papka (Administrator)
(860) 617-6357; email: vipapka@yahoo.com

Trustees: Mr. Doug Vogel: (603) 793-9513
Mrs. Pam Young: (603) 315-9536
email: doug.vogel@comcast.net or pjyoungnh@gmail.com

Celebration of the Holy Mysteries

RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY AND CONFESSIONS: ½ HR BEFORE DIVINE LITURGY

BAPTISM & CHRISMATION / ANNOINTING OF THE SICK / COMMUNION CALLS & VISITATIONS:
CONTACT FR. IHOR TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION:
CONTACT FR. IHOR AT LEAST SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO SETTING THE ACTUAL WEDDING DATE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN:
CONTACT MRS. CHRISTINA VOGEL AT (603) 686-2092 TO REGISTER YOUR CHILDREN

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE LITURGIES:
SUNDAYS: 10 AM (September thru May) MON THRU SAT: AS NOTED IN WEEKLY BULLETIN
 9 AM (June thru August) HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION: 7 PM

DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE FOR WEEK OF JANUARY 8, 2023

Sunday, January 8th – Sunday after Theophany

Divine Liturgy: 10 AM

Propers: Festal Tones

Vestments: Bright

Epistle: Ephesians 4: 7-13

Gospel: St. Mark 4: 12-17

Intention: For all Parishioners

Saturday, January 14th (10 AM): For the blessed repose of the soul of +Peter Connor with Panakhyda, offered by the Maksymowych Family

Saturday, January 14th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Divine Liturgy and Vespers Services Schedule and Intentions for January and February

Sunday, January 15th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, January 21st (10 AM): For the blessed repose of the souls of **+Larissa and +Josef** Jerrold with Panakhyda, offered by the Maksymowych Family

Saturday, January 21st (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, January 22nd (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, January 28th (10 AM): For the blessed repose of the soul of **+Walter** Horangic with Panakhyda, offered by the Horangic Family

Saturday, January 28th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, January 29th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 4th (10 AM): For good health and God's blessings upon **Luba** Dyky, offered by Luba Dyky

Saturday, February 4th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 5th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 11th (10 AM): For the blessed repose of the soul of **+Helen** Horangic with Panakhyda, offered by the Horangic Family

Saturday, February 11th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 12th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 18th (10 AM): For the blessed repose of the soul of **+Basil** Horangic with Panakhyda, offered by the Horangic Family

Saturday, February 18th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 19th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday, February 25th (7 PM): Vespers Service

Sunday, February 26th (10 AM): For all Parishioners

Saturday Services

Fr. Ihor is celebrating Vesper services every Saturday at 7 PM. All parishioners are invited to attend this beautiful service. Those who wish to have a Divine Liturgy celebrated for a loved one whether living or deceased or for a private intention are still able to do so. Please request your Divine Liturgy by contacting Fr. Ihor at (860) 617-6357 or cantor Jaroslaw Maksymowych at (603) 627-2042. Please note that Saturday Divine Liturgies will now be celebrated only at 10 AM whenever they are requested. If no Divine Liturgy has been requested for a particular Saturday, then none will be celebrated on that day. The Divine Liturgy schedule in the bulletin will only show 10 AM Divine Liturgies on Saturdays when they have been requested. If the bulletin does not show a 10 AM Divine Liturgy for a given Saturday, then this means that particular Saturday is available for your request.

Суботні Богослужіння

Отець Ігор святкує Вечірню кожної суботи у 7-мі годині вечером. Ласкаво просимо усіх парафіян до участі. Парафіяни які бажають замовити Божественну Літургію в суботу для померших або на особисті інтенції можуть дзвонити до о. Ігоря на номер (860) 617-6357 або до дяка п. Ярослава Максимовича на номер (603) 627-2042. Суботні Божественні Літургії будуть відслужені тільки о годині 10-тій ранком коли замовлені. Якщо Літургія в певну суботу не буде замовлена, то в цей день не буде жодна відправлена. Порядок Богослужінь в бюлетені покаже тільки ті суботні Служби Божі які є замовлені. Якщо в бюлетені не відображається Божественна Літургія на дану суботу, то це означає, що ця субота доступна на Ваше замовлення.

Liturgical Propers, Readings and Sermon for Sunday

Liturgical Propers for the Sunday after Theophany

First Antiphon:

Israel came forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob came out of the foreign land.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

The land of Judah became His sanctuary, Israel became His domain.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Beholding this wonder, the sea fled, and the Jordan turned back.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Why is it that you run away, O sea? O Jordan, why do you turn back?

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Processional Antiphon

VERSE: Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord, let us acclaim God, our Savior.

PROCESSIONAL REFRAIN: Son of God, baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing to You, "Alleluia".

VERSE: Let us come before His face with praise, and acclaim Him in psalms.

PROCESSIONAL REFRAIN: Son of God, baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing to You, "Alleluia".

VERSE: For God is the great Lord and the great king over all the earth.

PROCESSIONAL REFRAIN: Son of God, baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing to You, "Alleluia".

VERSE: Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

PROCESSIONAL REFRAIN: Son of God, baptized by John in the Jordan, save us who sing to You, "Alleluia".

Resurrectional Tropar: Tone 6

Angelic powers stood by Your tomb. The guards fell as dead. Mary came seeking Your most pure body. You vanquished hell; it was no match for You. You went to meet the women, for You are the Giver of Life. You are risen from the dead. Glory to You, O Lord!

Tropar of the Epiphany: Tone 1

At Your baptism in the Jordan River, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was proclaimed: The voice of the Father bore witness to You by calling You "My beloved Son." The Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of this declaration. O Christ-God, manifested Light of the world, glory to You!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always, and forever. Amen.

Kondak of the Epiphany: Tone 4

Your manifestation to the world is made known today, and Your light is seen shining upon us. We fully realize who You are, and therefore we sing to You: "You are the Inaccessible Light, and You have made Yourself known to us."

Prokimen – Tone 1: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, who have put our hope in You.

VERSE: Rejoice in the Lord, you just ones; for praise is fitting from the righteous.

Prokimen – Tone 1: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, who have put our hope in You.

НЕДІЛЯ ПІСЛЯ БОГОЯВЛІННЯ

Апостол: До Ефесян послання св. апостола Павла читання (Еф 4: 7-13)

Браття, кожному з нас дана благодать за мірою Христових дарів. Тому й сказано: “Вийшов на висоту, забрав у полон бранців, дав дари людям.” А те “вийшов” що означає, як не те, що Він був зійшов і в найнижчі частини землі? Той же, хто був зійшов на низ, це той самий, що вийшов найвище всіх небес, щоб усе наповнити. І Він сам настановив одних апостолами, інших - пророками, ще інших - євангелистами і пастирями, і вчителями, для вдосконалення святих на діло служби, на будівання Христового тіла, аж поки ми всі не дійдемо до єдності в вірі й до повного спізнання Божого Сина, до звершености мужа, до міри повного зросту повноти Христа.

Epistle Reading for the Sunday after the Theophany of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4: 7-13)

Brethren: Each of us has received God's favor in the measure in which Christ bestows it. Thus you find Scripture saying: "When He ascended on high, He took a host of captives and gave gifts to men." "He ascended" – what does this mean but that He had first descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is the very One who ascended high above the heavens, that He might fill all men with His gifts. It is He who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ, till we become one in faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, and form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature.

Alleluia – Festal Tone

VERSE: Make a sacrifice to the Lord of Sons of God; make a sacrifice to the Lord of young rams.

Alleluia – Festal Tone

VERSE: The voice of the Lord is heard over the waters, the God of glory thunders, the Lord echoes over the oceans.

Alleluia – Festal Tone

VERSE: Принесіть жертву Господу Синів Божих; принесіть жертву Господу молодих баранів.

Alleluia – Festal Tone

VERSE: Голос Господній лунає над водами, Бог слави гримить, Господь лунає над океанами.

Alleluia – Festal Tone

Євангелія: (Мт 4: 12-17)

У той час, почувши, що Івана ув'язнено, Ісус повернувся в Галилею і, покинувши Назарет, пішов і оселився в Капернаумі, що при морі, на границях Завулону та Нефталі, щоб збулося те, що сказав був пророк Ісаїя: “О земле Завулону та земле Нефталі, приморський шляху, країно за Йорданом, поганська Галилеє! Народ, який сидів у темноті, побачив велике світло; тим, що сиділи в країні й тіні смерті, - зійшло їм світло.” З того часу Ісус почав проповідувати й говорити: “Покайтесь, бо Небесне Царство близько.”

Gospel Reading for the Sunday after the Theophany of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (St. Matthew 4: 12-17)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and went down to live in Capernaum by the sea near the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet: "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali along the sea beyond the Jordan, heathen Galilee: A people living in darkness has seen a great light. On those who inhabit a land overshadowed by death, light has arisen." From that time on Jesus began to proclaim this theme: "Reform your lives! The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Sermon for the Sunday after Theophany

Christ is Born! Let us glorify Him! My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

On this Sunday after Theophany, we hear the very first sermon that Christ ever gave in his public ministry: "Repent! For the Kingdom of God is at hand!" With just these few short words, Christ begins His earthly ministry, and He summarizes the entire Gospel that is to come.

Repentance is not simply an emotional state. It isn't simply feeling sorry, although this is part of it. Repentance is a turning from darkness to the light of Christ. It is about moving away from selfishness to selflessness, moving away from death to life. It is not some protracted, morose state of being. Instead, repentance brings true joy. When we truly repent and truly turn to God, then we receive the grace of God and we are joyful! When we turn to Christ in repentance, this turning brings life, light, joy and peace – the very fruits of the Holy Spirit. Our lives are new and different – full of joy, full of life and full of vigor. This is what it means to repent. This is what Christ is saying when He says, "the Kingdom of God is at hand." This Kingdom can be experienced here and now, if we repent and turn to God.

The Savior was not baptized as a sign of His own repentance, of course, for He had no sins from which to repent. Instead, He makes the water holy by entering into it, by restoring the entire creation to its rightful relationship with God. As the God-Man, He descended into the world that He spoke into existence in order to free it from subjection to futility and to fulfill it as an icon of His salvation. Our Savior entered fully into our distorted world of brokenness and pain in order to set it right. He was baptized in the Jordan in order to clothe the naked Adam, in order to restore us to the dignity of those who wear the robe of light of His beloved sons and daughters. We who have been baptized into Christ, put Christ on in baptism like a garment.

By His mercy and grace, we participate personally in His healing and blessing in every aspect of our humanity. He does not call us to flee from His world, but to be so united with Him in holiness that we play our unique parts in fulfilling His gracious purposes for it. He invites us to become like Him as partakers in the divine nature by grace. That is what it means to be a human being in the divine image and likeness of God. All of us, through our ongoing repentance and the renewal of our baptism, are given the opportunity this day to experience more of our life in God the Holy Trinity, to further our faith, and to grow in communion with Him.

The sanctifying, deifying grace-filled presence of Christ meets us in this water through our participation in the Feast itself, our being anointed with this holy water, and the blessing of our homes and dwellings with this sanctified water. Sadly, in America many do not avail themselves of the fullness of this Feast. This blessing of our homes requires great faith from us: we make it a priority in this otherwise secular culture. We believe that the priest's blessing by Christ's command will bring us Christ's blessing and bring this sanctifying water to us in a unique way that will make a difference for us and our families in protecting and keeping us in Christ and growing us in our communion with Him throughout the new year. The Church proclaims that the "central sign" of God's sanctification of all things through His Theophany to the world is the act of blessing the homes of the faithful.

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life – the Living Kingdom. Christ sets for us a banquet table, and He calls us together to dine with Him. He feeds us with His own self – His own sacrifice – the Body and Blood of our Lord. Indeed, Christ offers us salvation, if only we will turn to Him. The Kingdom of Heaven and Christ the King are ineffably close to us – much closer than we can imagine, closer to us than the beating of our own heart, closer to us than our next breath. "Behold I stand at the door" of your heart, and knock, says Christ. "If any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in with him, and will dine with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20)

It is only through repentance that we can open wide the doors of our heart to our Savior, the Heavenly King. On this first Sunday after Theophany, let us recall our own baptism, and our own baptismal promises. Let us turn from our sins and fix our gaze on Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Through a true repentance let us open wide the

doors of our heart to Christ and to the Kingdom of Heaven as we look ahead towards Lent – that great season of repentance. “Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” Amen.

ПРОПОВІДЬ НА НЕДІЛЮ ПІСЛЯ БОГОЯВЛІННЯ

Христос Народився! Славім Його! Дорогі в Христі браття і сестри!

Ще вчора ми колядували про три празники, які і цього року прийшли до нас у гості: Різдво Христове звіщало нам, що «Бог предвічний народився, прийшов днесь із небес, щоб спасти люд свій весь». Відтак другий празник — св. Василя і свято Найменування нашого Господа, якому дали ім'я Ісус, згідно з об'явленням Ангела св. Йосифові: «... ти даси йому ім'я Ісус, бо він спасе народ свій від гріхів їхніх» (Мт. 1, 21). А третій празник — св. Водохреща, Богоявлення, коли Іван Предтеча вказував на Господа Ісуса як на «Агнца Божого, що бере на себе гріхи світу» (пор. Ів 1, 29). Кожне з цих свят, як ви зауважили, звіщає нам благу новину про спасіння, про наше відкуплення від гріхів, про велике Світло, яким є сам Христос, що «просвічує і освячує кожну людину, яка приходить у світ».

Адже й нас як народ, і як окремих осіб стосується Слово Боже, яке ми щойно чули: «О земле Завулону та земле Нафталі, приморський шляху, країно за Йорданом, поганська Галилеє! Народ, який сидів у темноті побачив велике світло; тим, що сиділи в країні й тіні смерті, — зійшло їм світло» (Мт. 4, 15–17). Так, над нашою землею вже майже дві тисячі років світить світло віри. І над нашим власним життєвим горизонтом зійшло велике світло віри — в день нашого хрещення. Втім світло може світити, але людина і народ можуть і надалі «перебувати в темряві», «сидіти в країні і в тіні смерті», як про це говорить сьогоднішнє Євангеліє. Це про таких людей і про такий народ каже св. Іван Євангеліст: «... світло прийшло у світ, люди ж більше злюбили темряву, ніж світло, — лихі бо були їхні діла. Бо кожен, хто чинить зло, ненавидить світло, тож і не йде до світла, щоб не виявились діла його. А хто правду чинить — іде до світла, щоб виявились діла його, сподіяні бо вони в Бозі» (Ів 3, 19–21).

Сьогодні чуємо слова Христа: «Покайтесь бо Царство Боже наблизилось». З цих глибоких і священних слів починається проповідь Ісуса до грішного, знедоленого гріхом людства. З покаяння-сповіді починається наше повернення до світла, повернення до Бога. Проповідь Ісуса перегукується зі словами Івана Хрестителя про покаяння. Для нас важливо є те що криється за цими словами, їхній глибокий зміст. «Покаяння» це є головна ціль будь-якої людини, в цьому слові відкривається весь зміст Євангелія. Апостол Павло розповідаючи про свою проповідь Євангелія говорить, що колись перш за все він свідчив своїм слухачам про покаяння: «грекам і юдеям покаяння перед Богом і віру в Господа нашого Ісуса» (Дії 20:21).

Покаяння починається тоді, коли ми, грішні, вирішуємо стати лице в лице перед Богом, заглянути в Його очі, подивитись на себе очима Творця, жити перед Ним. Тому святе Євангеліє говорить, що Царство Боже посеред нас і ми всі прекрасно розуміємо, що воно може бути тільки в любові. Царство Боже – Царство Любові і воно є завжди біля нас, його не треба чекати, коли воно прийде. Покаяння – це завжди для людини весна. Людина відчуває свої гріхи, духовну неміч і потребу перебування у світлі та правді, потребу спілкування з Богом. Заклик до покаяння є актуальним для кожного з нас. Ці слова сказані не лише до язичників, які відійшли від Бога, але і до нас. Від нас залежить чи буде мати помешкання в нашому серці Ісус, чи проповідь Спасителя буде мати успіх стосовно нас? Просімо, щоби це благодатне слово отримало перемогу над нашою гріховною сплячкою і принесло великі плоди для добра Церкви і для нашого добра.

Тому, плакаймо і шануймо наші справжні християнські, а не напівпоганські звичаї, берімо участь у святкових обрядах і освяченнях наших домівок, однак, не зупиняймося лише на цьому, а робімо наступний крок — назустріч Таїнству, назустріч Світлу, яким є сам Христос Спаситель. І так, наблизившись до Нього в молитві, в Таїнствах і в ділах милосердя супроти наших ближніх, ми самі станемо носіями вічного Божого світла, вказуючи іншим людям, що ще перебувають в темряві гріха і в тіні смерті, шлях до

Бога, як це заповідає нам наш Спаситель і Господь в Нагірній проповіді: «Так нехай світить ваше світло перед людьми, щоб вони, бачивши ваші добрі діла, прославляли Отця вашого, що на небі» (Мт. 5, 16). Амінь.

Communion Verse: Явилася благодать Божя спасительна всім людям. Хваліть Господа з небес, хваліть Його на висотах. The grace of God has been revealed, offering salvation to all mankind. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in these Holy Gifts! I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot receive You now sacramentally, I place before You my whole life and hope, O loving Master; and I ask, pray, and entreat You: Make me worthy to partake in a mystical way and with a pure conscience of Your awesome and heavenly Mysteries: for the forgiveness of sins, for the pardon of offenses, for the communion of the Holy Spirit, for the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, for confidence before You, and not for judgment or condemnation. I embrace You as You enter and abide in me, and I unite myself completely to You. Permeate my soul and body, and never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Молитва Духовного Причастя

Мій Ісусе! Я вірю, що Ти присутній у цих Святих Дарів!
Люблю Тебе над усе і моя душа тужить за Тобою.
Не можу зараз Тебе прийняти в Святій Євхаристії,
тому хоча б духовно прийди до мого серця!
Запрошую Тебе, відчиняючи навстіж двері мого серця, згадаючи Твої слова:
«Ось стою під дверима і стукаю.
Якщо хто почує Мій голос і відчинить двері,
Я ввійду до нього, і буду вечеряти з ним, а він зі Мною».
Я ввесь єднаюся з Тобою.
Ісусе, моє найвище Добро й моя солодка Любове!
Торкнись мого серця і запали його,
щоб воно завжди палало любов'ю до Тебе! Амінь.

Parish Announcements

We Welcome You!

If you are visiting our church today, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Thank you and God bless you for visiting with us today! We welcome all our visitors and guests who worship at our parish. We invite families and individuals who wish to become members to register by calling Fr. Ihor at (860) 617-6357.

Вітаємо Вас!

Якщо Ви відвідуєте нашу церкву сьогодні, наша парафіяльна громада рада вітати Вас тут! Щире спасибі Вам, і нехай Бог благословить Вас за Ваші відвідини з нами сьогодні! Ми запрошуємо сім'ї та осіб, які бажають стати членами, зареєструватися у нас по телефоні о. Ігоря на номер (860) 617-6357.

Please Pray for our Sick and Homebound Parishioners

Fr. Ihor Papka, Fr. Zbigniew Brzezicki, Oleh and Valentina Babski, Michaelle Baker, Marylou Blaisdell, Luba Dyky, Carmel Horangic, Christine Kolagji, John Koromaus, Helen Kucman, Martha and Ray Majkut, Karen and Jaroslaw Maksymowych, Jean Mandych, Sherri Martel, Katherine Masso, Jennifer McMillan, Katharine McNaughton, Jackie Morales, Lauren Morales, Jonathan Morales, Tanya and Ronald Morales, Alice Morris, Elizabeth Mozina, Olympia Pasicznyk, Billie Sheesley, Derek Stanley, Pauline Stanley, John Terninko, Elisha Wallace, Cindy Wilson, Dr. Mark Windt, Lauren Zelenski. Please contact Fr. Ihor if you would like to add a friend or loved one to this prayer list.

Ukrainian Traditional Vertep

Today, our parish will be visited by a Ukrainian Traditional Vertep - Bepten - a unique Christmas performance with sacred and secular parts. Vertep is the Ukrainian Christmas puppet theater that had its beginnings in the XVII century. It was first mentioned in 1667. Over time, Vertep became a traveling group of people with up to 40 characters, and the scenes exemplified daily life and activities. The Vertep theatre had numerous regional variants. The storyline is always the same – the conflict between good and evil in our souls. Evil is always vanquished and good always triumphs. Vertep was an illegal practice during the Soviet occupation of Ukraine but continued to be performed in secret as a way for the Ukrainian people to both rebel and preserve their culture.

Today, while forces of darkness are looming over Ukraine's wartime Christmas, the rich Nativity traditions of its people offer a light of hope to lead them through this joyous season. This truly Ukrainian tradition continues today and brings more hope, faith, and joy to everyone, by reminding us that good will always win over evil. We cherish Ukrainian traditions and culture and are thankful for everyone joining us to share this experience. Any donations given to the performers during the Vertep performance will be donated to our parish to support Ukrainian war refugees.

January Birthdays

The following parishioners are celebrating a birthday this month:

Jan. 1 – Father Ihor and Andrew B.

Jan. 2 – Nicole H.

Jan. 6 – Tanya M. and Nick H.

Jan. 8 – James V.

Jan. 17 – Anya V.

Jan. 19 – Isa B., Lauren M. and Garrett H.

Jan. 30 – Violetta P.

Our parish community wishes this month's birthday celebrants peace, joy, love and good health on their special day as well as throughout the year. May our dear Lord grant all of you many more healthy, happy and blessed years. Happy Birthday and На Многая літа! (Na Mnohaya Lita!).

Yordan Home Blessings

Beginning on Sunday, January 8th, Fr. Ihor will be available to travel to parishioners' homes to bless them during the season of Yordan (Theophany). Father Ihor will be blessing homes on Saturdays and Sundays during the month of January. Please see Fr. Ihor if you would like to sign up to have your home blessed. Kindly have at least three dates and time slots in mind when you sign up so that we can accommodate everyone. Thank you.

Parish Services Cancellation Announcements on WMUR-TV

In the event of inclement weather, any cancellations of parish church services will be announced on WMUR television. Cancellations will also be posted on the parish Facebook page, which can be accessed directly via the Internet. Please check these resources when winter storms approach to see if services have been canceled. Even if parish services have not been canceled, but weather or road conditions are poor, please remember to

use caution and good judgment before deciding whether or not to travel to church, keeping your safety and that of your family as the most important priority. Thank you and please stay safe.

Christmas Yalynka Dinner

The Ladies' Sodality will be hosting the annual Christmas Yalynka dinner next Sunday, January 15th in the church hall after Divine Liturgy. All are invited to attend and there is no charge for this dinner. However, each family is asked to bring a dish to share at this potluck dinner. Please see Martha to sign up for a dish to bring to the dinner. A raffle will also be held at the dinner. If you have any items to donate to the raffle, please also see Martha.

Weekly Reflection:

Learning about our Catholic Faith – Epiphany's Revelation

Among your Christmas cards, assuming you are still displaying them at home is sure to be at least one celebrating the Epiphany. Three gorgeously attired, exotically crowned men, are seen romping across the outback on camels perhaps? Perhaps a vast procession appears overwhelming the Holy Family, with three men presenting a precocious baby Jesus with precious gifts? Far more colorful than those poor drab shepherds who abandoned their flocks that we heard about on Christmas night, however romantically sanitized those shepherds may have become in our imagination.

But listen to the story Matthew tells us. We hear of three gifts – yes, but no mention of how many givers. Camels – no mention of them, but the Magi had to get to Jerusalem somehow. Kings – Herod is the king, the gift-bearers are “wise men”. Stars halting over the place where Jesus was – some very odd astronomy here.

Let's start with the star. Astronomers and commentators have endlessly debated the star of Bethlehem. Was it a supernova, a comet, a triple conjunction of the planets or the memory of all three jumbled together, or something else? We don't know. What Matthew does tell us is that some arcane astrologers recognized the birth of a Child of great significance. Their stellar wisdom points to Jesus as being born as the king of the Jews. That same title will later be hammered into the throne of Jesus, the cross at Calvary.

The Magi were non-Jewish astrologers, in an ancient world where astrology was taken very seriously, where astronomy was the handmaid of astrology, and where horoscopes were widely credited. Magi were thought to have special knowledge, including medical skills. They were perceived as “wise men” and were valued by kings. At least some were magicians and cast spells. Magi inspired awe and respect. For faithful Jews and Christians, then and now, Magi ranked along with necromancers, mediums, magicians, card-readers and fortune-tellers, they were absolutely never to be trusted or consulted by the faithful. Yet despite this total and consistent rejection, these Magi recorded by Matthew were indeed wise men. These pagan yet wise and learned seers come from the mysterious east to worship the newborn King. All knowledge leads to the Incarnation. It is later Christian imagination that has turned the Magi into kings, helped by Matthew's allusions to Psalm 72, just as allusions to Isaiah helped later convention specify that the Magi used camels rather than horses, to the delight of renaissance painters.

Matthew tells us of the Magi's three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh, so we naturally think of three gift-bearers or more importantly, the gifts. From at least the time of St. Irenaeus in the late second century, Christian interpretation has been clear. Gold symbolizes that Jesus is a king; frankincense that He is to be worshipped as God; and myrrh showing that Jesus will die. All this astrology/astronomy shows Jesus truly is born a king. Death though is not far away. Herod's anxious inquiries among the wise men of Jerusalem about

where Jesus was born, is motivated by the same Herod's desire to kill baby Jesus off as a potential political rival. The myrrh will come in handy, but not yet. When Jesus does ascend His throne at Calvary, reconciling heaven and earth, the myrrh will soon be needed to anoint His dead body. That reconciling throne of grace, which is Calvary, reveals Jesus is God, as symbolized by the frankincense, frankincense being an upmarket form of incense apparently!

As a final aside, St. Irenaeus also tells us that one Magi was old with white hair, full of the wisdom of years. Another was handsome and beardless, with the enthusiasm of youth. The third Magi was middle aged, a resolute man of action. Christian artists have frequently followed this age differentiation in their work, but it was not until about 1400 AD that they illustrated another comment of St. Irenaeus, that one of the Magi was dark-skinned, an artistic convention that oddly developed in northern rather than southern Europe. The Magi in their differences pick up the breath of humanity. These days we might expect the story to include a wise woman or two, until we realize that Mary, the Mother of God, who pondered all these things in her heart, was that wise woman, the Throne of Wisdom. Epiphany, therefore, is the revelation, that Jesus is truly God, and truly human, and He will die for us to fulfill God's salvific plan for humanity.

