

## THE ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:26-38

Celebrated on March 25

This icon beautifully depicts the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel brought the Good News to Mary that she would bear a child who would be the Savior of our souls. On the left we see Gabriel running to Mary to announce this news and on the right Mary, although a bit shocked by the news, accepting it with the words that we must all respond to God with in our life: "Let it be done to me according to your word." We also see depicted here the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit in the form of the ray that brings about the Incarnation of our God, Jesus Christ.



## **SAINT NICHOLAS OF MYRA**

4th Century –  
Celebrated on December 6

Known to many throughout the world as “Santa Claus,” St. Nicholas was actually a real person and a true saint of our Church. He was born to well-to-do parents and inherited their estate but was extremely generous in giving it all away. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council refuting the heresy of Arius that said Jesus, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, was a created being and therefore not fully God. The association with gift-giving comes from a story that he once rescued 3 daughters of a man out of slavery by anonymously providing enough money for them to have dowries.





## **BAPTISM OF CHRIST (THEOPHANY)**

Matthew 3:13-1

Celebrated January 6

We see shown here the Baptism of Jesus Christ, called Theophany in our Church, as we read about in all of the Gospels. He is baptized by John the Baptist, his cousin and it is called Theophany because we see the Triune God (Theos in Greek) shown (phani) in one event. The Voice of the Father comes down declaring Jesus to be His Beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit resting upon Him in the form of a dove. The Baptism of Christ is the same Baptism we are all Baptized in as well for He came to cleanse us of our sins and our Baptism cleanses us of our sins.



## **SAINT STEPHEN THE FIRST-MARTYR**

Acts 6 and 7

Celebrated December 27

St. Stephen was the first person killed for his faith in Jesus Christ as we read in Acts 6 and 7. His defense and speech is a great oration in defense of the Christian faith in and of itself in chapter 7. He was also one of the first deacons of the Church, serving the needy and poor and is depicted here in the vestments of a deacon and holding a censor as a deacon does in our services today.



## THE ASCENSION

The moment of the Ascension is told in one sentence: "He was lifted up before their eyes in a cloud which took Him from their sight" (Acts 1:9). Christ made His last appearance on earth, forty days after His Resurrection from the dead. The Acts of the Apostles states that the disciples were in Jerusalem. Jesus appeared before them and commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the "Promise of the Father". He stated, "You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5). His Mother, the Virgin Mary is centrally shown here below looking up at her son as He Ascends.



## **THE NATIVITY OF JESUS CHRIST (CHRISTMAS)**

The simplicity of the story of Christ's birth reveals the depth of God's love and the mystery of His actions in our life. As we celebrate Christmas anew every year, once again Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and wise men, the angels and animals direct our attention to the Lord Jesus. He who is truly the 'way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:1) who reveals Himself in the humble circumstances of a cave in Bethlehem. All of time is centered upon his coming. God comes into the world out of His great love for it, to show us the way back to God, even as a little child.





## SAINT ATHANASIOS THE GREAT

4th Century

Celebrated January 18

St. Athanasios is fittingly next to the icon of the Birth of Jesus as he is the author of perhaps the greatest work concerning how God became Man, "On the Incarnation" (at the age of 20 or so!). St. Athanasios was at the center of the controversy and heresy spread by Arius who declared Jesus was not fully God. Because of his defense of the Truth, Athanasios was exiled to Gaul in 336 but returned in 337. Unfortunately he was again exiled, this time to Rome, but soon returned in triumph again. His entire life was spent under persecution for his strong stance in defending Jesus Christ.





## THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-8

Celebrated August 6

The Transfiguration is an immensely important event in the Gospels that often does not get the attention that it truly demands. Jesus brings His 3 closest disciples up Mount Tabor, Peter, James, and John. At the top of the Mountain He shows them His Divinity which He always had but out of His love did not reveal because it would blind and overwhelm any who saw it, as it did to Peter, James, and John. It is one of the most important statements of the Divinity of Jesus Christ and shows us that we too are called to imitate Him and be divine by climbing the mountain of life to Him.







## SAINT GERASIMOS

16th Century

Celebrated October 20

Born in Greece he left his home and went throughout various lands, and finally came to Cephalonia, where he restored a certain old church and built a convent around it, where it stands to this day at the place called Omala. He finished the course of his life there in asceticism in the year 1570. His sacred relics, which remain incorrupt, are kept there for the sanctification of the faithful. He is well-beloved by many Greeks for his miracle-working presence on the island of Kephalaria off the coast of Western Greece.





## PENTECOST

Acts 2

Celebrated 50 Days After Pascha  
(Easter)

Often considered the “Birthday of the Church,” Pentecost is one of the Great Feasts of the Church as we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Disciples who had gathered together after the Lord’s Ascension. It is this Descent that gives them the power of God, they go from a group of men, unsure of their next move and mostly cowering in a room, to those who go to the ends of the earth, each being killed for spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. We each receive the Holy Spirit at our “personal Pentecost” when we are Baptized into the Church and this empowers us to spread the Gospel as well and live a godly life.

