

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Synaxis of St. John the Forerunner

The practice of blessing water on the day of Christ's Baptism was already existent in the 3rd century. St. John Chrysostom calls this water "*agiasma*"—a holy thing. This holy water is used to sprinkle and bless icons, liturgical articles, priestly vestments and crosses. It is also used to bless houses, food, automobiles and other articles. When received with faith, it has the power to cure both physical and spiritual infirmities. Although holy water cannot replace Holy Communion, it can be taken instead of Communion by one who is, for one reason or another, deprived of the consolation of the Sacrament. During times of despondency, confusion and spiritual turmoil it offers tranquility and relief. For this reason Christians keep this blessed water in a special place in their homes and partake of it at any time. The feast day of *Theophany* is also called *Epiphany*. Both terms indicate that God has revealed Himself to the world in Jesus, the God and Man and the Messiah, who teaches us to worship and glorify the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

How to prepare for a House Blessing? Easy: 1. Have a copy of the *Troparion of Theophany* so that you can sing with the priest. 2. The entire family should be present. 3. On a table set out an icon, an oil lamp or candle, small bowl (cereal size is fine) for the Holy Water (I will bring some Water with me if you do not have any) and list of names of your family, living and departed, clearly marked. 4. Turn off TVs and radios, video games and cell phones. 6. Teach your children the way to receive the blessing of the priest.

NOTICES FROM CHURCH BULLETINS:

Don't let worry kill you off—let the Church help...

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs...

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell." Come early and listen to our choir practice...

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones...

The Associate Pastor unveiled the church's new financial campaign last Sunday: "I upped my pledge—Up yours..."

Pot-luck supper next Sunday evening—Prayer and medication to follow.

- TROPARION OF THEOPHANY, Tone One:
When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called 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 OF ST. JOHN THE FORERUNNER, Tone Four:
The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner; for thou hast proved to be truly even more venerable than the Prophets, since thou was granted to baptize in the running waters Him Whom they proclaimed. Wherefore, having contested for the truth, thou didst rejoice to announce the good tidings even to those in Hades: that God hath appeared in the flesh, taking away the sin of the world and granting us great mercy.
- KONTAKION OF THEOPHANY, Tone Four:
On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise: and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light Unapproachable.

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Friday, Jan. 5: 11:30 AM, Vespers Liturgy and Great Blessing of Water
6 PM, Matins of Theophany
- Saturday, Jan. 6: 9 AM, Festal Liturgy for Theophany and Great Blessing of Water

- 5 PM, Vespers
- Sunday, Jan. 7: 10 AM, Divine Liturgy and blessing of buildings
Noon, Agape Meal
- Wednesday, Jan. 10: 6 PM, Vespers
- Thursday, Jan. 11: Online Bible Study with Fr. James
- Friday, Jan. 12: *No Confessions*
- Saturday, Jan. 13: 5 PM, Great Vespers
6 PM, arrival of Abbot Sergius from St. Tikhon's
with the Icon of St. Ann, abbreviated
Akathist Service

We offer our thanks to God for the wonderful Feast Day celebration, Jan. 2: the beautiful and heartfelt singing, serving, decorating and all the work that went into preparing and serving the festal meal. Thanks to all who labored for the glory of God and in honor of our Holy Father Seraphim of Sarov.

Please call Fr Nicholas or me if you'd like your home blessed. This year we will not be posting a list of names, dates and times, but will await your request. —*Fr Lawrence*

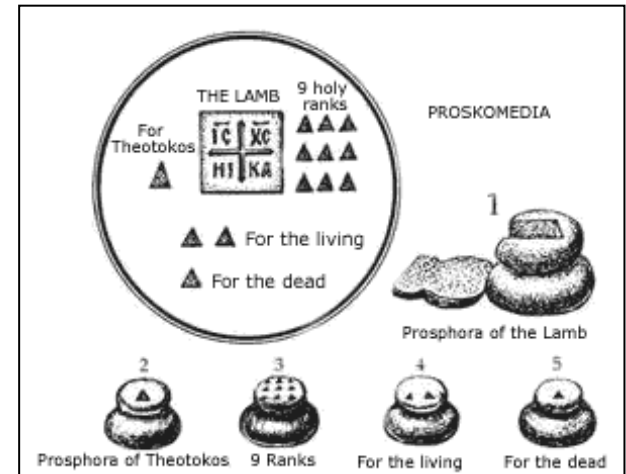
The Parish Members are invited, encouraged and requested to gather for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 4, 2024, in accordance with the Parish By-laws. The meeting will begin after the Divine Liturgy at 12:30 PM.

Matushka Ann and I will be away from Friday, January 12–Monday, Jan. 15 participating in the wedding of our nephew in Detroit. Please keep in mind that there will therefore be no Confessions heard on Friday Jan. 12.

Students, teachers and parents (indeed, everyone) are invited to come to the brief *Spiritual Lesson* on Sunday, January 14 at 12:30 PM in the Protection Church. Mentorship will begin again the following Sunday.

Your Commemoration Books await renewal for the new year at the Candle Desk. These books are brought to the Altar prior to the Divine Liturgy so we can pray for those whose names you have listed during the Service of Preparation, called the *Proskomedie*. This is the “service of preparation” of the bread and wine before the Liturgy. The illustration

shows the Eucharistic bread —called *the Lamb* —in the center. To the right of the Lamb is the particle in honor of the Virgin taken from another loaf (*at Thy right hand stood the Queen* says the Psalm verse); and to the left, particles



for the nine ranks of saints from another loaf (Prophets, Apostles, Bishops, Martyrs, Monastics, Unmercenary Healers, St. Seraphim and others and St. John Chrysostom. Below the Lamb are particles of bread for the living and the departed, from two other loaves—included here are the Metropolitan, the Diocesan Bishop, and particles for all those names submitted by you. This is all an image of the assembled Church, the Body of Christ: here is Christ and His Holy Mother on His right hand, the Saints, and the faithful, you and me and our spiritual family in Christ. After Holy Communion, all the particles are placed in the Chalice, immersed in the Precious Blood of Christ and consumed by the deacon. The names listed in your commemoration booklet should be those of your spiritual family, those closest to you and those in your daily prayers. At the *Proskomedie* we are praying not *instead* of you, but with you, so you should have a duplicate book at home. —*Fr Lawrence*

The Saint Seraphim Men's Fellowship will gather for dinner in the Parish Hall on Thursday, January 18 at 6 PM. All the men of the parish are invited. Please let Daniel DeCarlo know you are coming so preparations can be made. He can be reached at (716) 861-4046.

The 2024 Walk for Life will take place on January 20 in San Francisco. Please speak with Fr Lawrence if you are interested in car-pooling to Holy Trinity Cathedral in SF for the 8:30 AM Divine Liturgy, and the Walk which begins at Noon at the Civic Center.