

# **The Commemoration of the Circumcision of Christ and the Feast of St. Basil the Great**

**Commemorating the New Martyr Peter of the Peloponnesos**

**Sunday, January 1, 2012 (Civil New Year)**

## **Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 4)**

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

## **Apolytikion of the Circumcision of Christ (Tone 1)**

O most compassionate Lord, while yet God after thine essence, thou didst take human likeness without transubstantiation; and having fulfilled the law thou didst accept willingly circumcision in the flesh, that thou mightest annul the shadowy signs and remove the veil of our passions. Glory to Thy goodness, glory to Thy compassion, glory to Thine ineffable condescension, O Word.

## **Apolytikion of St. Basil the Great (Tone 1)**

In all the earth that received thy sayings, thy melody did resound, O righteous father, through which thou didst go about and proclaim, as worthy of God, the nature of creatures, cultivating the character of mankind, O thou of kingly Priesthood, Basil. Wherefore, plead thou with Christ God to save our souls.

## **Apolytikion of our Patron the Archangel Michael (Tone 4)**

O ye foremost of the heavenly hosts we beseech thee, though we are unworthy, pray that we may be encompassed with a shadow of Thy unearthly glory, preserving us who kneel and cry endlessly: deliver us from oppression since ye are the prince of the Highest Power.

## **Kontakion for the Feasts (Tone 3)**

The Master of all endureth humiliation and is circumcised for the iniquities of mankind; for He is good, and granteth salvation to the world.

And in the highest the High Priest of the Creator, clothed with light, the divine initiate of Christ, Basil, rejoiceth.

## **Daily Readings** [Arabic Texts below]

### THE EPISTLE

*My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. Hear this, all ye people.*

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians (2:8-12)**

Brethren, see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in Him, Who is the head of all rule and authority. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead.

### THE GOSPEL

### **The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke (2:20-21, 40-52)**

And it came to pass that the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when He was circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing Him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find Him, they returned to

Jerusalem, seeking Him. After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. And when they saw Him they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why hast Thou treated us so? Behold, Thy father and I have been looking for Thee anxiously.” And Jesus said to them, “How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?” And they did not understand the saying which He spoke to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

## **The Synaxarion – December 12<sup>th</sup>**

On January 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we celebrate the Circumcision in the Flesh of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ; it being the eighth day after His birth, we commemorate also the giving of the Name of Jesus.

### ***Verses***

*Christ being circumcised, the Law is cut off; and the Law being cut off, Grace is brought in. He that in six days made the earth and heavens, now upon the eighth taketh the name of Savior.*

The Divine Child was presented in the Temple and circumcised according to the Law existing in Israel since the time of Abraham. The Old Testament circumcision was the proto-type of the New Testament baptism. The circumcision of our Lord shows that He received upon Himself the true body of man and not just seemingly, as was later taught of Him by heretics. Our Lord was also circumcised because He wanted to fulfill the entire Law which He Himself gave through the prophets and forefathers. Thus, the Apostle Paul declares: “For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation” (Gal. 6:15).

On this day we also commemorate our Father among the Saints Basil the Great, archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

### ***Verses***

*Though he hath died, Basil in the Lord yet liveth; and he liveth with us, speaking from his writings. On January first thou didst die, O Basil.*

Basil was baptized in the River Jordan and was Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia for almost ten years. He was a great defender of Orthodoxy, a great light of moral purity, a great theological mind, a great builder and pillar of the Church of God. Basil fully deserved the title “Great” and is referred to as the “bee of the Church of Christ which brings honey to the faithful and with its stinger pricks the heretics.” Numerous works of this Father of the Church are preserved; they include theological, ascetical and canonical writings as well as the Holy and Divine Liturgy named after him, which we will celebrate today. Basil reposed peacefully in 379 A.D.

On this day, we also commemorate the new-martyr Peter of the Peloponnesos. *By the intercessions of Thy Saints, O God, have mercy upon us. Amen.*

#### **A Note Regarding Holy Communion**

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only* those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

#### **ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس**

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعنى عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المشاركة في سر القربان المقدس هنا مقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسية والذين يحضرون أنفسهم بالصلاة والصوم والاعتراف منذ فترة قريبة (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة فى الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس.) إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية رجاء مراجعة الكاهن.

## **OFFERINGS**

Holy Bread is being offered this morning with prayers by Sonia Basel Sayegh, for her son, Eshak Eid Sayegh on the occasion of his birthday (January 1<sup>st</sup>), and for her husband, and Eshak’s father, Eid Sayegh, also celebrating his birthday today. May God grant them many years!

Holy Bread and prayers are also being offered this morning by Presbytera Stela-Nicole and daughter, Mary Sarchizian with prayers for Father Minas Vasile (Basil) Sarchizian celebrating his Feast Day today. May God grant him many years!

The coffee hour is being hosted this morning by the Antiochian Women.

Special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for the repose of the newly-departed servant of God, Katharina Welge [AKA Kathy Meyer] longtime secretary (1969-2011) at the Antiochian Archdiocese Chancery in Englewood, New Jersey, who fell asleep in Christ on Friday, +30 December 2011, in retirement in So. Carolina at the age of 77. Memory eternal.

for the repose of the newly-departed Teri Dexter (+27 December, 2011), beloved mother and mother-in-law of Angie & Chris Abughazaleh. Memory eternal.

by Mary Ann Coury and family for the repose of the newly-departed, Nick Sevano (+21 December, 2011). Memory eternal.

by Father Constantine Nasr and family for the repose of the newly-departed Economos and Archpriest, Toufic Nasr (+20 December, 2011), beloved cousin. Memory eternal.

by Father Timothy for healing of his friend, Randall Hongo; for continued strength and support for the members of his family.

*Included in our prayers throughout the month of January are those celebrating their birthday: Eid Esshak Sayegh and Esshak Eid Sayegh (1/1), Nail Khoury (1/2), Claire Azzam (1/3), Steven Hage (1/4), Sophia Sweis, Vanessa Coury (1/5), Darryl Thomas (1/6), Silva Aftimos (1/8), Mark Hannah (1/8), Peter Joseph Turk (1/8), Hannah Homsey (1/9), Nancy Sawalha (1/9), Yvonne Farr (1/12), Britton McLinn (1/12), Daniel Kneizeh (1/12), Robert Abraham (1/13), Diana Thabit (1/13), Michael Baclig (1/14), Marcel A. Haddad (1/14), Ghada Mansur (1/15), Violet Kavan (1/15), Minnie Lush (1/15), Abigail Elizabeth Abraham (1/15),*

Kevin Homsy (1/16), Joe Kence (1/16), Blanche Barghash (1/17), Elie Berberi (1/17), Kelly Meena (1/17), Brandon Terry (1/17), Mary Ann Coury (1/18), John Sweis (1/20), Albert Coury, Jr. (1/21), Sophia Rose Rygiol (1/22), Leslie Thabet (1/22), Riad Aftimos (1/24), Tere Shimizu (1/28), Rita Makhoul (1/30), Rami Yanni (1/30), Vanessa Murr (1/31); and those celebrating their wedding anniversary: Nicole & Robert Webster (1/1), Adeeb & Nuha AbuGhazaleh (1/11), Khouriye Elaine & Father Ephraim Alkhas (1/9), and Walid & Isabel Kneizeh (1/17), Father Tom & Marcia O'Dea (1/25); Cynthia & Nicholas Bibby (1/21). May God grant them all many years!

*Included in our prayers for the departed during the month of January are:*

<i>Anna Saadeh +15 Jan. 1963</i>	<i>Eva Meena +8 Jan. 1997</i>
<i>Dorothy Fadel +6 Jan. 1973</i>	<i>Edward Deeb +11 Jan. 1997</i>
<i>Malakeh Saliba +14 Jan. 1975</i>	<i>Haifa Ellis +29 Jan. 1997</i>
<i>Fouad K. Mittry +20 Jan. 1975</i>	<i>Michael T. Haddad +1 Jan. 1998</i>
<i>Frieda George +17 Jan. 1976</i>	<i>Phyllis Mittry +16 Jan. 1998</i>
<i>Marianne D. Halaby +27 Jan. 1997</i>	<i>Madeline Bediali +9 Jan. 1999</i>
<i>John Mansur +16 Jan. 1981</i>	<i>Saman Simon +23 Jan. 1999</i>
<i>John G. Khouri +27 Jan. 1981</i>	<i>Eva Nichols +28 Jan. 1999</i>
<i>Alphonse Bonjianne +9 Jan. 1982</i>	<i>Helen Kirshy +18 Jan. 2000</i>
<i>George Sadd +13 Jan. 1985</i>	<i>Matilda Zahlaoui +22 Jan. 2000</i>
<i>Sandra Pettit +17 Jan. 1985</i>	<i>Samir Aftimos +24 Jan. 2001</i>
<i>Michael D. Fayard +16 Jan. 1988</i>	<i>Aida Boutari +5 Jan. 2002</i>
<i>Mandouh Boutros +12 Jan. 1989</i>	<i>Nazira Abdelhak +9 Jan. 2002</i>
<i>Emile Boutari +30 Jan. 1990</i>	<i>Albert Thomas +17 Jan. 2005</i>
<i>Shirley Jacobs +11 Jan. 1990</i>	<i>Bill Shedd +17 Jan. 2007</i>
<i>Marie Aboud +Jan. 1990</i>	<i>Elinor Bourjaily +4 Jan. 2008</i>
<i>Lila Bastron +25 Jan. 1991</i>	<i>Dr. John Abdun-Nur +31 Jan. 2008</i>
<i>Margaret Gantus +1 Jan. 1992</i>	<i>Assad Najjar +31 Jan. 2010</i>
<i>Joseph Abrahms +21 Jan. 1992</i>	<i>George Coury +3 Jan. 2011</i>
<i>Toofic Simon +12 Jan. 1996</i>	<i>Steven Peck +15 Jan. 2011</i>
<i>Lucille T. Maddox +1 Jan. 1997</i>	<i>Lorna M. Shedd +27 Jan. 2011</i>

### **Memory Eternal!**

**Please phone the Church Office if there are any omissions or corrections to the above listing of names. Please bear in mind that some have chosen not to be included in our announcement. Please pardon any errors.**

### NOTE

At the end of the Liturgy during the veneration of the cross, please refrain from speaking loudly and keep all conversation to a minimum in order that the prayers read after Holy Communion may be heard by everyone in the church. Thank you.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Is Your 2011 Pledge Up-to-date? Have You Completed a Pledge Form for 2012?

Should you have checks to turn in for your pledge for the 2011 calendar year, please do so by next Sunday, January 8. **All checks received after January 8, 2012 will not be applied to your 2011 statements even if they are dated on December 31, 2011.** Thank you for your cooperation for helping us to close our books for 2011. If you have any questions, please speak with MaryAnn Coury, Comptroller or our Parish Treasurer: Natalie Malouf.

If you have not already done so, as a committed member of St. Michael Church, please complete a new 2012 form (provided with this bulletin) and return your form at your earliest convenience. All parishioners who are at least 18 years old and self-supporting must complete a new form for each new year. All information will remain strictly confidential with the exception of listing your name in our bulletin as a pledging/tithing member. Your pledge or tithe supports the church's day-to-day operating expenses, which, like our personal expenses, are expected to increase in 2012. Thank you in advance, for your commitment. May God bless us all in practicing good Christian stewardship.

### Annual Parish Meeting, and Report Booklet

The Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership will be held on Sunday, January 22, 2012, immediately following the Divine Liturgy. In the best interest of time, a Report Booklet is being prepared for distribution to our membership prior to the Annual Meeting. All Council officers, Standing Committees and Subsidiary Organizations should turn in their single page reports to the Church Office no later than next Sunday, January 8, 2011 in order to be printed on time for distribution on January 15.

Our parishioners are asked to please inform us if you have any changes to your name, address, phone number or e-mail. Also, please let us know if you prefer that any of the information to be unlisted. You may e-mail Mary Ann Coury at: <[Maryanncoury@aol.com](mailto:Maryanncoury@aol.com)>. Thank you.

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR

[Note: There is **no** fasting from December 25<sup>th</sup> to January 4<sup>th</sup> (inclusive)]

### **THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)**

Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> – observed as a day of strict fasting

Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, 6:30 p.m.

followed by the First Great Blessing of the Waters

### **The Sunday after Holy Theophany (Epiphany)**

Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup> – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup> – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

## House Blessings

Father Timothy will be available to bless homes following the Feast of Holy Theophany by appointment. He may be reached by phone (818-219-3761) or e-mail: <[pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org](mailto:pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org)>. While pastoral visits to your home and house blessings may occur on almost day of the year, Father will be scheduling many house blessings up until the time of Great Lent (February 27, 2012).

## Parish Work Day

Our parish home requires our personal attention. Your availability in affording some time to help us with our parish clean-up day would be greatly appreciated and will help to save us some needless fees. "Home is where the heart is," and as Valentine's Day rapidly approached, the personal care of our parish home is a vital part of our Christian stewardship. Sunday, February 12, 2012 has been scheduled for our first day of cleaning. Bring a change of clothes, if necessary, to participate in

an afternoon of fellowship following Liturgy. A list of various odd jobs will be made available for you to sign-up for.

## **2012 Church Calendars**

Our new church calendars are now available for distribution at the end of the Liturgy, thanks to the sponsorship of Callanan Mortuary. You will be able to choose from three (3) icon designs, however, only one (1) calendar is provided for each household. Thank you.

## **New Altar Boy Robes**

Attention Parents: Please have your child meet with Bobbi Monsue for measuring. We will be ordering new altar boy robes in the near future. Thank you.

## **Mortgage Update**

\$16,555 has been received from \$17,355 in pledges towards our \$100,000 mortgage payment due on January 15, 2012. We sincerely thank our contributors for their help: *Judith Aboud, Adeeb & Nuha Abughazaleh, Laila Abughazaleh, Bandaly & Claire Azzam, Fr. Timothy Baclig, Chad & Heidi Blair, Anne Marie Botezatu, Dr. Samir & Amira Boutari, Mary Ann Coury, Jamie & Joy Farr, Gregory Habib, Ramez & Rima Hage, Libby Jacob, Frieda Kabbash, Violet Kavan, Robert & Amal Makhoul, Michael & Patricia Malouf, Elias Mankouche, Don & Lillian Meena, Andrew & Barbara Monsue, Constantine & Mandy Nasr, Joan Nasser, Eric Nelson, Order of St. Ignatius Coffee Hour sponsors, Richard & Cindy Tamoush, The Ghawi Rizik Memorial gifts, Shirley Wawee, and Nicole Webster.* Additional contributions are still being received. Please earmark your check "Mortgage" when making a contribution. Payments may be made by credit card; however, our church is charged a 2.5% fee for processing.

## **Reception Honoring His Eminence, Archbishop JOSEPH**

The V. Rev. Michel Najim, Dean of St. Nicholas Cathedral, the clergy, Parish Council, and organizations cordially invite you to attend a special buffet (non-sitting) reception, honoring our newly elevated Archbishop JOSEPH, next Sunday, January 8, 2012 (at approximately 1 p.m.). For

tickets, please contact Lillian Meena at: 661-259-9449 or e-mail her at: [lillianmeena@aol.com](mailto:lillianmeena@aol.com) (\$25/adults; \$10/children).

### **St. Mark Golf Tournament Re-scheduled**

The postponed St. Mark Golf Tournament has been re-scheduled for Monday, February 6, 2012 at the Aliso Viejo Country Club (33 Santa Barbara Dr., Aliso Viejo, CA, 92656; Registration, 9 a.m., Shotgun at 11 a.m., Reception/dinner at 5 – 8 p.m. You can now register on-line at: <[www.st-mark-church.org/golf/](http://www.st-mark-church.org/golf/)>.

### **A Child's Sacrifice**

A recent study cited in the Chronicle of Philanthropy (August 25, 2010 issue) confirmed what most people already assumed to be true: parents exert a decisive influence on the giving behavior of their children.

The study conducted by Russ Reid, a Pasadena, California fundraising consulting firm in interviews with 2000 adults, discovered that beyond household income and education, a far more important element is an adult's practice of giving is the degree to which their parents were involved in charitable causes.

Parental involvement in nonprofit groups (like the Church) increases the odds of a child becoming a donor by more than 80 percent; with parents who don't, there's only a 25 percent chance the child will grow up to be a donor, the study found. One of the greatest gifts that parents can give their children is to teach them the vital necessity of good stewardship. We do this by example and also through simple verbal teaching lessons. Most importantly it is not the priest or the chairperson of the parish stewardship effort that teaches children to give – it is the parents. What giving messages are we imparting to our children? To give as little as possible? To pay "dues" to the church? To see what others are doing and give just a little more so that we can satisfy our consciences? To closely examine the value of a festival ticket or an after Liturgy luncheon to ascertain if our "gift" is getting a good return?

It's no secret why evangelicals, Mormons and fundamentalists give so generously: they are taught to do so as children. Give your children an important lesson in life. Teach them generosity. The fruit of generosity is joyful freedom.

**Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.**

**Holy Bread Offering List**

Jan 08 – Jeanice Rose Deeb  
Jan 15 – Magued Wassef  
Jan 22 – Father Timothy Baclig  
Jan 29 – The Abdun-Nur family

**Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar**

Jan 08 – Laila Abughazaleh  
Jan 15 – the Abraham and Meena families  
Jan 22 – the Blair family and Adam Lamar  
Jan 29 – Margaret Abdun-Nur and  
Minnie Lush

**Please contact Father Timothy (818/219-3761; [pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org](mailto:pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org))  
to sign-up to offer Holy Bread for any of the open upcoming Sundays.  
Contact Frieda Kabbash (818)707-6478; [frieda702@aol.com](mailto:frieda702@aol.com)) to host the Coffee Hour.**

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<b>Calendar for:</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Holy Pascha	April 15	May 5	April 20
First Day of Great Lent	February 27	March 18	March 3
Western Easter	April 8	March 31	April 20
Feast of Theophany		Friday	January 6, 2012
Meat Fare Sunday		Sunday	February 19, 2012
Feast of the Annunciation		Sunday	March 25, 2012
Feast of the Ascension		Thursday	May 24, 2012
Pentecost		Sunday	June 3, 2012
Feast of the Nativity		Tuesday	December 25, 2012

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**PASTORAL SERMON**

**The Sunday before the Feast of Holy Theophany  
The Circumcision of Christ and the Feast of St. Basil the Great  
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig  
January 1, 2012**

Today, the 8th day of Christmas, is the commemoration of the Circumcision of Christ, which according to the Tradition of our Lord's Day, was

kept in accordance with Jewish Law. It is also the Feast of St. Basil the Great who is among our Church Fathers who helped to provide us with a Biblical understanding of our Faith. He together with St. John Chrysostom and St. Gregory the Theologian (commemorated together at the end of January) are called the “stars of Orthodoxy” because of their contribution in articulating Orthodox teaching on the Holy Trinity which is the basis of who we identify as Christian believers.

Today is also the Sunday before the Great Feast of Holy Theophany *Theophania* (“God revealed”). This Thursday, the 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas is the Eve of the Lord’s Feast—which many of the Eastern Churches consider “Christmas.” It was the second Great Feast of the Church second only to Holy Pascha—and was designed to be celebrated similar to, but not identical to Easter: Great Feast of Feasts. The church prescribes that there be no fasting up until the time when we prepare for the coming Feast and the Great Blessing of the Waters, however, January 5<sup>th</sup> is observed as a day of strict fasting.

At the beginning of the civil New Year the world searches for an experience of renewal in the hand of a clock; and as has become the custom in our country, the dropping of a crystal ball in the commercial center of our nation. For the Christian it is a time to understand and to recommitment ourselves to Holy Baptism and what it means to be “baptized into Christ” as the Great Feast of Holy Theophany is anticipated. It is a time of rediscovering the meaning of Christ’s love and His total sacrifice for the sins of the world.

In the former Feast of Christ’s birth, and especially with the commemoration of his circumcision today, the lesson is clear: our God was incarnate and became Man – just as we proclaim in the Creed. This event occurred in “the fullness of time” – the vocal point of history, such that everything is spoken of in terms of what took place before his birth and after his birth. Moreover, this *advent* is emphasized in Church teaching: “not an aberration” but an actual event in history. [Theophany *Theophania* “God revealed” (Epiphany *Epiphania* “manifestation” or “appearing”) – The Church was always very careful with its use of words to be sure that God’s coming was understood as a actual event in time.] This is also why in addition to commemorating the Circumcision of our Lord in the flesh, the name of Pontius Pilate occurs in our Creed. The

church made clear that the birth of the divine Son of God did in fact take place in history.

In the Synaxarion of the day we hear: “The circumcision of our Lord shows that He received upon Himself the true body of man and not just seemly, as was later taught of Him by heretics. Our Lord was also circumcised because He wanted to fulfill the entire Law which He Himself gave through the prophets and forefathers.”

The Old Testament circumcision was the proto-type of the New Testament baptism. For we hear St. Paul say (to the Galatians 6:15): “For neither does circumcision or uncircumcision mean anything, but only a new creation.” This was confirmed by the decision of the first formal letter of the Holy Apostles in Jerusalem in response to the Church of Antioch concerning the question of circumcision (Acts 15).

Then in St. Paul’s letter to the Colossians, heard in today’s epistle reading, we hear the clearest teaching on the subject: (2:8ff)

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have this fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In Him you were also circumcised, in putting off your sinful nature, not with a circumcision done with the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ. In baptism you were buried with Him and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead...”

In today’s Gospel reading we hear about the Christ child at the age of 12, teaching in the Jerusalem Temple, but remained “obedient to them” increasing “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

After about thirty years of a hidden life in Nazareth, Jesus is revealed to the world and begins His public ministry, beginning with His baptism by John in the River Jordan. And this is precisely the historical context of the coming Feast of

Theophany. {In the Western Church there is a tradition that commemorates the visit of the three kings at Epiphany; however, this was not accurate according to Holy Tradition.}

There are two purposes for the blessing of the Grace of God upon us on this Feast: First, we hear in one of the hymns of the Feast: *Let us, the faithful, prepare... for the coming Feast of the Baptism of our God. Behold He has put on our flesh... and asks for the baptism of salvation so that He might regenerate all those who, in purity, have been illumined by faith, all those who share in His Spirit.*

Second, and in another hymn, we hear, *In truth Christ our God comes to be baptized in the Jordan, and through His coming takes upon Himself the cleaning of our sins.* This hymn is based upon the New Testament verse which reads: ***God made Him who had no sin to be sin (or a sin offering) for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (II Corinthians 5:21).***

And so the Feast is a celebration of a double grace: on the one hand, God's means of purifying us with the element of water for the purification of our sins, and on the other hand, God's grace is bestowed upon us for illumination and participation in the Holy Spirit.

All of this was achieved by two actions of God: First, His Son's voluntary humility, and second, the glorification of the Son by the Father, who at the same time manifests His Spirit appearing in the form of a dove. Christ's humility is revealed in the fact that he submitted to be baptized by John in the River Jordan in order to fulfill all righteousness, not that He Himself needed to be forgiven for any sin by baptism, but that His divine presence and entrance into the Jordan was the means by which God once again demonstrated His love for the entire world, sanctifying it by water and His Spirit. He who was without sin made Himself the bearer of all our sins: and it is in the name of all sinners that Jesus made a public act of repentance. And so, Theophany, as the Feast of Baptism, is not only the Feast of Christ's Baptism, but also of our own. It is the celebration of our new life in Christ. Something that is at the heart of all who yearn for that newness of life, that change, renewal and healing, that "New Year."

Finally, in the Revelation of John (The Book of Revelation 21:5) in the “end of the age” we hear from The Alpha and the Omega (He who is the beginning and the end): “And behold, I make all things new.” Notice: He does not say, “...I make all new things,” but, “I make **all things new**.” We live in a day and age when it is much easier to dispense of something that is not working, something broken, something that would cost us more to repair. Well, God never violated any of His own principles, nor did He make any mistakes. As Christians you and I are called to a maturity in thinking, recognizing that in this life nothing good, lasting, or eternal comes without a price and much sacrifice.

May we all rediscover the Mystery of our Faith, but more importantly come to understand what is essential to our life as Christians: Christ was born of the Virgin, He was circumcised in the flesh, was baptized by John in the Jordan... He who came to save man by His love and great mercy!

### Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who didst will to be baptized by John in the River Jordan, cleanse us now as we draw near to Thy Holy table and again, to the waters of Holy Baptism. Renew us as we are reminded of our sacred commitment as those who are called to holiness. Shower us with your divine grace that we may be purified in mind, body and soul at the beginning of this New Year. Establish us in the Faith, illumine our hearts to ways of love, and keep us in your protective care. For Thou art He who dost bless and sanctify all things and unto Thee do we ascribe glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. A-men.

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### Arabic Texts of Hymns and Readings

#### طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الرابع

إن تلميذات الرب تعلمن من الملاك الكرز بالقيامة البهجة، وطرحن القضاء الجدي،  
وخاطبن الرسل مفتخراتٍ وقائلاتٍ: سُبِي الموتُ وقام المسيحُ الإلهُ، مانحاً العالمَ  
الرحمةَ العظمى.

## طروبارية الختانة على اللحن الأول

أيها الربُّ الكثيرُ التَّحَنُّنِ، إنَّكَ وَأَنْتَ إِلَهٌ فِي الْجَوْهَرِ، اتَّخَذْتَ صُورَةَ الْبَشَرِ بَعِيرِ اسْتِحَالَةٍ، وَتَمَّمتِ الشَّرِيعَةُ قَابِلًا بِاخْتِيَارِكَ خِتَانَةَ جَسَدِيَّةٍ، لِنُبْطَلِ الرُّمُوزَ وَتُزِيلَ غِشَاءَ الْأَهْوَاءِ. فَالْمَجْدُ لِصَلَاحِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِتَحَنُّنِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِتَنَازُلِكَ الَّذِي لَا يُوصَفُ، أَيُّهَا الْكَلِمَةُ.

## طروبارية القديس باسيلويس على اللحن الأول

لَقَدْ ذَاعَ صَوْتُكَ فِي الْعَالَمِ كُلِّهِ. فَإِنَّهُ قَبْلَ كَلَامِكَ الَّذِي بِهِ فَسَّرْتَ الْعَقِيدَةَ، وَأَوْضَحْتَ طَبِيعَةَ الْكَائِنَاتِ، وَنَظَّمْتَ أَخْلَاقَ الْبَشَرِ. فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْأَبُ الْبَارُّ ذُو الْكَهَنُوتِ الْمَلُوكِيِّ بَاسِيلْيُوسَ، ابْتَهَلْ إِلَى الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهِ فِي خِلَاصِ نَفُوسِنَا.

## قنداق الختان على اللحن الثالث

رَبُّ الْكُلِّ يَحْتَمِلُ الْخِتَانَةَ، فَيَخْتَنُ زَلَاتِ الْبَشَرِ بِمَا أَنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَيَهَبُ الْخِلَاصَ لِلْعَالَمِ. وَيَفْرَحُ فِي الْعِلَاءِ رَئِيسُ كَهَنَةِ الْخَالِقِ، الْكُوكَبُ السَّاطِعُ، نَجِيُّ الْمَسِيحِ، بَاسِيلْيُوسَ الْمَجِيدِ.

## الرسالة

إن فمي يتكلم بالحكمة، اسمعوا هذا يا جميع الأمم

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل كورنثوس

يا إخوة، انتبهوا لئلا يسلب أحدٌ عقولكم بالكلام الفلسفي والغرور الباطل

القائم على تقاليد البشر وقوى الكون الأولى، لا على المسيح. ففي

المسيح يحل ملء الألوهية كله حلوًا جسديًا، وفيه تبلغون الكمال. هو

رأس كل رئاسة روحانية وسلطة. وفي المسيح كان ختانكم ختانًا، لا

## الإنجيل

### فصل من بشارة القديس لوقا

في ذلك الزمان رجَعَ الرَّعَاةُ وَهُمْ يُمَجِّدُونَ اللَّهَ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ عَلَى كُلِّ مَا سَمِعُوا  
وَرَأَوْا كَمَا أَخْبَرَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ. وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ الطِّفْلُ يَوْمَهُ الثَّامِنَ، وَهُوَ يَوْمُ خِتَانِهِ،  
سُمِّيَ يَسُوعَ، كَمَا سَمَّاهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ قَبْلَمَا حَبَلَتْ بِهِ مَرْيَمُ وَكَانَ الطِّفْلُ يَسُوعَ يُنْمُو  
وَكَانَ وَالِدَا يَسُوعَ يَذْهَبَانِ وَيَتَقَوَّيَانِ وَيَمْتَلِيَانِ بِالْحِكْمَةِ، وَكَانَتْ نِعْمَةٌ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.  
كُلَّ سَنَةٍ إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ فِي عِيدِ الْفِصْحِ. فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ يَسُوعَ الثَّانِيَةَ عَشْرَةَ مِنْ  
عُمُرِهِ، صَعِدُوا إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ كَعَادَتِهِمْ فِي الْعِيدِ. وَبَعْدَمَا انْقَضَتْ أَيَّامُ الْعِيدِ  
وَأَخَذُوا طَرِيقَ الْعُودَةِ، بَقِيَ الصَّبِيُّ يَسُوعُ فِي أُورُشَلِيمَ، وَوَالِدَاهُ لَا  
يَعْلَمَانِ، بَلْ كَانَا يَظُنَّانِ أَنَّهُ مَعَ الْمُسَافِرِينَ. وَبَعْدَ مَسِيرَةِ يَوْمٍ أَخَذَا يَبْحَثَانِ  
عَنْهُ عِنْدَ الْأَقْرَابِ وَالْمَعَارِفِ، فَمَا وَجَدَاهُ. فَرَجَعَا إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ يَبْحَثَانِ عَنْهُ،  
فَوَجَدَاهُ بَعْدَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْهَيْكَلِ، جَالِسًا مَعَ مُعَلِّمِي الشَّرِيعَةِ، يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ  
وَيَسْأَلُهُمْ. وَكَانَ جَمِيعُ سَامِعِيهِ فِي حَيْرَةٍ مِنْ فَهْمِهِ وَأَجْوَبَتِهِ. وَلَمَّا رَأَهُ وَالِدَاهُ  
تَعَجَّبَا. وَقَالَتْ لَهُ أُمُّهُ: «يَا ابْنِي، لِمَاذَا فَعَلْتَ بِنَا هَكَذَا؟ فَأَبُوكَ وَأَنَا تَعَذَّبْنَا كَثِيرًا

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