

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley
a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406 stmichaelvannuys.org

His Beatitude, Patriarch JOHN X, of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch
and all the East www.antiochpatrarchate.com
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The After-feast (Apodosis) of Holy Theophany

Commemorating the Righteous Mother Domnica of Constantinople and her companions; Venerable George the Chozebite

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Tone 5; Eothinon 8

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 5)

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

Apolytikion of the Feast of Holy Theophany (Tone 1)

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath revealed Thyself and illumined the world, glory to Thee.

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 4)

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.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for the Sunday after Holy Theophany)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The Reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (4:7-13)

Brethren, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When He ascended on high He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that He had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is He who also ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

THE GOSPEL (for the Sunday after Holy Theophany)

**The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to Matthew
(4:12-17)**

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

The Synaxarion – January 8th

On January 8 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we continue to celebrate the Theophany of our Lord, and commemorate our righteous mother Domnica of Carthage, who became illustrious in Constantinople.

Verses

Heaven-minded Domnica, the earth forsaking,
according to her love, to Heaven ascended.

On the eighth, the gloomy night of mortal doom
took her of dominical name.

A pagan, Domnica went from Carthage to Constantinople in the reign of the Emperor Theodosius to Patriarch Nektarios, accompanied by four

girls who were likewise ignorant of God. He baptized them and blessed them to live as nuns. Domnica devoted herself to asceticism with wholehearted zeal, and did not falter right up to the time of her death at a great age in about the year 474. By the illumination of the Holy Spirit, Domnica was able to predict the future and perform miracles through prayer.

On this day, we also commemorate our Venerable Father George the Chozebite. By the intercessions of Thy Saints, O God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

GLOSSARY: Troparion (tro-pah-ree-on); plural, Troparia: A brief poem in accentual metre, expressing the theme of a feast. Kontakion (kon-tah-kee-on); plural, Kontakia: A special kind of Troparion that expresses the teaching of a Feast. It summarizes and applies the meaning of a feast of day. Orthros (Or-thros): The word literally means *early morning*. It is the name of the service, which by some has been called *Matins*, and still by others, *Lauds*, though it does not correspond exactly to either of the Western Services. Eothonon (ee-oh-thee-non): meaning – *pertaining to the dawn*. They are the eleven assigned readings of the Gospel during the Orthros Service, pertaining to the eleven appearances of our Lord to His Disciples after the Resurrection. Synaxis (see-nax-sees) “the gathering or coming together” as it pertains to a celebration of a commemoration or feast. Following a major Feast a “Synaxis” commemorates the “co-stars” of the Feast, i.e., following the Feast of the Presentation of Christ (Ss. Simeon and Anna), following the Feast of the Birth of Christ (the Holy Virgin Mary), following the Feast of Holy Theophany (St. John the Baptist), etc. Synaxarion (see-nax-sah-ree-on) the summary of a Feast, describing a historical significance and meaning of a commemoration.

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.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread is being offered by Ron & Kathy Zraick in memory of Ron’s father, Issac Zraick (+3 January, 1965), and his aunt Pauline Haddad (+9 January, 1997). Memory eternal.

Holy Bread is being offered by the Deeb family in loving memory of Dr. Edward Deeb (+11 January, 1997). Memory eternal. Prayers are also offered for Father Timothy Baclig celebrating his fortieth year in the Holy Priesthood. May God grant him many years!

Holy Bread and wheat are being offered by Joe Ayoub in memory of his beloved uncle, Labeeb Hamra (+ January, 2023) of Ajdidet, Marjaoun Lebanon. Memory eternal.

Holy Bread for the Feast of Holy Theophany was offered by the Mitchell family with prayers for the continued health of their family and in memory of: Gretta Casalnuovo and Emile Ayoub

Special thanks to all my St. Michael church's friends for your outpouring love and care, your calls and cards wishing me a quick recovery from my successful total knee replacement surgery on December 27. Praise God all went well and I am going through physical therapy. I appreciate and love you all! [Rima Hage]

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

for Gabriella Lewin in honor of her twelfth birthday,
by her mother and father, Daniel & Leilah Lewin

by Kathy & Ron Zraick for Khouriye Sally (Anastasia) Howell
of St. Athanasius Church (Sacramento, California),
the wife of Fr. Stephen Howell, and the mother of
Fr. Matthew Howell, the Pastor of St. Herman of Alaska
Church in Wasilla, Alaska

for the expectant parents: Adrienne & Regan Hines.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

[Note: Wednesdays and Fridays are observed as days of fasting]

The Twenty-ninth Sunday after Pentecost and The Twelfth Sunday of Luke

Saturday, January 14th – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, January 15th – Orthros, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2023 Council Officers Elected

We congratulate our 2023 Executive Officers who were re-elected on Wednesday, December 27, 2022: **Connie Abdun-Nur Barilla**, Chair; **Kris Thabit**, Vice-Chair; **John Khouri**, Secretary; **Britton McLinn**, Treasurer.

Church School Classes Resume today - Sunday, January 8

Father Timothy to Attend Special Archdiocese Convention

Father Timothy will be attending the Special Archdiocese Convention in Dallas, Texas (January 12-14, 2023) for the purpose of electing three qualified candidates to serve as the Archbishop of our North American Archdiocese. The top three (3) of eight (8) qualified candidates will be nominated for an election by the Holy Synod of Antioch. Father will remain in contact in the event of an emergency and may be reached directly by text or voice and e-mail (818) 219-3761; frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org. Subdeacon Richard Ajalat, Pastoral Assistant, may be reached for other matters in Father Timothy's absence at: (818) 800-2418 or rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org

Parish Council Virtual Meeting – Monday, January 16th, 6 p.m.

Holy Water Available for Distribution and House Blessings Scheduled

Holy Water will be available to all at the end of the service on January 9. There is no prohibition to anyone receiving or drinking Holy Water. Bottles will be available for Holy Water distribution by contacting Subdeacon Richard Ajalat. Please provide an offering to help cover the cost of the bottle. Thank you. House blessings may be arranged with Father Timothy or Father Minas by appointment. While house blessings may take place at any time of the year, it is best to schedule one prior to Meat Fare Sunday: February 19, 2023.

Calendar for:	2023	2024	2025
First Day of Great Lent	February 27	March 25	March 03
Holy Pascha	April 16	May 05	April 20
Western Easter	April 09	March 31	April 20
Feast of Theophany	Friday	January 6, 2023	
Meat Fare Sunday	Sunday	February 19, 2023	
Feast of the Annunciation	Saturday	March 25, 2023	
Feast of the Ascension	Thursday	May 25, 2023	
Pentecost	Sunday	June 4, 2023	
Feast of the Nativity	Monday	December 25, 2023	

Zoom Meeting Virtual Bible Study Resumes Next Tuesday

Our Bible Study with Father Timothy — will resume on Tuesday, January 10th at 7 p.m. A Zoom link will be provided in the weekly parish e-mail. Each study is limited to one hour. An “Orthodox Bible Study” provides a broad and complete study of the full context of Holy Scripture (Old and New Testament) It is a comprehensive approach to understanding God’s Word from Holy Tradition that includes: The Apostolic writings, Church Councils, the Canonical Texts, Patristic Sources, Liturgical Texts of Services and the experience of saints who have given testimony through their life as witnesses of the faith through the centuries. In the upcoming weeks we will continue our study of The Book of Genesis. A link for the recorded sessions are provided to anyone by request. Just e-mail Father Timothy at: frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Jan 06 (Holy Theophany) - the Mitchells

Jan 08 - open

Jan 15 - the Tambouras family

Jan 22 - Charmaine Darmour

Jan 29 - open

Charmaine Darmour

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread or host the coffee hour.

Church Etiquette Booklet

An updated booklet has been published on church etiquette and is available to our parishioners in the narthex. Now that we are in our new church sanctuary, it helps to end bad habits and begin the practice of good ones. Everyone is encouraged to take the time to review procedures and courtesies while in church. Also, please bear in mind that we now have an operational west and east gate on our property. The one-way drive around the Assembly Hall is clockwise. Please exit through the east gate if you are parked on the east parking lot to avoid driving in front of the Assembly Hall or face on-coming cars. Thank you.

New Church Sanctuary Sponsorships

Several sponsorships are available in our new sanctuary, including new altar boy robes. Please contact Father Timothy for more information at: frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org

Upcoming Events

[Note: You may now access our Google Parish Calendar to your personal calendar.

Here is the link: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/1?cid=YWRtaW5Ac3RtaWNoYWVsdmFubnV5cy5vcmc>]

Special Convention of the Antiochian Archdiocese

Thursday-Friday, January 12-13, 2023; Dallas, Texas

Young Adult Ministry Winter Retreat - January 13-16, 2023

at Big Bear; \$225/person by December 3 (see flier)

Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership — Sunday, January 29

Winter Sacred Music Institute hosted by St. Anthony Church

(San Diego) February 2-5, 2023; see flier attached below

2023 Debutante Fashion Show — Saturday, February 4, 2023

Sheraton Universal Hotel; RSVP by January 25th (see flier)

\$85/adult; \$50/children; social hour, 11 a.m., luncheon, 12 noon

Camp St. Nicholas Winter Camp — February 17-20, 2023

(President's Day Weekend)

Day Retreat Especially for Orthodox Moms and Moms to Be!

hosted by St. Luke Church (Garden Grove) February 23, 2023

Diocesan Parish Life Conference hosted by St. Luke Church

(Garden Grove) June 28 to July 2, 2023; Irvine Marriott

Go to: www.lapl.org

56th Biennial Antiochian Archdiocese Convention hosted by

St. George Church (Phoenix, Arizona); July 23-30, 2023

Go to: www.ac2023az.org



2023 Debutante Ball Participants

This year, six of the seventeen girls participating in the Debutante Ball are from St. Michael Church; one-third of the group! They are: **Julianna Aparicio, Natalie Dawud, Sarah Malouf, Elisa Milkie, Hannah Mitchell and Olivia Mitchell.** In addition, **DeAnne Meena Abraham** from St. Michael serves on the Committee, as Managing Director of the debutantes. Escorts from our parish will also participate. Your support of our girls and their families is appreciated. Please see the attached flier for more information, including ad sponsorships in the Program Book (deadline: January 23, 2023). Please contact **Carrie Sadd Khouri**, for more information at: CarrieSKhouri@gmail.com



HERE WE GO AGAIN!

THE LADIES' SOCIETY OF
ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

INVITES YOU TO

The 2023 Debutante

FASHION SHOW

& DEBUTANTE ALUMNI REUNION
WITH A SPECIAL RUNWAY APPEARANCE
FROM THE ESCORTS

Saturday February 4, 2023

SHERATON UNIVERSAL HOTEL

333 UNIVERSAL HOLLYWOOD DR.
UNIVERSAL CITY, CA 91608

11:00 • MIX & MINGLE

12:00 • LUNCHEON

rsvp by January 25, 2023

\$85 ADULT • \$50 CHILDREN

TO PURCHASE TICKETS PLEASE VISIT
STNICHOLASLA.ORG/BALL

OR EMAIL

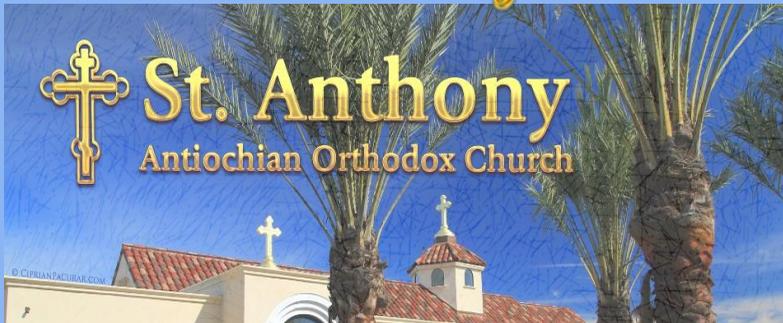
LAUREN MALOUF
LMALOUF@HCHC.EDU

**Great News!!! Deadline for Hotel Reservations
Extended to January 5 at Midnight!**

*The Antiochian Archdiocese Department of
Sacred Music invites you to the*

**2023 Winter Sacred Music Institute
February 2-5, 2023**

**Preparing for Great Lent:
Windows into the Triodion Season
Hosted by**



2825 Merton Avenue • San Diego, California

Make your reservations **NOW** by **January 5, 2023**

to receive an unequalled rate of **\$139/night**

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel San Diego

1515 Hotel Circle South • San Diego, CA

Thank you!

As we begin the New Year and reflect upon the past, our first thought is one of gratitude. We are very grateful to have so many generous people who help us serve our community. YOU are the reason we are here! Our being able to help those less fortunate makes our job worthwhile. Food,

clothing, toiletries, diapers and grocery gift cards have been, and will continue to be our main objective. We cannot thank you enough for your support over many years. Please know that together we truly make a difference in this wonderful world we live in! A happy and healthy New Year with warmest regards to all, Barbara Ausburn; Loaves and Fishes, Catholic Charities (Van Nuys).

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of the San Fernando Valley**

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622
His Beatitude, Patriarch JOHN, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East

"Prayer does not equip us for greater work - Prayer IS the greater work."
Oswald Chambers

Dear Fellow Parishioners of St. Michael Church,

We live in a "get-fixed-quick" kind of world and daily personal prayer can be challenging. Do you have a personal daily prayer rule? Are you successful in maintaining a practice daily prayer?

Join members of our parish, as well as a fellowship of Christians world-wide, who are hungry to grow in their personal prayer discipline and relationship with God.

You can sign up for more information about **The Encounter**, an initiative that helps us pray regularly and grow in our personal prayer disciplines of our Orthodox Church at faithtree.org.

I have been personally involved in the development of this tool developed by *Faithtree Resources* and encourage your being connected.

May the joy of the Feast with God's heavenly peace carry us through the New Year with St. Michael, protecting us from all harm.

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
Pastor

NOTICE

All checks to St. Michael Church that are dated, December 31, 2022 will be accepted for Financial Reporting for the 2022 calendar year if they are received for deposit by Sunday, January 8, 2023 and no later.

Contributions may also be made on-line via our parish website or by credit card in our Parish Bookstore, if earmarked and designated for 2022. Thank you for your cooperation.

Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Report Booklet

The Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership will be held on Sunday, January 29, 2023. In the best interest of time, a Report Booklet will be prepared for distribution prior to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 22. All Council officers, Standing Committees and Subsidiary Organizations should turn in their single page reports to the Church Office no later than Sunday, January 8, 2023 in order to be compile on time for distribution to the Voting Membership.

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His Holiness, Patriarch JOHN, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor
frtimothy@stmichaelvanuys.org

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313
www.stmichaelvanuys.org

*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things,
at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
(II Corinthians 9:8)*

Dear Members of St. Michael,

As we've begun a New Year our Parish Council Finance Committee will be providing us with our Proposed 2023 Annual Budget. A parish cannot solely rely upon the income of Sacramental offerings because we would not be able to meet our month-to-month expenses based upon anticipating baptisms, weddings, or funerals that takes place each year. Nor can we adequately pay for our ongoing property maintenance without the shared responsibility and the help of volunteers of our membership. Our

parish is able to provide its clergy and facilities, the prayer services of the church and its Sacraments because of our faithful parishioners who help to financially support the salaries and the operational costs of our church property.

We are again asking everyone to prayerfully consider making a reasonable annual financial pledge to the General Fund our parish for the New Year. We look forward, by God's grace, for continued growth in the future. We are also very grateful for the fulfilled commitments of all who have provided us with contributions to complete the construction of our new church sanctuary. Additional information will be provided at our Annual Parish Meeting to all pledging and regular contributing members at the end of January.

May you and your family enjoy God's continued blessings as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of Holy Theophany.

In Christ,

Subdeacon Richard Tamoush

Frequently Asked Questions When Completing a Pledge Form

What is the reason for completing an annual parish Pledge Form?

Each year planning for budgeted receipts and expenditures are an important part of being responsible stewards of Christ's church. Some of our month-to-month expenses include: priest and staff salaries, utility and maintenance expenses, the payment of taxes on all investment (income) property (yes, churches do pay property taxes), and insurances. Moreover, it is not uncommon for these regular expenses increase each year. It is a goal of our Parish Council to meet these expenses with the contributions of our members. The Pastor does not receive stipends (monetary gifts) for house blessings, baptisms, weddings and funerals if a family is not enrolled as a regular contributor of the parish. The Pastor's living expenses and allowances are included the Annual Budget of the parish that will be presented at our Annual Meeting on January 29th.

Our 2023 Pledge Form is provided with this bulletin and available on our parish website.

The form may be completed and returned to the Church Office at: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys; California; 91406; or placed in the narthex offering box. Thank you for your continued support of our parish.

Treasure self-assessment

Can I move one step to the right?

Household income	.5%	1%	2%	3%	5%	10% (tithing)
\$20,000	\$100	\$200	\$400	\$600	\$1000	\$2000
\$30,000	\$150	\$300	\$600	\$900	\$1500	\$3000
\$40,000	\$200	\$400	\$800	\$1,200	\$2000	\$4000
\$50,000	\$250	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2500	\$5000
\$60,000	\$300	\$600	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$3,000	\$6000
\$70,000	\$350	\$700	\$1,400	\$2,100	\$3,500	\$7000
\$80,000	\$400	\$800	\$1,600	\$2,400	\$4,000	\$8000
\$90,000	\$450	\$900	\$1,800	\$2,700	\$4,500	\$9000
\$100,000	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
\$110,000	\$550	\$1,100	\$2,200	\$3,300	\$5,500	\$11,000
\$120,000	\$600	\$1,200	\$2,400	\$3,600	\$6,000	\$12,000
\$150,000	\$750	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$7,500	\$15,000
\$200,000	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$10,000	\$20,000

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church
16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406 Phone: 818-994-2313
Website: www.stmichaelvannuys.org

**SAINT MICHAEL ORTHODOX CHURCH
2023 CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT FORM**

1. All enrolled members must first fulfill a fair share contribution that is paid 100% by St. Michael Church to the Archdiocese annually (this does not include your family pledge obligation BELOW).

Total number of baptized Orthodox persons (age 18 & above) in your household _____ \$50 each _____

Total number of baptized Orthodox persons (age 17 & under) in your household _____ \$35 each _____

(Please print all names with information in the section below)

2. In gratitude of God's blessings, I / we pledge to contribute St. Michael Church expenses.

A total annual amount of: _____ (see Treasure self-assessment chart)

\$_____ weekly \$_____ monthly \$_____ quarterly \$_____ semi-annually \$_____ annually

Name _____ Spouse Name _____

Phone number _____ E-mail Address _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

3. How do you wish to pay? We accept personal checks, credit card payments in-person, automatic bill pay, automatic payments from your bank (See back). Church address: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406-4622; Website: www.stmichaelvannuys.org

Ways to pay your pledge or donation:

- a. You may write a check to “St. Michael Church” and mail it to the Church Office.
(see address above)
- b. You may process an “automatic bill pay” with your bank that will mail a recurring monthly hard-copy earmarked check to St. Michael Church.
- c. You may pay by credit card using our website donation page (a 3% processing fee will apply) at: <https://www.stmichaelvannuys.org/donate/> and we will be immediately notified.
- d. You may arrange for a recurring monthly automatic withdrawal from your bank account using our church bank routing number and bank account.

Note: Each donation to St. Michael Church should be earmarked, i.e., “Building Fund,” “Pledge,” etc.

Print names of baptized Orthodox persons in your household.

Name Age

Name Age

Name Age

Name Age

Pastoral Sermon
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor
The Sunday after Holy Theophany

When do New Year resolutions fail? Why do they fail? What does the Feast of Holy Theophany teach us?

Being decisive is important to getting anything done. But it is only the start of initiating an action, starting over, or trying again. So why do we seem to always fail? It is because deciding to do something is not enough. For many, a new action may last for a period of time before it gets old, or we get tired and slip back to what we've been familiar with, or have been doing for a long time. And we give up!

The Feast Holy Theophany brings us renewal. In the Revelation of John (21:5) we hear the Lord say, "I am making everything new!" He did not say, "I am making new things." He did not make a mistake or violate His own principles. He fully entered our world and filled it with His divine presence to renew it! And the Feast we are now celebrating is His call for us to be renewed.

The Feast of Holy Theophany also provides us with illumination. However, it begins with our repentance—the full acceptance of responsibly saying "I've been wrong." It is then and only then that something new can really begin. To be resolute without illumination and repentance is self-serving. For many, that may be the goal. For the Christian, however, it is not only "I" who matters.

The Feast of Holy Theophany is also called the Feast of Light. Light illumines. It also reveals. If we are afraid of light and are more comfortable in darkness, we kid ourselves into thinking that change can come. We may also, in fact, not be ready for change.

Believing in all that Christ has come to do in order to save us—even from ourselves, can be the greatest challenge for you and I. We must desire with all of our heart, mind and soul to seek purification from sins with sincere

repentance; even forgiving ourselves if necessary; or at least begin to seek knowing what we must rid ourselves from in order to be illumined by the Light of Christ.

In St. John's Gospel we hear: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God." (John 3:19-21)

No one of us would admit that we intend to do evil things or delight in what is evil. It may also be difficult for us to think of wanting to "let [our] light shine before men that they may see [our] good deeds and praise [our] Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) Would that not be prideful? What did Jesus mean in saying that?

Jesus also said (in the same section of St. Matthew's Gospel beginning with verse 14): "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

Wait a minute: Isn't Jesus "the Light of the world?" Yes, He is! Well then, who am I to think of myself as "the light of the world?"

In his epistle St. John says: "God is Light; in Him there is no darkness at all." He goes on to say, "If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not put the truth into practice. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin." (I John 1:5-7) Notice that St. John's words teach us that there can be no separation in our relationship to each other, if we walk in Christ's light and have united ourselves with Him. It's like a candle that is lit by a one that is already aflame. We share in being the light of the world by bearing the Light of Christ.

In Chapter Two, St. John becomes more explicit. He says, "Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his

brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him."

Finally, renewal will be prevented if we continue to hold on to what we must completely let go of. God's forgiveness is something we can count on. Can He count on us to do His will and walk in His light?

May the Feast of Light, Holy Theophany, the full revelation of the Holy Trinity, illumine us in heart, mind and soul, that we may, with the fear of God, in faith and love, shine brightly with God's radiance!

Christ is in our midst!
He is and ever shall be!

EOTHINON 8

8 اللحن

STONE 5

5 الايوثينا

THE SUNDAY AFTER (APODOSIS)

THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST

RIGHTEOUS MOTHER DOMNICA OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND HER COMPANIONS;
VENERABLE GEORGE THE CHOZEBITE

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الرابع

إن تلميذات الرب تعلمن من الملاك الكرز بالقيامة البهجة، وطرحن القضاء الجدي، وخاطبن الرسل
مفتخرات وقائلات: سبي الموت وقام المسيح الإله، مانحاً العالم الرحمة العظمى.

طروبارية الظهور على اللحن الأول

باعتمادك يا رب في نهر الأردن، ظهرت السجدة للثالوث، لأن صوت الآب تقدّم لك بالشهادة، مسمياً
إياك ابناً محبوباً، والروح بهيئة حمامة يؤيد حقيقة الكلمة، فيا من ظهرت وأنرت العالم، أيها المسيح
الإله المجد لك.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة بالحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسل إليكم نحن غير المستحقين، حتى أنكم بطلباتكم
تكتنوفوننا بظل أجنحة مجدكم غير الهولي، حافظين إيانا نحن الجائين والصارخين بغير فتور،
أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القوات العلوية.

قنداق على اللحن الرابع
اليوم ظهرت للمسكونة، يا رب، ونورك أشرق علينا، نحن الذين نمدحك بمعرفة قائلين: لقد أتيت
وظهرت، أيها النور الذي لا يُدنى منه.

الرسالة

لِتَكُنْ يَا رَبُّ رَحْمَتَكَ عَلَيْنَا.
ابتهجوا أيها الصديقون بالرب.

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل أفسس.

يا إخوة، لكل واحد منا أُعطيَت النعمة على مقدار موهبة المسيح. فلذلك يقول "لما
صعد إلى العلى سبى سبباً وأعطى الناس عطايا. " فكونه صعداً، هل هو إلا أنه
نزل أولاً إلى أسافل الأرض؟ فذاك الذي نزل، هو الذي صعد أيضاً فوق السماوات
كلها ليملأ كل شيء. وهو قد أعطى أن يكون البعض رؤساء، والبعض أنبياء،
والبعض مبشرين، والبعض رعاة ومعلمين. لأجل تكميل القديسين، ولعمل الخدمة،
وبنيان جسد المسيح. إلى أن ننتهي جميعنا إلى وحدة الإيمان ومعرفة ابن الله،
إلى إنسان كامل، إلى مقدار قامته ملء المسيح.

الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس متى الانجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر.

في ذلك الزمان، لما سمع يسوع باعتيال يوحنا، رجع إلى الجليل. ثم ترك الناصرة وسكن
في كفرناحوم على شاطئ بحر الجليل في بلاد زبلون ونفتاليم: ليتم ما قيل على لسان
النبي إشعيا: "يا أرض زبلون وأرض نفتاليم، على طريق البحر، عبر الأردن، جليل
الأمم! الشعب الجالس في الظلام أبصر نورا عظيماً، والجالسون في بقعة الموت وظلاله
أشرق عليهم النور" ومن ذلك الوقت بدأ يسوع يبشر فيقول: "توبوا، فقد اقترب ملكوت
السماوات".

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعنى عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، الا 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 في الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية.