

THE TROPHYBEARER

Pastoral Thoughts

This month among other feasts, the Church celebrates the memory of three luminous pillars of the Church: Saint Basil the Great, Saint Gregory the Theologian, and Saint John Chrysostom. Though distinct in their lives and ministries, these saints stand as one in their love for Christ, wisdom, and service to the Church. They have become individual examples and a collective witness to the power of God's truth and grace.

The lives of the Three Hierarchs remind us that unity does not mean uniformity. Saint Basil was a monastic reformer, a defender of the poor, and a champion of liturgical worship. Saint Gregory was a poet and theologian known for his profound reflections on the mystery of the Trinity. Saint John Chrysostom was a gifted preacher and a fearless advocate for social justice, earning the title "Golden-Mouthed."

Though their gifts and callings differed, they served the one Body of Christ. Their example calls us to celebrate the diversity of talents and ministries within the Church while striving for the unity of faith and love.

Each of the Three Hierarchs stood firm in the face of heresy and confusion. Saint Basil defended the divinity of the Holy Spirit and clarified Orthodox teaching against Arianism. Saint Gregory eloquently articulated the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, emphasizing the balance of God's transcendence and immanence. Saint John Chrysostom preached with power against moral corruption, always rooted in the Gospel. Their commitment to truth was not academic; it was born from a deep relationship with God and a desire to guide the faithful toward salvation.

While these hierarchs were intellectual giants, they were also deeply pastoral. Saint Basil established hospitals and cared for the poor. Saint Gregory sought peace and reconciliation in times of Church division. Saint John used his preaching to inspire repentance and spiritual renewal. Their example teaches us that the true measure of theology is its ability to transform lives.

The Feast of the Three Hierarchs is not merely a historical commemoration but an invitation to follow their example. We see the importance of ascetic discipline and care for others, we are inspired to seek wisdom and articulate the faith with clarity, and we are reminded of the power of the spoken word and the courage to stand for what is right. As they worked tirelessly for the Church, we must strive to live lives of holiness, humility, and service.

So let us give thanks for these Three Hierarchs and their contributions to the Church. Let us seek their intercessions and may their example inspire us to love God with all our hearts, to defend the truth boldly, and to serve our neighbors with compassion. Through their prayers, may we also be counted among those who shine with the light of Christ.



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PARISH NEWS

Epistle Readers

Anyone wishing to become an Epistle Reader, Please Contact Father Michael

Sunday, January 5, 2025: The Sunday before Theophany/The Eve of Theophany: Loukia Constantinides

Sunday, January 12, 2025: The Sunday after Theophany: Alexa Florence

Sunday, January 19, 2025: 12th Sunday of Luke: Kim Eastland

Sunday, January 26, 2025: 15th Sunday of Luke: Harry Coin

Evening Meal Volunteers

January 22, 2025: Nicholas Elias and Dr. Vickie Pyevich

February 26, 2025: Susan Coin and Cathy Farrell

April 23, 2025: Kathy and Kevin Begyn

May 28, 2025: Dennis and Nancy Spurgetis

June 25, 2025: Father Michael, Presbyteria Maria and Patti Kenyon

July 23, 2025: Penny McGimpsey and Angela Spurgetis

August 27, 2025: Mary and Kim Winters and George and Diane Karoules

September 24, 2025: Dena Manta and Alexa Florence

October 22, 2025: Randy and Chris Smith

November 20, 2025: (Thursday) Ted Pitsoulakis and Jimmy Pliakos

December 18, 2025: (Thursday) Deacon Paul and Deaconess Romilie Speed

Anyone interested in taking part in this worthwhile ministry should contact Mary Winters at 563-726- 2880

Parish Council Sunday Duty Schedule

Sunday, January 5, 2025: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis and Mary Rankin

Sunday, January 12, 2025: Tom Bakeris, Nick Coin, Mariellen Crosson, and Vickie Pyevich

Sunday, January 19, 2025: Kim Eastland, Mary Kay Eckert, Gus Pappas, and Ted Pitsoulakis

Sunday, January 26, 2025: Kathy Begyn, Joe Burmeister, Dennis Spurgetis, and Mary Rankin

PROSPHORA MAKERS

Sunday, January 5, 2025: Open

Sunday, January 12, 2025: Open

Sunday, January 19, 2025: Open

Sunday, January 26, 2025: Open

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Sunday, January 5, 2025:

Ray and Connie Allen

Sunday, January 12, 2025:

The Family of George Coin

Sunday, January 19, 2025:

John and Patricia Andrews

Sunday, January 26, 2025:

Bassam and Lina Assaf

PARISH REGISTRY

Chrismation

The Servant of God, Eric Contreras, was Confirmed into the Orthodox Church on December 24, 2024. The Sponsor is Harry Coin.

Funerals

The servant of God, Harb Nasif Harb, fell asleep in the Lord and was buried on December 14, 2024

The Servant of God, John Andrews fell asleep in the Lord and was buried on December 28, 2024.

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

The Circumcision of the Lord (January 1)

Since the Mosaic Law commands that if a woman give birth to a male child, he should be circumcised in the foreskin of his flesh on the eighth day (Lev. 12:2-3), on this, the eighth day from His Nativity, our Saviour accepted the circumcision commanded by the Law. According to the command of the Angel, He received the Name which is above every name: JESUS, which means "Saviour" (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31 and 2:21).

The Theophany of the Lord (January 6)

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Saviour according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Saviour also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvellous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized and the voice was heard from the Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Saint Anthony the Great (January 17)

Saint Anthony, the Father of monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the span of twenty years are incredible. His ascetic struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city.

The cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ.

Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained, as mentioned above, about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God." Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life.

Saint Athanasius says of him that "his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Saviour. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul." So Passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.

SAINT MARK OF EPHESUS (JANUARY 19)

The great teacher and invincible defender of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, Saint Mark, was the offspring and scion of the imperial city, Constantinople. Reared by most pious parents, and instructed in secular and spiritual wisdom, he became preeminent in both. Saint Mark lived as an ascetic on the Prince's Islands and later in the monastery of Saint George Magana in Constantinople. He passed through all the degrees of the priesthood, and was finally advanced to the dignity of Archbishop and the lofty throne of the Metropolis of Ephesus. At the insistence of Emperor John Paleologos, the Saint was sent to the council of the Latins in Florence, to unite the churches that had been divided for so many years. He astounded the papal teachers with the divine wisdom of his words, and was the only one who did not sign the blasphemous decree of that false council. Because of this, the Holy Church

SAINT MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR (JANUARY 21)

The divine Maximus, who was from Constantinople, sprang from an illustrious family. He was a lover of wisdom and an eminent theologian. At first, he was the chief private secretary of the Emperor Heraclius and his grandson Constans. When the Monothelite heresy became predominant in the royal court, out of hatred for this error the Saint departed for the Monastery at Chrysopolis (Scutari), of which he later became the abbot. When Constans tried to constrain him either to accept the Monothelite teaching, or to stop speaking and writing against it - neither of which the Saint accepted to do - his tongue was uprooted and his right hand was cut off, and he was sent into exile where he reposed in 662. At the time only he and his few disciples were Orthodox in the East (See also August 13).

**His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago
and the Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos**

Cordially invite you to
the 64th Annual



Vasilopita Celebration

To Benefit St. Basil's Academy &
Youth and Young Adult Ministries

JANUARY

12

Start 6 PM

Hosted by St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
10301 S. Kolmar Ave, Oak Lawn, IL, 60453

Rsvp by January 6

Parish Reservations can be made
by calling or emailing:

708-636-5460

saintnicholasoffice@gmail.com



Saint George Parish Vasilopita January 12, 2025!

The community observance of the Vasilopita is most impressive. The priest begins the spiritual portion of the observance with a series of supplications for the health and peace of the world. Pieces are cut for Christ and His Holy Church, the Patriarch, Archbishop, Clergy and Laity, etc. (This tradition is taken from the ancient Christian observance of evening meals within the community.) Many pieces of bread are then distributed to the faithful, and all monies received from this event are sent to the Children's Home of St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York. All of the proceeds from the entire observance are sent for the needs of the Children's Home, like the one originally founded by St. Basil over 1500 years ago.

Our Vasilopita celebration is on January 12, 2025!

Include St. George on Your Next Shopping Run!

The last time our St. George parishioners responded enthusiastically to a request to pick up some items needed for the church when on their next Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Office Max or grocery expedition. Generous parishioners provided most of the copier paper, office supplies, paper plates and napkins, toilet paper, paper towels and other items used by the parish last year, resulting in reduced expenditures. For this we thank you all so much!

While throughout the pandemic we have not asked for this help, we are close to exhausting our supply and would like to make this an annual opportunity to share our bounty from God (as well as Bounty from Procter & Gamble)!

Suggested items to donate

Office Supplies:

- Reams of 8 1/2" x 11" copier paper (white)
- Reams of 8 1/2" x 14" copier paper (white)
- Reams of colored paper for Sunday bulletins
- Packages of address labels (size 1" x 2 5/8")

Safety Equipment

Carbon Monoxide detectors

Coffee Hour/Kitchen supplies:

- 8 oz. Styrofoam cups
- Dessert size paper plates
- Paper towels
- Packages of bar mops or towels (Sam's Club has a variety of these)

Banquet size disposable tablecloths

Restroom Supplies:

- Toilet paper
- Liquid hand soap (small bottles)

Thank you for supporting this effort last year! If you would like your expenditures noted on your end-of-year statement, please enclose copies of your receipts with a note of explanation in an envelope to Mary Rankin and place it on the desk in the main office.



We are collecting
hats/gloves/mittens/coats
for the less fortunate...
If you would like to donate,
please place them on the
Christmas tree in the
Narthex until January 5,
2025

2025 JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 The Circumcision of Our Lord Saint Basil the Great Fast Free 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great	2 Fast Free	3 Fast Free	4 Fast Free
5 The Sunday before Theophany/The Eve of Theophany Oil and Wine Allowed 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy followed by the Great Blessing of the Waters	6 The Holy Theophany of our Lord Fast Free 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy <i>*Please Note: The Great Blessing of the Waters will occur following Orthros, as is the ancient Tradition of the Church</i>	7 The Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist 8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy @ Assumption	8 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	9	10 Fast Day	11
12 Sunday after Theophany Parish Vasilopita 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion +Sacrament 6:00 p.m. Metropolis Vasilopita @ Saint Nicholas in Oak Lawn, IL	13	14	15 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	16 7:00 p.m. Book Study "Marriage and Family" by Saint John Chrysostom, both "in person" and Zoom	17 Feast Day of Saint Anthony the Great Oil and Wine Allowed 8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George 9:00 a.m. Women's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA)	18 Feast Day of Saints Athanasios and Cyril Patriarchs of Alexandria 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption
19 12th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion	20	21 6:30 p.m. Parish Council Meeting	22 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	23	24 Fast Day	25
26 15th Sunday of Luke 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday School Classes follow Holy Communion	27	28	29 Fast Day 8:00 a.m. Men's Fellowship Group @ Coffee House (1315 Jersey Ridge Road, Davenport, IA) 11:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum 7:00 p.m. Virtual Orthodox Study Forum	30 The Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs 8:00 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George		