



Sunday Bulletin January 5, 2020
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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**Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-
Proistamenos**

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## **Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. Plagal Second Mode. Psalm 27.9,1.**  
**O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.**  
**Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8**

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

## **Gospel Reading     Mark 1:1-8**

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' John was baptizing in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

As this is the Sunday of Eve of the feast of our Lord's Holy Theophany, we reflect back at what everyone witnessed at the time of our Lord's Holy Theophany. Those who were on the banks of the Jordan River, witnessed the manifestation of the incarnation of our Lord. They witnessed our Savior as both Man and God. All righteousness was fulfilled when St. John baptized the Lord in the Jordan River. The water was so affected by the Lord's immersion that it caused itself to flow backwards.

This reverse flow of the Jordan has persisted since that time! The Blessed Holy Trinity was there for all to see. God the Father parted the Heavens as God the Son came out of the water. The voice of God the Father proclaimed "This is my Beloved Son of Whom I am well pleased." God the Holy Spirit appeared overhead in the form of a dove. Thus, the Triune God appeared to all. There was no doubt! There was no negotiation! Our God in His complete form was present! He was there for all to witness. We are sprinkled with the water of the Jordan, the very water which baptized our Lord Jesus, for those of us who came to Church today on the feast of the Lord's Holy Theophany. We remember that during the Divine Liturgy, we sang, " For as many that are baptized in Christ, put on Christ! Alleluia." By being sprinkled with the Holy Water, the Aghiasmo, we essentially put Christ on ourselves.

In doing so, we give Glory to The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. We become one with the Lord! Today we enter into the Jordan River with Him and we pray that the sins that we carry will be thoroughly washed away.

We pray that the illumination cast by the upcoming celebration of the feast of the Lord's Theophany continues to shine on our path leading us to righteousness and to the grace of our Lord.

Prayerfully in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## Saints and Feasts Commemorated

### Sunday before Epiphany

### Eve of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ



#### Apolytikion for Eve of Epiphany in the Fourth Mode

The River Jordan was turned back by Elisseus' mantle once, when the fiery man of zeal Elias had been taken up; then were its waters divided hither and thither. The running streams became dry passage unto him, truly as a sign and type of Baptism, whereby we pass to the other side of the shifting stream of this fleeting life. Christ hath appeared in the Jordan River, to sanctify the waters.

### The Holy Martyrs Theopemptus and Theonas

When the persecution of Diocletian broke out in 290, Saint Theopemptus, a bishop, was taken for his confession of Christ, and convicted Diocletian to his face for his error and ungodliness. Remaining unhurt after cruel tortures, he was given poison to drink, which had been prepared by a sorcerer named Theonas. Protected by divine grace from this also, he drew Theonas to Christ, and after other torments, was beheaded. Saint Theonas was cast into a pit and buried alive.

### Righteous Syncletike of Alexandria

Saint Syncletike was from Alexandria in Egypt. She lived eighty-three years in virginity and asceticism, and became the leader and teacher of many nuns. What Saint Anthony the Great was to men, she became to women: a model of mortification of the flesh, of patience in afflictions, and of wise instruction; for this, she is known a "Amma," a title corresponding to "Abba." Towards the end of her long life, she was stricken with an exceedingly painful disease, which she endured with faith and magnanimity. She reposed in the middle of the fourth century. It is said of Saint Syncletike that she was the virgin who hid Saint Athanasius from the Arians for more than a year in the environs of Alexandria, and it is to Saint Athanasius that her life is ascribed.

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Holy Transfiguration Monastery

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Maria Lambrinos, Steve Anastos, Lilly Kashou, Angelo Romas, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

Philoptochos is having their annual luncheon on Sunday, January 12 between 1:30-2:00 at Union Diner, 3000 E. Main St. All are welcome. If you are interested in going, please let Lynda Ivan or Katy Gianakouros at (607) 342-7227 know to let Union Diner in Endicott know how many will be attending.

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Bassam Stephan, the brother of Jeanet Hazar and cousin of Lorraine Khouri. Bassam fell asleep in the Lord on December 26. May his memory be eternal. Our prayers and best wishes go out to them.

**Monday, January 6, 2020:** Feast of Holy Theophany - Orthros 8:45 am and Divine Liturgy 9:45 am - The Great Blessing of the Waters is to be at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on this day, January 6.

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

It is the sole and peculiar property of the Substance that transcends all, to be able to bestow on men the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and make those that draw near unto It partakers of the divine nature.

### **St. Cyril of Alexandria**

Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily 10., 4th Century

But this exists in Christ, not as a thing received, nor by communication from another, but as His own, and as belonging to His substance, for He baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

### **St. Cyril of Alexandria**

Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily 10., 4th Century

*Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael (607) 795-1474. For all other matters, please notify Fr. Michael or a member of the parish council.*