

The Good News

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2020

PASTORAL MESSAGE

The Church in her wisdom tries in many ways to teach us what it is to be a Christian. One of the most common ways is through the Gospel and Epistle readings set for each particular day. Each set of readings, and they do come in sets, have certain themes that they want to express. Sometimes the theme is obvious. Sometimes we must patiently dig for the themes expressed. The themes are also interconnected; in other words, they all depend on each other since they all have to do with the life of the Christian. The 15th Sunday of Luke is no exception; indeed we have a plethora of themes. My brothers and sisters in the Lord, there are three themes in the readings that I would like to discuss with you today. These themes are faith, praxis (reaction to faith), and seeing the Lord.

First is faith. Zacchaeus believed and wanted to see the Lord. His faith is concrete not nebulous. Why? Our God is concrete, our God is Trinity (a unity of persons). God is not idea, yet is particular. Our God is not one god among many but only God! Faith then is not individual expression of belief but personal expression of love. Individuality leads to death since it implies self sufficiency. Adam was created a person, yet Adam chose individuality, so Adam dies. Personhood leads to life since its defining characteristic is relationship. Christ/new Adam is a person and thus Christ/new Adam does not die. This was taught to us by: the prophets, the law, Christ himself, the Apostles and the Fathers. Faith then is belief in and not belief that. It is a verb and not a noun. Our faith is absolute and cannot be changed based on our feelings or whims. In the Church new is not good.

Second is praxis or our reaction to faith. Zacchaeus acted on faith by climbing tree. Obstacles mean nothing. Praxis is faith in action. St. James tells us in his epistle that faith without works is dead, yet work without faith is misguided. St. Paul tells us that our actions set the example to others in life, love and purity. Action is a personal reaction to faith. Christ says to feed poor. You own restaurant, I don't. This allows us to use gifts and not neglect them. How we put our faith in action varies. All of us can and should do the faith differently.

Third is seeing the Lord. Zacchaeus saw the Lord. As seeing the Lord is the apex of Christian Life the Eucharist (mass/liturgy) is the apex of worship. It is the source of communion (co-existence) with: God, our fellow man and nature. In the Eucharist we are body of Christ while at all other times we are trying to be. Here we receive into ourselves Christ in entirety. Here the Trinity makes their abode in us. We come to the one chalice with faith. The Chalice is sign of unity not means of unity as we hear in the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great: Unite us all to one another so that we may become partakers of the one Bread and the One Cup in the communion of the one Holy Spirit... (Offertory prayer) We are united not as in the Hindu nirvana but with our distinctions intact. We are united with those living, those fallen asleep and those yet to be born.

So, we can see then that like Zacchaeus we are called to faith, we are called to believe in Christ with a passion. This belief, this faith brings us to the door, and without it, we cannot find our way. The faith calls us to action. It is not enough to come to the door, but we must act to open it. Our faith should not be a theoretical knowledge. We do not learn about God, but we learn and are taught God. This is true because we come here in faith to see God, our Father. We see him in the context of the Divine Liturgy where we receive him into our bodies. Let us then go forth into the world and show the zeal of our faith. Let us go forth and act on our faith in order to give it credence. After doing all this let us come back and approach the lord with faith, fear and love so that we too may hear, "Today salvation has come to this house". Amen.

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Note: Sunday Liturgy 8:30 a.m. Orthros 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy (Saint George) 8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy (Assumption)</p>	<p>6 The Theophany of Our Lord Fast Free 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Great Blessing of the Water and the Divine Liturgy (Saint George) 8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of the Waters (Assumption) 12:00 noon Water Blessing at at Leach Park in Bettendorf, IA 6:00 p.m., Great Vespers at St. John - Cedar Rapids</p>	<p>7 The Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George</p>	<p>1 The Circumcision of Our Lord Saint Basil the Great Fast Free 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George)</p>	<p>2 Fast Free</p>	<p>3 Fast Free 9:00 am Royal Hours of Theophany (Assumption)</p>	<p>4 Fast Free 6:00 pm Great Vespers (Assumption)</p>
<p>5 Sunday Before Theophany Eve of Theophany Oil and Wine Allowed Orthros and Divine Liturgy and the Great Blessing of the Waters (Assumption and Saint George)</p>	<p>6 The Theophany of Our Lord Fast Free 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Great Blessing of the Water and the Divine Liturgy (Saint George) 8:30 am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy with the Great Blessing of the Waters (Assumption) 12:00 noon Water Blessing at at Leach Park in Bettendorf, IA 6:00 p.m., Great Vespers at St. John - Cedar Rapids</p>	<p>7 The Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George</p>	<p>8 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 Fast Day</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 Sunday after Theophany Parish Vasilopita (Assumption and Saint George) Parish Council Oath of Office (Assumption and Saint George) Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion 6:00 p.m., Metropolis Vasilopita</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 The Holy Fathers slain at Sinai and Ratho 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption</p>	<p>15 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)</p>	<p>16 9:00 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George) 6:00 p.m., Fundraising Meeting (Assumption)</p>	<p>17 Feast Day of Saint Anthony the Great Fast Day 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption</p>	<p>18 Feast Day of Saints Athanasios and Cyril Patriarchs of Alexandria 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George</p>
<p>19 12th Sunday of Luke Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion 1:00 p.m. Quad Cities Orthodox Christian Youth Group January event</p>	<p>20 6:00 p.m. Parish Council Meeting (Assumption)</p>	<p>21 9:00 a.m. Men's Club (Assumption) 1:00 p.m. Care Link Meeting (Saint George) 6:30 p.m., Parish Council Meeting (Saint George)</p>	<p>22 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)</p>	<p>23 9:00 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)</p>	<p>24 Fast Day</p>	<p>25 Feast Day of Saint Gregory the Theologian 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George 6:00 pm QCOFC Social at Bad Boyz Pizza in Moline</p>
<p>26 15th Sunday of Luke Orthros and Divine Liturgy (Assumption and Saint George) Sunday School Class following Holy Communion</p>	<p>27 6:30 p.m. Orthodoxy 101 (Saint George)</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 Fast Day 10:00 a.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)</p>	<p>30 Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Assumption 10:30 a.m. Bible Study (Assumption) 6:00 p.m. Orthodox Study Forum (Saint George)</p>	<p>31 Feast Day of Saints Cyril and John the Unmercenaries Fast Day 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy at Saint George</p>	

Father Thomas away for continuing education program. Please direct any pastoral need to Fr, Michael Constantinides (708) 214-2371

Orthodoxy 101

**Everything you want to
know about Orthodoxy**

Themes:

Fasting (January 13)

Prayer (corporate) (January 27)

Prayer (private) (February 10)

The Ecumenical Councils (February 24)

The Creed (March 9)

**Monday evenings at
6:30 p.m. at Saint George**

**Bring your questions and
your friends!**

Epistle Readers

Sunday, January 5, 2020
 Sunday before
 Theophany
 Alexa Florence

Sunday, January 12, 2020
 Sunday after
 Theophany
 Kay Coin

Sunday, January 19, 2020
 12th Sunday of Luke
 Isabella Elias

Sunday, January 26, 2020
 15th Sunday of Luke
 Niko Kenyon

Coffee Hour Hosts for January 2020

Sunday, January 5, 2020 hosted by:
 The Stratton
 Family

Sunday, January 12, 2020 hosted by:
 Presbyteria Maria

Sunday January 19, 2020 hosted by:
 Mary Rankin

Sunday, January 26, 2019: Open

Parish Council Sunday Duty

Sunday, January 5, 2020
 Joe Burmeister,
 Mary Kay Eckert
 Gus Pappas
 Mary Rankin

Sunday, January 12, 2020
 Mariellen
 Crosson
 Doug Kenyon
 Ted Pitsoulakis

Sunday, January 19, 2020
 Nick Coin,
 John Mekus,
 Dennis
 Spurgetis,
 Diane Spurgetis

Sunday, January 26, 2020
 Joe Burmeister,
 Mary Kay Eckert
 Gus Pappas
 Mary Rankin

Election News

2020 Parish Council

Congratulations to the
 2020 newly elected Parish
 Council:

Joe Burmeister

Nick Coin

Mariellen Crosson

Mary Kay Eckert

John Mekus

Gus Pappas

Ted Pitsoulakis

Mary Rankin

Angela Spurgetis

Dennis Spurgetis

Dianna Spurgetis

EVENING MEAL VOLUNTEERS

January 22, 2020:
 Susan Coin and Cathy
 Farrell.

February 26, 2020: Bill
 and Mary Rankin

March 25, 2020: Patty
 Kenyon and Presbyteria
 Maria.

April 22, 2020: Jim
 and Elizabeth Teros.

Anyone interested in
 participating in this
 worthwhile ministry
 should contact Dena
 Manta at 332-1684.

Memorials for January

January 5, 2020

Martha

Stratton:

(40 days)

Brad Crosson

(1 year)

January 12, 2020

Loukia

Kalimeras

(40 days)

Prosphora Baking Schedule

**Sunday,
 January 5, 2020:**

John Stratton

Sunday,

January 12, 2020:

Open

Sunday

January 19, 2020:

Open

Sunday,

January 26, 2020:

Diane Breckon

Assumption Corner — January 2020

Mississippi River Blessing - January 6th

After Liturgy on the 6th of January for the feast of Holy Theophany we will be coming together as all the Orthodox of the Quad Cities to bless the Mississippi River. Service will begin at Noon at Leach Park (100 12th St) in Bettendorf, IA near the i74 bridge. (See the attached flier)

Fr. Thomas Away - January 7-11th

Fr. Thomas will be away from January 7th to the 11th at a continuing education program in Boston. Services for St. John the Baptist on January 7th will be at St. George. In case of pastoral emergency Fr. Michael Constantinides will be available and should be contacted directly by phone: (708) 214-2371.

Philoptochos Vasilopita Sale - January 12th

Philoptochos will be having their annual Vasilopita sale to benefit St. Basil's academy in upstate New York on Sunday, January 12th during coffee hour.

Theophany Home Blessings - Start January 13th

Fr. Thomas is taking appointments to bless homes and businesses this January with the Holy Water of Theophany. Blessings will take place beginning January 13th, you can schedule directly with Fr. Thomas today!

New Ministry: Fundraising Committee Meeting - January 16th

As we decided at our November General Assembly, our parish is need of fresh, fun, and profitable ideas to help cover the budget deficit for this new year. Everyone is welcome to offer their inputs, and no ideas will be turned away from consideration. First meeting will be January 16th at 6pm bring our ideas!

January Youth Event: Snow Tubing - January 19th

At 1pm on January 19th our combined youth group will be enjoying an afternoon of fun and fellowship at Snowstar in Andalusia, IL (9500 126th St W). Subsidized cost will be \$7 for 4 hours of tubing. All families are welcome to join the fun!

QCOFC Presents: Orthodox Social - January 25th

The newly formed Quad Cities Orthodox Fellowship Committee is having a social event on January 25th. We will be coming together for pizza and fellowship at Bad Boyz Pizza in Moline (313 16th St) at 6pm. Save the date and join us!

Save the date!



January 19th

Join us January 19th for Snow tubing at Snowstar from 1pm-5pm. The cost is \$7 a person and is open to ages 3 and up! Please RSVP to Georgjean Pitsoulakis, or Presbyterera Angela by January 12th!!



Orthodox Churches of the Quad Cities join together for the
Great Blessing of the Waters

along the Mississippi River

Monday, January 6, 2020
Noon-12:45

Leach Park, Bettendorf, IA
at the foot of the I-74 Bridge

Theophany (in the West often called Epiphany) is one of Christianity's oldest holidays, pre-dating even Christmas. All are welcome to come and participate in this beautiful commemoration of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan.



The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (January 06)

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.

Gregory of Nyssa (January 09)

Saint Gregory, the younger brother of Basil the Great, illustrious in speech and a zealot for the Orthodox Faith, was born in 331. His brother Basil was encouraged by their elder sister Macrina to prefer the service of God to a secular career (see July 19); Saint Gregory was moved in a similar way by his godly mother Emily, who, when Gregory was still a young man, implored him to attend a service in honor of the holy Forty Martyrs at her retreat at Annesi on the River Iris. Saint Gregory came at his mother's bidding,

but being wearied with the journey, and feeling little zeal, he fell asleep during the service. The Forty Martyrs then appeared to him in a dream, threatening him and reproaching him for his slothfulness. After this he repented and became very diligent in the service of God.

Gregory became bishop in 372, and because of his Orthodoxy he was exiled in 374 by Valens, who was of one mind with the Arians. After the death of Valens in 378, Gregory was recalled to his throne by the Em-

peror Gratian. He attended the Local Council of Antioch, which sent him to visit the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which had been defiled and ravaged by Arianism. He attended the Second Ecumenical Council, which was assembled in Constantinople in 381. Having lived some sixty years and left behind many remarkable writings, he reposed about the year 395. The acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council call him "Father of Fathers."

Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, & John Chrysostom (January 30)

This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarrelling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish

itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Johnanites. Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor, they revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the three of them, which he did

with great skill and beauty. Saint John of Euchaita (celebrated Oct. 5) is also the composer of the Canon to the Guardian Angel, the Protector of a Man's Life. In his old age, he retired from his episcopal see and again took up the monastic life in a monastery in Constantinople. He reposed during the reign of the aforementioned Emperor Alexis Comnenus (1081-1118).