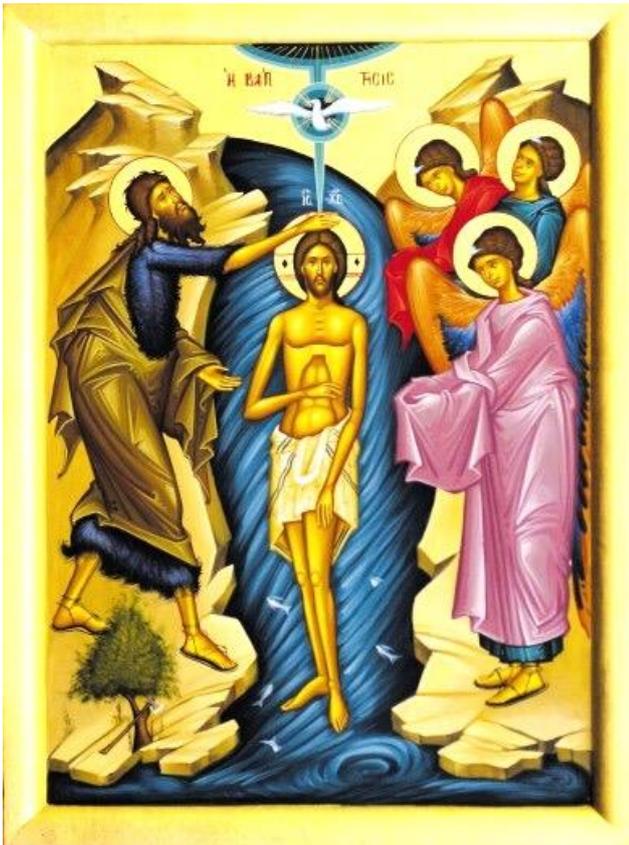




PARISH BULLETIN

HOLY ARCHANGHEL MICHAEL'S ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

No. **144**/13 January 2019



Sunday after Theophany

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Mode pl. 4.

From the heights didst Thou come down, O Compassionate One. And Thou didst submit to three-day burial that from the passions Thou might deliver us. O our Life and Resurrection, O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Seasonal Kontakion. Mode 4.

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sov'reign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise and chant with knowledge: Thou hast come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.

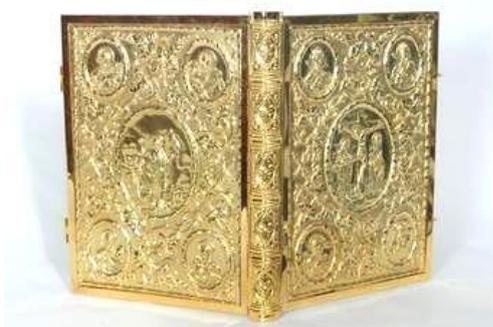
Prokeimenon. Mode 1. Psalm 32.22,1

*Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.
Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.*

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter 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 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 Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun 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."

Word of the week – Reflection Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos

We are at the beginning of the year and we are used to exchanging well wishes, which are always pleasant, hopeful and encouraging. Yet things in peoples' lives do not come as they wish. There are voices today who speak of a difficult year ahead and, of course, there are serious grounds to support this view that there will be difficulties. But a person has to face all the problems of life with an elevated sense of meaning. This should be done particularly by Christians.

The thoughts below refer to how the Church urges Christians to live every day of their lives and, therefore, this year. Our model should be Christ and our continuing aim will be how to live in Christ.

1. Christ, after His baptism in the Jordan River and the arrest of John the Forerunner, began His ministry preaching repentance: "Repent, for the reign of heaven is near" (Matt. 4:17). This refers to the Gospel reading on the first Sunday after the Baptism of Christ, basically the first Sunday of each new year. This is important because it determines in our lives the course for every new year.

2. However, the entire work of Christ we live again within the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, which is the sacramental repetition of the work of divine economy. We come to the church, participate in the Divine Eucharist (we do not only pray as

individuals), but we also live the sacramental event of the divine incarnation of Christ.

During the course of the Divine Eucharist we pray that God would send His mercy. We feel that we are sick in soul and body, and have been hurt by demonic influences and the excitement of the passions, and so we see our unworthiness, our spiritual leprosy, as well as our spiritual deadness and internal situation, and we pray that God would send His mercy. That is, we come to the Divine Eucharist hurt, frustrated, and many times we feel miracles take place, that there are internal changes. By this we are living within us the wonderworking identity of Christ, what Christ did and does. We are experiencing the sovereignty of Christ over all creation.

3. Yet, this entire life of Christ does not end with the celebration of the Divine Eucharist, but it continues also in our personal life. After the Divine Liturgy there begins another internal liturgy. When one communes of the Body and Blood of Christ, after necessary preparation, then they receive within them Christ as Prophet, King and High Priest and so the Divine Liturgy continues.

Christ teaches within us what we must do to walk correctly and rule over our passions, giving us His grace and energy, together with our synergy, to be released from the passions and freed from their dynasty. As a Priest He inspires us to pray unceasingly to God.

This means that after Divine Communion we live Christ within us as Prophet, King and High Priest, and so we increase our spiritual life. Christ continues to preach, work miracles and perform as a Priest for our salvation.

In this sense the Gospel describes the key events of the life of Christ, mystically illustrated in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, and it is experienced spiritually in the heart, the center of the inner man, where the love and mercy of God is revealed.

We have many problems in our lives, several anomalous situations, and we face numerous difficulties, but as Christians we should live in Christ, that is, we should enter into the life of Christ and Christ can enter into us.

With these conditions, the new year will be blessed and fruitful and this year will be profitable. We should not only see our external difficulties, but we are interested primarily and above all how we make within our existence a spiritual Divine Liturgy. We should be very interested especially in what the Apostle Paul says: "For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ" (Heb. 3:14).

Happy and blessed New Year!

Source: *Ekklesiastiki Paremvasi*, "Η ζωή του Χριστού μέσα μας", January 2012. Translated by John Sanidopoulos.



Liturgical Schedule for this week

Wednesday <i>January 16</i>	6:00 pm	Paraklesis
Friday <i>January 18</i>	5:30 pm	Akathist
Saturday <i>January 19</i>	9:00 am 5:00 pm	Divine Liturgy & Memorial Vespers
Sunday <i>January 20</i>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Matins Divine Liturgy



Announcements:

- **Bible study** – Thursday, January 17th, at 6:00 pm.
- **House blessings** – Please contact Fr. John by phone, email, or in person to schedule a time.
- **Please keep Bishop Athanasius Akunda of Kisumu and All West Kenya in your prayers.** There will be a two-day wake on Sunday, January 13, from 4pm to 9pm with a Trisagion Service at 7pm at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Worcester and Monday, January 14, from 4pm to 9pm with a Trisagion Service at 7pm at Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster. His body will return to Kenya on January 15 for a funeral and burial service.
- **Snacks** for the two schools in Southbridge – **collection resumes January 13th and January 20th.**
- **Remember:** Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is an Orthodox Charity and relies on your donations to continue its mission of providing the best care possible.
- **Coffee hour** is sponsored by Luke and Kim Yanka.



16 Romanian Avenue, Southbridge, Massachusetts, 01550, P.O. Box 823 (508) 765-5276

www.stmichaelorthodox.com