



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

January-February 2008

Homily on Theophany

by +Metropolitan Philaret

On the day of the feast of Theophany—the Baptism of the Lord—it is not out of place to remember another baptism: that baptism which was performed over each of us Orthodox Christians, that baptism at which each of us, by the mouth of our godparents, gave a promise to God that he would always renounce Satan and his works and would always unite himself, “join himself,” with Christ.

This, I repeat, is especially fitting for this present day. The solemn rite of the Great Sanctification of Water will be performed shortly. Its center, its main part, one could say, is the majestic prayer wherein the Lord is glorified and the grace of the Holy Spirit is called down upon the water being sanctified. This prayer begins with the beautiful words: “Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works, and no word sufficeth to hymn Thy wonders.” Whoever has been at a performance of the mystery of Baptism and was present attentively, knows that the prayer at the sanctification of the water in which a man will be baptized begins with these same words, and the first part of this prayer is completely the same, both at the Great Sanctification of Water and at the performance of the mystery of Baptism. And only later, in the last part, does the prayer at the performance of the mystery of Baptism change, as applicable to this mystery, when a new human soul will be baptized.

And so, it would not do us any harm to remember those vows given at Baptism on behalf of each of us. When a man is baptized as an adult, as even now sometimes happens, and happened especially often in antiquity, he himself makes the vows on his own behalf; but if he is baptized in infancy, his godfather or godmother—his “sponsors,” as the Church calls them—pronounce these vows for him. And so these vows, in which a Christian has promised God to renounce Satan and all his works and to join himself, to unite himself with Christ, these vows are not only forgotten by people, but many in general know nothing about them or about the fact that these vows were pronounced for them and that they ought to think a little about how they must fulfill these vows.

And what if at the last day of the history of the human race on earth — on the day of the Dread Judgment — it turns out that a man (or his sponsors for him) made vows,

and he does not even know what the vows were and what was promised? What will happen to such a man?

Think, brethren, about what it means to renounce Satan and all his works and to join oneself to Christ.

The times are such now that a God-opposing bustle, in which the enemy of the human race reigns, has taken possession of humanity and, as was said in olden times, forces almost all people “to dance to its tune.” All this bustle, of which our present life is composed, is a God-opposing bustle, in which there is no God, in which God’s enemy holds sway and rules. If we made a vow to renounce Satan and all his works, then, in fulfilling it, we ought to strive not to stifle our soul with this bustle, but to reject it and to remember how the Church says, “One thing is needful” — only one thing is necessary — and to remember that we must join ourselves with Christ, that is, not only fulfill His commandments, but also endeavor to unite ourselves with Him.

Think, then, about this, O Christian soul, on this day of the radiant and great feast; think and pray that the Lord send thee firm faith and the resolve to fulfill these vows, and not to be swallowed up by the bustle of the world and lose the tie with the Lord, with Whom thou didst promise to join thyself for ever.

Today’s feast is called the feast of the Lord’s Baptism or the feast of Theophany; but those who know well the church Typicon, know also that sometimes in this Typicon it is also called “the feast of the holy Theophanies” — in the plural number.

Why? Here is why: Of course, that which the singers sang about today — “God the Word appeared in the flesh to the human race” — is the center of the commemorations of the present feast day. The incarnate Son of God, of Whose birth, when He was born, only a very few knew, “appeared to the human race”; for His baptism is, as it were, His solemn inauguration of His ministry, which He then performed after that until His death and resurrection. But at the very same time, the fact that precisely on this feast “the worship of the Trinity was made manifest,” as is sung in its troparion, is characteristic of today’s feast.

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St. Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under the omophorion of Metropolitan LAURUS, First Hierarch, and Bishop GABRIEL of Manhattan. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly under the direction of the Rev. Michael Crowley. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15th of the month prior to publication to Margaret Lark at (603) 332-9613, e-mail: woolfolk3@gmail.com, or to Father Michael at tcrowley@maine.rr.com. Thank you.

Rector:

Rev. Michael Crowley
 16 Channel Road
 South Portland, ME 04106
 (978) 204-0428 (cell phone with voice mail)

Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment

Parish Council

- President: Rev. Michael Crowley (207) 767-1889
- Starosta: Sdn. Constantine Desrosiers (603) 775-0320
- Secretary: Natalie Pishenin (978) 658-5564
- Treasurer: Anthony Sarantakis (978) 263-2016
- Sisterhood: Matushka Nancy Crowley (207) 767-1889
- Cemetery: to be determined by search committee.
- Interim, Rev. Michael Crowley
- Peter Danas (978) 459-9541
- John Danas (978) 454-0315
- Laryssa Doohovskoy (978) 841-5960
- Roberto Gonzalez (978) 692-1229
- Michael Johnson (603) 893-4593
- John Kekis (978) 456-9865
- Choir Director: Michael Lang (603) 465-9754

Trapeza Schedule

*** =Strict Fast (no meats, fish or dairy)**

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday please call and switch with someone. If you have any questions contact Karen Schidlovsky at (603) 868-6410. Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare on your day. Some parishioners prefer to make a big lunch but this isn't necessary. As long as there is enough food for about 50 people, anything is appreciated. Donuts, fruit and pastries are as acceptable as soup and sandwiches. Thank you in advance for your contribution.

January

- 6 Pot Luck
- 13 Matushka Nancy, Megan Crowley, Katya Fredette
- 20 Karen Schidlovsky, Nancy Harris
- 27 Masha Harris, Kot Engalichev

February

- 3 Natalie Botchkov, Tania Sciaudone
- 10 Helena Doohovskoy, Marianne Dimatteo, Laryssa Doohovskoy
- 17 Nick Kronauer, Vera Sarantakis
- 24 Anna Kekis, Amy McLellan

Sisterhood News: We are purchasing a couple of small tables for the preschool Sunday school students. We had some small chairs donated already for our "younger" students. Our "Giving Tree" is in full swing, and our wrapping paper sale almost hit a profit of \$450 - thank you, Tanya Sciaudone, for heading up that effort, with Nancy Harris.

Thank You... to John Kekis and Tony Sarantakis for putting up the new fan in the choir loft and the new changing table in the rest room!

Please remember in your prayers...Nicholas, Lilly, Nina, Josephine, David, Vassilisa, Lilly Anne, Margaret, Matushka Irina Lukianov.

Please remember to inform the Myrrhbearers Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Financial Update: As of December 31, 2007, the balance on the church mortgage stands at \$47,335. If you have any questions, please see Subdeacon Constantine Desrosiers.

Congratulations:

... to Katya and Matt Fredette on the birth of their son, Joshua Thomas, born on November 7. Many years to all!

Church School Update:

We have gotten off to a very good start this year and attendance has been wonderful.

The preschool has undertaken an outreach project this year. A few weeks ago, the kids created pictures of the story of Noah's Ark. Their artwork was used to make blank greeting cards. The class is selling boxes of the cards to raise money to purchase livestock for an impoverished family through Heifer International.

The elementary group has continued with Alexander Doohovskoy and John Danas to discuss the weekly Gospel lesson.

The middle school group has been meeting with Alexei Doohovskoy to discuss the Gospel and Epistle readings as well as taking a close look at the Liturgy – examining what happens during the service. Thank you to Reader John Sarantakis and Daniel McLellan who served as substitute teachers during Alexei's absence in October.

The high school group has been meeting weekly and enjoying the lectures/discussions of our esteemed teachers. If you have any ideas or suggestions for the high school

classes, please see Matushka, who has done a wonderful job of putting together the schedule for this group. As always, the classes are not limited to our youth, but open to everyone who would like to attend.

Yolka: The Yolka has been scheduled for January 20. Mireille Lang is once again directing the children's play. Yolka will also include musical performances -- which were greatly received last year.

New Church Website: <http://www.stxenia.org/>

Please take a look at it and visit it often to see our updated events and news. Of special interest would be Sunday School news, which will help to keep both parents and students current with their lessons.

Children's Play Loft: If your child has played (or eaten) in the loft area, please remember to pick up toys from the floor and discard food and plates. This will keep the area clean and safe for everyone's use and will help our hall cleaner to clean that area more thoroughly. Thanks!

Winter Snow: The presence of snow and ice on the parking lot can make parking and access to the church difficult. With the onset of snowy weather, please remember to park your cars without blocking others or the cemetery road. Please also remember to keep the cemetery road clear, not only on Sundays, but also when visiting. Thank you.

If we need to cancel Services because of snow on any Sunday or Feast, we will post a notice on WBZ as well as sending out an email and putting a notice on our web site.

Theophany House Blessings: Fr. Michael will begin blessing homes immediately after the feast. Please let Father know what is the best time for you to have him come to your home. As in the past, it works well when families in the same general area coordinate for the same day. We have much more time before the beginning of Great Lent this year since Pascha is much later than last year.

Remember that having Father come to your home to bless is not an imposition on him. He really enjoys this time of year and the opportunity to visit the homes of parishioners.

Membership Dues: Membership dues, on an honor basis, to continue as a percentage of income: 1% minimum with a goal toward 10%.

St. John of Kronstadt Party, 2007



Continued from front page

All three Persons of the Holy Trinity appeared for the first time in their separateness, which is also why this feast, I repeat, is called “the feast of the holy Theophanies.” Men heard the voice of God the Father: “This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased” (on Whom My favor rests); the Son of God accepted baptism from John (moreover, we know from the Gospel that John the Baptist was, as it were, at a loss when the Savior of the world came to him, and he attempted to restrain Him); and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended from the Father on the Son. In this way, “the worship of the Trinity was made manifest” for the first time, which is why the Church sings thus in the troparion, and why she also calls this feast “the feast of the holy Theophanies.” Christ the Savior appeared in order to begin His saving ministry.

Here, not so long ago, when there was another great feast — the Nativity of Christ — we said that the Lord, by His nativity in a poor cave, when He deigned to be laid in a cattle manger, thereby emphatically rejected, as it were, all earthly glory, all earthly splendor and magnificence, for He did not deign to appear in royal chambers or rich palaces, but precisely in those poor and modest conditions. And thereby He immediately showed that He had brought to the earth a new principle, the principle of humility.

Look, then, how He Himself, so to say, is true to Himself, how even now on today’s great feast He institutes the very same principle of humility manifestly and undoubtedly for us. For whither did He come? To the Jordan. Why? To be baptized by John. But sinners came to John; they confessed their sins to him and were baptized. But He was without sin, “could not be touched by sin,” was absolutely free of it and pure; yet nonetheless, He humbly stands in line with other sinners, as if He were in need of this cleansing washing with water. But we know that the water did not cleanse Him, the most holy and sinless One; but it was He who sanctified the water by deigning to be washed by it, as was sung today during the sanctification of the water: “Today the nature of the waters is sanctified.” And so, Jesus Christ brought the principle of humility to the earth and was true to it throughout the course of His whole life. But that is not all. He has also left us this testament: Come “and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

Remember one more radiant, joyful, spring feast — the feast of the Annunciation.

Here the most blessed Virgin Mary hears the good tidings from the Archangel, how the incarnation of God will be accomplished through her. What does her most holy, most pure and blameless soul say when she came to her relative, Elizabeth, in order to share her joy with her? She only says: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior, for He hath regarded the low estate [humility] of his handmaiden.” This humility was also the beauty of her spirit. From the very account of

the Annunciation, we know that the Archangel appeared to her at that moment when she, having read the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the incarnation of God from a virgin, was not even thinking to apply this to herself, but only thought in the depth of her humility: “How joyful I would be if I were the least handmaid of that blessed virgin.” ...And here stands the Archangel Gabriel before her with his good tidings. The Lord, meek and humble Himself, regarded her humility.

He also enjoined humility on us, contrary to the principles of pride and self-love by which humanity today breathes.

Look, why are there so many disagreements among us, both within the enclosure of the Church and in parishes? Because everywhere men made red-hot by self-love are clashing; but if that humility to which the Lord calls us would be found in us, none of this would happen.

Let us, then, brethren, learn from our Savior, who as the least sinner came to John in order to be baptized by him; let us learn from Him this God-beloved and fragrant virtue, without which, as the holy fathers have said, no other virtue whatsoever can be perfect.

Amen.

Thoughts on Partaking of Communion

Veneration of Holy Icons Prior to Holy Communion

For those people who venerate the Holy Icons prior to the appearance of the Chalice for Holy Communion, please allow those brethren who will be partaking of Holy Communion the opportunity to venerate the Holy Icons first. This will allow them to quietly and prayerfully line up and prepare themselves to receive the Holy Eucharist.

Approaching the Chalice at Communion

As we approach Holy Communion, we are instructed to cross our arms over our chest in a penitential fashion, associated with preparation for death (and resurrection).

The correct position for the arms of children is LEFT OVER RIGHT. That is, putting their right hand closest to their bodies and the left arm and hand on top of the right. This teaches them to avoid crossing themselves as they approach and depart from the chalice, thereby protecting the Holy Eucharist from potential disturbance. Adults, however, would most correctly place their hands RIGHT OVER LEFT but be admonished not to cross themselves on approach or departure (without turning your back to the chalice) from the solea.

After Communion

Since we have consumed the Holy Body and Blood of Christ we do not kiss others or bow from the waist for some period of time after partaking of Communion, and the post-Communion blessed bread and wine, lest a particle of the Holy Eucharist be lost from our mouths.



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
 170 N. Lowell St. (Rt. 113)/PO Box 147 - Methuen, MA 01844
 (phone) Fr. Michael Crowley (978) 204-0428 -- Church (978) 688-1211



JANUARY 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 30 (Dec 17) Forefathers Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	Dec 31 (Dec 18) HM Sebastian & comp. Fast	1 (Dec 19) M Boniface Fast: wine & oil	2 (Dec 20) HM Ignatius of Antioch St. John of Kronstadt Fast: wine & oil	3 (Dec 21) VM Juliana Fast: wine & oil	4 (Dec 22) GM Anastasia Fast	5 (Dec 23) 4:00 Small Vespers 6:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
6 (Dec 24) Holy Fathers Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy followed by Vespers of the Nativity 6:30 Vigil of the Nativity of Christ the Lord Fast: wine & oil	7 (Dec 25) NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	8 (Dec 26) Synaxis of the Theotokos Fast free	9 (Dec 27) Protomartyr Stephen Fast free	10 (Dec 28) 20,000 MM of Nicomedia Fast free	11 (Dec 29) Holy Innocents Fast free	12 (Dec 30) VM Anysia 6:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
13 (Dec 31) Pentecost 33 Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast free	14 (Jan 1) Circumcision of the Lord Fast free	15 (Jan 2) St. Seraphim of Sarov St. Juliana of Lazarevo Fast free	16 (Jan 3) Pr. Malachi Fast free	17 (Jan 4) Synaxis of the 70 Apostles Fast free	18 (Jan 5) 6:30 Vigil of Theophany Fast: wine & oil	19 (Jan 6) THEOPHANY OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Waters 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 All-Night Vigil
20 (Jan 7) Synaxis of the Baptist Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 Parish Yolka	21 (Jan 8) St. George the Khozebite Fast	22 (Jan 9) M Polyeuctus Fast	23 (Jan 10) St. Gregory of Nyssa Fast	24 (Jan 11) St. Theodosius Fast	25 (Jan 12) M Tatiana Fast	26 (Jan 13) MM Hermylus & Stratonicus 6:30 All-Night Vigil
27 (Jan 14) Pentecost 35 Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	28 (Jan 15) St. Paul of Thebes Fast	29 (Jan 16) Chains of St. Peter Fast	30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great Fast: fish, wine, & oil	31 (Jan 18) SS Athanasius & Cyril Fast	Feb 1 (Jan 19) St. Macrina St. Mark of Ephesus Fast	Feb 2 (Jan 20) St. Euthymius 4:00 Small Vespers 6:30 All-Night Vigil



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FEBRUARY 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jan 27 (Jan 14) Pentecost 35 Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Jan 28 (Jan 15) St. Paul of Thebes	Jan 29 (Jan 16) Chains of St. Peter	Jan 30 (Jan 17) St. Anthony the Great Fast: fish, wine, & oil	Jan 31 (Jan 18) SS Athanasius & Cyril	1 (Jan 19) St. Macrina St. Mark of Ephesus Fast	2 (Jan 20) St. Euthymius 4:00 Small Vespers 6:30 All-Night Vigil
3 (Jan 21) Pentecost 36 Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	4 (Jan 22) Ap. Timothy	5 (Jan 23) HM Clement 6:30 Molieben & Akathist to St. Xenia	6 (Jan 24) St. Xenia of Rome St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Fast	7 (Jan 25) St. Gregory the Theologian	8 (Jan 26) St. Xenophan Fast	9 (Jan 27) St. John Chrysostom 6:30 All-Night Vigil
10 (Jan 28) Pentecost 37 Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	11 (Jan 29) St. Ignatius	12 (Jan 30) Three Holy Hierarchs	13 (Jan 31) SS Cyrus & John Fast	14 (Feb 1) M Tryphon St. Brigid of Ireland 6:30 Vigil of the Meeting	15 (Feb 2) MEETING OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	16 (Feb 3) SS Symeon & Anna 4:00 Bible Study 6:30 All-Night Vigil
17 (Feb 4) Publican and Pharisee Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	18 (Feb 5) M Agatha Fast free	19 (Feb 6) St. Bucolus Fast free	20 (Feb 7) St. Parthenius Fast free	21 (Feb 8) GM Theodore Fast free	22 (Feb 9) St. Innocent of Irkutsk Fast free	23 (Feb 10) HM Charalampus 6:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
24 (Feb 11) Prodigal Son Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	25 (Feb 12) St. Meletius	26 (Feb 13) St. Martinian	27 (Feb 14) St. Auxentius Fast	28 (Feb 15) Ap. Onesimus	29 (Feb 16) MM Pamphilius & comp Fast	Mar 1 (Feb 17) 4:00 Small Vespers 6:30 All-Night Vigil

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St. Xenia Orthodox Church
170 North Lowell Street
P.O. Box 147
Methuen, MA 01844

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DIRECTIONS TO ST. XENIA CHURCH:

From I-93 North or South take Exit 46, Routes 110 and 113 Dracut and Lawrence. If you were travelling North on I-93, take the exit and go around the rotary and under the highway. Follow the signs and bear right off the rotary for Route 110/113 Dracut. **If you were travelling South on I-93,** bear right at the bottom of the exit ramp towards Route 110/113 Dracut.

Where Routes 110 and 113 split, bear right onto Route 113 towards Dracut. You will pass several cemeteries on your left, including the Polish National Catholic Cemetery. The very next gate on the left is the entrance to St. Xenia's. Please note that the church is on the left just before the Hickory Hill Golf course, so if you pass the golf course, you will have missed the church. Parking is available on church grounds.