



From Father Anthony

January is Epiphany

Christ began His public ministry with His baptism in the Jordan River. By studying the icon of the Baptism we discover much of our Theology and practices surrounding the sacrament of Baptism. The icon tells us that Christ came into the world perfect God and perfect man. This was revealed to us in His baptism in the Jordan where St. John the Baptist baptized him. Up until the 4th century Christ's birth and His baptism were celebrated on the same day, January 6th. According to Michel Quenot, "Although chronologically a thirty year period between Christ's birth and His baptism, the two feasts make up a whole, a solemn pair whose popularity in the third century is conveyed to us by the Fathers." A correction in the date of the winter solstice, from January 6 to December 25, was presumably responsible for the separation of the two feasts as early as the fifth century.

The icon of the Theophany, which was composed already in the fourth century, was further enriched from the twelfth century onward. In this icon we see Christ either completely naked or with a small loincloth around his waste standing in the Jordan River. Sometimes the water is up to His shoulders and covers His body, sometimes it appears as though he is standing on the water. St. John the Baptist has his right hand raised over Christ's head blessing him. Sometimes St. John's gaze is turned heavenward as if hearing the words of the Father, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mat 3.17). The Father's presence is represented by a hand reaching out of the heavens blessing and below that is represented the Holy Spirit as a dove with a ray coming down to Christ's head. This is the first manifestation in the New Testament that God is three persons. In the Old Testament the saying was "Our God is one." This new revelation of God as three persons was a profound shift in understanding the nature of God. The ramifications of this revelation was the cause for much dialogue and debate over the next several hundred years and resulted in the Nicene Creed that we recite at every Divine Liturgy, and begins, "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth..." and continues, "...and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father before all ages...and in the Holy Spirit the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father." This creedal statement of our faith is depicted in this icon and the feast day is appropriately called Theophany or Epiphany, "God made manifest!" Opposite St. John on the banks are three angels in an attitude of adoration waiting to receive Christ with cloths to dry Him off. Not a part of the Gospel narratives of the event of baptism, they are ministering angels that are mentioned later on after his temptation in the wilderness. Behind St. John is a tree with an axe in it which is a reminder to every baptized Christian, "Even now the axe is laid to the root of the tree; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire...I baptize you with water...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mt 3:10-11).

Sometimes Christ is depicted standing on two slabs of stone in the form of a cross with snakes writhing up underneath it, representing Satan and his evil angels. This detail comes from Psalm 74 verse 13, which says, “Thou didst crush the heads of the dragons in the water.” This is a detail that is not common to every Icon of the Baptism.

Iconography and hymnography in the Church are closely linked and complimentary. In the Apolytikion of Holy Theophany we read in musical verse what is depicted in the icon titled “Vaptiseis” the “Baptism”:

When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father gave added witness, naming Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the certainty of the word. Christ who revealed yourself as God, bringing light to all the world, glory to Thee.

Christ’s baptism signified the beginning of His public ministry. Baptism is our introduction into the Kingdom of God and also our introduction into ministry. As we grow and mature in our spiritual lives we are given more and more opportunities for ministry. In many places Christ tells us His attitude toward ministry, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work” (John 4.34). In the same way, when we learn obedience, a key ingredient in the spiritual life, His will becomes our food as well (i.e., our source of sustenance and nourishment for true life). Our lives are made meaningful not by the things that we collect, or the worldly accomplishments that we achieve, but by fulfilling God’s will on earth. “Not my will but Thy will be done.” May this Epiphany be a personal Epiphany for each of us as we seek to obey God’s will more perfectly in our lives.

Have a blessed and holy New Year.

Fr. Anthony



Sunday Epistle & Gospel Readings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
January 2	2 nd Timothy 4:5-8	Mark 1:1-8
January 9	Ephesians 4:7-13	Matthew 4:12-17
January 16	Colossians 3:4-11	Luke 17:12-19
January 23	1 st Timothy 1:15-17	Luke 18:35-43
January 30	Hebrews 13:7-16	Matthew 5:14-19

Parish Family News

Thank You

“We would like to thank you for your prayers during a difficult time for our family. Please continue to pray for the restoration of health to Theodora (Lola) Andros. You are all very kind and we appreciate the phone calls and well wishes. We are truly blessed to be a part of this very special parish.”

- Perry and Tammy Andros

Kalo Paradiso!

To Richard Volk, Elton Manzione, and Lynn Manzione who were Chrismated on Dec. 12th, and to the Simmons Family (David, Diane, Gabriel, and Joshua) who received the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation on Dec. 19th. These events are wonderful blessings for us all!

Parish Happenings

Mark your Calendar!

On Jan. 22nd, Fr. Nicholas Triantafilou will lead a retreat entitled, “The Church and the Social Gospel in the 21st Century.” The 10:00 a.m. - noon session is open to the entire parish and the wider Athens community; after the lunch break, the 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. session is for the Parish Council.

Name Day Celebration

The Pan-Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood will be attending Vespers on Friday, Feb. 18th. His Eminence will be joining us for the Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Feb. 19th. Please see Karen Kimbaris if you are interested in helping provide refreshments for Friday night or the buffet luncheon on Saturday.

Parish Council News

Congratulations to the newly elected Parish Council Members: Ann Volk and Dean Kimbaris. The new Parish Council will be sworn and the executive board will be elected after the Divine Liturgy on Jan. 9th.

We would also like to thank outgoing members Bill Herrington and Pete Gess for their hard work and ministry to our parish.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be on January 19th at 7:00 p.m. at the Church.

Covered Dish Luncheon

Our monthly covered dish luncheon will be on Sunday, January 2nd, following the Divine Liturgy. Please join us and enjoy great food and fellowship.

Marswood Hall

Now that we are in our beautiful new facility, it is our responsibility to promote the rental of Marswood Hall. Feel free to take some of the Marswood Hall flyers and share them with

others if you have the chance. The success of this wonderful facility in part rests in our hands!

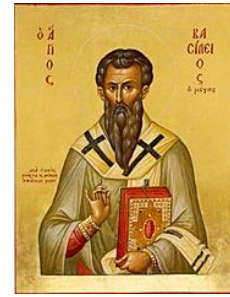
It is also our responsibility to make sure the entire facility is cleaned on a weekly basis. A schedule is now circulating so that each family may sign up for one week; a “how-to” cleaning manual is also available. When it is your family’s turn to clean, you may either do it yourself or donate \$50 for a professional cleaning service. For more information, see Richard Volk.

Koumbaros Fundraising Letter

If you have not yet sent out your Koumbaros letters to family and friends inviting them to support our Church Building project, please do so as soon as possible. This is a wonderful opportunity to share our building project with others, so that they in turn can help support the spread of Orthodoxy. We have already received pledges and contributions totaling \$4,025.

Hospice Volunteers Needed

Odyssey Healthcare is a growing hospice provider in Athens and is currently looking for volunteers to take part in their work. They are contacting local churches looking for volunteers to visit patients, provide relief to caregivers during time of stress, or take part in other special projects. If you would be interested in taking part in this special project, you may contact the volunteer coordinator Gina Miller at (706) 425-0700.



St. Philothea Directory

Father Anthony Salzman, Presbyter
Phone: 770-725-5035
E-mail: frantonios2@mindspring.com

Parish Council

President: Bill Herrington
Vice President: Peter Gess
Treasurer: Bill Mahoney
Secretary: Stacey Cramer
Members:
Frieda Dekazos, Alex Johns, Dean Kimbaris,
Karen Kimbaris, Kurt Knisely, Angie Shih

Sunday School

Angie Shih, Dana Johns

Music Director

Mari Iakovou

Philoptochos Board

President: Karen Kimbaris
Vice President: Mari Iakovou
Secretary: Nina Lamson
Treasurer: Tara Mahoney

Marketing and Maintenance Chair

Rick Volk

Hospitality Chair

Georgia Parthemos

Communications Chair

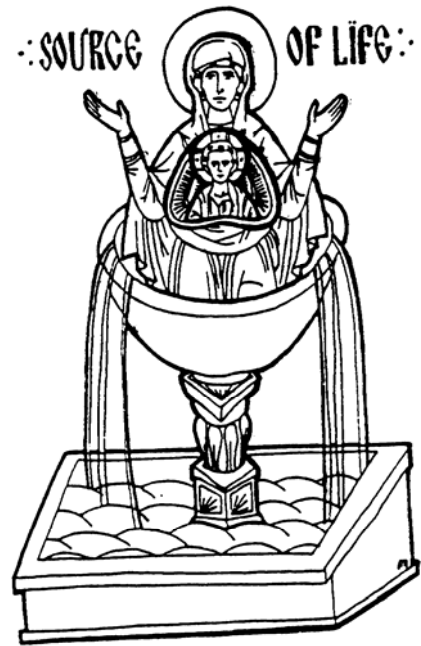
Tammy Andros

Liaisons to the Caterer

Dean and Karen Kimbaris

The Blessing of the Waters

When Christ descended into the Jordan He sanctified the waters, which He was then Baptized in. In the same way we celebrate “The Blessing of the Waters” each year on January 6th, the Feast of Epiphany, for the sanctification of our souls and bodies. We then take Holy Water to our homes to consume each morning with antidoron (blessed bread) before we eat anything else for the day. Thus we dedicate every day of our lives to the Lord. Following the blessing of the waters (January 6th), it is customary to have our home blessed in the New Year. Below is a sign up schedule for House blessings in January. Please pick a date and time, and provide your address, phone number and directions to your house (if I have never been there before).



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Date (circle one): Sat., Jan. 8 Thurs., Jan. 13

Blessings will be from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Preferred Time (circle one): morning afternoon

Directions:

CONFIRMATION from Fr. Anthony

Date _____

Time _____

*Fill out the above form and either bring it to church or email it to Father Anthony at:
frantonios2@mindspring.com*

On Stewardship

“At the heart of our Christian Stewardship is gratitude in response to God’s blessing, which He grants to us freely, lovingly, and abundantly. When Saint Paul was referring to the generosity of the Macedonians he wrote: ‘They gave beyond their means, of their own free will...but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God’ (2 Corinthians 8:3,5). When people come to Christ and experience His sacrifice, love and ongoing care for them as persons, they offer themselves in the service of the Lord as an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving.”

-The Reverend Alexander G. Leondis, Director
Department of Stewardship and Pastoral Resources

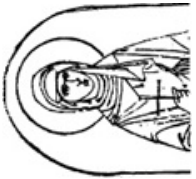
General Fund Financial Report as of 11/30/2004

	November	YTD
Expenses		
Operating (less Door Opening)	\$ 4,774	\$63,290
Door Opening	-0-	11,307
<i>Transfer to Building Fund</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<u><i>13,000</i></u>
		\$ 87,597
Income		
Pledges*, Donations, and Candles	\$5,153	\$59,740
Reimbursement from Bldg. Fund	-0-	3,350
Commemorative Ad Sales	-0-	<u>12,170</u>
		\$ 75,260
Checking Account Balance		\$16,118

*2004 Pledges: \$56,200 collected vs. \$56,600 pledged

2005 Pledges: 42 for \$59,644.00

Bill Mahoney, Treasurer
15 December 2004



St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta

January 2005						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School	3	4	5:00p Epiphany, Orthros, Divine Liturgy, Blessing of the Waters	6	7	8
9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School 12:00p Parish Council, Swearing in and Executive Committee Elections	10	11	6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catachumen Class.	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School	St. Anthony the Great 5:00p St. Athanasios the Great, Orthros and Divine Liturgy	St. Athanasios the Great	6:00p Greek School 6:00 p.m. Parish Council 7:00 p.m.	6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catachumen Class.	St. Maximos the Confessor	Retreat with Fr. Nicholas Triantafyllou, The Church and the Social Gospel in the 21st Century
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School			6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catachumen Class.			6:00p Greek Taverna
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Three Heirarchs 9:00a Orthros, Divine Liturgy and Sunday School 12:00p Souper Bowl of Caring			6:00p Greek School, Mens Group, Catachumen Class.			

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