

# The Nativity, O Christ our God!



The Choir and Servers pose for pictures after the Nativity Liturgy. Christ is born!

## Why was the Sinless One Baptized?

As we now draw near to the Great Feast of Theophany, which commemorates Christ’s baptism in the Jordan River, it behooves us as Christians to reflect on the meaning of the Lord’s baptism, and to ask ourselves why the Lord chose to be baptized in the first place. After all, the answer is not obvious. Certainly, it was not obvious to St. John the Baptist at the time of Christ’s baptism.

In John’s own terms, the baptism he proclaimed was a washing “of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mk 1:4). In being baptized by John, Jewish believers were admitting that they were personally sinful and needed God’s forgiveness. Accepting baptism would have been an acknowledgment that one was spiritually unclean and needed to be cleansed. Thus,

the external washing was a symbol of an internal, spiritual cleansing. This is why John is shocked when Jesus comes to him and asks for baptism. As a prophet, John on some level recognizes that Jesus is the incarnate and all-holy Word of God, and so he tries to prevent Jesus from being baptized, saying, “I have need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” (Mt 3:14). For John, it doesn’t make sense that Jesus should desire to be baptized, since he believes, like the apostles, that Christ “knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21).

But if Christ is not baptized in order to be purified on a personal level, then why is He baptized? St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the early years of the second

(continued, see FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK, next page)

## Schedules

TELLERS		SERVERS
January 10	G. Cattell and D. McNulty	
January 17	M. Fiori and M. Fedkin	
January 24	K Cattell and D. McNulty	
January 31	G. Cattell and M. Fiori	
February 7	K. Cattell and M. Fedkin	
February 14	G. Cattell and D. McNulty	All Servers welcome each Sunday. <i>Altar Server</i> <i>Co-Captains:</i> <i>J. Cadman and S. Oleynik</i>

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■ FROM THE RECTOR’S DESK

# Why was the Sinless One Baptized?

century, provides a deeply helpful explanation when he says that, “He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water” (*Ig. Eph.* 18). Christ’s baptism does not make Him righteous; He is righteous and pure before he ever comes to the Jordan. From all eternity He is “the Holy One of God” (Jn 6:69). Instead, when Christ enters the waters of baptism, He makes them holy. A created thing cannot make the Son of God holy, but whatever Christ enters, He purifies and sanctifies.

And this is true of Mary’s womb, of the waters of the Jordan, and even of death itself. When Christ enters into death, He fills it with all the power and the purity of His “indestructible life” (Heb 7:16). By entering into death, Christ completes and finalizes His union with the human being and creates a pathway for man to find eternal life and a lasting salvation, and this pathway is an imitation of Christ’s earthly sojourn. So, the answer to our question, then, is that Christ is baptized so that we might have a starting point in the journey to eternal life. Christian baptism is about much more than repenting or receiving forgiveness of our sins in this life; it is a mystical bond and union forged between the person being baptized and Jesus Christ himself. Christian baptism is baptism “into Christ” (Gal 3:27) by which we become “members” of “the body of Christ” (1 Cor 12:27). It is a personal incorporation into Christ’s journey. When we are baptized, we are united to Christ’s suffering, death, resurrection, and glorification. And we are promised that if we follow Christ’s path to the end, we will share His destiny and the glory of His kingdom.

Thus, Christ is not baptized for His own sake, but as we say in the dismissal of Theophany, He deigned to

**THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD**

R. HOURS: Tues., Jan. 5, 8am

VESPERS: Tues., Jan. 5, 6pm  
*(A.T. Pelikan, Litya)*  
*(P. Doty, Icon)*

LITURGY: Wed., Jan. 6, 9am  
*(A. Stickles, Prosphora)*



**Additional Liturgy:**

DATE/TIME	FOR	ICON
Fri., Jan. 1, 10am	St. Basil	E. George

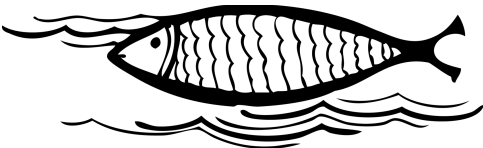
**THE MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE**

VESPERS: Tues., Feb. 1, 6pm  
*(A.T. Pelikan, Litya)*  
*(K. Fedkin, Icon)*

LITURGY: Wed., Feb. 2, 9am  
*(I. Andrzhievskaya, Prosphora)*

be baptized wholly “for us and for our salvation.” So let us, brothers and sisters, put away all works that are foreign to Christ in this season and walk with him in “newness of life,” not using our minds and bodies as “instruments of unrighteousness unto sin” but rather as “instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:4, 13). Having been baptized into Christ, let us set our mind on the things above, recognizing that Christ’s calling is our calling, and –through baptism – Christ’s journey is our journey. Glory to Jesus Christ!

— Fr. Ignatius



■ NEWS & NOTES

## Goodbye, Protodeacon Alex!

On January 1, Pdn. Alex will be stepping down as Director of Ministries at Holy Trinity and awaiting reassignment by the archdiocese. We wish him well in all of his future endeavors, and look forward to hosting a celebration of his years of service at HTOC in the near future as the pandemic passes. May God grant him many more years of fruitful ministry!

## Bookstore Opening to the Public

Last month, the parish bookstore moved to Trinity House, and now, starting January 12, it will be open each week on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00AM-1:00PM, Wednesday from 3:00PM-6:00PM. The store carries books, icons, cards for all occasions, music CD’s, censers, incense and other items for the home prayer corner, prayer ropes, car decals, crosses, candles, and more. For those who are tech-savvy, the store is also available online and has the ability to place special orders for those hard-to-find things. Please see Anna Stickles for further details or with any questions.

## Theophany Home Blessings Moved

Due to continuing health concerns and restrictions, the home blessings normally done at Theophany will be moved to Pentecost this year. A sign-up will be posted at that time. Please contact Father with questions or concerns.

## The Beauty of Thy House

A special thanks to our anonymous donors for three new, beautiful candle stands. These stands were made to be filled with sand for holding candles, and replace the candlestands that we had been using, which were in turn donated to the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. They are in front of the Royal doors by Christ, the Theotokos, and the crucifix. Thank you!

*Many thanks to the anonymous donors who purchased 12 new altar server robes! Here, Father blesses them on Christmas Eve.*

## Under New Management

With the departure of our beloved Protodeacon Alex from the secretarial aspect of parish life, “This Week at Holy Trinity,” the *Trisagion*, as well as most email communications will be handled by Matushka Seraphima. Please, continue to call or email the parish office as usual with your requests, comments, or concerns, or speak to Father or Matushka before or after a service. And thank you for your continuing graciousness with the inevitable hiccups during this time!

## On the Nativity

*Continued from previous page*

accused as a “deceiver,” above he was glorified as the Holy One. What a mystery! Beholding his miracles, I extol his divinity; seeing the sufferings, I cannot deny his humanity. As man, Emmanuel opened the gates of human nature; as God, he left the bars of virginity unbroken. As he entered through the ear, so too did he come out from the womb; as he was conceived, so was he born. His entering in was altogether without passion, and his coming out was altogether beyond understanding – as the prophet Ezekiel said: “The Lord brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me, ‘Son of man, this gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened. No one shall pass through it, but the Lord, the God of Israel, he alone shall enter and come out, and the gate shall be shut.’” There you have a clear testimony to the Holy and ‘God-bearing’ Mary. Let all contradiction now cease, and let us be enlightened by the teaching of the Scriptures, so that we may attain to the kingdom of heaven in Christ Jesus our Lord. To him be glory for ever and ever.



# On the Nativity of Christ from the Virgin

*This poetic homily to the Theotokos was preached in the 5<sup>th</sup> century by the Bishop of Cyzicus, Proclus, specifically to establish the reality of the incarnation contra Nestorius, who was then Patriarch of Constantinople. It quickly became a favorite and oft-quoted homily, and parts of it are still sung liturgically as part of the weekly cycle (octoechos).*

Who ever saw, who ever heard, of God dwelling without restriction in a woman’s womb? Heaven itself cannot contain him, and yet a womb did not constrict him. He was born from a woman, God but not solely God, and man but not merely man, and by his birth what was once the door of sin was made the gate of salvation. Through ears that disobeyed, the serpent poured in his poison; through ears that obeyed, the Word entered in order to build a living temple. From the place where Cain, the first disciple of sin, emerged, from there also did Christ, the redeemer of the race, sprout unsown into life. The loving God was not ashamed of the birth pangs of a woman, for the business at hand was life. He was not defiled by dwelling in places which he himself had created without dishonor. If the mother had not remained a virgin, then the child born would have been a mere man, and the birth no miracle. But if she remained a virgin even after birth, then indeed he was wondrously born who also entered unhindered “when the doors were sealed,” whose union of natures was proclaimed by Thomas who said, “My Lord and my God!”

So do not be ashamed of the birth pangs, O man! For they were the beginning of our salvation. Had he not been born of a woman, he would not have died. Had he not died, he would not “through death have destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil.” A master builder is not dishonored if he dwells in buildings of his own design. Clay does not defile the potter who repairs what he himself had fashioned. Neither was the pure one defiled by coming forth from a virgin’s womb.

From what he formed without pollution he came forth without defilement. O womb, in which was drawn up the bond that gave us all liberty! O belly, in which was forged the sword that defeated death! O field, in which Christ, nature’s farmer, himself sprouted forth unsown as an ear of corn! O temple, in which God became a priest, not by changing his nature, but by his mercy clothing himself with him who was “according to the Order of Melchizadek!” “The Word became flesh.” Even if the Jews disbelieve the Lord who said so. God has put on the form of a human being, even if the Greeks ridicule the wonder. For this reason, the mystery is a “scandal to the Jews” and “folly to the Greeks” because the miracle transcends reason. Had the word not dwelt in a womb, the flesh would never have sat on the throne. Were it a disgrace for God to have entered a womb, it would also be a disgrace for angels to serve a man.

...He came to save, but he also had to suffer. How were both possible? Mere man had no power to save. One who was solely God could not suffer. What happened then? He who was God became man. By what he was, he saved; and by what he became, he suffered. When therefore the church saw the synagogue crowning him with thorns, she bewailed the outrage in these words: “daughters of Jerusalem, go forth and behold the crown with which his mother crowned him.” For he both wore the crown of thorns and undid the sentence of the thorns. For the same one was in the “Father’s bosom” and in the virgin’s womb, in his mother’s arms and on the “wings of the wind.” Adored by angels and “dining with tax collectors.” Seraphim would not look at him, and “Pilate interrogated him.” A “servant struck him” and creation trembled. While nailed on the cross, he did not depart from his throne; while shut in the tomb, he was “stretching out the heavens like a curtain”; while numbered with the dead, he was plundering Hades. Below he was

(continued, see ON THE NATIVITY, next page)

## March for Life

January 17, 2021, will be observed as “Sanctity of Life Sunday” in parishes of the Orthodox Church in America. The day serves as a prelude to the 49<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in the United States; thus a “March for Life” will take place from the Mall to the US Supreme Court on Friday, January 29.

As in past years, Protodeacon Alexander will lead the trip, and the parish will provide free transportation. There is no cost to attend; The trip is fully sponsored by our campus and Church School

ministries. The pilgrimage departs from Trinity House promptly at 6 a.m., and returns by 11 p.m., stopping each way at the Sheetz near Duncannon at about 7:30 a.m./9:30 p.m. to pick up and drop off Chapel members. Participants should wear warm clothing, pack a lunch, and bring money for snacks or souvenirs. (RSVPs to [events@holytrinity-oca.org](mailto:events@holytrinity-oca.org) are appreciated.)

Pilgrims will join fellow Orthodox from around the country in a peaceful witness to the sanctity of all human life. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon will lead a delegation of bishops, clergy, monastics, seminarians and faithful from the Orthodox Church in

America as they join other Orthodox Christian bishops, clergy, and faithful participating in the annual march.

A rally is held on the National Mall at noon. At the conclusion of the rally, Metropolitan Tikhon will preside at a prayer service for those who have fallen victim to abortion over the past four decades.

For those unable to travel, our OCF at Penn State will host a virtual memorial service for the unborn at a later date. All parishioners and the public are invited to attend. Email [orthodox@psu.edu](mailto:orthodox@psu.edu) for details.

## Orthodox Psychotherapy Association formed

NEW YORK – The Mental Health Task Force of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America accomplished its first major task by publishing a comprehensive and unified Directory of Orthodox Christian Mental Health Professionals. The Directory includes Eastern or Oriental Orthodox Christians verified to be in good sacramental standing by their parish priest or local bishop. The interactive directory allows users to search by zip code for Orthodox Christian mental health providers licensed to practice in their state. The directory offers useful details about each provider’s area of practice, as well as contact information.

As an ever-growing directory, the Task Force invites mental health providers who are licensed to practice

by their state and in good standing in their parishes to apply to be included in the Directory.











The Assembly of Bishops recognizes the value of mental health services and encourages the clergy and faithful to seek help in times of need. To access the directory, as well as the provider application, please email [communications@assemblyofbishops.org](mailto:communications@assemblyofbishops.org) or visit their website at [assemblyofbishops.org](http://assemblyofbishops.org).

At the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord,” Thou hast come, O Lord, taking the form of a servant. And Thou who knowest not sin dost ask for baptism. The waters saw Thee and were afraid; The Forerunner was seized with trembling and cried aloud, saying: ‘How shall the lamp illuminate the Light? How shall the servant set his hand upon the Master? O Savior who takest away the sin of the world sanctify both me and the waters.’ – *Doxastikon, Great Blessing of the Waters*



# Holy Trinity Calendar

All events take place at 119 South Sparks Street in State College, unless where noted.  
Events listed at **Trinity House** take place at 123 South Sparks Street, in State College.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27 <b>Sunday After the Nativity of Christ Protomartyr Archdeacon Stephen</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <b>LIVE</b> <i>(Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home</i>	28	29	30 Vespers, 6pm	31 Great Vespers, 6pm	January 1, 2021 <b>Circumcision of our Lord St. Basil the Great</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours 9:35am)</i>	2 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>LIVE</b>
3 <b>Sunday Before the Theophany</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <b>LIVE</b> <i>(Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home</i>	4	5  <b>Eve of the Theophany</b> Royal Hours, 8am Great Vespers/Litya/ Blessing of Water, 6pm	6 <b>THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR</b> Baptism of Karen Rath, 8am Divine Liturgy, following Great Vespers, 6pm K&W Facilities Focus Group @ Nave & via Zoom†	7	8 	9 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>LIVE</b> Confessions, following
10 <b>Sunday After Theophany</b> Divine Liturgy, 10am <b>LIVE</b> <i>(Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home</i> Installation of New Parish Council, 11:45AM	11	12	13  Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Parish Council meeting, 7pm	14	15 	16 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>LIVE</b> Confessions, following
17 Divine Liturgy, 10am <b>LIVE</b> <i>(Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home</i>	18	19	20  Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	21	22 	23 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>LIVE</b> Confessions, following
24 Divine Liturgy, 10am <b>LIVE</b> <i>(Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home</i>	25	26	27  Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	28	29  <b>2021 March for Life</b> (see article for sign-up details)	30 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>LIVE</b> Confessions, following
31 Divine Liturgy, 10am <b>LIVE</b> <i>(Hours, 9:40am) or Typika @ Home</i>	February 1 Great Vespers/Litya/ Blessing of Candles, 6pm	2 <b>MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE</b> 8AM Divine Liturgy	3  Confessions, 4pm-6pm Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following	4	5 	6 Great Vespers, 6pm <b>LIVE</b> Confessions, following

# Chapel Calendar

All events take place at the new building (145 North Kern Street) in Beavertown, unless where noted.

Thursday 31 Great Vespers, 6pm	Saturday 16 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
Friday 1 Divine Liturgy, Circumcision of Our Lord; Hours 9:40AM, Moleben for the New Year to follow	Sunday 17 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> † Catechesis, 1:30pm via Zoom†
Saturday 2 Great Vespers, 6pm, Confessions, following	Tuesday 19 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm
Sunday 3 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> † Catechesis, 1:30pm via Zoom†	Saturday 23 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
Tuesday 5 Theophany Vesperal Divine Liturgy, Sanctification of the Waters (remember to bring your Holy water bottles to refill), 6pm	Sunday 24 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> † Catechesis, 1:30pm via Zoom†
Saturday 9 Great Vespers, 6pm, Confessions, following	Monday 25 “Hats and Blankets for Babies” (social distancing in force)
Sunday 10 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> † Catechesis, 1:30pm via Zoom† Great Sanctification of the Waters @ the creek by the Beaver Springs Fire Company, 12 noon	Tuesday 26 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm
Tuesday 12 Choir Rehearsal, 6pm	Friday 29 Akathist for the Unborn, 6pm
	Saturday 30 Great Vespers, 6pm Confessions, following
	Sunday 31 Divine Liturgy, 10am <i>(Hours, 9:40am)</i> † Catechesis, 1:30pm via Zoom†

† to join remotely, visit [holytrinity-oca.org/zoom](https://holytrinity-oca.org/zoom).

**LIVE** this service will be livestreamed on YouTube (visit [holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube](https://holytrinity-oca.org/YouTube)).

January 2021