



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor

RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. THEOPHAN LEONARCZYK, Eparchial Chancellor

"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge. Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)

January 8, 2017

The Third Day of the Feast of Theophany;

The Commemoration of our Father George the Chozebite

and of our venerable Mother Dominica

THE SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), RICHARD ASHOOH, ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, JOHN CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, TIM ERMATINGER, KEN KOMISAREK, MARYLOU LAZOS, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JOE NEHME, MAURICE PARE, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (1st Tone) Page 51

The Troparion of Theophany (1st Tone)

At Your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed, for the Father's voice bore witness to You by calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove, confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God Who has appeared to us and enlightened the world, glory to You!

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 16

The Kontakion of Theophany (4th Tone)

Today You have appeared, O Lord, to the universe, and Your light, O Christ our God, has been impressed upon us who sing to You with full knowledge. You came and appeared, O Inaccessible light!

THE PROKIMENON:

**MAY YOUR KINDNESS, O LORD, BE UPON US,
FOR WE HAVE HOPED IN YOU.**

Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

Today's Readings: Ephesians 4: 7-13 and Matthew 4: 12-17

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Susan Attalla (44th), Zahia Elias (32nd), Leo Elias (10th), Sam Elias (66th), Cassie Gallagher (35th), Ernest Baroody (43rd), Mary Noufel (35th), Mariam Haddad (35th), John Fawaz (62nd), Anna Kessop (56th), Frederick Alexander (25th), and Selma Michael (13th)

Sunday, 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Abraham Dagher (16th Anniversary),
by his parents Jamil and Rosemonde Dagher and Family

For the repose of Robert Khalil Jabaley (6th Anniversary),
by Theresa Jabaley

Next Saturday (Jan. 7), 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Chester Doolittle (11th), Mary Abood (8th), Josephine Saide (27th), Donna Hanneman (25th), George Saide (28th), Nassery Noufel (4th), John Nassoura (42nd), and Karen Kfoury (8th)

Next Sunday (Jan. 8) 11:00 AM:

For the repose of Joseph "Mike" Duquette (3rd Anniversary),
by Betty Ashooh



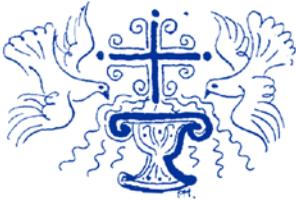
TAKE THE BLESSED WATER!

Last Thursday evening we commemorated the Lord's Baptism with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the Great and Solemn Blessing of Water. Some of the blessed water is still reserved so that you can drink it. You may also bottle some of the water and take it with you for the sanctification of your homes. It is traditional for the parish priest to visit the homes of his parishioners during the coming weeks, and to bless their homes with this sacred water. If you would like Father Tom to bless your home, please notify him by filling out one of the cards available in the back of the church, or by leaving a phone message at the rectory.



Newborn in Christ!

The Servant of God, **Grayson Phillip Fountain**, will receive the Holy Mysteries of Illumination – Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Communion – Sunday morning. Grayson is the son of Stephen and Amy Fountain. Congratulations to Grayson and to all of his family! May God grant them many years in health and happiness.



**There will be a meeting of the Parish Advisory Council on
Tuesday, January 17 at 7:00 PM**

Thursday Night: Coffee with Abouna!

You are cordially invited to share a cup of coffee with Fr. Tom on Thursday evening at 7 PM in the church hall. Along with coffee, we will have an open forum discussion on anything that you would like to talk about that pertains to our parish, our faith, and our life in the Church.



Attendance Last Week: Saturday, 4:30 PM: 18 Sunday 11AM: 68

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 845.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$29.⁸¹

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$ 79,337.²¹

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Tues., Jan. 10	8:30 AM	Weekday Orthros (basement chapel)
Wed., Jan. 11	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: For the deceased of the parish
Thur. Jan 12	8:30 AM	Weekday Orthros (basement chapel)
Sat. Jan. 14	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The 29th Sunday After Pentecost
Sun., Jan 15	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Jan. 15	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The 29th Sunday After Pentecost

The Icon of Theophany

The event depicted in the icon is that described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke; here is Matthew's version:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:13-17)

This, then, is the Epiphany (revelation) of the Holy Trinity, otherwise known as Theophany which literally means a "revelation of God" in Greek. The paradox that Jesus Christ might be revealed as God through an act of submittal to a mere

man, John, is shown well in the Icon. Though John is baptizing Christ, John is shown either bent over in reverence to the Christ or he is shown with his face turned toward heaven and beholding the miracle of the Theophany; either way, despite being the baptizer, he is not central to the scene.

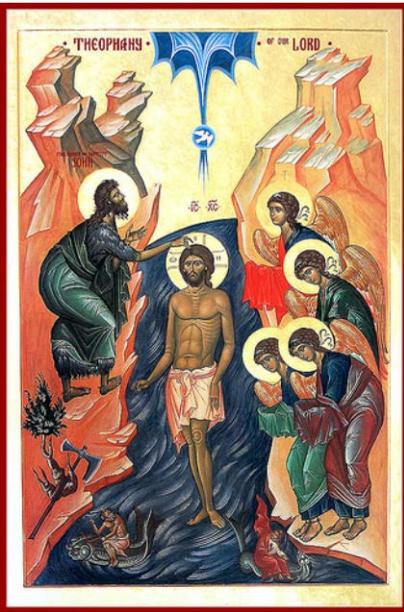
Near to John is a tree with an axe laid at the root, recalling John's own preaching to those who came to him: "And now also the ax is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matt 3:10). Present in the icon, this shows that whilst the Baptizer must now "decrease so Christ may increase", John's teachings and role are not done away with now that the Holy Trinity has been revealed. On the opposite bank to John the Baptist, angels wait invisibly to receive the newly baptized Christ and clothe Him.

Jesus Christ, despite being the one submerged in the Jordan, is shown as though standing up and staring straight at us. His body is depicted as strong and beautiful, as it is understood classically, and in older icons He is naked. Christ appears almost as wide as the river Jordan itself; indeed: it is as though it is Jesus Christ, rather than the river, which cuts a swathe through the rocky wilderness on either side.

Whilst in Western art Jesus is often shown as submitting to John's authority, in Orthodox icons Christ's hands are not shown in prayer, but in a sign of blessing. Rather than the waters of Jordan cleansing Christ, it is Christ Who cleans the waters. This is why in the bottom of most Theophany Icons, little creatures appear to be fleeing from the feet of Christ. This is a reflection of the words of the Psalmist regarding the Messiah (Christ): "the sea saw and fled, the Jordan turned back" (Psalm 114:3). The Jordan (left) and the Sea, which is also represented as a woman wearing a crown, or as a monster.

This is the depth and profundity of the Baptism of Christ; the feast of lights which revealed the Holy Trinity, and cleansed the waters of baptism so that we, like the fishes shown in the icon, may swim in pure waters.

-<http://iconreader.wordpress.com>



Glory to Your Kingdom!

THE LORD JESUS BEGAN His public ministry with the same message that St John the Baptist had proclaimed before Him, namely that the “Kingdom of God” or the “Kingdom of heaven” was at hand. What did their hearers understand by this announcement and what should we take it to mean today?

God’s Kingdom in the Old Testament

Biblical reflection on the world saw it as the creation of God. Therefore He was its king from the beginning. In this sense, the Kingdom of God is **all creation**.

Old Testament prophets also saw **Israel** as God’s Kingdom. After the Babylonian exile the people of Israel were generally ruled by others – Syrians, Greeks or Romans – with brief interludes of independence. God’s people increasingly looked for God to intervene in human history by reestablishing their kingdom. According to the Book of Daniel, God’s instrument for restoring this kingdom would be the “*Son of Man*” (Dn 7) or “*Messiah*” (Dn 9). What was called the “*Messianic Age*” would usher in the Kingdom of God.

Jewish thought generally accepted the thought of the Prophet Isaiah that the great sign of God’s Kingdom would be a time of universal peace and brotherhood on the earth, without crime, war and poverty when “*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea*” (Isaiah 11:9). The coming messiah would inaugurate this Kingdom by defeating the powers warring against God’s people.

The rabbis therefore rejected claims that Jesus was the messiah, since greed and enmity still exist in our world. He had “failed,” and died as a result. As the twelfth century Jewish thinker Maimonides wrote, failure or death is proof that a defeated leader is not the messiah: “If he does not succeed, or is killed in war, it is certain that he is not the messiah promised in the Torah” (*Mishnah Torah*, Hilchot Malakim 12).

The Lord Jesus and the Kingdom

The Lord Jesus clearly claimed to usher in the Kingdom of God. The New Testament presents a vision that **Jesus Himself is the presence of the Kingdom**, what the third-century theologian Origen termed the *autovasileia* (the Kingdom in Himself). In Him there is perfect communion with the Father and an outpouring of God’s love. The Gospels show Him as constant in prayer and in doing the Father’s will. He manifests God’s love for mankind in a way that no other has done. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, “Jesus himself is the Kingdom; the Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like worldly kingdoms. It is a person; Jesus leads men to realize the overwhelming fact that in him God himself is present among them, that he is God’s presence” (*Jesus of Nazareth*, Part 1, p. 49).

The Kingdom Is Within You

While the Lord Jesus is the Kingdom of God in our midst, He tells us that this Kingdom may also be present in human hearts. When people are taken by the love of God and keeping His



Commandments, the Kingdom of God is formed within them. When love is present, the God who is love is manifest as love within us.

Citing the Scriptures, Origen connects them with the Lord's injunction to pray "Thy Kingdom come": "*The Kingdom of God, in the words of our Lord and Savior, 'does not come for all to see; nor shall they say: Behold, here it is, or behold, there it is; but the Kingdom of God is within you,' [Lk 17: 20, 21] 'for the word of God is very near, in our mouth and in our heart' [Deut 30:14]. Thus it is clear that he who prays for the coming of God's Kingdom prays rightly to have it within himself, that there it might grow and bear fruit and become perfect"* (On Prayer, 25).

Enduring for the Kingdom

Many Christians today feel that, because God loves His entire creation, this means that everyone will enter the Kingdom of heaven automatically. They find it difficult to harmonize God's love for us with the need to respond actively to that love. While rejoicing in God's love for us, we need to remember these sobering words of the Lord:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few (Mt 7:13, 14)... Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell; and great was the fall of it" (Mt 7:24-27).

Entering the Kingdom is possible for us, then, if we put the Lord's teachings into practice, something which may cause us great hardship. Living the Lord's way may cost us friends, a job, even family support. It will certainly cost us the freedom to live according to our own desires, unmindful of the needs of others. St Anthony of Optina, wrote in a letter to one of his spiritual children: "Of course, it would be easier to get to paradise with a full stomach, all snuggled up in a soft feather-bed, but what is required is to carry one's cross along the way, for the Kingdom of God is not attained by enduring one or two troubles, but many!"

The Church and the Kingdom

The ultimate expression of the Kingdom will be in the age to come when Christ, seated at the Father's right, shall reign forever and ever. There He shall be surrounded by the saints – those who have allowed the Kingdom within them to mature fully through communion with God in prayer and faithfulness to His teachings in action.

The Church on earth is, as it were, the "anteroom" of the kingdom of heaven: the vestibule through which we pass in order to enjoy the presence of God within. We enter this "vestibule" through the necessary doorway of baptism. As the Lord told Nicodemus, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*" (Jn 3:5).

Yet for those outside the Church their goodwill toward believers is a kind of baptism into the kingdom, the "baptism" of love. As we read in Christ's parable of the judgment, "*Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world... Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'" (Mt 25:34, 40).*

Many thanks to the following parishioners and friends who were able to support the Parish Christmas Gift Drive. They helped raise almost \$18,000 for the parish!

Mr. & Mrs. Jean Abi Farah	Mr. & Mrs. Bert Guimond	Mr. James Morin
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Anderson	Mrs. John Habib	Mr. & Mrs. Kamal Moussoba
Ms. Betty Ashooh	Mr. & Mrs. Elias Haddad	Mr. & Mrs. Pierre Nassoura
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Ashooh	Mr. & Mrs. Wissam Haidar	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nehme
Mr. & Mrs. John Barger	Mr. & Mrs. Keith Harb	Mr. & Mrs. Stefan Notter
Mr. Joseph Baroody	Mr. & Mrs. Jonathan Hetu-Radny	Mr. & Mrs. Denis O'Keefe
Mrs. Carol Bednarowski	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Kaladish	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen O'Leary
Mr. Henry Bilodeau	Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kearney	Ms. Marion Powell-Thornton
Mrs. Helena Burkush	Ms. Christine L Kfoury	Mr. & Mrs. Ted Shiepe
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Cullen	Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Khoury	Mr. & Mrs. Pierre Slaybe
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Mrs. Theresa Cullen	Mr. Ken Komisarek	Rev & Mrs. Thomas Steinmetz
Mr. & Mrs. Charbel Dagher	Mrs. Mary-Ann LaJeunesse	Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Stephen
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Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Ermatinger	Mr. & Mrs. John MacArthur	Mrs. Rita Tutundgy
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Fregeau	Mr. Kenneth Monty	Shannon & Marilyn Whitmore
Stephen McMahon & Grace Freije		

Thank you!

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Olivia Aragon, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Al Auclair, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Sarah Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Sher Farrow, Declan Finn, Janet Drake, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, Christine Freitas, John Gallagher, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Nick Haddad, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Diana Lebel, Peggy Leclar, Fr. Theophan Leonarczyk, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Susan Merrill, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Blaise Notter, Steve Notter, Steven O'Leary, Denis O'Keefe, Ellen Osgood, Josephine Paquette, Sheila Quinn, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Kara Salvas, Denise Sherburne, Tarrant Smith, Mary Stephen, Catherine Waldron, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *"Welcome to this Holy House,"* located on the table in the back of the church.




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