

ST. NICHOLAS BULLETIN Sunday, Jan. 9th, 2021

29th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 4. Afterfeast of the Theophany. Sunday after Theophany. Martyr Polyeuktos of Melitēnē in Armenia (259)

Ephesians 4:7-13 (Sunday after) | Matthew 4:12-17 (Sunday after)

Christ is baptized! In the Jordan! Please join us following Divine Liturgy at the parish rectory to bless the house, and for a fellowship meal.

Services and events this week

Saturday

6:00pm Great Vespers, followed by catechesis class

Sunday

9:00am Bible Study

9:40 Hours; 10am Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

Prayer list Dec. 25th

Eleanor Prystash – for departed husband, John/ for departed family/ for departed Ethan Aitken/ for departed Fr. Igor/ for health of Joann

Jim Prystash – health of mother/for departed Dad, John/ health of family

Deacon Rodion & Mat. Sandy – in memory of newly departed Ethan Aitken & Fr. Igor/ in blessed memory of parents, Harold & Lillian Sethman, Joseph & Irene Motichak/ health of Dennis Carroll/ health of Fred Ruev/ health of Deacon Rodion, Nicholas & Christina

Dimitri & Pauline Petro – Christ is Born! Glorify Him! In memory of grandmother Pauline Drahushak/ in loving memory of Fr. Igor/ for health of Christine & Alexandra/ for health of Natalie & Rob/ for health of Kyra & Adam/ for health of Jim Klizas

Vlad Kash – in memory of Fr. Igor

Nick & Christine Milcovich – in memory of Fr. Igor/ in memory of Ethan Aitken/ in memory of Minnie Pandrock

Prayer list Dec. 26th

Mary Behanna – in memory of parents Andy & Petrina Gernat (Virgin Mary Kiot)

Sandy Klizas – in memory of Stephen & Helen Drake/ in memory of Frank & June Drake/ health & well-being of parishioners of St. Nicholas/ special intentions

Bill Mullen – in memory of Fr. Igor, memory eternal/ in memory of wife, Lorraine

Michael Horan – memory eternal to my loving wife, Rebecca/ for health of Cindy/ for special intentions/ memory ternal to our beloved Fr. Igor

Ken Behanna – for the health & welfare of our church/ blessings for the Aitken family/ blessings for the Soroka family

Ralph & Ina Prystash – in memory of Fr. Igor/ for health of daughter, Jacque

Ralph Prystash – for the health of Ina & Dianna

Rodney Prystash – for health of family

Sandy Carroll – in memory of Fr. Igor/ health of husband, Dennis

On the Baptism of Christ by St. Theophan the Recluse

Celebrating holy Theophany, we are transported in thought to the very place of this event, and we shall intelligently attend to what is happening there! There it is – Bethabara! You can see St. John standing on the shore, in clothes made of camel’s hair, with a girdle of a skin about his loins (Mk. 1:6). He is surrounded by a countless multitude of people from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the lands around the Jordan. The Baptism of the Lord has just finished, and all eyes are fixed upon the Son of man just emerged from the waters. They see nothing else. But sharpen by faith the eye of your mind, and following after John, passing over what is seen by all, turn an attentive gaze upon what is not seen by all – on the opened heavens, the dove descending, and the voice saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (Mk. 1:11). Fix your gaze, and do not tear your attention away from this wondrous vision! O! Who will give power to our words, that they might worthily sing praises to God in three hypostases, revealed at the Jordan!

Along with lost paradise, the heavens were shut closed by God’s righteous judgment. But as a strong gate cannot hold back a powerful surge of water, so did the fortress of righteous judgment finally melt from the fire of Divine love – and now the heavens are opened. Brethren, let us also open the forces of our nature, let us insatiably receive the revealed God, and delight in Him. Let us soak all our senses with Him, all our thoughts and desires.

We are sunk in darkness; but here is abundant light. We are immersed in dismal separation – from heaven and from ourselves – but here is an all-enlivening peace. We are exhausted by our powerlessness, but here is the inexhaustible source of all strength!

And as after the darkness of night all creatures long for the light and strive with desire to receive the first rays of the rising sun, so do we turn the illuminated eye of our mind toward the Theophany, desiring to receive the comforting rays of the Divine economy of our salvation, redeemed by the merciful Word of God the Father – and delight in them.

As a creature constricted by the cold of winter greedily meets the spring, which looses the bonds of cold, and again finds harmonious vivification, so do we, vivified by the hope of salvation, with our hearts receive peace shining forth from the baptized Lord – and we delight in Him! As during the summer heat the thirsting soil drinks in with a thousand lips the rain falling from the sky, so do we with every desire of our souls receive all the strength that is

ready to pour upon us from the Spirit descending in the form of a dove – and we delight in it!

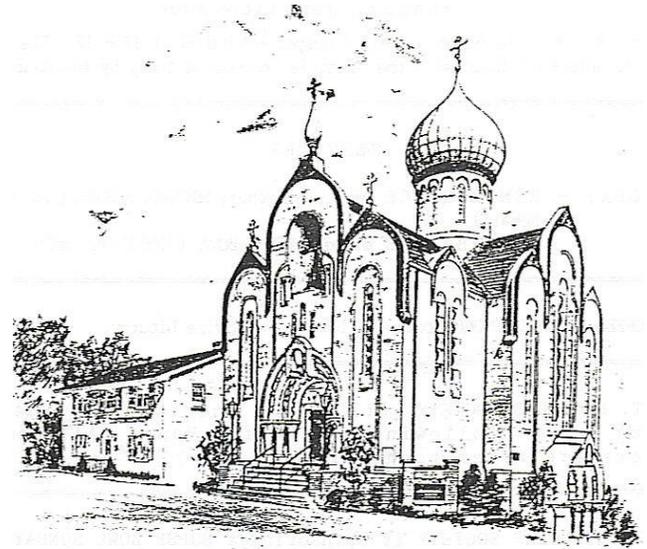
Why should we even invite ourselves to this? For, aren't we all led into the economy of salvation? Shouldn't we all therefore be enlightened, and conciliated, and enlivened? But O! When has it been so? Once the Lord, recalling John the Baptist, said reproachfully to the Jews, He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light (Jn. 5:35).[1] Every year in our holy church the Lord brings also to us the light of His Theophany before John in the Jordan. Doesn't He say to us through this, "Here is the burning and shining light!" Make sure that that you be willing to rejoice only in his light while it is shining.

Be careful, brethren, for you walk in danger![2] (Eph. 5:15). Doesn't the deceptive call of the enemy of our salvation at times seductively strike our ears? False wisdom says: "Come to me, I have the light." But it does not have the light, only a phantom light, and those who listen to it call light darkness and darkness light. The world says: "Come to me, and I will give you peace!" But it has no peace, only a phantom peace, and those who are lured by it and discover the lie only too late reproachfully condemn it saying, "Peace! Peace! And where is peace?"

The prince of the world promises wide berth and life, and power and pleasure. But he has neither power, nor freedom, nor pleasure – only a phantom of these, and those who are seduced by them can only call themselves alive, free, and satisfied, while in fact they are wearied slaves, tormented by deprivation.

Hasten, brethren, to acquire the skill of discerning all of this in the light of the Theophany and do not be lured by what is only called light, and peace, and power but is not. Strive instead ever harder towards the One Who is the way, the truth, and the life, also righteousness, and illumination, and deliverance.

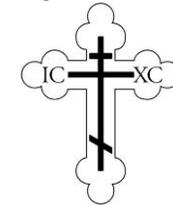
Well, we have almost gotten to judgment and self-condemnation. What is there to be done? That is how the Lord wants it to be. He has ordered that the Church brightly celebrate His Theophany, and wills that each of us enter into the joy of the feast only through the judgment of conscience. Whoever has tasted the gifts that are the cause of the Church's present celebration will rejoice; but whoever has not tasted them – first taste them, and then you will rejoice. Amen.



"Persistent prayer, together with silence, can heal broken hearts." –St. Porphyrios

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

1 St. Nicholas Drive
DONORA, PENNSYLVANIA
Organized 1916



The Rev. Father JOHN PARKER, Priest & Rector
Rectory Telephone (724) 379-4827
Office Hours—Thurs. & Fri., 10am-noon, 1pm-3pm
frjohndonora@gmail.com

Protodeacon ROBERT MOTICHAK (Attached)
Dr. DIMITRI PETRO, Choir Director

www.stnicholasorthodoxdonora.org