



January 2021

Dearly Beloved,
Glory to Jesus Christ! Blessed and Happy New Year!

There is something so compelling to the entire human race about new beginnings, new chapters, new years--a chance to start over, or to continue moving with renewed hope towards what we lost sight of. Even in the non-religious world, there is a deep desire to approach the new horizon of the coming of the year with resolutions: to do better, to fight the decay, to grow into who we think we should be. A new year offers us the feeling of a fresh start, to leave the pain of the past 365 days and enter joyously into the coming ones. I believe this deeply rooted feeling is the image of God in all of us, the "Divine Spark" as St. Gregory of Nyssa calls it, that wants to grow from "image" to "Likeness" in Christ.

How fitting, then, that for Orthodox Christians, the whole season of the New year is imbued with the Incarnation; after a season of fasting and preparation, we are ready to receive God in the flesh, God with us, not only in the Nativity but the feast of Theophany and the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. The longing for a new creation in us is brought about by the coming of the New Adam, who came to bring a New Paradise, a New Year of the Lord in our very midst. Because God became man, the whole of our life, in every season and time, is sanctified and made New, whole, and holy.

During these festal times we bless the waters of creation and all of our livelihood, our homes and families, finally blessing candles to represent the Light of Christ which has dawned on us. This period from Nativity to the Temple is a festal season, the Paschal answer to the Winter Lent, to be celebrated with a deepened life of joy in Church attendance, personal prayer, and goodwill toward our fellow man, no longer fasting, but feasting, reaping the fruits of the labor borne in love during the fast.

May we use our God-given desire for the new to draw us to a deeper life in Christ, toward the endless new day of the world to come! May our one resolution this year be to draw nearer to

Christ in whatever way we possibly can--especially in drawing near as the Body of Christ in His holy Church!

Blessings for the feast in Christ,
Fr. John, Mat. Nadia & Baby Jonah



Services for Theophany

Tues. Jan. 5th

9:00am Royal Hours

6:00pm—Vespers Liturgy of St. Basil

Wed. Jan. 6th

**9:30am Theophany of our Lord and God and Savior
Jesus Christ & Blessing of Waters**