

Magnificat

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News from
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
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Advent
2018

Splendid was the feast that has now passed;
more splendid yet is the one to come:
An angel announced the first;
John the Forerunner proclaims the next.
On the former, a bereft Bethlehem
bewailed the blood of her slain Innocents;
the blessed waters of the second
give rebirth to a multitude of children.
Then the star revealed You to the Magi;
now the Father proclaims You to the world.
O Savior, who took flesh and are now made manifest,
glory be to you.

From Vespers of January 2

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Chicago, and belonging to the Ukrainian Metropolis in the United States of America, which is in union with the Pope of Rome, supreme pastor of the universal Church. We embrace Evangelical poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability of life, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the traditions of the Christian East. In our skete at Jacob's Falls, on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, we devote ourselves to a common life of prayer and work for the praise, love, and service of God and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts.

God Made Manifest

God has no need of our worship; the praise and honor we render Him can add nothing to His already infinite glory, nor is there any lack in His perfection that we might fulfill. Our prayer, rather, is for our benefit, a feeble expression of our love for Him and a wholly inadequate attempt at rendering some return for the many blessings He has already bestowed upon us. Through our petitions and thanksgiving, we acknowledge our total dependence on His mercy, of which we have so much need and are so unworthy. Seeking to draw closer to Him, we strive to attune ourselves to His will and participate more fully in His divine life.

We cannot know the mind of God. Indeed, we can know nothing about Him at all, except what He has chosen to reveal to us. Scripture, therefore, is central to our worship. We hear the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament read out in more or less continuous fashion at Divine Liturgy through the course of the year. Chanting the Psalms forms the heart of our Divine Office, and we hear numerous readings from the Law, Prophets, and Writings of the Old Testament at Vespers, as well.

Hearing the sacred words and singing ecclesial hymns sprung from the meditations of holy monks and nuns of ages past, inspired by the teaching and preaching of antiquity's holy hierarchs, we gain a growing understanding of the great things God has done for us and an inner awareness of His activity in our lives. Though He remains incomprehensible to our minds, we feel His presence and begin to know Him in the depth of our hearts.

Through her liturgical year, the Church keeps before us the memory of God's great ac-

tions in times past. Worthy celebration of her feasts allows us to witness the saving events once again and participate in them within our hearts.

Principal among these festivals is Pascha. Following Christ Jesus liturgically through the final week of his life and reliving the salvific events of his sacrificial suffering and death at Passover, we are led to the exuberant joy of His Resurrection on the third day. The reality of these events forms the core of Christian belief, and in them we see fulfilled the work of our salvation. Thus, the Church prepares for its Paschal celebration with the forty day fast of Great Lent

and prolongs the feast throughout the fifty days until Pentecost. Moreover, the joy is reiterated each week at the Vespers and Matins of Sunday throughout the year.

But the Lord's Passion brings salvation – atonement for our sins – only if He is God. And God, who is pure spirit, can neither suffer nor die. It is an article of the Christian

faith, therefore, that Jesus Christ is both true God and true man. We celebrate the mystery of the Incarnation – God becoming man and taking on our human nature, as well as our human flesh – with the Feast of the Annunciation on March twenty-fifth.

This date falls during Lent or Holy Week, and sometimes on Pascha itself. Indeed, there is some scholarly speculation that the date was chosen because many early Christians believed it corresponded to the date of Passover in the year Christ died. (It seems there was a belief current in antiquity that great and holy men often passed from this life on the anniversary of the day they had entered it.) Be that as it may, the feast of the Annunciation is overshadowed by

Today is the origin of our salvation
and the revelation of the mystery
planned from before all the ages:

the Son of God

becomes the Son of the Virgin,
and Gabriel announces

the good news of this grace.

Therefore, with him,

let us cry out to the Mother of God:

Hail, O Full of Grace,

the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation

the solemnity of its environs, and full celebration of the Incarnation waits until the remembrance of its manifestation in the birth of Christ nine months later.

Like Pascha, the feast is preceded by six weeks of fasting. Although, the Byzantine tradition does not consider this period as a special liturgical season, observance of the fast is a vital part of our preparation for the celebration. Fasting helps us to overcome and keep in check the baser instincts of our nature and purify our minds and hearts of desires for earthly things. The more we free ourselves from material attachments, the better we are able to contemplate and receive spiritual graces. This is so often lost in our day when pre-Christmas partying leaves us too jaded and sated to celebrate the joy of the Great Twelve Days of Christmas.

In the Byzantine tradition Christmas and Theophany (Epiphany) are seen as one feast, celebrating our salvation and its appearance in the world in the divine and human Person of Jesus Christ. By the power of with the Holy Spirit, the Son and Word of God, consubstantial with the Father, took flesh and became man in the womb of the Virgin Mother for our salvation and for the redemption of the whole world. This mystery, revealed to the Virgin at the time of the Annunciation (cf. Lk. 1:31-33) is manifested in the tender flesh of the Babe of Bethlehem. At His birth, it is intimated to humble shepherds and wise kings. John the Baptist, who rejoiced in it while still in his mother's womb (cf. Lk. 1:44), has it definitely made known to him by the Father's

word and the descent of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk. 3:21f; Mt. 3:16f; Mk. 1:10f) at His baptism in the Jordan. It becomes intimately known to us in faithful celebration of the feast.

In the Person of Jesus Christ, God has entered and become part of His creation. In His loving condescension, He has become one of us. The relationship between God and man, between God and the entire universe, has been radically changed; nothing can ever be the same. Now even lifeless matter is redeemed and charged with grace; by the action of the Holy Spirit it may become for us the bearer of Divine Life.

January sixth seems to be the original date kept in celebration of this wonder. Already in the late Second Century, Clement of Alexandria speaks of a festival on that day in commemoration of Christ's baptism by John; by the middle of the Fourth Century we find the feast spread throughout the East. Known as Epiphany (*manifestation or shining forth*), its principal focus remained the Lord's baptism, but it commemorated His birth, as well, and also His first miracle at the wedding of Cana (Jn. 2:1-11) – all events which manifest His divinity to the world.

Introduction from the West, later in the Fourth Century, of a particular commemoration of the Lord's Nativity (Christmas) encouraged development of the celebration in its present form.

The Infancy Narratives – the first two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel and the second

Come, O faithful, inspired by God,
let us arise and see in Bethlehem
the Divine Mercy
that has come down from on high.

Cleansing our minds,
let us offer lives of virtue
instead of myrrh.

In faith preparing our entry
into the Feast of the Nativity
and storing treasures in our souls
as we sing:

Glory in the highest to God in Trinity,
whose good will has appeared among men,
and who, in His love for mankind,
frees Adam from the ancestral curse.

From the Sixth Royal Hour
of Christmas



chapter of St. Luke's – form the scriptural core of our Christmas observance and the related celebrations that immediately follow. During this postfestive period we hear the account of the slaughter of the Holy Innocents (Mt. 2:13-23) three times – on the day after Christmas, on the Sunday after Christmas, and on the feast of the Holy innocents, themselves, December 29. This serves as a forceful reminder of the world's opposition to Jesus and His followers and prefigures the suffering and death for which He had come into the world – so, too, do the sepulcher-like appearance of the manger and the shroud-like rendering of the swaddling clothes in the icon of the feast.

January 1, the Feast of the Circumcision, serves as a hinge between the postfestive days of Christmas and the prefestive days of Theophany. The Gospel appointed for Divine Liturgy at the feast (Lk. 2:21, 22, 40-52) recounts the Lord's circumcision and reception of the name, Jesus, and the account of His finding in the temple, at age twelve, when He announced that He must be about His Father's business. In the next celebration, on January 6, we see Jesus as a man, on the verge of taking up that business with His public ministry.

Concentration on the Synoptic accounts (Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11; and Lk. 3:21-22) of Christ's baptism in the Jordan by John returns this feast to its earlier primitive emphasis. While the scriptural events commemorated differ, the burden of both the celebrations on December 25 and January 6 remains the same: the manifestation of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, God-with-us.

At His birth and during His infancy, the mystery of Jesus Christ, true God and true man,

was made known – and, then, indistinctly – to a few individuals. At His baptism the voice of the Father proclaims Him His Beloved Son, which the Holy Spirit confirms by visibly descending on Him in the form of a dove. In her profound meditation on this first, distinct revelation of the Holy Trinity, the Eastern Church has bestowed upon the ancient feast a new name. Epiphany, *manifestation, shining forth*, is now more commonly known as Theophany, *manifestation of God*.

The event at the Jordan manifests Jesus as the long awaited Messiah and the Son of God, one of the Holy Trinity, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. By His acceptance of John's baptism of repentance, even though He is without sin, Jesus identifies Himself with our sinful human nature; John, for his part, recognizes and identifies Him as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn. 1:19), the Holy One who will save His people from their sins (cf. Mt. 1:21).

The readings from Scripture and the liturgical poetry enshrining the Gospel narrative at Christmas testify as to who the Christ Child is and the purpose of His coming amongst us. Those of Theophany, while reiterating these insights, proclaim its effects. In Theophany Christmas is fulfilled.

Although the prescribed texts and scriptural reading pertain specifically to the event being celebrated, the Services of Christmas and Theophany follow almost exactly the same pattern. There are special readings from Scripture appointed for Divine Liturgy on the Saturday and Sunday immediately preceding and following each feast. The eve of each is thick with festal observances, leading up to the celebration of Divine Liturgy

When You were baptized in the Jordan,
O Lord,
worship of the Trinity was made manifest:
The Voice of the Father bore witness to You,
calling You His Beloved Son,
and the Spirit in the form of a dove
proved certain His words.
O Christ God, who have appeared
and enlightened the world,
Glory be to You!

Troparion of Theophany



on the morning of the feast itself. Theophany, however, uniquely includes in its celebration the Great Blessing of Water.

In origin, most likely a solemn font blessing for large scale public baptisms, the rite has long been a principal feature of Theophany celebrations in the East. St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) mentions it in one of his homilies, noting that the faithful take the water home and keep it for personal sanctification throughout the year; this is still the custom today. Though now usually performed only once, the liturgical books prescribe the Blessing for both the vigil and day of the feast – in church in the evening and outdoors, at a nearby spring, stream, or body of water, during the day. The public aspect of the latter gives it, perhaps an undue prominence, but the Blessing, itself, does epitomize the cause of our rejoicing.

The entire universe, in the beginning created very good, but then corrupted by sin, is now restored in Christ Jesus. By His coming, He makes all things new. Jesus Christ, perfect God and perfect man, approaches the Jordan and accepts baptism from John not to be cleansed of ritual impurity or of sin, which He does not have; He comes not to express repentance, for He truly has nothing of which to repent; nor is His intent merely to be a role model for our own repentance, and still less is it to hear His divinity confirmed. He comes, rather, for the cleansing of the whole world.

Immersing His divine flesh in the waters of the Jordan, He purifies all the waters of the earth. He restores that primordial element (cf. Gen. 1:2) to its original goodness, and with it He sanctifies all creation. In the waters of Baptism, we, too,

are sanctified, restored to our original state of goodness after the death of sin. The water blessed at Theophany – and reserved for the imparting of blessings throughout the year – physically conveys to us this great cause of joy.

Happy, indeed, are we who have been born again in Baptism. We have been incorporated into Christ and made sharers of His divine nature. As members of His body, the Church, we constitute His continued and active presence on earth. May we always live our lives so as to manifest Him to the world.

Theophany is also sometimes called Illumination or the Feast of Lights. Jesus is the Light of the World, and beside the Jordan the world first witnessed His splendor. His baptism inaugurates His public ministry, and, through His teaching, our minds are enlightened, and we see things clearly, as in the brightness of day. The many candles surrounding the font at Theophany, as well as those held by neophytes at their baptism, remind us

that in Baptism we have all put on Christ. May His brightness always shine forth from us to illumine the world.

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The Services for Christmas and Theophany are long and solemn, rich in Scripture, and exceptionally moving. They occur at a time, however, when our weather is usually at its nastiest, and we do not advise the faithful to undertake significant travel to be with us for their celebration. The information on the following pages lists their appointed Scripture readings as well as their scheduled times; we encourage you to join us in spirit through prayerful reading and meditation.

Today the Creator of heaven and earth
comes in the flesh to the Jordan;
the sinless One seeks to be baptized
that He may cleanse the world
of the Enemy's deceit.
The master of all is baptized by a servant
and grants mankind cleansing through water.
Let us all cry out to Him:
O God, made manifest to us,
Glory be to You!

From Great Compline
of Theophany

Services, Christmas 2018

Saturday, 22 December 2018 -- Saturday before Christmas

6:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) Galatians 3:8-12; 2) Luke 13:18-29
5:30 pm	Solemn Vespers	1) Genesis 14:14-20; 2) Deut. 1:8-11,15-17; 3) Deut. 10:14-21

Sunday, 23 December 2018 -- Sunday before Christmas

10:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) Hebrews 11:9-10,17-23,32-40; 2) Matthew 1:1-25
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Monday, 24 December 2018 -- Vigil of Christmas

6:00 am	Matins and First Hour Pss: 5, 44(45), 45(46)	1) Micah 5:2-4; 2) Hebrews 1:1-12; 3) Matthew 1:18-25
9:00 am	Third Hour Pss: 66(67), 86(87), 50(51)	1) Baruch 3:35-4:4; 2) Galatians 3:23-4:5; 3) Luke 2:1-20
11:00 am	Sixth Hour Pss: 71(72), 131(132), 90(91)	1) Isaiah 7:10-16;8:1-4,8-10; 2) Hebrews 1:10-2:3; 3) Matthew 2:1-12
1:30 pm	Ninth Hour Pss: 109(110), 110(111), 85(86)	1) Isaiah 9:6-7; 2) Hebrews 2:11-18; 3) Matthew 2:13-23
4:30 pm	Solemn Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great	1) Genesis 1:1-13; 2) Numbers 24:2-3,5-9,17-18; 3) Micah 4:6-7,5:2-4; 4) Isaiah 11:1-10; 5) Baruch 3:35-4:4; 6) Daniel 2:31-36,44-45; 7) Isaiah 9:6-7; 8) Isaiah 7:10-16;8:1-4,9-10; 9) Hebrews 1:1-12; 10) Luke 2:1-20
9:00 pm	Great Compline and Solemn Matins Pss: 134(135), 109(110), 110(111)	1) Matthew 1:18-25

Tuesday, 25 December 2018 -- Christmas Day

10:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) Galatians 4:4-7; 2) Matthew 2:1-12
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Services, Theophany 2019

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Friday, 04 January 2019

6:00 am	Matins and First Hour Pss: 5, 22(23), 26(27)	1) Isaiah 35:1-10; 2) Acts 13:25-33; 3) Matthew 3:1-11
11:00 am	The Royal Hours Pss: 28(29), 41(42), 50(51) Pss: 73(74), 76(77), 90(91) Pss: 92(93), 113(114-115), 85(86)	1) Isaiah 1:16-20; 2) Acts 19:1-8; 3) Mark 1:1-8 1) Isaiah 12:3-6; 2) Romans 6:3-11; 3) Mark 1:9-15 1) Isaiah 49:8-15; 2) Titus 2:11-14;3:4-7; 3) Matthew 3:13-17
4:30 pm	Vespers	

Saturday, 05 January 2019 -- Vigil of Theophany

6:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5; 2) Matthew 3:1-11
4:30 pm	Solemn Vespers Great Blessing of Water	1) Genesis 1:1-13; 2) Exodus 14:15-18.21-23.27-29; 3) Exodus 15:22-16:1; 4) Joshua 3:7-8.15-17; 5) 2 Kings 2:6-14; 6) 2 Kings 5:9-14; 7) Isaiah 1:16-20; 8) Genesis 32:1-10; 9) Exodus 2:5-10; 10) Judges 6:36-40; 11) 1 Kings 18:30-39; 12) 2 Kings 2:19-22; 13) Isaiah 49:8-15; 14) 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 15) Luke 3:1-18 1) Isaiah 12:3-6; 2) 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; 3) Mark 1:9-11
8:30-9:00 pm	Great Compline and Solemn Matins Pss: 96(97), 131(132), 111(112)	1) Mark 1:9-11

Sunday, 06 January 2019 -- Theophany

10:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great	1) Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7; 2) Matthew 3:13-17
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Monday, 07 January 2019 -- Synaxis of St. John the Baptist

10:00 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom	1) Acts 19:1-8; 2) John 1:29-34
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From the Jampot



Our mild summer continued well into September; post-Labor Day visitors enjoyed sunny skies and warmer than usual temperatures. We were away on the 18th, attending the funeral of a priest who had been a longtime friend of the monastery. When we returned, the temperature had dropped twenty degrees, and a strong wind was blowing. Fortunately, the colors were not far advanced, and the trees – strong from a summer that had been kind to all growing things – kept their leaves. But fall was definitely here!

With the cold came rain. Sunny days were few during the next four weeks, and it was raining – sometimes heavily – at least half the time. The creeks filled and the falls gushed; regular autumn visitors were treated to visions of the spring run-off.

The color advanced slowly. Visitors during the last week of September were disappointed to see it had only just begun. It came on strong about the middle of the first week of October and peaked about the middle of the second. Despite the wetness, many people came out to see the display, which, by numerous accounts, was one of the most spectacular to be seen in years. During the third week of October, our last of business in the shop, we were treated to two warm, sunny days – some of the most beautiful we had seen all fall – then came high winds; inland, where it had come on earlier,

the color came fluttering down. But it lingered by the shore, and, when we closed the door of the shop for the season, our immediate area remained swaddled in rich, deep gold.

Jampot business continued swift throughout. The lull at the end of August and during the first week of September that we had come to expect in former times has prove mostly nonexistent in recent years. Weekdays were moderately busy, and three Saturdays during the color season proved the busiest of the year.

Supplies held fairly well for most of the time, although some items disappeared from the shelves toward the end. We kept up with the special orders for “winter stashes” of baked goods, even though the variety on the counter was sometimes much diminished. Customers continued coming through our final week until we closed the door on October 20, completing **Jampot’s** all-time best season.

Having returned from our post-season break and resumed production several weeks ago, we now stand ready to provide – for your personal use, or gift-giving pleasure – the delectables offered for shipment on the following pages.



HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE
Society of St. John
6559 State Highway M26
Eagle Harbor, Michigan 49950
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Musings on the Last Day

The final weeks of the Jampot season bring many bittersweet moments. On the one hand, there is the accumulated weariness of the season's thousands of hectic interactions with customers, the myriads of candies, cookies, and muffins produced, and the endless stocking of the constantly depleted jam shelf. All of which leads to anxious anticipation of a badly needed, restorative post-season break. On the other, there are the many farewells exchanged with regular customers who have become familiar faces and good friends over the years. "Good bye," they say, "Have a good winter; I'll see you in the spring," "come summer" or "next fall." We wish them safe travels and assure them we'll be here when they return, "God willing". "God willing, we'll all be here again!"

For several weeks before the end, we post a sign noting the last day of shop sales. Newcomers often ask, "So, what do you do in the winter?" If we are feeling waggish, we will reply, "Just staying alive in the winter around here is a full time job!" before going on to tell of the online sales and mail orders that will consume our time during the remainder of the year. That, too, is God willing!

We undertook a major Jampot expansion this year. The new jam production facility cost about \$720,000.00 to build and equip. Praise God! Generosity and good sales necessitated mortgaging only \$450,000.00. Still, the twelve year amortization results in monthly payments in excess of \$4,000.00. Much generosity will be needed in the coming months. The Reinerio Family Foundation has presented a matching grant of \$10,000.00 for the month of December. Normal Christmastime generosity should allow us to easily meet the match. God willing!

Ultimately, all is in the hands of God. Certainly, He has never failed us. We thank Him for the loving providence that has brought us thus far. We thank Him especially for you, our friends, patrons, and benefactors, who share in His divine providence and make our continued life possible on this severe and windy shore. May He bless you with peace and good health during the coming months and grant you a happy Thanksgiving with family and friends, as well as a holy and mindful celebration of His manifestation amongst us.