



# **“ORTHODOX 9” PARISHES BULLETIN**

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:



**St. Mary’s (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE**

**St. John the Baptist - HOREN**

**Holy Ascension - CALMAR**

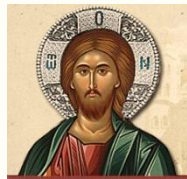
**St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)**

**Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY**

**Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)**

**St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)**



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***Christ is Born! – Let us Glorify Him!***

***Христос Рождается! – Славимо Його!***



Glory to the Holy Eternal Trinity, that willed to recreate us by the voluntary birth of the Only Begotten Son of God!

The glorious and immense God’s work in the righteous kings, patriarchs, prophets and all the saints done – and the fruit of this labour – the fruit of the Blessed Womb appeared for our sake: *“Behold, I make all things new!”* (Rev. 21, 5).

The news is so great that it cannot be restrained even by the holy limits of the God-created people of Israel: it enlightened the wisdom of the far away nation, and they see the

Star and are following it with the prophetic gift in the hands.

And the skies burst with the joyful news: the angels appear and call the pastors to go and see the Child, the Pastor, and the Lamb.

*“For love is as strong as death”,* sings the one who asked wisdom from God.

Long ago this power was misused by the first people: but Eve did not die right after transgression, for they (their love and unity) could not be separated even by the sin.

Now, the One, Whose origin is from the highest, willed to become a baby of the human family, to share human life with all the consequents of sin, but at the time of temptation – refusing it up to death.

And the whole family, through this great and mystical power God implanted into it – *“This is a great mystery”* (Eph. 5, 32) – now receives the fruit of his choice and his victory, from the One who has become a child of our family of people today and put the beginning for this glorious Recreation.

So, this is a feast, so easily understandable and so close to every family or community – the birth of a child. Let us embrace this sacramental event as we embrace our children, with the same faith, self-denial, and love. Amen

# The Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ. “To fulfill all righteousness”

January, the 19<sup>th</sup>



During the time that John the Forerunner preached on the banks of the Jordan River and baptized people, Jesus Christ reached thirty years of age. He also went from Nazareth to the Jordan River to John to receive baptism from him.

John did not consider himself worthy to baptize Jesus Christ and began to shrink back from Him saying, “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?”

But Jesus answering said to Him, “Suffer it to be so now,” — that is, do not hold back from me now, “for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness,” — to fulfill everything in the Law of God and to set an example for people. Then, John obeyed and baptized Jesus Christ.

Contemplating over these words, St. John John of Kronstadt said, as if on behalf of the Lord:

“I come to take upon Myself all the iniquities and impurities of humanity, without being defiled by them, in order to make payment for them, thereby satisfying the justice of My Father in heaven, and to offer Myself as a redemptive Sacrifice, in order to immerse them all in the waters of the Jordan.

I, of Myself, as the sinless God-man, desire to wash away all human iniquities and to give to My Church a cleansing bath of eternal life in baptism by water and the Spirit;

I Myself, having fulfilled all righteousness, desire to teach people Divine righteousness, giving them the power and the grace to fulfill it...”

Upon completion of the baptism, when Jesus Christ came out of the water, suddenly the heavens were opened over Him; and John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him and heard the voice of God the Father from Heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.”

Then, John was finally convinced that Jesus was the expected Messiah, Son of God, Saviour of the world.



The Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ is celebrated in the Holy Orthodox Church as one of the great feasts on January 6th (January 19 NS). The celebration of the Baptism of the Lord is also called Theophany or the Manifestation of God because at the time of baptism God revealed Himself to people as the Holy Trinity in this way: God the Father spoke from Heaven, the incarnate Son of God was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended in as a dove. Also, at the time of baptism for the first time, people could see that in the person of Jesus Christ there appeared not only man but also God.

The day before the feast is an established fast day. The same strict fast is observed and the same types of services are celebrated as on the Eve of Christ's Nativity (Christmas). Because the Saviour by His own baptism sanctified the water, on this feast there is a blessing of water. On the day before, water is blessed in church and on the feast itself — under the open sky, in rivers, lakes, pools and wells. This Blessing of the Waters is often called "The Procession to the Jordan."

Note: See the Gospels of Matthew, 3:13-17; Mark, 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34.

Troparion of the Feast — Tone 1

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan / the worship of the Trinity was made manifest / for the voice of the Father bore witness to You / and called You His beloved Son. / And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, / confirmed the truthfulness of His word. / O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself / and have enlightened the world, glory to You!

Kontakion of the Feast — Tone 4

Today You have shown forth to the world, O Lord, / and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us. / Knowing You, we sing Your praises. / You have come and revealed Yourself, / O unapproachable Light.

## Q&A on the Holy Baptismal water sanctifications



*"Grant sanctification, blessing, cleansing and health to all those who have contact with it, and to those upon whom it is poured, and to those who receive of it"* (from the prayer of the Great Blessing of the Waters).

### **What is the difference of the two water blessings on the Baptism?**

"The Blessing of the Waters on the feast of Theophany [January 19] originated in the Church of Jerusalem and in the

fourth to fifth centuries was performed only in this Church: the faithful came to the river Jordan for Blessing of the Waters in commemoration of the Baptism of the Savior. That is why on the feast of Theophany water is usually blessed in rivers, streams and wells ("walk to Jordan" processions), because Christ was baptized outside the Church. But on the Eve of Theophany [January 18] water is blessed in churches," Germogen Shimanskiy (article on liturgics for the seminary).

# THE EVIDENCE OF THE THEOPHANY MIRACLES IN THE HOLY LAND

*"Sea beheld and fled, Jordan turned back" (Psalm 113/114)*

*"The bubbling then spread, and the river developed two currents, one running to the right and another running to the left, with the two currents finally merging into each other!"*



In Ben Gurion Airport our group met the tour guide who held a touching sign reading, “City of St. Peter”. When we were all gathered together, she greeted us with amiable words, some of which surprised and puzzled me:

“A miracle will definitely happen to each one of you in this Land—after all, you have stepped foot upon the extraordinary, Holy Land. Believe me—I have lead tour groups here for five years now. You only have to be able to see these miracles.

That this trip would not be commonplace is something that I already felt in St. Petersburg. All my business connected with our departure worked out in the best way possible, without any participation from me, and I thought sadly that probably I have already used up all my miracles and I don’t have anymore to look forward to.

But the miracles were only just beginning!

The main event, the reason we came to the Holy Land precisely on these days, was the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. However, our guide, Presbytera Maria, the wife of the archpriest at the Greek church of St. Nicholas, disappointed us when she said that for several years in a row now the Israeli military has not allowed pilgrims to come to the historical site of the Baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we needed to pray fervently so that permission would finally be granted.

On the morning of January 18, when we boarded the bus, it was still unclear whether they would take us to the very place where St. John the Baptist baptized the Lord and not to some other spot on the River Jordan. Presbytera Maria again called upon all to pray, and in an everyday tone of voice added that today after the Great Blessing of the Waters we will see how the Jordan turns back. Apparently this was an ordinary manifestation for her. But not for me. This information made me rise from my seat and cry, “What do you mean by ‘turn back’? Does the Jordan really start flowing in the opposite direction?”

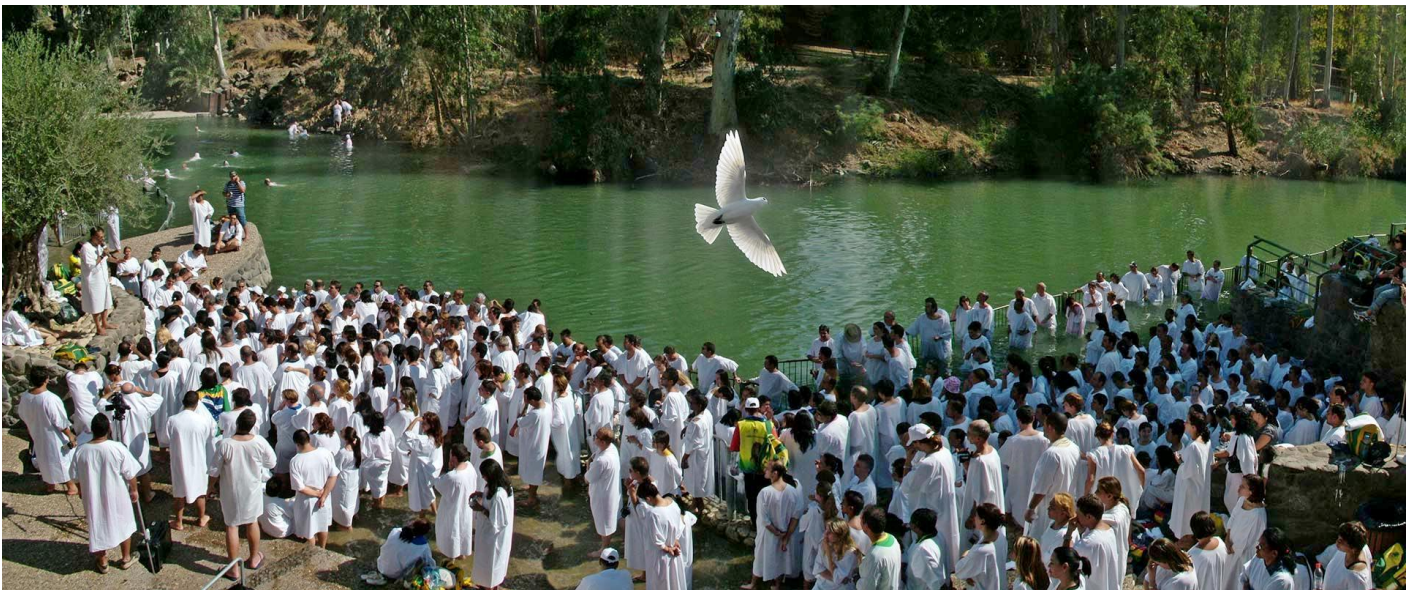


But Presbyteria simply waved her hand. “Yes, you’ll see it for yourself soon!”

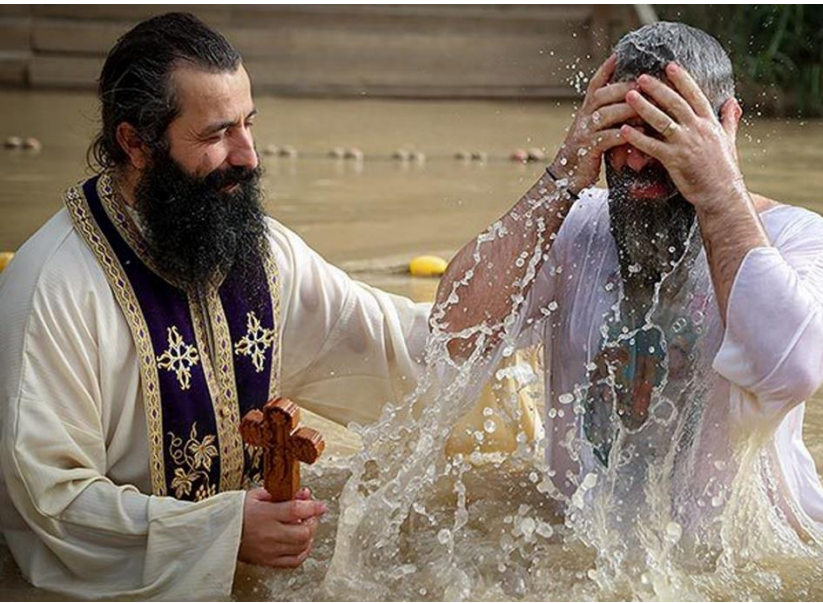
I fell silent and dropped back into my seat in confusion. But this did not mean that I had yet been successful in dealing with the churning flow of thoughts in my head. “What does this mean, ‘The Jordan was turned back’? How are we supposed to understand this? Do they really mean it literally? And why haven’t I heard about this before?” The words of Psalm 113, The sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back (Ps. 113:3) that are sung on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord was something that I had always considered allegorical. The Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. The Jordan is an image of human mortality, and the Dead Sea is an image of hell. Out of all the rivers in the world, Christ had the Sacrament of Baptism take place in the Jordan, as if freeing our human race from its flow into death. This interpretation by St. John Chrysostom of the words of the Psalm was a real discovery for me when I heard them once. But that the water in the Jordan would actually start flowing backwards! And although the brain refuses to accept this extraordinary event, something within me was already living and trembling in expectation of this miracle.

Under my clothes and over my swimsuit, at Presbyteria Maria’s advice I had put on while still in the hotel a white gown I bought the day before for five dollars in an Arab shop near the Lord’s Sepulcher. Along the road to the Jordan our bus stopped at the last shop where those who had not done so earlier could still purchase white gowns for a reasonable price. After all the fuss of shopping we walked upwards along a road and stopped near some sort of wall. I happened to be standing near the tour guide at the very moment when she announced that we were now near the first tomb of Lazarus the Four-days-dead. After eight days of our trip I still could not get used to the continually lightening-fast transformation from the ordinary to the great in this amazing Holy Land!

Finally, with all the anxiousness over the unknown behind us, we were now standing near the historical site of the Baptism of Christ, by the walls of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist! A brief wait for the arrival of Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem, and the Cross procession solemnly moved to the accompaniment of the kettle-drum and horns toward the Jordan, where the rite of the Great Blessing of the Waters began.



During the services, a white dove landed decorously on the Patriarch’s staff. At the end of the service he flew up, turning two circles over our heads, and then returned again to his place. The Israeli military guarding the entrance to the Jordan, automatic rifles on the ready, allowed the priests to approach the water and then closed ranks in front of the pilgrims. I was seized with anxiety: now how will I see the most important thing! Recalling that enormous TV screens had been installed to the left and right of the covered platform where the services had taken place, I pushed forward to one of them. Everything that was happening below could be seen on these screens like in the palm of your hand!



Now the priests throw before themselves wreaths of green leaves tied with ribbons. And now they pull them back out from the left side. Obviously they are floating away with the stream. Yes, but the Jordan flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, that is, from left to right, if you look at it from our shore... That means that the stream should take the wreaths to the right and the priests should be pulling them out of the right side... But they throw the wreaths in front of themselves again and again pull them from the left side... I watched, enchanted, this action, which is repeated many times—apparently for those of little faith, like me. I looked around in confusion and my eyes met with those of Presbytera. She was almost laughing as she looked at my shocked expression, and gestures to me that we need to hurry.

Why is the water in the Jordan salty?

I gathered the just-sanctified Baptismal water into a bottle I had brought from St. Petersburg. You don't need to go down to the river to do this because the water is piped upward. I poured some holy water into a plastic cup, took a big gulp, and froze with surprise: the water is bitter-salty to the taste! A bold supposition flickered through my head: Could this water have come from the Dead Sea to this place when it was 'turned back'? But there is no time to ponder this because hundreds of pilgrims in baptismal robes are already standing at the entrance to the river like a huge white cloud. On the other side of the barrier the Israeli soldiers are running around. One of them energetically waves his automatic rifle and shouts indefatigably in perfect Russian at everyone not to crowd around the turnstiles, not to step on the barriers, and to take a few steps backward.

After an hour of marking place our "white cloud" starts murmuring indistinctly; in the fore you can hear soldiers squabbling with the pilgrims, who are angry about the extremely slow pace of the queue. To my left is a group of people with a priest at the head, singing harmoniously, "When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan..." Soon I saw with amazement how they walked singing through the turnstile. I suggested to my neighbor on the right that we sing the troparion to the feast. They replied with embarrassment that they didn't know the words. It was the same with my neighbors to the rear and to the side. I started singing the troparion quietly to myself. It became easier to stand there, but I didn't notice any progress in the queue ahead...





Two hours later I managed to push through the turnstile, ran down the steps to the wooden platform, quickly took off my shoes and approached the water. Now I had to immerse myself totally three times. I took a step into the water. My leg was burned by the cold as with boiling water! I forced myself to take another step, then another... Shivering from the cold I dipped three times into the icy water, mumbling to myself, “In the name of the Father! And the Son! And the Holy Spirit! Amen! And then shot out onto platform like a cork out of a bottle. My whole body was burning, like after a good Russian bathhouse! The weariness of three hours on my feet disappeared as if it had never been—to the contrary I was overcome by a feeling of physical lightness and was spilling over with unbelievable joy!

The first thing I did after climbing into the bus was to ask Presbytera Maria why the waters of the Jordan are salty.

“What? Did you already swallow some?” she said with a horrified look on her face.

“Of course I did! Wasn’t I supposed to?” I said, perplexed.

“Of course not! The waters of the Jordan are salty because fertilizers from the surrounding fields flow into it along with the ground water! How are you feeling—does your stomach hurt yet?”

“Why should it hurt? This is Theophany water!” I would not give up. “Don’t you drink the water that has been blessed in the Jordan?!”

“We add a few drops of this water to a bottle of ordinary fresh water and drink it only after that.”

I lost a little steam after such a prosaic explanation for the saltiness of the waters of the Jordan... But how wonderful it would be if the Dead Sea were transformed on this great feast!

My joy caught up with me in St. Petersburg when I found a citation on the internet from a book by Archimandrite Ambrose (Yurasov), *On Faith and Salvation*: “On the eve of the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Orthodox Christians cut wooden crosses and fix lit candles to them, and the Jordan River carries them to the Dead Sea. But on the day of the Baptism, when the waters of the Jordan are turned back and flow away from the Dead Sea, the crosses are carried back. And the usually fresh water of the Jordan becomes salty.”

Larisa Kaliuzhnaya

Translation by  
OrthoChristian.com

## Gratitudes from Orthodox IX Christian Community!

- ❖ *A heartfelt gratitude to Bishop Matthew of Sourozh, to the dean father Igor, and all our clergy – priests and deacons – of Patriarchal Parishes, as well as OCA and ROCOR sister Churches, for the care and support, guidance, and co-servicing, and the parishioners of St. Barbara Cathedral and Orthodox V, and all those of the sister Churches for participation and contributions to our common labour!*
- ❖ *A heartfelt gratitude to constant and devout members of our Church Board (Parish Council) for providing your special care for organizing and leading the church life and the tendance over the church building, the parish hall, cemetery and all the church territory!*
- ❖ *A heartfelt gratitude to all those, who generously and timely donated funds, items and supplies, contributed with your voluntary work, time and effort to support our Parishes last year. May God grant you His Treasure Incorruptible – the Grace of the Holy Spirit, and keep you sake through the difficult times!*
- ❖ *A heartfelt gratitude to those, who support our humble, at this time, online service!*



## *In Memoriam*

### **Andrew Belozer**

August 21, 1924 - December 2, 2020

***The parishioners of Orthodox 9 extend our deepest and sincere condolences to Doris, Glen and Karen and all the Belozer family and friends of the newly departed servant of God Andrew Belozer, who passed away peacefully December 2, 2020.***

All his talents Andrew has given to serving God, people and Church.

Andrew Belozer managed to combine strong will and assertiveness against the problems of maintaining the church and the community life, with soft and fatherly attitude to the individual people, being always interested in the well-being of everyone's life. His authority of an exemplary citizen and a very special man Andrew applied to the betterment of his church inheritance.

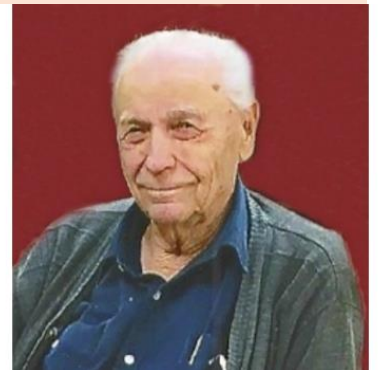
We could say, that Andrew gained the grace of saint Job the Much-suffering, blessing the Lord for, both, the happiness, and the tribulations of his life, thus never yielding to the despair, but giving an example of relying on God's will.

He could combine the administrative talents with many talents in craft and carpentry: many of his creations still do a lot of good both for the Church, the priestly order and many people.

For 27 years he was President of Orthodox IX, and for 12 years he was President of St. Mary's church at Nisku!

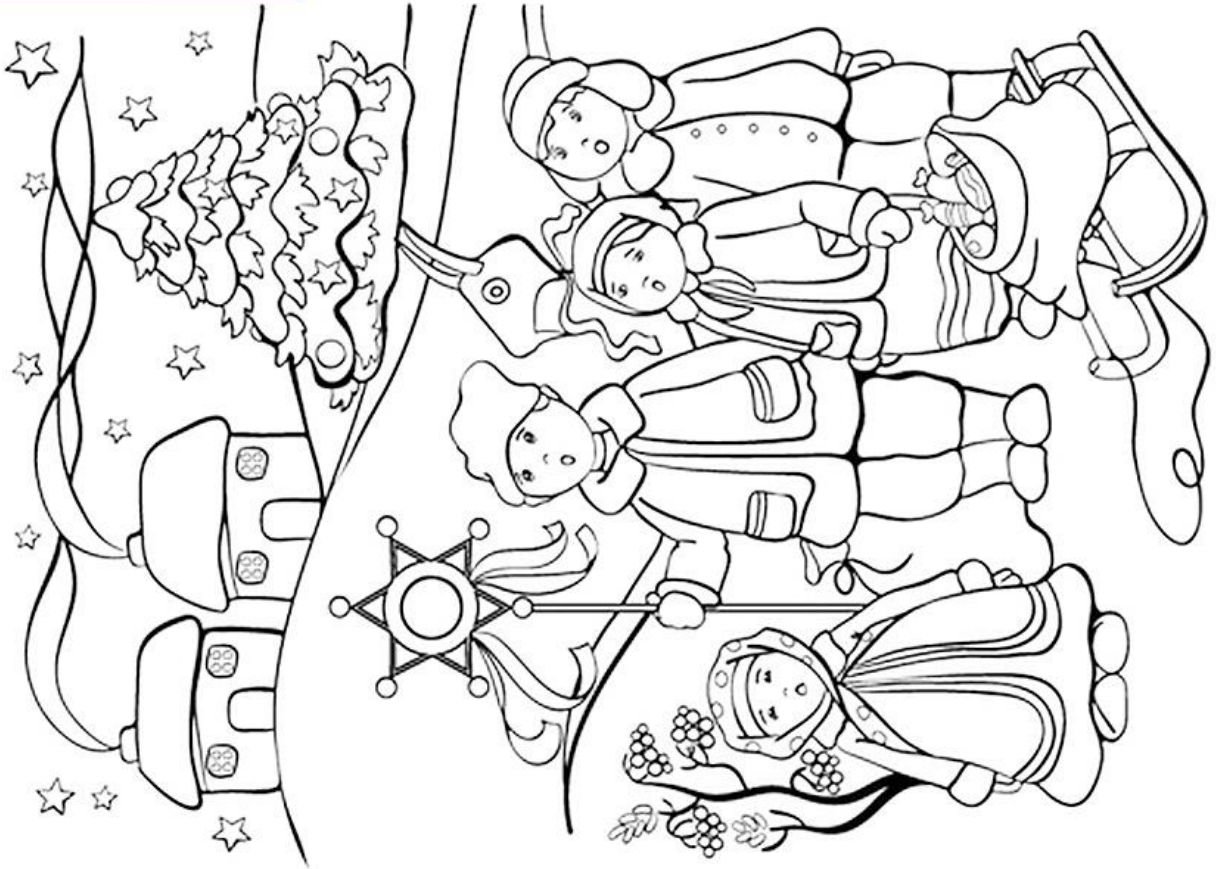
And even after he could not keep it up officially, never he missed an important church event, giving his authoritative speeches of edification to the congregation.

**The mercy of God, the Kingdom of Heaven to the newly departed servant of God Andrew Belozer!**





Let's go and sing Christmas carols!



# January 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			<u>6</u> Christmas Eve 2:00 p.m. – Christmas Vespers & Matins - Nisku	<u>7</u>  <b>Nativity of Christ</b> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy	<u>8</u> <b>Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos</b>	<u>9</u>
<u>10</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u> <b>Circumcision of the Lord, St. Basil the Great, Julian New Year</b>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>17</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy	<u>18</u> Epiphany Eve (strict fast) 	<u>19</u> <b>The Baptism of our Lord</b> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy with water blessing	<u>20</u> Synaxis of John the Baptist 	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>24</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u> Paul of Thebes 	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>31</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy	<p><u>2021- Dates to remember</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>2021</b> – the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of consecration of the first Orthodox church in Canada and the first visit of the Orthodox Bishop, St. Tikhon</li> <li>○ <b>2021</b> – the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first (documented) Slavic arrivals to settle at Rabbit Hill are (at present - Nisku area); 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the unification of St. Mary's church; the 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Consecration of St. Mary's church</li> <li>○ <b>February 27.</b> Saturday – 10:00 am – Divine Liturgy; 11:30am – The Annual Diocese meeting will be held at St. Mary's Church, Nisku.</li> <li>○ <b>March 6.</b> Saturday – 10:00 am – The Annual "Orthodox IX" Parishes meeting will be held at St. Mary Parish Hall, Nisku.</li> <li>○ <b>March 13.</b> Saturday – 1:00 pm – The Annual St. Mary's Parish meeting will be held at Parish Hall, Nisku.</li> <li>○ <b>March 15.</b> Monday – GREAT LENT BEGINS.</li> <li>○ <b>March 21.</b> – Sunday of Orthodoxy</li> <li>○ <b>May 2.</b> – Easter Sunday – HOLY PASCHA – THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST</li> </ul>					