

Synaxis of John the Baptist

In the Orthodox Church it is customary, on the day following the Great Feasts of the Lord and the Mother of God, to remember those saints who participated directly in the sacred event. So, on the day following the Theophany of the Lord, the Church honors the one who participated directly in the Baptism of Christ, placing his own hand upon the head of the Savior.

Saint John, the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, whom the Lord called the greatest of the prophets, concludes the history of the Old Testament and opens the era of the New Testament. John the Baptist bore witness to the Only-Begotten Son of God, incarnate in the flesh, and was accounted worthy to baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan.

John the Baptist, the son of the Priest Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth, was related to the Lord on His mother’s side. He was born six months before Christ. The Archangel Gabriel announced his birth in the Temple at Jerusalem, revealing to Zachariah that a son was to be born to him. Through the prayers offered beforehand, the child was filled with the Holy Spirit. He prepared himself in the wilds of the desert for his great service by a strict life, by fasting, prayer and sympathy for the fate of God’s people. At the age of thirty, he came forth preaching repentance. He appeared on the banks of the Jordan, to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus Christ. Having baptized the sinless Lamb of God, John the Baptist was beheaded by the sword on orders of King Herod.

Because John the Baptist’s main role in his life was played out on the day of the Theophany (Epiphany), the Church has from earliest times dedicated the day following Theophany to his memory.

An incident with the hand of the Forerunner is also linked to this feast. The Evangelist Luke desired to remove his body from Sebaste, where the John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod, to Antioch, his place of birth. He succeeded, though, in acquiring and translating only one hand, which was preserved in Antioch until the tenth century. After this it was transferred to Constantinople, where it disappeared during the time of the Turks. It is said that every year on the feast of the saint, the bishop brought the hand of John the Baptist before the people. Sometimes the hand appeared open and other times the hand appeared clenched. In the first case it signified a fruitful and bountiful year, and in the second case it meant a year of unfruitfulness and famine.



Saint Mary Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach

1317 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406

The Very Reverend Father Peter Shportun, *Priest /Pastor*

Church Office: (561) 965-5007
Fr. Peter’s Cellular: (561) 632-7066
Email: stmaryschurch@bellsouth.net
Website: stmaryschurchwpb.org
Banquet Hall Rentals: Maribel Perez - (561) 721-5696

*A Parish of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast,
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America*

Worship Guide and Bulletin – January 7, 2024



Prayer on the Synaxis of John the Baptist

“Yea, O thou who didst baptize Christ, thou revered Forerunner and last of the Prophets, first of the Martyrs according to Grace, mentor of fasters and those who fled to the desert, teacher of purity and close friend of Christ, we pray thee, we flee to thee for refuge: cast us not away from thy protection, but rather raise us up who are fallen in many sins: renew our spirit through repentance, as it were by a second baptism, washing away sin, and preaching penitence unto the cleansing of the ill deeds of each: wash us, indeed, who are stained with sins, and cause us to enter that place where nothing impure hath entry, into the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Welcome!

Whether you are a parishioner or a visitor, we are glad you have chosen to pray with us at Saint Mary's. As a friendly reminder, please observe the following upon entering the church for prayer.

- If you arrive after the services begin, try to enter the Church quietly and observe what is happening. Try not to interrupt the service by your entrance.
- Please silence your cellular telephones.
- Please place your offerings in the basket on the counter in the Church Narthex (Entrance), or the Offering Tray when passed.
- You are invited join us in the Banquet Hall for coffee and refreshments following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Divine Liturgy Variables for the Synaxis of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner & Baptist John

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated on this day. The service text may be found beginning on page 91 in the Red Service Book in the pews.

The First Antiphon

When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among a barbarous people; Judah became His sanctuary; Israel His dominion.

Refrain: *Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.*

The sea beheld and fled: Jordan turned back. What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? And thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back? (**Refrain**)

Glory... Both now... (**Refrain**)

The Second Antiphon

I am filled with love, for the Lord will hear the voice of my supplication. For He hath inclined His ear unto me, and in my days will I call upon Him.

Refrain: *Save us, O Son of God, Who wast baptized by John in the Jordan; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.*



Church Services at Saint Mary

- ♦ Sunday: Matins at 8:50 AM; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM
- ♦ Saturday (**Beginning January 13th**): Great Vespers at 6:30 PM
 - ♦ Wednesday: Vespers at 6:30 PM

Confessions

- ♦ Saturday immediately following Vespers;
 - ♦ Sunday 8:30 to 8:50 AM;
 - ♦ Wednesday 6:00 to 6:30 PM;or by appointment with Fr. Peter

Beginning Saturday, January 13th, Great Vespers will be celebrated at 6:30 PM

In the Orthodox Church the liturgical day begins in the evening with the setting of the sun. This practice follows the Biblical account of creation: "And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Genesis 1.5). The Service of Vespers takes us through creation, sin, and salvation in Christ. It prepares us for the sleep of the night and the dawn of the new day to come.



"...let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." Hebrews 13: 15-16



Saint Mary Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach, Florida

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December 13, 2023

NOTICE OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Dear Parishioners,

This letter serves as official notification of the Annual Parish Meeting of Saint Mary's Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach, Florida, to be held on **Sunday, January 21, 2024, 11:45 AM**, at Saint Mary's Banquet Hall, 1317 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, FL.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive and review the reports from the Parish Council, Pastor, and Parish Organizations for the year 2023. In addition, the 2024 Church Budget will be presented for approval and elections to the Parish Council will be held.

All reports are asked to be submitted by January 7, 2024. These reports and the meeting agenda will be made available in the Church Narthex on or before January 14, 2024, and during the Annual Parish Meeting.

To participate and vote, parishioners must be in good spiritual and financial standing with Saint Mary's Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach, FL.

Your support of Saint Mary's over the year has been greatly appreciated. Please continue with your support by participating in the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Pasley, Parish Council Secretary, on behalf of:

The Very Reverend Fr. Peter ~~Shportun~~, Pastor:

Parish Council of Saint Mary's Orthodox Church,
Mark Samra, Chairman

The Very Reverend Father Peter ~~Shportun~~, Priest/Pastor
1317 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

Telephone: (561) 965-5007 • Fax: (561) 965-0679 • E-mail: stmaryschurch@bellsouth.net

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America / Diocese of Miami and the Southeast

The pangs of death have encompassed me; the perils of hades have found me. Tribulation and sorrow have I found, and I called upon the name of the Lord. (*Refrain*)

Merciful is the Lord, and righteous; and our God hath mercy. (*Refrain*)

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

The Third Antiphon

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Israel now confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let them now who fear the Lord confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.

- *During the Little Entrance, after the verses of the Third Antiphon, the Apolytikion of Theophany is sung. After the Little Entrance, the following hymns are sung in the following order:*

Apolytikion for the Resurrection in Tone 6

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Apolytikion for Theophany in Tone 1

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Apolytikion for the Synaxis of John the Baptist in Tone 2

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with songs of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown indeed to be the most honorable of the prophets, for in the waters thou didst baptize Him Who had been proclaimed. After suffering with joy in behalf of the truth, thou didst proclaim even to those in Hades the God Who appeared in the flesh, Who taketh away the sin of the world, and granteth us the Great Mercy.

Apolytikion of the Church (Dormition) in Tone 1

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world; for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

Kontakion of Theophany in Tone 4

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.

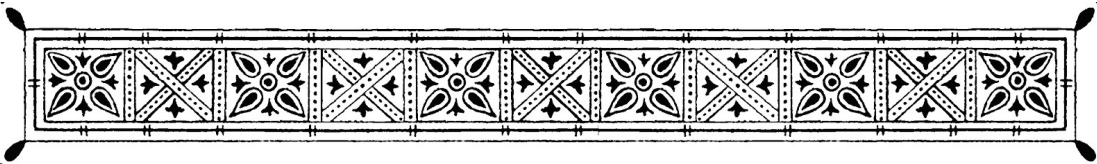
The Anti-Trisagion Hymn (Sung in place of "Holy God")

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia. (thrice)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Have put on Christ. Alleluia.

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.



THE EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

The Epistle (For the Synaxis of John the Baptist)

Verse: The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord. O God, hear my prayer.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (19:1-8)

In those days, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into



Time To Have Your Home Blessed!

Each year following the Feast of Epiphany, it is the tradition of the Orthodox Church to have the priest come and bless our homes. Through the prayers and by the sprinkling of Holy Water the priest invokes God's blessings and protection upon the home and those living in it. We bless homes for many reasons:

- to show that the family is a small Church in Christ,
- to consecrate and sanctify the home and all activity in it to God,
- to fill the home and all who live in it with the fullness of God.

Fr. Peter will begin the Blessing of Homes on Sunday, January 7th. To schedule a Home Blessing, you may contact Fr. Peter by doing one of the following:

- *Telephone or Text (Fr. Peter's cellular # is 561.632-7066);
- *Email at frpshport@gmail.com;
- *Speak to him following services or during Coffee Hour;
- *Complete the form below and either mail or give it to him directly.

When the Fr. Peter comes, have as many family members present as possible. On a table include an icon and a lit candle; a list of names (living and departed) you want Fr. Peter to pray for; You may also include anything that you may want to have blessed (i.e. icon, cross, personal item, etc.) This is also a wonderful time for you and Fr. Peter to visit. (Note: It is not expected to feed Fr. Peter unless prior arrangements are made).

HOME BLESSING REQUEST FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Seven Day Prayer Candles Offered

♦ By Leon & Judy Chahub for the healing of Grace, Cynthia, and Carol; In loving memory of Jennifer.

*****When offering a Seven Day Prayer Candle, please list only the names that you are praying for, and are asking the church community to pray for. Please do not include greetings, birthday and anniversary wishes, etc.***

Holy Water from Theophany

Bottles of Holy Water blessed on Theophany, are on the table next to the baptism font. If you did not receive Holy Water on Theophany, please feel free to take one home with you.



Be a Sunday Coffee Hour Host

A beautiful way to celebrate an occasion, honor a loved one's memory or simply show your love for Saint Mary's is to host a Sunday Coffee Hour. It is also a great way to contribute to our parish fellowship. Please speak with Jane Pasley of Khouryia Myriam for more details and to host a Coffee Hour.

Weekly Spiritual Discussion

Spiritual Discussions led by Fr. Peter resume this coming Wednesday, January 10th, immediately following the Vespers Service. The topic of discussion over the next several weeks will be 'The Beatitudes' taken from the gospels of Matthew (5:2-12) and Luke (6:20-26). All are welcome to participate.

Antiochian Village Registration

Registration for the Antiochian Village Summer Camp opens on Sunday, January 7th, at 6:00 PM. If you wish to send your children to Antiochian Village, please do not procrastinate as available dates fill quickly. For more information and to register. Please refer to www.avcamp.org for more information and to register.

*****The Order of Saint Ignatius of Antioch and Saint Mary's Church will again offer camp scholarships for 2024. Information for qualifications and how to apply will be announce soon.***

Parish Council Meeting

The January meeting of the Parish Council will be held this Sunday, January 7th, at 11:45 AM, in the Conference Room.

what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the One Who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve of them in all. And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, arguing and pleading about the Kingdom of God.

الرسالة (للقدّيس يوحنا المعمدان)

يَفْرَحُ الصِّدِّيقُ بِالرَّبِّ. اِسْتَمِعْ يَا اللهُ لَصَوْتِي.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الرُّسُلِ الْقَدِيسِينَ الْأَطْهَارِ.

فِي تِلْكَ الْأَيَّامِ حَدَثَ إِذْ كَانَ أَبْلُوسُ فِي كُورِينْثُوسَ، أَنَّ بُولُسَ اجْتَاَزَ فِي النَّوَاجِي الْعَالِيَةِ وَجَاءَ إِلَى أَفَسَسَ، فَوَجَدَ بَعْضًا مِنَ التَّلَامِيذِ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: «هَلْ نِلْتُمُ الرُّوحَ الْقُدُسَ لَمَّا آمَنْتُمْ؟» «قَالُوا لَهُ: لَا، حَتَّى إِنَّنَا لَمْ نَسْمَعْ بِوُجُودِ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ». «قَالَ: «فَبِأَيَّةِ مَعْمُودِيَّةٍ اعْتَمَدْتُمْ؟» «فَقَالُوا: «بِمَعْمُودِيَّةِ يُوْحَنَّا». فَقَالَ بُولُسُ: «إِنَّ يُوْحَنَّا عَمَدَ بِمَعْمُودِيَّةِ التَّوْبَةِ قَائِلًا لِلشَّعْبِ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِالَّذِي يَأْتِي بَعْدَهُ أَيُّ الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ». «فَلَمَّا سَمِعُوا اعْتَمَدُوا بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ، وَوَضَعَ بُولُسُ يَدَيْهِ عَلَيْهِمْ فَحَلَّ الرُّوحُ الْقُدُسُ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَطَفَفُوا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِلُغَاتٍ وَيَتَنَبَّأُونَ. وَكَانُوا كُلُّهُمْ نَحْوَ عَشْرِ رَجُلًا. ثُمَّ دَخَلَ الْمَجْمَعُ، وَكَانَ يُجَاهِرُ مَدَّةَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَشْهُرٍ يُفَاوِضُهُمْ وَيُقَنِّعُهُمْ بِمَا يَخْتَصُّ بِمَلَكُوتِ اللهِ.

The Gospel (For the Synaxis of John the Baptist)

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:29-34)

At that time, John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of Whom I said, 'After me comes a man Who ranks before me, for He was before me.' I myself did not know Him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that He might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on Him. I myself did not know Him; but He Who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on Whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

الإنجيل (للقدّيس يوحنا المعمدان)

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ يُوحَنَّا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ.

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ رَأَى يُوحَنَّا يَسُوعَ مُقْبِلًا إِلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ: «هُوَذَا حَمَلُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي يَرْفَعُ خَطِيئَةَ الْعَالَمِ! هَذَا هُوَ الَّذِي قُلْتُ عَنْهُ: إِنَّهُ يَأْتِي بَعْدِي رَجُلٌ قَدْ صَارَ قَبْلِي، لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ مُتَقَدِّمِي. وَأَنَا لَمْ أَكُنْ أَعْرِفُهُ. لَكِنْ لِكَيْ يُظَهَرَ لِإِسْرَائِيلَ، جِئْتُ أَنَا أَعْمِدُ بِالْمَاءِ». وَشَهِدَ يُوحَنَّا قَائِلًا: «إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ الرُّوحَ مِثْلَ حَمَامَةٍ قَدْ نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَاسْتَقَرَّ عَلَيْهِ. وَأَنَا لَمْ أَكُنْ أَعْرِفُهُ، لَكِنَّ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَنِي لِأَعْمِدَ بِالْمَاءِ، هُوَ قَالَ لِي: إِنَّ الَّذِي تَرَى الرُّوحَ يَنْزِلُ وَيَسْتَقَرُّ عَلَيْهِ، هُوَ الَّذِي يُعَمِّدُ بِالرُّوحِ الْقُدُّوسِ. وَأَنَا قَدْ عَاتَيْتُ وَشَهِدْتُ أَنَّ هَذَا هُوَ ابْنُ اللَّهِ».

- *The Divine Liturgy continues as usual with the following changes:*

Megalynarion of the Synaxis of John the Baptist in Tone 2

Magnify, O my soul, the Maiden who delivered us from the curse.

O the wonder of thy super-intelligent birth-giving, thou all-pure bride, the blessed Mother through whom we have received perfect salvation, we indite a fitting song, offering as a gift the song of gratitude.

Communion Hymn for the Synaxis of John the Baptist in Tone 8

In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. Alleluia.

After receiving Communion, please read the 'Prayers of Thanksgiving After Holy Communion' on pages 128-131 in the Red Service Book in the pews.

- *After Communion, instead of singing "We have seen the true light", the Festal Apolytikion: "When Thou, O Lord" is sung.*
- Fr. Peter's Monthly 'Children's Sermon' will be offered prior to Communion. All children are encourage to come to the front of the church and participate.
- Sunday School Classes resume on this Sunday following Holy Communion.

Weekly Altar Candle

◊ In glory of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Holy Bread Offered

◊ By George & Hayfa Zein, for the blessings of the New Year and the good health of the Zein and Ibrahim families.

***If you would like to offer a Weekly Altar Candle, or Holy Bread for a Divine Liturgy, please speak with Fr. Peter. (A minimum donation of \$10.00 (Altar Candle), and \$30.00 (Holy Bread) is requested.)*

Please Remember in Your Prayers

For the Living

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5: 14

For the Good Health of the Servants of God: Archpriest Michael & Matushka Annette Zaparyniuk, Michael, Priest Andrew Short, Sub-Deacon William Hall, Jodet Rae, Leon & Judy Chalhoub, Johnny & Joyce Chalhoub, Raouf Saballeil, Sabah Shalhoub, Craig Miller, Emma, George, Alice Kelly, George Matouk, Yvette.

For the Shut-ins of our Church Community: Gloria Yedlinsky, Lidia Pawlcuk, Zakia Salloum.

For peace in the Middle East and the Ukraine.

For all Christians and people suffering from violence, war, persecution, captivity, hunger, and homelessness throughout this world.

For those serving in our armed forces here and abroad: Christopher Smith, Jonathan Shportun, Alexios Gavrilos.

For the Departed

"With the spirits of the righteous made perfect, give rest O Lord to the souls of Thy servants..."

Khalil Aboukhalid (newly departed (12/13/23); Florence Esper (newly departed 12/8/23), Lama Chalhoub (newly departed 12/6/23), Gail Camileri (6/26/23), Angie Smith (6/23/23), Archdeacon Joseph Harb (3/8/23).