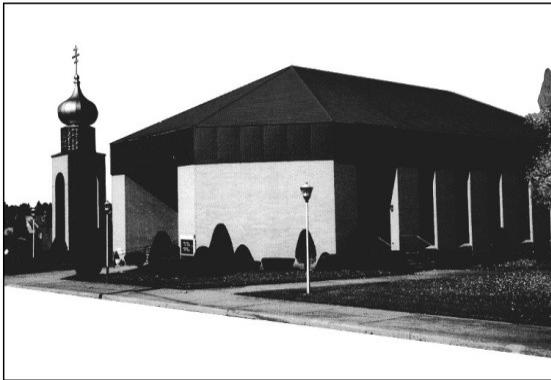


**SLAVA ISUSU CHRISTU!
SLAVA VO V'IKI!**



**GLORY TO JESUS CHIRST!
GLORY FOREVER!**

**January 10, 2016
Sunday After Theophany**



st john the baptist Byzantine catholic church

5 East 20th Street, Hazleton, Pennsylvania
office/rectory: 570-454-1142
hall/kitchen: 570-454-9075 (Bingo & food orders)

Fr Jerome Wolbert, ofm, Pastor
jeromeofm@yahoo.com 570-401-8684 (cell)

Deacon Lawrence Foran
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Sacramental Mysteries:

Confession (Repentance & Reconciliation) Saturday 3:30-4pm and by appointment.

Baptism, Chrismation, Becoming Byzantine Catholic: Please meet with Fr Jerome or Deacon Larry.

Holy Matrimony (Weddings): Planning must begin at least six months in advance.

No date can be set until all paperwork is in order. Pre-Cana classes held every Spring.

Please contact Fr Jerome or Deacon Larry to set up an initial meeting.

Holy Anointing for Healing: on request in church after Liturgy or call Fr Jerome.

Eucharist: for those unable to attend church, contact Deacon Larry for temporary or on-going visits.

Please remember in your prayers those confined to home, nursing facility or hospital. ***Please pray especially for Brother Gus, OFM, Barbara C., John S., Margaret, Hiromi, Tammy, Darren, Theresa and Fr. Jody.*** If you would like to add a name to the prayer list, please give a written note or email to Fr. Jerome or Deacon Larry. Communion calls are made on the week of the first Friday of each month. Please call the rectory if you or a family member wishes to be visited, either permanently or temporarily. Don't wait until there is a crisis to call. The sacraments should be brought to the sick on a regular basis.

Pirohi Making Sessions begin on Monday, January 11th at 9:00 AM. New volunteers are always welcome to assist in this valuable parish fund raiser.

St. John Bingo is held every Tuesday night in the church hall. Doors open at 4:30 PM and bingo begins at 6:00 PM. Please patronize our parish bingo and bring a friend!

Please pick up your 2016 envelopes in the church vestibule. We ask that you now use these 2016 envelopes. Please do not submit any 2015 envelopes. Envelope numbers have been changed for 2016 so in order to be assured proper credit for your donations, only use the 2016 envelopes.

Area GCU Lodge will hold its first quarter meeting in our church hall on Sunday, January 31st at 1:00 PM. All members are asked to attend. Activities for the year will be discussed.

Aluminum Cans – We are still collecting aluminum cans to help in raising funds for the parish. You can bring the cans in whenever the church is open for Divine Liturgy, or call the rectory to make other arrangements for dropping off cans. Please remember: *aluminum cans only* and please be sure all liquids have been removed.

From our Pope for the New Year ...

Mercy is the heart of God. ... This then is why "it is absolutely essential for the Church and for the credibility of her message that she herself live and testify to mercy. Her language and her gestures must transmit mercy, so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father. The Church's first truth is the love of Christ. The Church makes herself a servant of this love and mediates it to all people: a love that forgives and expresses itself in the gift of oneself. Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy."

We too, then, are called to make compassion, love, mercy and solidarity a true way of life, a rule of conduct in our relationships with one another. This requires the conversion of our hearts: the grace of God has to turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (cf. *Ezekiel 36:26*), open to others in authentic solidarity. For solidarity is much more than a "feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far". Solidarity is "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all", because compassion flows from fraternity.



From the Pastor ...Gospel Reflection

Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

Sometimes I nod my head and say, "Yes, I understand," and only after a moment realize that I did not catch everything, or maybe I don't realize the full impact of what was said until much later.

It is easy to let the eyes and ears glaze over when we hear the same passage year after year. But this is the theme of Jesus' preaching: the kingdom of heaven is near, and we should "repent" because of it.

What meaning does a word like "Kingdom" have for those of us used to voting in a "democracy"? We rule ourselves. At this writing, people have stormed lands managed by the federal government to insist on a more local rule. We resist allowing anyone – even God – to have control over us. Yet, that is part of what we pray for: the grace not to resist but to cooperate with the Lord our God and God's plans for us.

Repentance is rooted in the Greek word for turning around; Jesus is saying, "turn toward God." In much of our life, we are on automatic pilot, scurrying around as we have been trained to do, working for only what is immediately needed, or to pile up a storehouse so we can be safe for now.

Our repentance is to turn toward God and allow ourselves to see as God sees and to do what God has for us to do. The "penance" we receive at Confession should help us to do this. Indeed, all of our prayerful attention to God helps us to love God and neighbor and to listen better that we may follow through on what God is asking of us.

So let us pray recognizing the wisdom and being more attentive, that we may hear what God wants us to hear, see with the same merciful compassion that God sees us, and follow through on what God asks of us. Let us truly repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!

Read it again: *Matthew 4:12-17*

For your reflection: What is one way that you see or do things differently from those around you because you are paying attention to God's present, here and now?

New Phone Numbers - We will save \$100/month for at least two years by changing our phone service, but our number can no longer be ported to a new carrier due to changes in the phone exchanges in our area. Therefore, we need new numbers with a 459 exchange. The phone technician will make the change on January 29. The old numbers will carry a message for at least 30 days, giving our new phone numbers. Of course, Father Jerome and Deacon Larry can always be reached by cell phone.

New Phone Numbers effective January 29:

Rectory Office: [570-459-5745](tel:570-459-5745)

FAX: [570-459-5729](tel:570-459-5729)

Hall: [570-459-6037](tel:570-459-6037)

Phone Numbers Will Change January 29

Parish Calendar

Sunday January 10 -- ECF classes resume

Prayer for Christian Unity Sunday January 24 at 3pm in our church

An opportunity to gather with other Christians to pray for what Jesus prayed for: that we would all be one, as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). The theme of this year's prayer is "Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord" (see 1 Peter 2:9). The event is sponsored by the Greater Hazleton Ministerium. This is a wonderful opportunity to show good will to our brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches and ecclesial communities. There will be a social following in the hall. Please tell Fr. Jerome or Deacon Larry if you can help serve or bring refreshments.

GCU Greater Hazleton Lodge meets Sunday January 31 at 1pm in the Parish Hall

Parish Council meeting at 2pm Sunday January 31 in the Rectory Conference Room

Fr Jerome will distribute an agenda by January 17.

Forgiveness Vespers Sunday February 7 at 3pm

Prepare for the Great Fast by praying to God for the grace to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. Reconcile with others. Join us for a pot-luck in the parish hall after vespers.

Moleben for the Year of Mercy, Thursday, Feb.11—at St. Mary's Church in Hazleton Heights.

From Around the Metropolia: *A New Year Confession*

A non-Catholic friend just can't understand why Catholic bishops invite people back to church with the sacramental Mystery of Confession. You might say my friend is like the kid on the commercial who doesn't want a toothbrush for Christmas, and we are like the puppy dog who gets excited over Milk-Bones. Confession may be misunderstood and even maligned, but I have seen its healing power. We encourage the average Catholic Christian to make a good Confession during the pre-Christmas Fast and during the Great Lenten Fast. We also recommend more frequent Confession for those who strive to live the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ more fully. The New Year, with its resolutions and fresh beginnings, seems like a good time to talk about the things that people talk about in Confession.

– Fr Stephen Wahal of Donora, Monessen, and Charleroi, PA

Blessed is the Kingdom ... What is a Sacramental Mystery?

The hat is empty, and then the magician pulls a rabbit out of the hat! Magic works by slight of hand, hiding things and tricking your senses into thinking something else is going on.

The sacramental mysteries of the church work differently: God asks us to use physical things prayerfully in a certain way, through the ministry of the church, as a way for God to reach us, helping us to open our hearts and all of our being to the mystery of God able to work in us.

God works through the water of baptism and the chrism (fragrant blessed oil) to baptize us in water and the Holy Spirit. The water and chrism are signs of what God is doing invisibly to us. God works through the oil of anointing and the prayers of the priest to convey his loving mercy which can bring about healing of soul and body; thus some may not be healed physically but may still be healed of some of the emotional or spiritual pains in their lives. I knew a woman who was healed spiritually after she was anointed for healing when her cancer became very serious. Through her spiritual healing, her ex-husband and delinquent son started to help her. Even her family was healed by the anointing.

We should receive the sacraments regularly. We recognize the pains of our lives, and in faith we turn to the Eucharist for healing of soul and body. St James tells us to ask for the priests to pray over and anoint those who are seriously ill. We do not simply arrange human marriages but enter into holy matrimony, a union of man and woman *with Jesus Christ*. Let us frequent the sacramental mysteries of the Church and pray that God give us greater understanding as we receive these holy mysteries.

Next time ... *Anointing for Healing*



House Blessings 2016: Forms are in the vestibule to sign up to have your house blessed. Fr Jerome and Deacon Larry have a special gift for each family that requests a house blessing. Sign up today! ***Census and House Blessing forms may be returned in the collection.***

Please remember to return your parish census forms as soon as possible. You may return the forms by placing them in the collection basket. Thank You!

House Blessings 2016: As Christians we work with God to reclaim fallen nature for the Kingdom of Heaven. We talk about this as our “salvation” but we also reach out to all creation to reclaim what God has created for Good Purpose and Blessing. Any blessing reclaims creation for God's Kingdom.

The home is a central place for each of us whether we live alone or with others. We pray, we work, we chat, we develop family relationships and work out our marriages, all in our homes. What more important place is there to reclaim for God's Kingdom? Thus we drive the enemy out of our homes by the power Christ has given us, his Body the Church. We do this through our prayers, our striving to live well in Christ, and through the annual sprinkling with holy water blessed on the feast of Theophany.

The word “theophany” means revelation of God. We might not see God descend as the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove on Jesus. But we do see with the eyes of faith that blessing people and things brings God in a way more obvious and present to our senses. The effort that we make to connect with God helps us become more receptive to God's presence, is important witness to others, and our cooperation with God is also a blessing for those around us.

In conjunction with the **100th Anniversary celebration of Holy Rosary Parish**, we are chancing off a ticket for



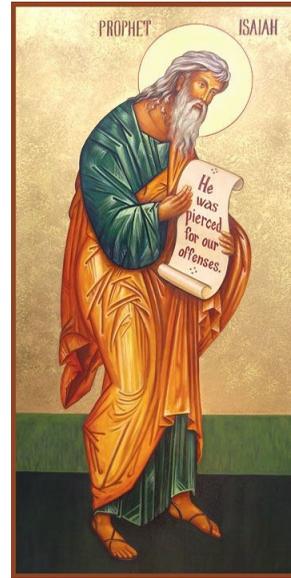
a **Trip to Italy** or **\$3,000.00 cash**. The trip is a 9-day pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, Florence & Venice with Fr. Brian Clarke and members of Holy Rosary Parish. The date is May 8th to the 16th, 2016 and includes transportation, lodging & meals. The donation is \$100.00 per ticket and only 100 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be Monday, February 1st, 2016.

For more information or to purchase a ticket, please contact Holy Rosary Office at [570-454-6693](tel:570-454-6693), Monday – Friday, 9 am to 4 pm.

From the Prophet Isaiah

Rise up in splendor! Your light has come,
the glory of the Lord shines upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth,
and thick clouds cover the peoples;
But upon you the Lord shines,
and over you appears His glory.
Nations shall walk by your light,
and kings by your shining radiance.
Raise your eyes and look about,
they all gather and come to you.

Isaiah 60: 1-3



Monday, January 11th marks the feast of St. Theodosius, the Cenobiarch and venerable monk. He lived near the end of the 6th century and was a founder of Cenobite monasticism, which stressed community life. As an adult St. Theodosius settled near Palestine in a deserted cave, which, according to Tradition, was the cave that the Three Magi had spend a night on their journey to worship the new born Savior. His life of solitude was often interrupted by people seeking his guidance. Soon other monks came to join him, making the cave too small for all his followers. He then established a monastery and up to 700 monks gathered to live there. St. Theodosius was renowned in his great service to neighbors, the poor and for providing shelter for travelers. Before his death, he summoned three bishops and revealed that he would soon depart to the Lord. Three days later, at age 105, he died and was buried in the original cave in which he once lived.

