You appeared today to us on earth, O Master, and Your light was signed on us who cry aloud to You and say with understanding, O Christ our God: You came and shone forth, O Light unapproachable.
CHURCH
Reverend Protopresbyter Constantine Simeonidis, Proostamenos
Very Reverend Protopresbyter Demetrios Simeonidis, Liturgical Assistant
Reverend Protopresbyter Konstantinos Tsagas, Retired
Robert Shand, Pastoral Assistant
Protopsalti: Mr. Pantelis Xikis       Sexton: Mr. Fotios Fotakidis           Choir Director: Mrs. Stacey Norton

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Welcoming Committee: Rosie Papagiannakis

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Choir: Stacey Norton
Senior Caregiving: Chris Rothenberger
Bible Study: Very Reverend Father Demetrios
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The Good Samaritan Society: David Brock
Meals for Moms: Niki Tringas
Orthodoxy 101: TDB
OPA: Sebastian Filutowski
Philoptochos: Linda Theodorakis
Prayer Armada: Melissa Georgiadis & Linda Martin
Premarital Seminar: John & Jean Dragash
Society of Wisdom: Mary Mantzaris

ECYDC PARISH MINISTRIES
Asteria Dance Troupe: Maija Davatelis, Zoe Jones, & Katherine Kartsonis
Catechetical School: Maria Haun-Davis, Presbytera Elaine Simeonidis, & Irene Sorich
Filarkia Dance Troupe: Gina Ageropoulos, Elektra Burnett & Eleni Stratigias
GOYA Advisors: Rob Shand Assistant: Sebastian Filutowski
Hellenic Dance Troupe: Tina Burnett & Staci Lagoutaris
Hellenic Academy Principal: Taso Mitrogogos
HOPE/JOY Advisors: Volunteer Needed
Jr. Hellenic Dance Troupe: Niki Arhakis, Venetta Jones, Krisa Roman, & Anna Saiger
Little Aegean Dance Troupe: Sophia Azarian, Sophia Kotsonis, & Anastasia Papaioanou
Mission Ministry: TBD
St. John Oratorical Festival: Niki Tringas
Youth Choir: Stacey Norton
Vacation Bible School: Monica El-Gharib
Youth Narthex Servers: Jennifer Cokias

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FOLLOW US ON:
Theophany (or Epiphany)
By Protopresbyter George Dion Dragas, Phd, Dd, Dth

In the 4th century AD, Christmas was separated from Theophany and constituted a separate Feast, which was celebrated on the 25th of December. This separation had been adopted in the Western Church, which was at that time united with the Eastern Churches. Since then Theophany was specifically connected with the Baptism of Christ, i.e. with the commencement of the public ministry of Christ through which he became the Savior and Redeemer of the world. The question that arises here is why was Christ baptized? Why did this take place and what is its deeper meaning?

2. The Baptism of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism
a) The witness of John the Evangelist. In the Gospel of St. John we find the first hints regarding the relation between the Baptism of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism. St. John the Forerunner speaks about the Baptism in water which he administered according to the divine calling and explains that the coming Christ would transform it into baptism in the Spirit so that through it human beings would enter into the kingdom of God: “John bore witness and said that he saw the Spirit descending like a Dove from heaven and resting upon Christ. He also said the he did not know him [i.e. Christ – until that point], but He who sent him to baptize had said that on whom he would see the Spirit descending and resting upon him, he would be the One who will baptize in the Holy Spirit. John also said that he saw this and bore witness to it, namely, that he is [the Christ] the Son of God” (1:32-34). Exactly the same was confirmed by the Lord himself when he said to Nicodemus: “Amen, amen I say to you, unless one is born of water and Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God” (3:5). These words of the Lord constitute the institution of the holy sacrament of Baptism, through which human beings become Christians. The descent of the Holy Spirit, then, at the Baptism of Christ, revealed the sacrament of Christ which Christ instituted and operates through the Holy Spirit. It is the Baptism which the Lord delivered to his holy disciples as a basic element of their ministry in the world.

b) The witness of the Evangelists Matthew and Mark. In the two synoptic Evangelists, Matthew and Mark, there is an explicit statement about the necessity of the sacrament of Baptism as a means of participation of human beings in the salvation which Christ offers. This appears in the command of the Risen Lord to his
Disciples to preach the Gospel and baptize human beings throughout the world. In other words, he asked them to initiate human beings into their new and saving relation with the one God in Trinity which was definitively revealed at his Baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. “Go, then, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all those things which I commanded you” (28:18-20). Mark the Evangelist states the same in a briefer way. “Go to the whole world and preach the Gospel to the entire creation. Whoever believes you and is baptized will be saved” (16:15-16).

It is clear, then, that the sacrament of Baptism which Christ instituted by fulfilling and transforming the Baptism of John the Baptist is the commencement of our reconnection with our creator, who is the leader and perfecter of our salvation. To understand the deeper meaning of this salvation we must pay attention to the details that the Gospel narratives supply concerning the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan.

3. The deeper meaning of the Baptism of Christ and the Sacrament of Baptism.

a) Man’s return to the true God. The Baptism of the Forerunner was a “baptism of repentance,” which signaled man’s return to God by obedience to the divine will. It was necessary in view of the coming of the Messiah and the kingdom of God which He would bring into the world. It was a kind of prelude and preparation which looked towards God’s intervention through the Messiah, that is, the justification of human beings and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is most clearly manifested in the words of Christ to John the Baptist, “This is necessary, so that all righteousness might be fulfilled” (Matth. 3:15). So, when Christ came forth to receive the baptism of John as a man, he accepted the divine will on behalf of the entire humanity. And then, the witness of the heavenly Father which recognized him as His beloved Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit in a bodily manner “in the form of a Dove” signaled the acceptance of Christ by the Father as the Messiah who would bring the kingdom of God into humanity. This kingdom was mainly and primarily represented by the communion of the Holy Spirit, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold: “Jacob is my son and I will take him up. Israel is my elect, whom my soul has accepted, and to whom I gave my Spirit so that he might judge among the nations”(42:1).

b) The humanity of Christ as the basis of man’s salvation. Both the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah as well as the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him refer to his humanity, which he assumed for our sake, and made it the basis of our justification and salvation. As the ecclesiastical hymnology declares:

“Having put on the form of the servant, O Christ, you came forth to be baptized by a servant in the waters of Jordan, so that you may redeem from the ancient slavery and sanctify and enlighten all of us human beings” (Vespers of the eve of Theophany).

“It is redemption that Christ is coming forth to bring to all believers through his baptism. Because through this, he purifies Adam, he raises the fallen, he puts to shame the tyrant who caused the fall, he opens the heavens, he brings down the Holy Spirit, and he grants incorruption and participation” (8th Praise).

“Today the Lord comes to the waters of Jordan, and says to John: Be not shy for baptizing me, because I came to save Adam the protoplast” (Oikos).

“As man you came to the river, O Christ, King, and you hasten to receive baptism from the hands of the Forerunner, for our sins, O Lover of mankind” (Sophronios of Jerusalem)!

c) The revelation of the one God in Trinity and his communion with man.

In the last analysis, however, what happened in
the Jordan refers to the divinity of Christ, and especially to his eternal filial identity, which reveals the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Christ is the eternal Son of the Father who also became man in order to bring man back to the kingdom of the Holy Trinity. It is for this reason that the Sacrament of Baptism which grants to us regeneration and brings us into the life of Christ is celebrated in the name of the Holy Trinity, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The feast of Theophany, then, refers not only to man’s return to the true God, the creator and Savior through Christ, but also to the revelation of the mystery of God, i.e. to the truth that God is one in Trinity and as such he must be worshiped. As the ecclesiastical hymnology states it:

“When you were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, it was then, that the worship of the Holy Trinity was manifested. Because it was then that the voice of the Begetter bore witness by calling you His Beloved Son. And then also, that the Spirit in the form of a Dove confirmed the assurance of the word. We glorify You in Your Epiphany, O Christ, as the God who enlightens the world” (Apolytikion).

“You manifested yourself to the world today, and your light, O Lord, was marked upon us who praise you with full understanding” (Kontakion).

The enlightenment about the One God in Trinity is also the reason for the feast of Theophany being called the feast of “The Lights.” The Lights in this case are the three blessed persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are one divine Light unapproachable!

4. The Great Sanctification of the Waters

The Great Sanctification of the Waters, which is observed on the eve and on the day of Theophany, is a calling to remembrance of the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan by John the Baptist and the sanctification of the waters which was done by Christ at that time. Saint John Chrysostom speaks about this Great Sanctification of the feast of Theophany and says that the sanctified water was kept by the faithful and used for purifications, support, healing, etc. We realize its importance when we recall the words of the prayer which the priest offers at the epiclesis (invocation) of the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of the water: “…and make it a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a release of sins, a cure of maladies, a extermination of demons, unreachable to the opposing powers, a plenitude of angelicpotency…” What is particularly important in this case is the repentance and the fasting which is observed on the eve of the Feast. When we receive the sanctified water of the Great Sanctification with contrite spirit and true faith, then it truly becomes a healing means of soul and body and undoing of all opposing powers.

The feast of the Theophany is an invitation to renewal and return to the Lord of glory, who humbled himself, though he was God, and became man – a true man, sinless, forgiving and merciful, the way, the truth and the life. Let us follow him on the path of righteousness, along with his all-holy Mother the Theotokos, St. John the Baptist, the holy Apostles and all the Saints.
During the reign of the Emperor Alexios Komnenos (1081-1118), a controversy arose in Constantinople among men learned in the Faith and zealous for virtue about the three holy Hierarchs and Fathers of the Church, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

Some argued for Saint Basil [known as Basilians] above the other two because he was able, as none other, to explain the mysteries of the Faith, and rose to angelic rank by his virtues. Organizer of monastic life, leader of the entire Church in the struggle with heresy, austere and demanding shepherd as to Christian morals, in him there was nothing base or of the earth. Hence, said they, he was superior to Saint Chrysostom who was by nature more easily inclined to absolve sinners.

The partisans of Saint Chrysostom [known as Johnites] retorted that the illustrious Archbishop of Constantinople had been no less zealous than Saint Basil in combating vices, in bringing sinners to repentance and in raising up the whole people to the perfection of the Gospel. The golden-mouthed shepherd of matchless eloquence has watered the Church with a stream of homilies in which he interprets the divine word and shows its application in daily life with more accomplished mastery than the two other holy Doctors.

According to a third group [known as Gregorians], Saint Gregory the Theologian was to be preferred to the others by reason of the majesty, purity and profundity of his language. Possessing a sovereign mastery of all the wisdom and eloquence of ancient Greece, he had attained, they said, to such a pitch in the contemplation of God that no one had been able to express the dogma of the Holy Trinity as perfectly as he.

With each faction setting up one of the Fathers against the other two in this way, the whole Christian people were soon caught up in the dispute, which, far from promoting devotion to the Saints in the City, resulted in nothing but ill-feeling and endless argument. Then one night the three holy Hierarchs appeared in a dream to Saint John Mauropous, the Metropolitan of Euchaita (5 Oct.), separately at first, then together and, speaking with a single voice, they said:

“As you see, the three of us are with God and no discord or rivalry divides us. Each of us, according to the circumstances and according to the inspiration that he received from the Holy Spirit, wrote and taught what befitted the salvation of mankind. There is not among us a first, a second or a third, and if you invoke one of us the other two are immediately present with him. Therefore, tell those who are quarreling not to create divisions in the Church because of us, for when we were on earth we spared no effort to reestablish unity and concord in the world. You can conjoin our three commemorations in
one feast and compose a service for it, inserting the hymns dedicated to each of us according to the skill and knowledge that God has given you. Then transmit it to the Christians with the command to celebrate it each year. If they honor us thus as being with and in God, we give them our word that we will intercede for their salvation in our common prayer.’ At these words, the Saints were taken up into heaven in a boundless light while conversing with one another by name [PG 120].

Saint John immediately assembled the people and informed them of this revelation. As he was respected by all for his virtue and admired for his powerful eloquence, the three parties made peace and every one urged him to lose no time in composing the service of the joint feast. With fine discernment, he selected January 30 as appropriate to the celebration, for it would set the seal to the month in which each of the three Hierarchs already had a separate commemoration.

The three Hierarchs — an earthly trinity as they are called in some of the wonderful troparia of their service — have taught us, in their writings and equally by their lives, to worship and to glorify the Holy Trinity, the One God in three Persons. These three luminaries of the Church have shed the light of the true Faith all over the world, scorning dangers and persecutions, and they have left us, their descendants, this sacred inheritance by which we too can attain to utmost blessedness and everlasting life in the presence of God and of all the Saints.

With the Feast of the Three Hierarchs at the end of January — the month in which we keep the memory of so many glorious bishops, confessors and ascetics — the Church in a way recapitulates the memory of all the Saints who have witnessed to the Orthodox faith by their writings and by their lives. In this feast we honor the whole ministry of teaching of the holy Church, namely, the illumination of the hearts and minds of the faithful through the word of truth. So the feast of the Three Hierarchs is, in fact, the commemorations of all the Fathers of the Church, those models of evangelical perfection which the Holy Spirit has raised up from age to age and from place to place to be new Prophets and new Apostles, guides of souls heavenward, comforters of the people and fiery pillars of prayer, supporting the Church and confirming her in the truth.

Apolytikion in the First Tone

The three greatest beacons of the Three-sunned Godhead, who lighted the whole inhabited world with the beams of their divine doctrines, the rivers of wisdom flowing with honey, who watered all creation with streams of the knowledge of God, Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian with famous John whose tongue spoke golden words, let all we lovers of their words now assembled honour them in hymns. For they ever intercede with the Trinity on our behalf.

Kontakion in the Second Tone

You have taken, Lord, the sacred, the God-inspired heralds, the high peak of your Teachers, for the enjoyment of your good things and for repose; for you accepted above every offering their toils and their death, you who alone glorify your Saints.
Dear Faithful Friends of The Diakonia Retreat Center,

We pray this note finds you well as we celebrate the incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the spirit of renewal this season brings, His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta has given his blessing to reestablish the Guardian Angel donation program for the Diakonia Retreat Center. These Guardian Angels are faithful stewards enabling the DRC to provide a location for spiritual retreats, Clergy conferences as well as youth programs such as Saint Stephen’s summer camp.

As parents and Orthodox Christians, we are enthusiastic believers in the impact the DRC has on our youth and all those who trod these peaceful grounds. It is our hope and prayer that we can all recognize the benefit of the DRC for our children, grandchildren and future Orthodox Christians in the Southeast. Likewise, we look forward to your visit and prayers at the DRC in 2021. Many have become Guardian Angels of our beloved Diakonia Retreat Center and generously supported this wonderful place of renewal and reflection.

Please join us in this worthy cause and become a Guardian Angel today by clicking the link below.

On behalf of the Diakonia Retreat Center Board of Directors and the Metropolis of Atlanta, thank you for your generous support.

With a grateful heart,

Jim Klemes
DRC Board

**DONATE HERE**

**PENY’S HEART TRANSPLANT**

This is Peny Farmakis, sister, friend, office manager, prayer warrior, and fervent servant of Christ. She has a disease called cardiomyopathy. Peny has led a healthy lifestyle and has never had any medical issues. Since being diagnosed with cardiomyopathy two and a half years ago, she has been doing everything in her power to keep her heart healthy. The disease has progressed and she will now have to remain in the hospital until a heart is available.

Peny has $101,400 in medical bills prior to hospitalization. Her government insurance will, fortunately, pay for the transplant but her living expenses, insurance premium, and medications will be in excess of $5,000 per month. She has no savings and owns nothing as a result of fighting the disease on a limited budget.

Peny needs our PRAYERS for a heart to be donated soon, healing, comfort, and peace as she waits. Life with this disease has been devastating for Peny and Ann. Let’s pull together and help with her expenses as she waits for a heart!

For cards and letters of blessings and well wishes, Peny’s address in the hospital is:

Advent Health Orlando
601 E. Rollins Street
Orlando, FL 32803
Attention: Peny Farmakis

**DONATE TO PENY’S HEART TRANSPLANT HERE**
Catechism

Class is in Session!
Meetings will meet online once a week until catechism can be reunited in person. Check the church website for your class schedule!

Adult Spiritual Enrichment

The Iconography of Holy Trinity in Maitland, FL

Adult Spiritual Enrichment will begin classes on Sunday immediately after Church inside the Nave. It will also be aired live for those not attending Church. No food or drink inside the church please. Free to all!

Sundays after Church starting September 13, 2020
~11:30 AM–12:15PM

Click here to register and watch online.
2020 STEWARDSHIP
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<td>Lawyer, Andrew (Conde), M/M, Jr.</td>
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2020 STEWARDSHIP

Panagakis, Helen, Mrs.
Panagakis, Nicholas (Heather), M/M
Pantazis, George (Angeliki), M/M
Papadatos, Tom (Whitney), M/M
Papagiannakis, Nick (Rosie), M/M
Papaoanou, George (Katerina), M/M
Pappas, Alexis, Ms.
Pappas, Catherine (Muscato, Jeff), Ms.
Pappas, Harry (Jacqueline), Dr. & Mrs.
Pappas, Peter, Dr.
Pappas, Stephanie, Ms.
Pappas, Thomas (Kiki), M/M
Paterakis, George (Irene), M/M
Patounakis, George (Anna), M/M
Patsio, William (Joyce), M/M
Perez, Anthony (Eliades, Julie), Mrs., Mr.
Petrakis, John (Susan), Mr. & Mrs.
Pfeil, Susan, Ms.
Philon, Rob (Carole), M/M
Pjevach, George, Mr.
Polygalaktos, Marika, Mrs.
Polygalaktos, Toula, Ms.
Pond, Gary (Bea), M/M
Pottier, Laurent (Dinna), Mr. & Mrs.
Psarakis, Catherine, Mrs.
Psarakis, Mark (Effie), D/D
Rallis II, John (Nancy), M/M
Raptakis, Kanelli (Kiria), M/M
Raptis, John (Stephanie), M/M
Read, Thomas (Paige), M/M
Ressopoulos, George (Melanie), M/M
Richtmyer, John (Elizabeth), M/M
Rinkacis, David (Katherine), M/M
Rollas, John (Vasiliki), M/M
Roman, Arte (Krisa), M/M
Rothenberger, Larry (Christine), M/M
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Sahawneh, Saleem (Mais), M/M
Salivaras, Dimitri, Mr.
Sanidas, Doris, Mrs.
Sanidas, Michael (Kelly), M/M
Schlabig, James (Diane), Mr.
Schmitz, Gregory (Joanna), M/M
Scivally, Stephen (Elizabeth), M/M
Scuro, Elena, Ms.
Scuro, Vincent (Tina), M/M
Senteris, Perry, Ms.
Shand, Robert, Mr.
Shawki, Nader (Kenda), Mr. & Mrs.
Sheppard, Jacob (Backus, Katerina, Dr.), Dr.
Simeonidis, Constantine (Elaine), Father
Simeonidis, Demetrios, Father
Sirks, James (Stella), M/M
Sirks, Todd, Mr.
Sirois, Patrick (Rose Ann), M/M
Sluss, James (Carol), M/M
Smith III, Harry (Christina), M/M
Smith, Eric, Mr.
Soregaroli, Thomas (Jeanine), M/M
Sorich, Elena, Ms.
Sorich, Michael (Irene), M/M
Southerland, Aspasia, Mrs.
Starling, Ryan (Alexandra), M/M
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Steckel, Evdokia, Mrs.
Stevens, Luke (Katherine), M/M
Stoumbos, Louis (Theano), M/M
Stratis, George (Angela), M/M
Stratis, Sophia, Mrs.
Stratis, Steven, Mr.
Sucescum, Ricardo (Anthoula), M/M
Talantis, Kathleen, Mrs.
Talantis, Nicholas, Mr., Jr.
Talantis, Nicholas, Mr., Sr.
Tamvakis, Chris (Carrie), M/M
Tavrides, Chryssie, Mrs.
Taylor, Lynn, Dr.
Tenekedes, Tess, Mrs.
Territo, Joseph (Angela), M/M
Teter, Stephen (Loucenda), M/M
Theodorakis, Linda, Ms.
Thomas, Alex, Mr.
Thomas, Alvin (Theodora), M/M
Thomas, Anne, Mrs.
Tiliakos, Mike (Drucilla), M/M
Torres, David (Stephanie), M/M
Toscas, Maria, Mrs.
Triantafillu, Dimos, Mr.
Tringas, Andrew (Niki), D/M
Tsavides, George (Despina), M/M
Tsikouras, James (Anna), M/M
Tsolakis, Steve (Katerina), M/M
Tzeneurakis, Emmanuel (Marina), M/M
Vallas, Sam (Anastasia), M/M
Varley, John (Virginia), M/M
Vassiliadis, Paul (Elaine), M/M
Vastardis, Alex (Amy), M/M
Vastardis, William (Lula), M/M
Vergos, Pagona, Mrs.
Victory, Christopher (Christina), M/M
Vidas, Alex (Tonya), M/M
Vonetes, Alfred Dean (Abigail), D/M
Vonetes, Dean (Mary Ann), M/M
Wagner, Bea, Mrs.
Ward, Maurice (Silvia), Mr. & Mrs.
Waugh, Christian (Mirella), M/M
Wells, Brad (Paula), M/M
Wells, Edward (Tina), M/M
Wemple, Richard (Lillian), M/M
White, Patrick (Katsarakes, Samantha, Mrs.), Mr.
Winchester, Eddie (Linda), M/M
Wirnowski, Judith, Mrs.
Wood, Kenneth (Madalina), M/M
Wyborski, Nicholas (Wanda), Rev. & Mrs.
Wynne, Michael (Caroline), Mr.
Xikis, Pantelis (Luz), M/M
Yarbrough, William (Joyce), Mr. & Mrs.
Yianilos, Katherine, Mrs.
Yousif, Wael (Jennifer), M/M
Zendeli, Mario (Leidy), M/M
Zuppas, Arian (Adriana), M/M
Zuppas, Foto (Mariana), M/M
Zuppas, Heidi, Mrs.
Zuppas, Joana, Ms.
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We should not depend on special affairs to meet our budget, for this is our direct responsibility. Stewardship places the responsibility on us, for we are the recipients of God's gifts and play an active role in perpetuating His work of salvation. The expenses of our Parish are vital to our Church for keeping in touch with you, maintaining our buildings, supporting those who serve us, worship and educational programs, as well as our national ministries commitments.

STEWARDSHIP

DECEMBER 2020

388 Families
$470,520.00 Pledged
$546,089.39 Paid
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<td>3 Sunday Before Theophany 8:15am: Orthros 9:30am: Liturgy</td>
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<td>5 Small Blessing of the Waters 9:30am: Orthros 10:00am: Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>6 Holy Theophany 10:00am: Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>7 Synaxis St. John the Forerunner</td>
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<td>10 Sunday After Theophany 8:15am: Orthros 9:30am: Liturgy Trisagion and 40 Day Blessing</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>12th Sunday of Luke 8:15am: Orthros 9:30am: Liturgy</td>
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<td>30 Three Hierarchs 9:30AM: Orthros 10:00AM: Divine Liturgy</td>
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<td>31 Sunday of Zaccheus 8:15am: Orthros 9:30am: Liturgy</td>
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<td>2 PRESENTATION 9:30AM: Orthros 10:00AM: Divine Liturgy</td>
<td>3 6:00PM: Paraklesis</td>
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<td>4:00PM: Baptism</td>
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HARRY R. PAPPAS, M.D.
Cataract, Glaucoma

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