

IC XC NIKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
305 Main Road, Herkimer, New York, 13350 • 315-866-3272
Archpriest John Udics, Rector • e-mail: john.udics@gmail.com
Deacon Demetrios Richards • e-mail: dwr00nhr@twcny.rr.com
Parish Web Page: www.cnyorthodoxchurch.org

CHRIST IS BAPTIZED! IN THE RIVER JORDAN!

January 11, 2015	Sunday after the Theophany of Our Lord	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
January 17	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
January 18	32 nd Sunday after Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Today's Bulletin is offered for the health of Olga Prawlocki, on her 104th birthday, by Sonia Buttino!

Saints of the Day: Venerable Pachomius of Kensk (16 c.) Venerable Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch (529). Venerable Michael of Klops Monastery, Fool-for-Christ (Novgorod) (1452). New Hieromartyrs Priests Nicholas, Theodore and Vladimir (1919). Saint Vladimir, Priest Confessor (1932). Venerable Theodosius of Antioch (412). "Chernigov-Eletskaia" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (1060). Saints. Theodore and Agapius of Apamea in Syria. Martyr Mairus. Saint Stephen of Placidian near Constantinople. Saint Theodosius of Mount Athos, Metropolitan of Trebizond (14 c.). Saint Agapius of Apamea in Syria. Hieromartyr Hyginus, Pope of Rome (142). Venerable Romilos Hermit of Veddin (1375). Venerable Vitalis of the Monastery of Abba Serid (Seridos) at Gaza (609-620). Saint Joseph of Cappadocia. Saint Boadin the Irishman, Hermit. Saint Brandan the Irishman, Abbot (5 c.). Saint Ethne and Saint Fedelm of Connaught, Virgins.

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mothers Raphaela, Michaela, Catherine, Anna. Monk Victor, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Helen, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Diane, Abigail.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Abbott Tryphon of the Monastery of the All-Merciful Saviour, Vashon Island, WA

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of newly-departed John Saltourides (76) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of his family.

New Year's Resolutions, 2015

The custom to make resolutions for the new year is as ancient as the ancient Babylonians, where citizens made promises to their gods at the start of the year that they would return borrowed objects and pay their debts.

Although it's not a custom of the Orthodox Christian Church, Americans are accustomed to making resolutions and laughing at ourselves because of the weakness of our will in actually keeping the resolutions we make. Most resolutions are practical: losing weight, eating healthy foods, doing good deeds of one sort or another, not raising our voices to our children or our spouse, being on time for meals, meetings and such and so.

What resolutions can we make about our relationship with God and our parish?

First of all, we should assess the level of seriousness we have in relation to God. Do you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37)? If not, why not? How do you demonstrate that love?

Do you use foul language and tell off-color jokes? You use the same mouth to praise the Lord – perhaps a little oral cleanliness would be a good thing to resolve (James 3:1-12).

Do you pray daily, at home or elsewhere? Do you even at least say only the Lord's Prayer daily? If you do, you know it changes your heart and improves how you feel about your faith. Do you read Scripture? How about resolving to memorize a psalm? Or some passages from Scripture. Resolve to increase your prayer life, even if only a bit at a time.

How is your generosity toward God? You could resolve to increase your donation to the Church in order to help with its growth. Or increase your donations to charitable institutions to help clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and to visit the sick and imprisoned.

Resolve to expand your knowledge of the Church – read a spiritual book or a Church history book.

Do you love your neighbor as much as you love yourself? We can resolve to think about our sonship to God. And we can promise to try to improve our love for our neighbor. Sometimes our neighbor isn't someone we like very much, and that makes it difficult to love them. But it's not impossible, if we resolve to try.

And how much do you show love for your parents? We can resolve to love them more, to help them more, to pray regularly at their graves.

Are you faithful to your spouse? We can resolve to show them more love, more regularly, more deeply.

Do you tell lies easily? Do you think it's easier to tell a lie and to face up to the truth?

We would all like to see greater attendance and membership in our parish. It is statistically true that only 26% of Orthodox Christians in America come to church weekly (the statistic is drawn from people who are actually involved in parish life, not from anyone who was ever baptized Orthodox; that statistic would be much worse). That's really a horrible percentage. Old age is a good excuse, as is illness. But for those of us who are healthy, what can we do to improve our behavior? We can make a resolution to do our best to attend every Sunday service and services during Great Lent. When the Church is full, visitors are more likely to be impressed with the quality of the Christian life here, and inspired by it, try to do the same. No one wants to join a parish where services are sparsely and sporadically attended. Neither are people impressed by those who speak against others. If you don't like the way someone is doing their job, instead of being critical, whispering behind their backs, how about being helpful instead?

We can resolve to treat newcomers with special care and attention. We can resolve to bring one person who is not a member to church. Is it a neighbor who doesn't go anywhere to church? Is it someone who is handicapped and can't get to a church? Tell them, 'we're going to church on Sunday morning at 9:30 and we'll be happy to give you a ride and bring you home again after coffee hour.'

We can resolve to be on time when we go to church. There's no excuse for being late to work, late to school, late for a doctor's appointment – why should you excuse yourself from being on time for church? Being late tells fellow parishioners that you don't take church very seriously. It also tells the same thing to your children, who will mimic you.

We can resolve to be less resistant to change.

Now. What is a resolution? Why do we fail to keep them? Resolution comes from the word resolve, a decision or determination: for example, to make a firm resolution to do something. Resolve is the mental state or quality of being resolved or resolute; firmness of purpose. And the verb resolve: to come to a definite or earnest decision about; determine (to do something).

We have identified a number of things you might like to resolve about for the new year. This list is broad and long and you might want to trim it back quite a bit. A list of resolutions which is too long is unfortunately an excuse to fail. But let's say you've identified a couple of resolutions you think you can make. The goal now is to live it out, see it through, be firm in your purpose, be solid in your determination to 'make it work.'

Athletes can tell us a thing or two about resolution. They practice and train for their sport in order to improve, in order to make a new and better habit. Isn't breaking old, bad habits part of what this is all about?

The reason we fail is human weakness. Even trained athletes fail when they're 'out of it' or feeling ill or angry or frustrated. If we Christians fail, it's for the same reasons: our resolution isn't strong enough, our purpose isn't overwhelming enough, our decision is too weak to begin with.

Part of resolution is desire. If we desire to change, we must really desire it and be willing to fight to overcome our lethargy, our bad habit rut. Smokers who try to quit smoking are constantly tempted to return to their vice, drinkers are regularly assaulted by the draw of the bottle. The phrase which comes to mind from Holy Scripture is "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness." (Proverbs 26.11) and another: "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud." (2 Peter 2:22). We must learn to be disgusted by our former bad habits and turn away from their rottenness, depravity and wickedness so that we might live.

Those who succeed in changing their lives are those who have the gumption to get up and do something about it.

You need to have your resolutions set in stone, printed out so you can be assaulted by them every day. Be sure you see your resolutions so you don't forget them, so that they are as firm in October as they were in the January which is past.

REFLECTION by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha,

The merciful God often sends comfort to those pleasing to Him on earth from the other world through his saints. Saint Theodota suffered for Christ before Saint Anastasia. Anastasia was then cast into a confined and dark prison to die of hunger, according to the judgment of the torturers. During the thirty days of her imprisonment, Saint Theodota appeared to Anastasia every night from the other world and strengthened her in her suffering. Anastasia spoke of many things with Saint Theodota and asked numerous questions. One night she asked her how she was able to come to her after her death. Theodota replied that the souls of the martyrs are given special grace from God, so that after departing this world they may return to speak to whomever they desire for the imparting of instruction and comfort. When thirty days had passed, the torturer brought Saint Anastasia out of prison and was amazed to see her still alive. He then condemned her, along with several others, to be drowned in the sea. The Christians were put into a small boat by the soldiers, who set sail in another. When the Christians were brought out into the deep, the soldiers upset the boat, so that the water would enter and drown the condemned. Then a miraculous vision took place: Saint Theodota appeared on the water and guided the boat to shore. Thus, all who were condemned to death were saved with Anastasia. Seeing this miracle of God, one hundred and twenty pagans immediately believed in Christ and were baptized.