

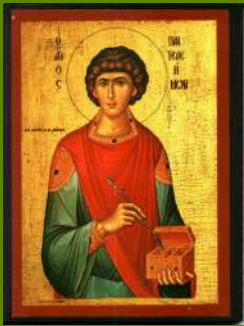
St. Panteleimon Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Fr. Andrew Bartek, Rector V. Rev. Anthony Spengler, Attached

Protodeacon Robert Northrup Reader James Tilghman

Parish Council President: Nicholas Cavaligos



Sunday, January 10, 2016

Tone 7

Gospel: St. Matthew 4:12-17

Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13

32nd Sunday after Pentecost / Sunday after Theophany

St. Gregory, Bp. of Nyssa / Bp. Theophan Recluse

January Bulletin Sponsor

Fr. Andrew in Memory of his parents George & Dorothy

Liturgical & Event Schedule

Sunday, January 10

9:10 am: Hours

9:30 am: Divine Liturgy / 40 Days
MINI-SOCIAL TODAY

Tuesday, January 12

6:00 pm Bridgeview Chamber of Commerce
Meeting

7:30 pm: Monthly Healing Service

Saturday, January 16

6:00 pm: Great Vespers

Sunday, January 17

9:10 am Hours

9:30 am D. L. / 40 Days / Social

12:30 pm: Leave for March for Life in Chicago

SAVE THE DATES JANUARY 2016

Sunday, January 24

1:00 pm: Retirement Dinner for Fr. Andrew
Harrison

6:00 pm: Annual Sanctity of Life Prayer
Service @ St. Peter & Paul Uk.
Orthodox Church in Palos Park

Saturday, January 30

9:00 am: Speak Out IL

Sunday, January 31

Annual Greek Dinner in Chicago between our
Parish & St. Peter & Paul Burr Ridge

40 Days Eternal Memory

January 10: Terrorist attack in Mali / Russian
Pilot Oleg

January 17: Terrorist attack in CA & Michael

January 24: Firefighter Dan Capuano

February 7: Bernice McGurk

SUNDAY JANUARY 24, 2016

RETIREMENT BANQUET FOR THE

V. REV. ARCHPRIEST

FR. ANDREW HARRISON

Time: 1:00 pm -6:00 pm

Where: Ruffled Feathers Golf Club, 1 Pete Dye
Drive, Lemont, IL 60439

Cost: \$30 per adult / \$15 per child 10 & under

Please respond by January 10, 2016 via call/text:
708-710-5966 or email: lbetsanes@gmail.com

A cash bar will be available for soda & alcoholic
beverages

Please remit pymt by Jan. 10, 2016 to: St Luke
Orthodox, 10700 Kean Ave, Palos Hills, IL 60465

Contact Golf Club for special dietary requests @
630-257-1000

2016 - SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

January: St Tikhon's Seminary

This collection will take place during the Litany
before the *Our Father* or see Steve Grabavoy or
Mark Hruban

IMPORTANT DATES JANUARY 2016

Monday, January 11

Work begins in Church & Rectory Basement

Tuesday, January 12

7:30 pm: Monthly Healing Service (1st time
open to the Public)

Tuesday, January 19

7:30 pm: Bible Study (1st time open to the
Public)

Wednesday, January 20

7:30 pm: Monthly Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 26

7:30 pm: Orthodoxy 101 Class
(Open to Public)

7549 West 61st Place, Summit, Illinois 60501

Rectory 708-552-5276 / Cell 570-212-8747

website: <http://www.saintpanteleimon.org/>

Minneapolis Cathedral site of June 2016 International Music Symposium

The [International Society for Orthodox Church Music](#) [ISOCM] will host a pan-Orthodox Music Symposium at Saint Mary's Cathedral here from Wednesday, June 22 through Sunday, June 26, 2016. The event will include presentations and workshops, music reading sessions, and rehearsals and will culminate in a festive hierarchical All-Night Vigil and Divine Liturgy. The event will also feature a special concert by the critically acclaimed vocal ensemble Cappella Romana.

According to Archpriest Ivan Moody, ISOCM's board chairman, the aim of the symposium is to bring together people involved in all aspects of music in the Orthodox Church—chanters, choir singers, composers, conductors and musicologists. Father Ivan said, "An event like this reinforces the idea that we can all learn from each other and together enrich the worship of the Church."

Father Ivan will present the keynote address on the symposium's theme, "Orthodox Liturgical Music: Finding Beauty and Prayer in the English-Speaking World," on Saturday, June 25 during a session which will be open to the general public. Organizers hope the theme will inspire participants to reflect on their role and responsibility in creating a liturgical experience that engages the faithful in the liturgical life of the church.

"Church musicians assist the clergy in leading the divine services," said Dr. Kurt Sander, one of the organizers for the Minneapolis symposium. "It is incumbent upon us as directors, singers, and chanters to cultivate an impression of profound beauty within the liturgical act." Dr. Sander was also instrumental in organizing the very successful pan-Orthodox music symposium held in Cincinnati in June 2014.

The symposium will feature new music being written for the event by the noted American Orthodox composer, the Archpriest Sergei Glagolev. "I'm excited about this opportunity, and very happy to work on a setting of the post-communion troparia," said Father Sergei. "The text for these two troparia—'We have seen the true light' and 'Let our mouths be filled'—serve as the ultimate thanksgiving of the Liturgy and of the Eucharist which we receive."

The ISOCM is also pleased to announce that the vocal ensemble Cappella Romana will present a special concert of Orthodox liturgical hymns in Minneapolis as part of the symposium. The concert, under Father Ivan's direction, will feature the extraordinary Opelo (Requiem) by Stevan Hristić, Peter Mirolybov's Exapostilarion for the Dormition, and works by Father Ivan himself, Kurt Sander, Father Glagolev and Tikey Zes. The program will showcase

the breadth of creativity found in Orthodox liturgical music from the Byzantine and Slavic traditions to more modern settings from Finland and America.

The selections which Cappella Romana will perform reflect the sense of creativity and diversity reflect the mission of the ISOCM and the success of its conferences and gatherings. "Past ISOCM events have proved that bringing together musicians from different traditions and different countries is a uniquely effective way of effecting a pan-Orthodox witness both to the universality of the faith and the diversity of its traditions," said Father Ivan.

The symposium will feature presentations by other international and US-based specialists in the field of liturgical music.

Comprehensive information about all of the presentations, workshops and rehearsals, along with the full schedule, presenter biographies, and hotel reservations, [may be found here](#). Registration is now open on the site. Those who complete their registration before February 1, 2016 will receive an early-bird discount.

Founded in 2005, the ISOCM seeks to provide an open platform for musicians, musicologists, singers, and composers that encourages dialogue and the exchange of information and ideas and inspires cooperation. The Society sees the promotion of communication between East and West as one of its priorities and hosts biannual conferences at the University of Eastern Finland on its Joensuu campus. The Society also hosts regional symposia and gatherings elsewhere throughout the world to help create opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of knowledge in the field of Orthodox liturgical music.

Did You Know?: An Annual Theophany Miracle - The Jordan Reverses Its Flow

In a video "filmed in 2011," that "During the ceremony[of the blessing of waters] , which is led by the Patriarch of Jerusalem (who is standing on the Israeli side), and by one of Jordan's Orthodox priests (on the Jordanian side) the waters continue to flow as usual toward the right. However, as soon as the Patriarch and the Jordanian priest drop the Cross into the river, chanting "En Iorthani Vaptizomenou Sou Kyrie" ("When You were baptized in the Jordan, Lord"), the waters start to mysteriously bubble in places. The bubbling then spreads, and the river develops two currents, one running to the right and another running to the left, with the two currents finally merging into each other! Eventually, after a few minutes, the miracle is completed. The new current is steadily flowing! The Jordan had reversed its flow like then, when God Himself was baptized in it and blessed it! The miracle takes place as long as the Crosses are in the river. When they are removed, the Jordan normalizes its flow. Link:

<http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2009/01/miracle-jordan-reverses-its-flow.html>



MARCH FOR

LIFE

CHICAGO

LOVIN' LIFE IN CHICAGO

JANUARY 17, 2016, 2-4PM

MarchForLifeChicago.com
marchforlifechicago@gmail.com

JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL
MARCH FOR LIFE CHICAGO

STARTS AT FEDERAL PLAZA (50 W ADAMS)

— SPEAKERS —

Melissa Ohden, *Abortion Survivor*

Archbishop Blase Cupich
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Chicago

Bishop Paul of Chicago
Orthodox Church of America

Pastor Wilfredo De Jesús,
New Life Covenant Church in Chicago

→ SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS ←

ILLINOIS RIGHT TO LIFE • ORTHODOX CLERGY ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO • L.E.A.R.N. (LIFE EDUCATION AND RESOURCE NETWORK) CATHOLICVOTE.ORG • LAKE COUNTY RIGHT TO LIFE • AID FOR WOMEN ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO • ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO RESPECT LIFE OFFICE • STUDENTS FOR LIFE OF ILLINOIS • CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF ILLINOIS • COUPLES FOR CHRIST • FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY AND LIFE • PRO LIFE ACTION LEAGUE • RENOVACIÓN CARISMÁTICA CATÓLICA HISPANA • SPIRIT JUICE STUDIOS • PRO-LIFE WISCONSIN • DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD • ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE • RELEVANT RADIO • THOMAS MORE SOCIETY • THE WOMEN'S CENTER • FAMILIES IN CHRIST JESUS



Father Andrew presented two parishioners with an icon of St. Panteleimon

Ron & Pat Svava received an icon in thanks for their generous non-interest loan of \$30,000. This allowed the parish to make much needed renovations and to help stop the majoring flooding problems the parish has had over these many years.

Andrei Davik, a life long member of the parish received an icon in thanks for his many years of service as a board member and a parishioner. His wife Linda stands with him.

GOD GRANT YOU ALL MANY BLESSED YEARS!

SEVEN COURSE GREEK DINNER

On Sunday, January 31, 2016, St. Panteleimon Church will be having their annual Greek Dinner at the Parthenon Restaurant located at 314 S. Halsted in Chicago. Cocktails (cash bar) at 12:00 and dinner will be served at 1:00 P.M. Tickets for the seven course dinner served family style will be \$25.00, tickets sold after January 24, 2016 will be \$30.00. Free valet parking is available in front of the restaurant.

The dinner menu will consist of:

Saganaki, Taramosalata, Gyros, Greek Salad, Moussaka, Pastitsio, Dolmades, Rotisserie Roasted Pig served with rice pilaf and roasted potatoes, Baklava, Galaktoboureko and American Coffee.

Tickets will be sold by Karen Muzyka. Contact her at St. Panteleimon or at (708) 924-1933. Checks should be made payable to St. Panteleimon Church. Checks can be mailed to her at:

7253 White Ash Drive , Justice, IL 60458

From Beccy Eggers:

The Lewis Women's Basketball team participated in Adopt-a-Family in Detroit MI as we were playing in Detroit last Sunday. Our family was The Camp Family of 3 who lost their home in a fire and the Mom was laid off from her job recently. Wanting to spread Christmas cheer to a family in need was a priority and we purchased and wrapped over \$500 in gifts and then delivered to their temporary government assisted housing.

We then invited them to our game and left them with tickets in hope that they would come to watch a few blocks away at Wayne State University.

The family did come and they had special seats on the bench with us. They were ecstatic! It was lovely to be part of!

* * * * *

Thanks for sharing this wonderful news Beccy! Talk about being the "hands of Christ" in ministry! Way to go!



Fire in the Desert by Fr. Lawrence Farley

The Sunday before the Great Feast of the Theophany is dedicated to the work of John the Baptist (or Saint John the Forerunner, to give him his liturgical title). To appreciate him fully, we need to place him in his historical context, and realize that he came to Israel as a thunderstorm at the end of a long drought. Or, to vary the metaphor, as a fire in the desert, illumining the darkened hearts of men.

It had been a long time since the voice of prophecy had sounded in Israel. Though holy writing had never ceased (the Book of Sirach, for example, dates from the second century B.C.), no prophet had arisen to proclaim the Word of the Lord since Malachi lifted up his voice in about 430 B.C. Since that time Israel had endured the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes who desecrated the Temple, the rise and internecine strife of the Hasmoneans, and the coming of the Romans, under whose Imperial boot they remained firmly lodged. A modern proverb says, "When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on". By the time of John's birth, Israel had come to the end of its rope. They therefore tied a knot and hung on, and the knot unto which they clung was the Law, with its hope of final Messianic liberation. Hope deferred, the Scriptures tell us, makes the heart sick (Proverbs 13:12), and many had grown discouraged and sick of heart in waiting for the seemingly eternally-deferred hope of redemption. In response Zealots arose in Galilee to use terrorist tactics to force God's hand. Pharisees buried their heads in the Scriptures and debated its details. The common people just waited with heads hung low, and wondered quietly in the wee hours of the night if their God had abandoned them.

Then came the voice of John sounding like a trumpet in the wilderness: "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!" In the darkness that hung over men's hearts in that day, the fire of his words came like a light, and all Israel lifted up their heads, and looked to the desert with new hope. John proclaimed that Messiah was at hand, but that Israel was no more ready

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Prayer List

Priests: Anthony Spenglar, John Kuchta, James Gleason (*Fr.'s spiritual father*), *Ted Bobosh, *Moses Berry, *John Magramm, *John Matusiak, John Duranko, Lev Holowoty, *Anastassy Fehr, *Daniel Rental, *Leonid Kishkovsky

Deacons: *Theophan Warren /

Matushka: *Elaine Rental, Kristy Lollar & her unborn child, Ksenia & newborn baby Ileana baby, *Carol Janacek, Pani Patricia Duranko /

Parishioners: Karen Muzyka, Mark Hruban, Ronald Stachowiak, Rebecca Eggers, Jason Kirnbauer, Sonja Harris

Parishioner's Friends / Family: Donna Parhas (*Nick's Cousin*), Ron (*Mark's Friend*), Mary Ann Magerko, John Magerko, Helen Pender (*Fr.'s God-mother*), Stephen Holly (*Fr.'s cousin*), George Cavaligos (*Nick's brother*), Christos Parhas (*Nick's cousin*), Constantine Cavaligos (*Nick's dad*), John Hartel (*Joann's Step-dad*), Sandra (*Karen's sister*), Erika Northrup, Walter Litzie (*Fr.'s cousin*), Danielle Krush, Mark Svara, Linda Davik, Mary Northrup, Sandra Leonchik, Dianne Northrup, Raymond Northrup, Joey Krush, Carol Bregin (*Friend of Lynn*), Ann Lazo (*Friend of Lynn*), George Lazo (*Friend of Lynn*), Bruce (*Fr. Kurt's brother*), Christine & her unborn baby, * Maria Sokolova & her 3 unborn babies, Chrissy Marron, Bernice McGurk (*Laura Grabavoy's grandmother*), Kelly Flynn, Baby Faith, Daniel Tiani (*friend of Becky Eggers*), Vivian (*friend of Becky Eggers*), Tim Kendra (*Rich Wolfe's father*).

Other Requests: Lucille (*Duke*), Dianne (*Bill Rudolph*), Elizabeth Lilos, Jemsey Pradun, Mae Joanna Bass, Hermenegil (*Neighbor*), Lidiya (*Neighbor*), Cathleen Rebollar, Patricia Schuster, *Maria Sokolova & her 3 unborn babies, *Barbara Pawlack, *John Sedor

Military: Amber, Caleb, Nicholas, David, Timothy, Robert, Kristen, Matthew, Brian, Daniel, Joseph, Joseph (*Fr.'s cousin*)

Captives: Metropolitan Paul (*Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo*), Archbishop John (*Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo*)

For the UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria / Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world / Those held captive throughout the world.

Additions or removals from the list? Please notify Fr. Andrew. (***Bishop Request**)

In Memoriam: The 15th Anniversary of the Repose of Bishop Boris

Wednesday, December 30, 2015 marks the 15th Anniversary of the repose of His Grace, Bishop Boris of Chicago and the Midwest.

Born on November 18, 1923 in Portage, PA, the son of the late Archpriest Theodore and Mary [Youshak] Geeza, he was a 1945 graduate of Columbia University, New York, NY. The following year he graduated from Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and was married to Helen Korba.

Following his graduation and marriage, he served as choir director and teacher at Three Saints Church, Garfield, NJ until his ordination to the priesthood by His Eminence, Metropolitan Theophilus [Pashkovsky] in 1947. After serving as pastor of Saint Nicholas Church, Weirton, WV, he was commissioned as an Orthodox chaplain in the US Navy in March 1953. In recognition of his long and distinguished service in the chaplaincy, which included a tour of duty in Vietnam, he was named as the first Dean of Orthodox Chaplains in 1970 and was awarded the Chaplain's cross for meritorious service the following year.

Following the repose of his wife in 1971, he continued his ministry until his retirement from the chaplaincy in 1975. Having pursued post-graduate studies at Saint Vladimir's Seminary, he was appointed Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA and Chancellor of the Diocese of the West.

In July 1978, he was named Bishop-elect of Manhattan, a new post created by the Holy Synod of Bishops to assist His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius. On September 16 of the same year he was tonsured into monastic orders by Metropolitan Theodosius at Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY and elevated to the rank of archimandrite. **Con't Page 7**

J A N U A R Y

HAPPY BIRTHDAY		HAPPY NAME DAY
5- Karina Posada 17- Natalie Northrup 24- Becky Eggers	8- Susie Joynt 21-Alex Posada	2- The Retired Right Rev. Seraphim of Sendai 19- The Retired Right Rev. Mark of Boston 24- The Right Rev. Daniel (Bishop of Dsanta Rosa)

If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

In blessed repose: J A N U A R Y

1-Anna Wojciechowski (00) 2- Fr. Richard Everman (07) 4- George Bartek (83) 12- Adam Kuzmich (98) 13- Joseph Bloschynsky (00) 14- Joseph Dubovik (99) 14- Dorothy Michaluk (08) 16- Theodore Grabavoy (89) 22- Anna Grabavoy (77) 24- Helen Dubovik (11)	26- Jacqueline Marie Hansen (08) 29- John Mahalko (90) 29- Olga V Foraker (05) 1938: Anisia Sloboda Theodore Kozliak Peter Begal	1939: Michael Blarzko Ivan Yakel
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Remember those who have gone before us in prayer. If there is a name missing from the above list, please speak to Fr. Andrew to have them added.

UPDATED JANUARY 2016

Bulletin Sponsor: Would you be interested in being a bulletin sponsor in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one or friend? Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Services for that month. Donation: \$40 for the month.

Memorial Candle(s): *(Give names to Fr. Andrew)*

Option 1: The Tray of Candles under the Cross is now the area of remembrance for the deceased. If you would like the tray of candles placed in memory of a deceased loved one, the suggested donation is \$30. The Sponsors will be remembered during the Divine Services for that Sunday.

Option 2: One of the small Tray's under the Theotokos in the back of the Church. Donation \$25

Option 3: If this tray is full, one or more candles may be gotten at the candle desk & be placed in the sand box.

Candles for the Health of a Loved One *(Speak to Fr. Andrew to make arrangements)*

Option 1: One of The small tray's of 40 candles in front of the icon of woman saints in the back of the Church - donation \$25.

Option 2: The altar candles in the Sanctuary & Eternal Light candle - donation \$20.

Option 3: If Candles are filled more candles may be gotten at the candle desk & placed in the sand box.

Monthly Panachida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Panachida. If you would like your loved one(s) to be remembered, please give a list of names to Fr. Andrew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month. If there is a remembrance (newly departed or 40th day remembrance) of your family or friends we will remember them on the closest Sunday otherwise they will be remembered on the third Sunday. If it is an remembrance not related to our parish family we will just sing Memory Eternal on the 40 Day remembrance.

Hospitalization/Shut-ins: If anyone goes into hospital, or is a shut-in, please let Fr. Andrew know as soon as possible so he can attend to them and their family members.

Celebration? Achievement?: Your spiritual family would like to share in your achievement, celebration, and accomplishment. Send in a picture or email to Fr. Andrew, by Wednesday @ 5:00 pm so he can place it in the bulletin!

Bishop Boris Con't

Upon the retirement of His Eminence, Archbishop John [Garklavs] of Chicago in September 1978, the 18th Assembly of the Diocese of Chicago and the Midwest, meeting in Madison, IL on October 1, 1978, unanimously nominated Archimandrite Boris to fill the vacant episcopal see. Members of the Holy Synod of Bishops, meeting in New York on October 17-18, 1978, formally elected him to succeed Archbishop John.

On November 11, 1978, he was consecrated to the episcopacy by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius; Archbishop John of Chicago; His Grace, Bishop [later Archbishop] Kyrill of Pittsburgh; His Grace, Bishop Firmilian of the Serbian Orthodox Church; and His Grace, Bishop Ireney, Vicar of the Moscow Patriarchate at Chicago's historic Holy Trinity Cathedral. During his tenure as Bishop of Chicago, Bishop Boris organized diocesan departments, initiated publication of a diocesan newspaper, *The Vigil*, and promulgated uniform parish bylaws. He also oversaw the establishment of several new missions and parishes throughout the Midwest Diocese, the OCA's largest.

In November 1988, Bishop Boris retired from active ministry, but remained active in various aspects of Church life.

May Bishop Boris' memory be eternal!

Archpriest John Matusiak, Secretary of the Diocese of the Midwest

A check for \$500 was sent to the Diocese of the Midwest to assist with the purchase of motorcycles to help clergy in Kenya.

The following results from Yolka:

\$ 523 in ticket sales
\$ 421 in raffle tickets
\$ 123 in liquor sales
\$1,067 Total Revenue
\$ 501 minus food cost
\$ 566 Net Gain



Fire...Cont.

to receive redemption than were the godless Gentiles. They must therefore repent, and wash away their sins just like Gentiles did when they were baptized and became Jews. Some questioned John's authority to baptize Jews as if they were Gentiles. Who did John think he was? Was he Elijah, they demanded? Was he Messiah himself? No, none of these. What was he then? A voice—just a voice. A voice crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight. Did they object to him baptizing in water? One would soon be among them who would baptize with fire.

The Feast of the Circumcision: A Blessed New Year!

While January 1 marks the beginning of the civil new year—and we wish every blessing of the season to our readers—it also marks the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

On the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised in accordance with the Old Testament Law. All male infants underwent circumcision as a sign of God's Covenant with the holy Forefather Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17:10-14, Leviticus 12:3).

After this ritual the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos (Luke 1:31-33, 2:21). The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, underwent circumcision in order to give people an example of how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled. The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics (Docetists) taught.

In the New Testament, the ritual of circumcision gave way to the Mystery of Baptism, which it prefigured (Colossians 2:11-12). Accounts of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord continue in the Eastern Church right up through the fourth century. The Canon of the Feast was written by St Stephen of the St Sava Monastery (October 28 and July 13).

In addition to circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God's Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus (Savior) on the eighth day after His Nativity as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world (Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:38-39, 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Philippians 2:9-10). These two events, the Lord's Circumcision and Naming, remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and "are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11). The very name "Christian" is a sign of mankind's entrance into a New Covenant with God.

Fire ...Con't

John's voice continues to sound telling us to open our eyes. Like Israel in John's day, we remain blind, shrouded in darkness. We need to see with new eyes, and look again at the world around us.

That is, we need first of all to look to our hearts. This is the meaning of repentance—to look first at the darkness within us, and let in the light of God. When the light shines in we will see that God is not simply one part of our life, but life itself. Our modern secular society has banished God from its culture, and relegated religion to a single, hermetically-sealed compartment of life (preferably kept far and at a safe distance from the public square). We are surprised when we learn that in previous centuries (and in Islamic lands today) the awareness of God permeated everything. To live was to walk in the presence of God, dwelling beneath His shadow. Our culture today regards such a life as fanaticism, but for ancient societies (and for John) this was simply normal living. They were not the fanatics. It is we who are mad.

Secondly, we need to look to our neighbor and see him for what he is—that is, as God's gift to us. We often do not see our neighbor. Those around us are two-dimensional, people without names, histories, hopes, or sorrows. Do we know the name of the person who serves us coffee every day at Starbucks? Do we know the name of the person in the street to whom we give spare change? For most of us, these people are not real, and we hurry past them as if they were phantoms. John the Forerunner reminds us that those whom we meet even casually are people like us, and if we have two coats, we should give the second one to the one who has none (Luke 3:10-11).

Finally, we need to look to the horizon. John bid the people look not the darkness filling the land (which often bore a Roman sword), but to the coming Kingdom of God. We live in a later day than John, and the Lord before whom he ran has already come and established the Kingdom of God like seed in the earth. The horizon to which we look is lit with the light of His Second Coming. The land is still filled with darkness, reported duly by CNN and Fox network and a thousand other shrill voices of despair. Like those who first heard John crying in the wilderness, we look up with hope. The prophetic voice of the Old Covenant ended with Malachi calling them to wait for the day of the Lord that would come burning like a furnace and for the Sun of Righteousness who would arise with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:1-2). The prophetic voice of the New Covenant ends with the voice of Saint John crying, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20). In both Old Testament and New, the horizon is the place to look to. For at all times it is illumined with the light of redemption and victory.

TOURS FOR 2016

For additional information or to book any of these wonderful trips contact travelinfo@culturallycreativetravel.com or call 713-688-6793, ask for Douglas

ANCIENT AND HOLY IN THE HOLY LAND, February 29 - March 12, 2016

In 2016, just before the Great Lent, we are planning a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Visiting the places associated with the Earthly Life of our Savior should be an incredible inspiration to all who hope to journey through the Lent in piety and to recount the suffering of the Lord and His Radiant Resurrection.

PASCHAL PILGRIMAGE TO RUSSIA: FROM DIVEEVO TO VALAAM, May 1-16, 2016

During the Bright Week '16, we hope to embark on a pilgrimage to Russia. This time we're offering a slightly different program. Our visits to Moscow and St. Petersburg will remain the same, but we will add a visit to the Valaam Monastery in the main part of our program. The most special, new, and in many ways unique feature of our trip, will be a pilgrimage to Diveevo, for two night stay at the convent established by St. Seraphim of Sarov. His relics are housed in the main church of the monastery in Diveevo.

GRAND TOUR OF SPAIN, May 23 - June 15, 2016

As a latest addition to our collection of pilgrim tours, we've created for you a one of a kind tour to Spain, a unique and diverse European destination. Most who travel here choose one of two routes — The first; Via Catalonia, they travel along the Ancient way of Santiago de Compostella. This is a favorite among the fans of hiking and experienced vacationers who want to do something different, as well as pious devotees. The other route; The capital Madrid, often chosen for its richness of art and culture, as well as the splendor Moorish city of Cordoba, and Seville and Granada. We give you both parts of the country — combining history, art, architecture, and religion, into one engaging two-week adventure.

ANCIENT AND HOLY IN GREECE, June 6-18, 2016

For early summer of 2016, we have prepared a wonderful pilgrimage through the mainland Greece. We offered this several years ago, and are pleased to offer it again. Our greatly improved and modified itinerary will allow you to stay in the most interesting city of Greece – Thessaloniki – for three days, visiting Ancient and Byzantine sites, along with wonderful museums. We have included most of the famous Archeological sites of the Classical Greece, along with numerous pilgrim stops at Meteora, Egina, Patras, Osios Lukas, etc.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BYZANTINE SAINTS, October 24 - November 16, 2016

As many of you have expressed wanting to visit the Holy sites of Asia Minor, to visit the imperial City of Constantinople, with the most incredible Byzantine Church of Agia Sophia, to see the frescoes of the Cappadocian Monasteries, to walk on the streets of the cities that housed the earliest Christian Communities and to pray at the cave where St. John the Evangelist received his revelation. Now you can! Join us on our pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Asia Minor, so it may be that soon that your dreams will come true! Join us while there is still time to sign up.