

SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF JANUARY 10, 2010

(The Sunday Bulletin also is on the parish website)

SUNDAY/JANUARY 10

Sunday After Theophany

St. Theophan the Recluse

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Church School/Teen Discussion & Coffee Hour
12:00p.m. Movie: "Bridge to the East"

TUESDAY/JANUARY 12

7:30p.m. Movie: "Bridge to the East"

SATURDAY/JANUARY 16

9:00a.m. Memorial for Mary Kralovich
9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/JANUARY 17

Zaccheus Sunday

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy
Church School & Coffee Hour

Fasting Days

Monday, Jan. 13 & Friday, Jan. 15



**St. Theophan the Recluse
Bishop of Tambov (+1894)**

Blessing of Homes: Jan. 6 – Feb. 6

Contact Fr. James to schedule your home blessing

House Blessing: The Purpose

The annual blessing of homes is a custom of special beauty and significance. We again ask Christ to bless and enter into our homes and our lives. We ask Him to be with us, as we desire to be with Him. We ask that by the sprinkling of blessed water, the Holy Spirit renew us, our families and our lives in our homes. As Christ brought salvation to the house of Zacchaeus; we ask for the same for all dwelling in our homes.

House Blessing: The Order

The house being cleaned and ready, we dress in an honorable manner (as we would for church). When the priest arrives, we greet him at the door, having turned off any radio, TV, or other noise based element. Animals that may cause disruption by being startled by the sprinkling water should be placed out of the way. On a small table before icons, a small but wide-mouthed bowl full of newly blessed water is placed. Together with a list of names of those who reside in the home, a lighted candle and censor (if you have one) are also placed on the table. These items are arranged prior to the arrival of the priest. At the beginning of the service for the blessing of the home, a family member leads the priest throughout the home, carrying the lighted candle. The rest of the household follows and then returns to the table for the final prayer and blessing with water upon those present.



Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!

Jan. 26, 40th Day Archbishop Job
Feb. 09, 40th Day Helen Homiak
Feb. 09, 40th Day Paul Lebedz
Feb. 12, 40th Day Olga Poklitar
Jan. 10, 1983 Helen Zvonchenko
Jan. 11, 1979 Vassily Koles
Jan. 12, 1965 Alex Emilianov
Jan. 12, 1976 Julia Dzyban
Jan. 12, 1982 Xenia Kalevich
Jan. 13, 1953 Katherine Shwetz
Jan. 13, 1966 Peter Krentisky
Jan. 15, 2000 Ekaterina Moroshan
Jan. 17, 1938 Fr. Elia Lilikovich
Jan. 17, 1953 Radion Tzarkov
Jan. 17, 1975 Mary Kralovich



Winter Weather Changes in the schedule

Due to weather conditions, it may be necessary to postpone or cancel services, meetings, classes or other events. The parish website will provide this information at least one hour before the scheduled event. You may also call the rectory, if in doubt.

Namesday Greetings

St. Tatiana/January 12th: Tatiana Onuschak, Tatiana Hansen; Many Blessed Years!

Movie Presentation – In Conference Room

Jan. 10th, Sun. at 12:00p.m. and Jan. 12th, Tues at 7:30p.m. Feature: “*Bridge to the East*” This award winning film is narrated by the late Sir Steven Runciman, one of Great Britain’s greatest historians. Sir Runciman traces the influence of the Byzantine World and Culture in Eastern and Western Europe and it’s encounter with Islam. A rich exploration of thought, philosophy, art, architecture and belief. 54 minutes. Invite someone to see it with you!

Annual Parish Meeting – Feb. 7th, Sun.

The 2010 Parish Meeting will be held at 12:00p.m. and last no longer than one hour. In case of inclement weather, the Meeting is scheduled to be held the following Sunday, February 14th. **All Reports for the Meeting must be submitted no later than, January 29th, Friday 8:00p.m.** This permits time for compilation and distribution for January 31st, Sunday.

IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) Souper Bowl of Caring

On Sundays, January 31 and February 07, our parish will be collecting food staples for the local food pantry and monetary gifts for Great Expectations (a local home helping unwedded pregnant mothers). On these Sundays you are asked to bring a canned good or goods and \$1.00 or more for these charitable causes. Baskets will be in the church vestibule.

Newly-Departed – Former Parishioners

Helen Homiak of Louisiana (+ 1 Jan.) Paul Lebedz of Manville (+ 1 Jan.) Olga Poklitar of Green Brook (+ 4 Jan.). Memory Eternal!

Fast-Free Week – January 27th & 29th

There is no fasting this Wednesday or Friday.

Icon Print Box is on the Vestibule Stand

As icon prints should be treated respectfully, such prints from your old 2009 wall calendar as well as Christmas cards may be deposited in the box provided. We will collect only this January month.

2010 Parish Financial Support

Parishioners are asked to use the offering envelopes that are mailed to your home every other month. This is the normal and best way to support your parish. It also allows for budget planning. To secure envelopes, please speak with Father James about parish membership.

Outreach Meeting

Monday, January 18th, at 7:00p.m.

Parish Council Meeting

Thursday, January 21st, at 7:00p.m.

Offerings for the week of January 10

Olive Oil – in memory of Michael and Justina; in memory of Emilia and Vaschen.

Appreciation

Is expressed to the “Three Amigos” – Robert, Nicholas and Robert for the special breakfast last Sunday at the Coffee Hour.

THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN LETTERS TO GOD

Dear God, I would like to live 900 years like the guy in the Bible. Love, Chris

Dear God, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in church. Is this ok? Neil

Dear God, Please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there now. Ginny

Dear God, I am an American. What are you? Robert

Dear God, thank you for the baby brother but what I prayed for was a puppy. Joyce

Dear God, I bet it is very hard to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it. Nan

Dear God, in the Bible times did they really talk that fancy? Jennifer

Dear God, instead of letting people die and having to make new ones why don't you just keep the ones you got now? Jane

Dear God, I think about you sometimes even when I'm not praying. Elliott



THE FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD

The Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River reveals wondrous salvific events:

- ❖ The Mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed.
- ❖ Christ blessed the water, making it holy; water for our renewal and regeneration.
- ❖ A model of Baptism was established for the followers of Jesus Christ, so that they could have their sins washed away and be freed from the tyranny of demons.
- ❖ The Forerunner, St. John the Baptist was blessed by Christ.

The word **Theophany** (meaning manifestation of God) comes from the apostolic passage, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Another name for the Feast is **Epiphany** (meaning manifestation from above), "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). A third name is the "Feast of Lights", as Christ reveals Himself as the "Light of the World" (John 8:12).



Russian Orthodox Church delegation attends celebrations marking anniversary of the enthronement of Patriarch Iliya of Georgia

The Day of the Enthronement of His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, on 25 December 2009, began in Tbilisi with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Trinity Cathedral, with a multitude of people congregated. Among the participants were Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchate Exarch for All Belarus, and members of the Russian Orthodox Church's delegation.

After the service Metropolitan Filaret read out a congratulatory message from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and a congratulatory letter from the Holy Synod of the Byelorussian Exarchate. He also awarded Patriarch Iliya the highest decoration of the Byelorussian Orthodox Church – the Order of St. Euphrosyne of Polotsk and presented him with an Icon of Our Lady of Iveron.

The Primate of the Georgian Orthodox Church expressed profound gratitude to Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Filaret and recalled the distant years when he attended the Moscow Theological Academy.

Later that day a grand dinner took place during which a congratulatory letter from Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, was read out.

In the evening the Russian delegation attended the concert given in the Grand Hall of the Tbilisi Conservatoire in honour of Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya.

Metropolitan Jonah urges faithful to join DC March for Life

Posted 12/30

WASHINGTON, DC [OCA] -- Orthodox Christians everywhere -- especially those within driving distance of the US capital -- are being encouraged to bear witness to their faith at the annual March for Life on Friday, January 22, 2010.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah has issued a special invitation encouraging youth and young adults to join him in proclaiming that all life is indeed a gift from God.

The faithful are asked to gather by noon under the "Orthodox Christians for Life" banner to the left of the stage at the Ellipse, between the Washington Monument and the national Mall. Metropolitan Jonah will be the first of several speakers to address the public at the pre-March program.

At the conclusion of the March, Metropolitan Jonah will offer prayers for the victims of abortion.

On Thursday, January 21, the eve of the March, the faithful are encouraged to join Metropolitan Jonah for Vespers at Saint Nicholas Cathedral, 3500 Massachusetts Ave. NW, at 7:00 p.m. A reception will follow.

On the morning of the March, Metropolitan Jonah and members of the Holy Synod of Bishops will concelebrate the Divine Liturgy at the cathedral at 8:00 a.m.

Students from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY and Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, will form a combined choir to render the liturgical responses at both services. Classes at both seminaries will be suspended for the day to encourage participation by faculty and students alike.

THE PATH TO SALVATION

by Bishop Theophan the Recluse

The following essay, a short but typical example of Bishop Theophan's writing, is the Foreword to his major work, The Path To Salvation, and constitutes an outline, by a highly qualified and experienced authority, of the very phenomenon of the spiritual life: its nature, its dangers, its goal.*

IT IS POSSIBLE to describe the feelings and inclinations which a Christian must have, but this is very far from being all that is demanded for the ordering of one's salvation. The important thing for us is a real life in the spirit of Christ. But just touch on this, and how many perplexities are uncovered, how many guideposts are necessary, as a result, almost at every step!

True, one may know man's final goal: communion with God; and one may describe the path to it: faith, and walking in the commandments, with the aid of Divine grace. One need only say in addition: Here is the path—start walking!

This is easily said; but how to do it? For the most part the very desire to walk is lacking. The soul, attracted by some passion or other, stubbornly repulses every compelling force and every call; the eyes turn away from God and do not want to look at Him. The law of Christ is not to one's liking; there is no disposition even to listen to it. One may ask, how does one reach the point when the desire is born to walk toward God on the path of Christ? What does one do so that the law will imprint itself on the heart, and man, acting according to this law, will act as if from himself, unconstrained; so that this law will not lie on him, but will as it were proceed from him?

But suppose someone has turned toward God, suppose he has come to love His law; is the very going toward God, the very walking on the path of Christ's law, already necessary and will it be successful merely because we desire it to be? No. Besides the desire one must also have the strength and knowledge to act; one must have active wisdom. Whoever enters on the true path of pleasing God, or who begins with the aid of grace to strive toward God on the path of Christ's law, will inevitably be threatened by the danger of losing his way at the crossroads, of going astray and perishing, imagining himself saved. These crossroads are unavoidable because of the sinful inclination and disorder of one's faculties, which are capable of presenting things in a false light—to deceive and destroy a man. To this is joined the flattery of Satan, who is reluctant to be separated from his victims and, when someone from his domain goes to the light of Christ, pursues him and sets every manner of net in order to catch him again; and quite often he indeed catches him. Consequently it is necessary for someone who already has the desire to walk on the indicated path to the Lord to be shown in addition all the deviations that are possible on this path, so that the traveller may be warned in advance about this, may see the



dangers that are to be encountered, and may know how to avoid them.

These general considerations which are unavoidable to all on the path of salvation render indispensable certain guiding rules of the Christian life by which it should be determined: how to attain to the saving desire for communion with God and the zeal to remain in it, and how to reach God without misfortune amidst all the crossroads that may be met on this path at every step—in other words, how to begin to live the Christian life and how, having begun, to perfect oneself in it.

The sowing and development of the Christian life are different in essence from the sowing and development of natural life, owing to the special character of the Christian life and its relation to our nature. A man is not born a Christian, but becomes such after birth. The seed of Christ falls on the soil of a heart that is already beating. But since the naturally-born man is injured and opposed by the demand of Christianity, —while in a plant, for example, the beginning of life is the stirring of a sprout in the seed, an awakening of as it were dormant powers—the beginning of a true Christian life in a man is a kind of re-creation, an endowing of new powers, of new life. Further, suppose that Christianity is received as a law, *i.e.*, the resolution is made to live a Christian life: this seed of life (this resolution) is not surrounded in a man by elements favorable to him, and besides this the whole man, his body and soul, remain unadapted to the new life, unsubmitive to the yoke of Christ. Therefore from this moment begins in a man a labor of sweat—to educate his whole self, all his faculties, according to the Christian standard. This is why, while growth in plants, for example, is a gradual development of faculties, easy, unconstrained—in a Christian it is a battle with oneself involving much labor, intense and sorrowful, and he must dispose his faculties for something for which they have no inclination: like

a soldier, he must take every step of land, even his own, from his enemies by means of warfare, with the double-edged sword of forcing himself and opposing himself. Finally, after long labors and exertions, the Christian principles appear victorious, reigning without opposition; they penetrate the whole composition of human nature, dislodging from it demands and inclinations hostile to themselves, and place it in a state of passionlessness and purity, making it worthy of the blessedness of the pure in heart—to see God in themselves, in sincerest communion with Him.

Such is the place in us of the Christian life. This life has three stages which may be called: 1. turning to God; 2. purification or self-amendment; 3. sanctification. In the first stage a man turns from darkness to light, from the domain of Satan to God; in the second, he cleanses the chamber of his heart from every impurity, in order to receive Christ the Lord Who is coming to him; in the third, the Lord comes, takes up His abode in his heart, and communes with him. This is the state of blessed communion with God—the goal of all labors and ascetic endeavors.

To describe all this and determine its laws will mean—to indicate *the path to salvation*....

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Prayer is the elevation of the mind and heart to God in praise, in thanksgiving and in petition for the spiritual and material good we need. The Saviour commanded us to enter into our inner room and there to pray to God the Father in secret. According to Saint Demetrius of Rostov, the inner room means the heart. Consequently, the commandment of the Lord obliges us to pray mentally in our heart to God. This commandment extends to all Christians. The Apostle Paul commands the same, saying that we must pray in spirit always. Therefore it is impossible to contest the fact that mental prayer is compulsory for all Christians, and if it is obligatory it is also possible—God does not command the impossible.

St. Theophan the Recluse

Lithuania defies EU to promote family values

Sidestepping critics, Baltic nation strengthens family-friendly law on public information.

Lithuania lawmakers ended their year by amending a law on the protection of minors that had been condemned as "homophobic" by the European Parliament and other international bodies. But they did so in a way that strengthens and clarifies legal restrictions on public information which is out of synch with human dignity and family values. The small Baltic nation thus once again stands out for boldness among European states, such as Ireland and Italy, which are resisting the imposition of secularist policies by European Union bodies.



The new legislation, adopted by the parliament in Vilnius on December 22, eliminates a clause banning the promotion among minors of "homosexual, bisexual, and polygamous relations", replacing it with a ban on public information "that encourages [any type of] sexual relations among minors that denigrates family values or that promotes any concept of marriage and the family other than that defined in the Lithuanian Constitution and Code of Civil Law" (which states that marriage is between a man and a woman). The amendments also make clear that the legal restrictions apply to education, the media, advertising and all other types of public information.

"Lithuania is a European state that holds to traditional ethical values which it has no intention of abandoning." ~ Irena Degutiene, chair of Lithuanian parliament

degrades human dignity".

The law, first adopted in July, limits a wide range of public information considered harmful to young people, including graphic violence, instructions on how to make explosives, presentation of drug use in a positive light, pornography, ridiculing and discriminating against people or groups on the basis of their race, religion, social status or sexual orientation, and "the encouragement of behavior that

Its original text – with its specific reference to homosexuals – drew swift accusations of "homophobia" and human rights violations by Amnesty International and some EU diplomats. This led in September to a resolution of the European Parliament which condemned the law as discriminatory. They even proposed sanctions against the Baltic EU member state.

Lithuania responded by asking the European Court of Justice to declare that resolution null and void, as an unlawful intrusion into a democratic country's legislative sovereignty. Surprisingly, the court agreed that the European Parliament had overstepped the bounds of its competence.

The chair of the Lithuanian parliament, Irena Degutiene, hopes that the values on which

Lithuania has chosen to base its family and social policy might become an example for other European nations. "Lithuania is a European state that holds to traditional ethical values which it has no intention of abandoning," Degutienė said in a statement. "Going against the flow of strict cultural and ethical libertarianism in the European Union is not popular. But I am convinced that by resisting the sometimes insistent pressure to forsake principles and values with a proven ability to guide the life of society, we in fact will come out the winners."

Other European countries have also made the news recently for efforts to defend their values against EU institutions. Ireland, for example, in June forced EU leaders to guarantee in a series of written "assurances" that the union's new Lisbon Treaty, which increases the weight of EU law relative to national legislation, would not override pro-life clauses in the Irish Constitution nor prejudice Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality.

Nonetheless, shortly after Irish voters approved the Lisbon Treaty in an October referendum, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg agreed to hear the case of three women seeking to overturn Ireland's laws defending human life from the moment of conception. The women, who say they were forced to go abroad for abortions, argue that Irish law violates the European Convention on Human Rights by jeopardizing their "right to health and well-being". The court is expected to rule on the case within the next 12 months.

The Italian government, meanwhile, is appealing a November ruling by the same European court which ordered the removal of crucifixes from public school classrooms in the country on the grounds that such religious symbols "restricted the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their convictions, and the right of children to believe or not to believe." At the same time, the Italian Constitutional Court has issued a decision of its own stating that where rulings by the European Court of Human Rights conflict with provisions of the Italian Constitution, such rulings "lack legitimacy" and will not be enforced.

Russia, while not a member of the EU, has also been speaking out internationally in defense of moral values in public life. As MercatorNet reported, at recent United Nations meetings the Russian government has promoted pro-natalism rather than population control and resisted attempts to get "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" language embedded in human rights instruments. The Russian Orthodox Church, for its part, is campaigning actively to defend traditional values against modern liberalism in Europe, inviting the Catholic Church form an alliance for this end.

"It is a matter of concern that morality is emasculated in the theory of human rights, while interdependence of moral principles and human rights is not put into question by the authors of the concept, which is reflected in universal and European documents," Patriarch Kirill of Moscow stressed in a letter this month to Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland. "It is our conviction that neglect of moral aspects in implementing human rights threatens to undermine the very concept of rights and freedoms which has become one of the achievements of modern history," Kirill continued.

In this context, Lithuania's daring defense of moral values in public life could be seen as a promising international trend. The revised Law on the Protection of Minors, which was based on proposals by President Dalia Grybauskaitė and the ruling coalition of Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius, even won a few opposition votes. The government is also currently working to revoke a rule that, since Soviet times, has required all medical students specializing in gynecology to learn and practice how to perform abortions.

Interestingly enough, the generally critical media coverage of such issues and conversations with the man in the street all suggest that there been no major shift in society's views. The change rather, seems to be, that people with values are getting tired of being silenced and excluded from public debate, and they are learning to make their voices heard and felt. Naturally, those voices are coming to the surface, and attracting media attention, in some places more than in others. But the trend is growing and offers hope that the days of the "dictatorship of relativism" in public policy may well already be numbered.

Bryan P. Bradley is an American-born freelance writer based in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he has lived and worked since 1994. He has reported on economic, political and cultural issues in the Baltic region for a number of international news agencies, including Bloomberg and Reuters.

