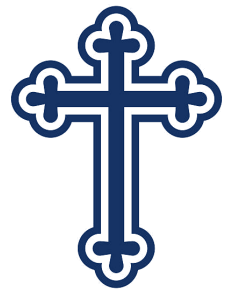




# St. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH



**Fr. Gabriel Bilas, Rector**

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## MONTHLY BULLETIN JANUARY 2020

### Important Dates to Remember:

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- ✝ 1/5 Blessing of the Waters following Divine Liturgy
- ✝ 1/6 Theophany Divine Liturgy 10am
- ✝ 1/12 Blessing of the river and Annual Lamb Roast Following Divine Liturgy
- ✝ 1/13 Inter-Christian Basketball
- ✝ 1/14 Parish Council Meeting
- ✝ 1/15 Begin Spring Semester of Metanoia
- ✝ 1/19 Sanctity of Life Sunday following Divine Liturgy
- ✝ 1/19 St. Emilia's Mom's Group Meeting 4:30pm
- ✝ 1/23 Holy Dormition Monastery Charity Dinner
- ✝ 1/26 Men's Group Planning Meeting
- ✝ 1/27 Inter-Christian Basketball
- ✝ 1/30 Divine Liturgy 10am & Choir Practice 6pm

## Transformative Grace

A message from Fr. Gabriel

During these winter months, especially if you are an "early riser", one of most beautiful things you can do in the morning is to go out in to the crisp and clean air, and stare up at the clarity of the night sky...waiting for the coming of the dawn. Over the course of just a few minutes, you can watch as the planets and the stars disappear from view when the Sun comes over the horizon, shining its brilliant rays on the world. In the midst of this beauty, one cannot help but think to the beginning of the Great Doxology in the Matins service, when the priest exclaims: "Glory to Thee Who has shown us the Light!

However magnificent the sunrise is, it pales in comparison to the beauty and light that comes upon the Human Race on the Feast of Holy Theophany! On January 6th, Christ descends into the waters of the Jordan, and the heavens literally open, with a voice coming down from the sky, saying something that will change the world forever: "This is my beloved Son, of Whom I am well pleased".

This simple statement made from the Father, is a very blazing and public revelation of Truth and Power. God is now dwelling with us, in the midst of His creation! He isn't just some omnipotent being in the heavens, Who plays with His creation like pawns on a chessboard! He is here, dwelling among us, and continually revealing His power and His Love through the Worship, Mysteries, and Sacraments of His Holy Church!



(Continued on page 2)

For those who are new to the Orthodox Faith, it is on the Feast of Holy Theophany that we bless and sanctify water, remembering how Christ sanctified the waters of the Jordan. There is a very pious custom that is popular in many Orthodox Countries, where after the waters are blessed, men and women will dive into icy waters...plunging themselves into the depths of the various frozen lakes and rivers three times. They do this to be reminded of their own baptisms, when the Holy Spirit came into ordinary water, and put to death mankind's old ways of wickedness, and allowed them to awaken as adopted sons and daughters of God.

There are many in the outside world that would look upon this custom as odd, just like they do at so many of the other mysteries (sacraments) of the Church. From an outside perspective, these mysteries of the Church seem like a bunch of hocus pocus, useless rituals that have no purpose, and no way of changing mankind and the world. But it has been the teaching of Christianity from the very beginning, that it is through the sacraments that the human race is truly transformed.

There is a beautiful (and historical) story that explains this much better than I could, which took place in the first centuries of the Church, during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate in the 4th century. He was celebrating his birthday and had asked for comedians and actors to come in and entertain the guests at the grand banquet that was thrown in his honor. One of the popular things to do at that time, was to poke fun and make fun of the Christians who were under persecution at that time by the state. The pagan actors came up with an elaborate scene, in which they would mock the various beliefs of Christians, including their belief in the power of baptism.

All of the actors came on stage, some dressed as priests, another dressed as a bishop, and a man, whose name was Porphyrios, played the role of the man who was going to be baptized. They brought out a large font of water and a white baptismal robe as props. After the scene started, every one of the actors, included Porphyrios, tried to out-do the other with derisive posturing, ridiculing gestures, and an over dramatization of the prayers that were supposed to be said over the waters. Towards the end of the performance, Porphyrios went into the font, and the actor dressed as the Bishop shouted: "The Servant of God Porphyrios is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!" He then thrust Porphyrios down into the waters, and it was there that something unexplainable happened. In the Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints), we read:

*"As Porphyrios came up from the waters, he was donned in the white robe, and suddenly felt himself transfixed. A complete serenity overcame him, and out of a bright light that only he could see before him, came a voice which said that he was truly being baptized in the name of the trinity."*

After this incredible transformation, Porphyrios refused to continue with the rest of the act. In an act of pure courage and defiance towards the Emperor, he started to denounce all that were present, for mocking the true God of the Christians! He was so changed by the waters of Baptism, and he held on to this new reality so tightly, that not even the threat of death from the king could cause him to turn his back on our Lord! The last sentence in the story of his life, sums up everything very nicely: "By the will of God, he was transformed from a clown of the king, to a servant of the Lord".

Transformative Grace...this is what we are given through all of the sacred mysteries of the Church, and it is what we are reminded of on this great Feast of Theophany. Why does the priest encourage the entire flock to attend the Church services, to take part in the sacraments, to go to confession, to be present for blessings, and to receive the Body and Blood of Christ as often as possible? Because it is in these mysteries that God's power is revealed to the human race! The mysteries (sacraments) of the Church are the only things that exist in this world, that can truly change and transform us as sons and daughters of the creator of all.

As we begin this new year, celebrating and remembering the manifestation of God's power through His Holy Epiphany, let us once again make a commitment to allow ourselves to be transformed by His power through prayer, silence, and the sacred mysteries which He has entrusted to those who seek eternal life with Him.

# THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SERVE!

## Parish Greeters

### January 5th:

Donna & Wes Nakagiri

### January 12th:

Seth & Mia Hillaker

### January 19th:

Pat Smith

### January 26th:

George & Julie Jonascu

## Coffee Hour Volunteers

### January 5th:

Stephen & Inna Bondira & Mira

Grimes

### January 12th:

Sbdn. Andrew & Meghan Durand

### January 19th:

David & Solome Daugherty

### January 26th:

Brady & Kathy Damic

## Epistle Readers

### January 5th:

Sbdn Andrew Durand

### January 12th:

Rdr. Chris Ballnik

### January 19th:

Dr. Janet Wiese

### January 26th:

Rdr. John Auxier

## Alternate Readers

### January 5th:

Jenni Otis

### January 12th:

Sue Walton

### January 19th:

Sbdn. Andrew Durand

### January 26th:

Rdr. Chris Ballnik

Incase you missed this months homilies visit...

<http://www.st-marymagdalene.org/parish-blog>

## WISHING YOU MANY BLESSED YEARS!

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- ✠ 1– Robyn Dollins
- ✠ 3– Jeremy Becklehamer & Benjamin Cooley
- ✠ 4– John Oslin & Jacob Yonan
- ✠ 6– Brion Cooley
- ✠ 7– Anastasia Branoff
- ✠ 10– Theresa Cooley, Solome Daugherty & Layla Yonan
- ✠ 11– Theodora Tyrell
- ✠ 13– Theresa Serafimovski & Hannah Burtka
- ✠ 15– Mark Yonan & Jason Derry
- ✠ 16– Minka Owens, Logan Welch & James Rice
- ✠ 18– Katherine Senter & Cindy Welch
- ✠ 19– Katherine Arnes & Adalyn Joseph
- ✠ 20– Jeanette Hildreth, Terri Oginsky & Laura Khoury
- ✠ 21– Fr. Dn. Logan Shephard
- ✠ 22– Denis Oslin
- ✠ 23– Theophan Forsyth
- ✠ 24– KatherynAuxier
- ✠ 25– Michael Khoury & Carly Locascio
- ✠ 29– Fr. Dn Michael Schlaack & Ruth Becklehamer
- ✠ 30– Renee Wilkinson & Shannon Joseph
- ✠ 31– Stephen Schlaack

### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- ✠ 31– Helen & James Locascio

**HAVE YOU “liked” and “shared” our parish Facebook page? For announcements, upcoming events, pictures and more visit us at**

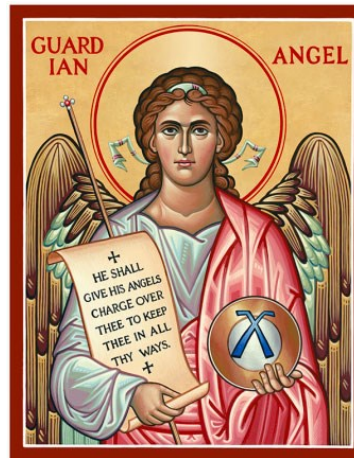
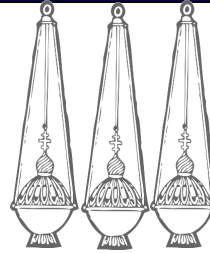
**<https://www.facebook.com/StMaryMagdaleneOrthodoxChurch/>**

**This is a great way for you, your family and your friends to stay connected with your parish family and Orthodox Christian Community!**

# Prayer Life

*Pray for our sick and suffering brothers and sisters*

Metropolitan Theodosius	Michael
Metropolitan Herman	Pulette
Reader Gregory	Katherine
Vinne	James
Anastasia	Ron
Alex	Pat
Elaine	Michael
Perpetua	Chloe
Carol	Jenna
Katelyn	Carol
Frankie	Melissa
Thom	Susan
Damian	Renee
Stacie	
Caolyn	
Megan	
Lon	
Ella	
Noah	
Elnora	
Peter	
Calvin	
David	



## *This Month's Scripture Readings*

**January 5th:**  
Mark 1:9-11

**January 12th:**  
**Matthew 5:12-17**

**January 19th:**  
Luke 18:35-43

**January 26th:**  
Matthew 15:21-28

### Armed Forces

Matthew Beck; Air Force  
Michael Oginsky; U.S. Marines  
Patrick Tejkl; U.S. Marines  
Lindsey Cazatt; U.S. Navy  
Stephany Bishop; U.S. Navy  
Jason Wilburn; Army Rangers  
Alex Suriano; Air National  
Guard  
Dallas Watson; Air Force  
Bradley Grimes,  
Seaphim Lazar-Watson; Air  
Force

### Recently Departed

Nicholas  
Margaret

### Catechumens

John  
Karem  
Asher  
Miriam  
Elliott  
Alyssa  
William

### Mother's With

Christine



# MONTHLY FORECAST

## **2020 Blessing of Water for Theophany**

The Great Blessing of Water will take place on Sunday, January 5th, after the Divine Liturgy. Bring your empty Holy Water bottles from home to Liturgy that Sunday to fill up! Bottles are also available at the Church if you do not yet have one!

## **Theophany Divine Liturgy**

On Monday, January 6th, we will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of Theophany, beginning at 10:00 AM

## **Annual Lamb Roast and Blessing of the River**

This year's parish lamb roast and blessing of the River will take place on Sunday, January 12th, following the Divine Liturgy. A free lamb lunch will be provided, but everyone is asked to bring an appetizer or desert to pass around! Bring a friend this Sunday!

## **House Blessings for 2020**

House blessings will begin after January 6th! Please fill out the house blessing form (available at the Church or in this bulletin) and give it to Fr. Gabriel as soon as possible so that he can get the schedule together! If you have questions about having your house blessed, do not hesitate to ask him!

## **Memorial Service for the Unborn**

After Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 19th, we will be having our annual Memorial Service for all unborn children. Please invite and spread the word to anyone who might have lost a child in the womb.

## **Lenten Pilgrimage Announced**

Registration is now underway for our 2020 Lenten Monastery Pilgrimage, which will take place from Sunday, March 29th to Thursday, April 2nd. On our trip, we will be spending time at Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Monastery in New York, St. Tikhon's Monastery in Eastern Pennsylvania, and Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Western Pennsylvania. The total cost for the trip is \$340 dollars per person, plus fuel costs (split up at the end) and any meals on the road. The trip is limited to 12 people and is being opened up to our parish family first! Please email Fr. Gabriel if you are interested as soon as possible, before this trip fills up! See the flier below for more information!

## **Annual Holy Dormition Vespers and Dinner**

This year's annual Dormition Dinner will be held on Thursday, January 23rd, at Holy Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Grand Blanc. Tickets are just \$35 dollars for adults, and \$25 dollar for students, and all of the proceeds go to support Holy Dormition Monastery. This year, our parish is responsible for beverages and centerpieces! If you would like to donate, purchase tickets, or help with the center pieces, please see Dcn. Michael!

## **Inter Christian Basketball Dates**

This month's basketball open gym dates will be on Monday, January 13th and Monday January 27th, beginning at 7:00 PM at Hope Lutheran Church in Linden. The Church gym is located behind Linden High School. If you like to play basketball, or just want to run up the court for an hour or so to burn off those Christmas cookies, please be sure to join us!

## **Spring Metanoia Begins**

The Winter/Spring Semester of Metanoia is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, January 15th, beginning at 6:30 PM. The full schedule and topic list is on one of the fliers below! This class is open to all members of our parish, as well as those from the outside looking to study and learn more about Orthodoxy! If you have not taken the class before, everyone is HIGHLY ENCOURAGED to commit and participate at least once! See Fr. Gabriel if you are interested in registering, or if there is someone that you know that would be interested in learning more!

## **Mom's Group Dinner**

The St. Emilia Mom's Group is set to meet at 4:30 PM on Sunday, January 19th. Please see Addie Lanterman for more details!

## **Men's Group Introduction**

There has been talk over the past several weeks to start a men's group here at the parish. On January 26th, the group is hoping to have their first meeting after Divine Liturgy at a local bowling ally! Stay tuned for more details!

## **Divine Liturgy for Three Holy Hierarchs**

Mark your calendars for Thursday, January 30th, as we will be celebrating the feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs with a Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM!

## **Lazarus Bag Collections**

This month the fellowship of St. Photini will be collecting items for their annual Lazarus Bags, see the attached flier for items needed.



# THEOPHANY SCHEDULE

## 2020

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

ST. JOHN  
THE BAPTIST

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**Saint Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church**  
**2439 S. Long Lake Road, Fenton, Michigan**

Sunday, January 5th Divine Liturgy and Blessing of the Water 9:50am

Monday, January 6th: Divine Liturgy for the feast of Theophany 10:00am

Sunday, January 12th Divine Liturgy, Blessing of the River and Annual Lamb Roast 9:50am





# ST. MARY MAGDALENE HOUSE BLESSING FORM 2020

**Family Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Best Number to Reach You:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Circle What Days and Times Work Best For Your Family:**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Friday**

**Mornings**

**Afternoons**

**Evenings**

*In preparation for your House Blessing, please have a candle, an icon, a small dish to hold the Holy Water, and a list of names for your family's living and departed.*

# Feast of the Theophany of our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ

oca.org



Theophany is the Feast which reveals the Most Holy Trinity to the world through the Baptism of the Lord (Mt.3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptized by Saint John the Forerunner, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a dove. From ancient times this Feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since God is Light and has appeared to illumine “those who sat in darkness,” and “in the region of the shadow of death” (Mt.4:16), and to save the fallen race of mankind by grace.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptize catechumens at the Vespers of Theophany, so that Baptism also is revealed as the spiritual illumination of mankind. The origin of the Feast of Theophany goes back to Apostolic times, and it is mentioned in The Apostolic Constitutions (Book V:13). From the second century we have the testimony of Saint Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord, and the night vigil before this Feast.

There is a third century dialogue about the services for Theophany between the holy martyr Hippolytus and Saint Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries, from the fourth to ninth century, all the great Fathers of the Church: Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan, John of Damascus, commented on the Feast of Theophany.

The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this Feast, which

is sung at Orthodox services even today. Saint John of Damascus said that the Lord was baptized, not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but “to bury human sin by water,” to fulfill the Law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify “the nature of water” and to offer us the form and example of Baptism.

On the Feast of the Baptism of Christ, the Holy Church proclaims our faith in the most sublime mystery, incomprehensible to human intellect, of one God in three Persons. It teaches us to confess and glorify the Holy Trinity, one in Essence and Undivided. It exposes and overthrows the errors of ancient teachings which attempted to explain the Creator of the world by reason, and in human terms.

The Church shows the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires us with a sense of deep gratitude for the illumination and purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, therefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism, keeping clean this priceless garb, for “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

## Troparion — Tone 1

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan / The worship of the Trinity was made manifest / For the voice of the Father bore witness to You / And called You His beloved Son. / And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, / Confirmed the truthfulness of His word. / O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself / And have enlightened the world, glory to You!



# Our Parish Youth

## Upcoming events:

Happy New Year!

We are anxiously awaiting the start of our spring semester of church school! We will begin lessons again on January 19th, continuing through Pascha. We look forward to furthering our knowledge on the topic of church history! Stay tuned for information on a greeting card fundraiser in the coming weeks!



**“FATHERS AND MOTHERS: GO AND LEAD YOUR CHILD  
BY THE HAND INTO THE CHURCH.”  
- ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**



**ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (OCF)** is the official campus ministry organization of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

**Flint OCF:**

The Flint OCF had a great month of December. On the 6th, we met up at St. George with Fr. Joe to discuss “All About St. Nicholas,” on his feastday. It was an excellent discussion and we were even joined by Fr. Jarrod, the new priest from Assumption. On December 19th, we met up at NCG Trillium in Grand Blanc with a large group, including some from the high school group at SMM, to watch “The Rise of Skywalker.” It was a great night of fellowship. We look forward to the Nativity of Christ and an exciting new year with more OCF meetings

**Prayer of a Student**

Christ my Lord, the Giver of light and wisdom, who opened the eyes of the blind man and transformed the fishermen into wise heralds and teachers of the gospel through the coming of the Holy Spirit, shine also in my mind the light of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Grant me discernment, understanding and wisdom in learning. Enable me to complete my assignments and to abound in every good work, for to You I give honor and glory. Amen.

**Prayers Before Study**

Most blessed Lord, send the grace of Your Holy Spirit on me to strengthen me that I may learn well the subject I am about to study and by it become a better person for Your glory, the comfort of my family and the benefit of Your Church and our Nation. Amen

Christ, the true light, who enlightens and sanctifies every person coming into the world, let the light of Your countenance shine upon me (us) that I (we) may see Your unapproachable light; and guide my (our) steps in the way of Your commandments, through the intercessions of Your all-holy Mother and of all the Saints. Amen.

**Prayer After Study**

I thank You, Lord our God, that again on this occasion You have opened my eyes to the light of Your wisdom. You have gladdened my heart with the knowledge of truth. I entreat You, Lord, help me always to do Your will. Bless my soul and body, my words and deeds. Enable me to grow in grace, virtue and good habits, that Your name may be glorified, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.



**Prayers for our college students:**

- Greg Auxier
- Katherine Arnes
- David Schutt
- Katherine Schutt
- Oliver Lazar Senter
- Elena Bucciarelli
- Zachary Wilkinson
- Douglas Wilkinson

- Laura Khoury
- Rachael Hildreth
- Sydney Wilkinson
- Katerina Jonescu
- Katheryn Auxier
- Alexandra Kekel



# "METANOIA"

LEARNING TO CHANGE ONE'S HEART FOR GOD



**In a Christian World now littered with various denominations, each teaching a different version of the same Gospel, have you ever wondered or thought about what the earliest Christians taught, how they worshiped, and what believed? Now is your opportunity to come, discuss, and learn about the fullness of what the Ancient Christian Faith is all about!**

**This 7 Week Class will cover the fundamental beliefs of the Ancient Christian Church, passed down to us from Christ and His Disciples**

## **Spring Semester, 2020**

- Wednesday, January 15th, 6:30 PM: Introduction into Orthodoxy. What is Holy Tradition?**
- Wednesday, January 22nd, 6:30 PM: What do we believe about God?**
- Wednesday, January 29th, 6:30 PM: What is the purpose of man's existence?**
- Tuesday, February 4th, 6:30 PM: What is Prayer? The Mysteries of the Jesus Prayer**
- Wednesday, February 12th, 6:30 PM: Missing the Mark: An Eastern View of Sin**
- Wednesday, February 19th, 6:30 PM: Who is Jesus and What Did He Come Here to Do?**
- Wednesday, February 26th, 6:30 PM: What does the Church believe about Mary?**



## A Month in Review:

We had an absolutely wonderful month of December, which was highlighted by the Advent Feasts of St. Nicholas and of the Nativity of our Lord! We also had a very successful annual bake and craft sale, of which we owe all of our bakers and helpers many thanks! Thank you to all who came to sing and pray with us for the Christmas Services! Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

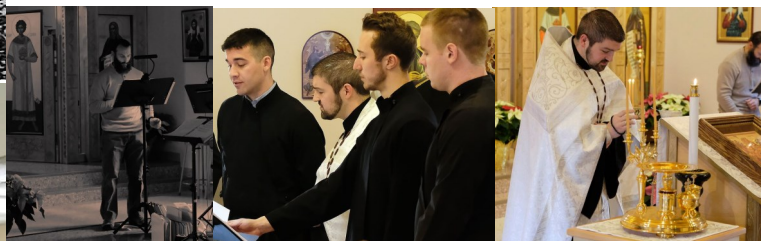
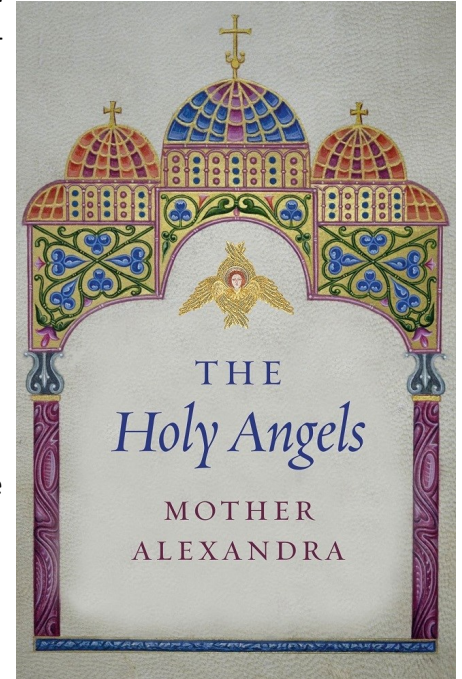


## Recommended Reading from Fr. Gabriel

### **The Holy Angels, By: Mother Alexandra (recently released from Ancient Faith Bookstore )**

First published in 1981 and long out of print, *The Holy Angels* has yet to be surpassed as a comprehensive and comprehensible account of the nature of the angels

and their role in our salvation. In layperson's terms, Mother Alexandra presents the essence of everything the Church has to teach us about the angels, beginning with the Old Testament, continuing through the New Testament, and concluding with the Tradition of the Church as expressed in her theology, hymnography, and iconography. For those who long to become better acquainted with these holy servants of God and to understand their role in our lives, this book is a great place to start.



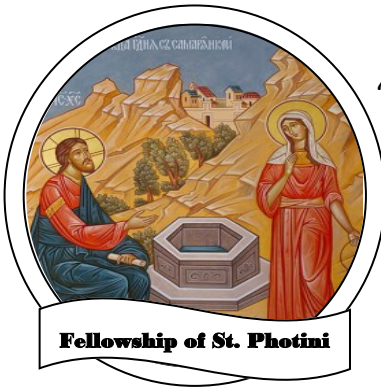




## St. Emilia's Moms Group

**CALLING ALL MOTHERS: Next monthly meeting will take place on Sunday, January 19th at 4:30pm** For more information please reach out to Renea Becklehamer or Ad-die Lanterman.

# FELLOWSHIP OF ST. PHOTINI



"An inclusive opportunity for community outreach led by the faithful of St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church"

Please contact Theophan Forsyth, Terri Oginski or Rebekah Humphreys if you would like any information about upcoming projects or would like to donate to the works of the Fellowship of St. Photini.

The Fellowship of St. Photini will again collect items for our annual distribution of Lazarus Bags. We will be collecting the following items:

**Hand warmers**  
razors  
gloves  
hats  
protein bars  
bottled water  
Chapstick  
McDonald's gift cards  
**Travel size:**  
first aid kits/ bandaids  
Kleenex  
toothbrush and toothpaste  
shaving cream

As a parish family we will be creating 50 Lazarus Bags with the goal of **seeking out** those who are less fortunate, and offering them a helping hand.

Whether it is someone who is begging on the side of a highway, or someone who is sitting on a street corner with no roof over their head, we are called to recognize and help our neighbor in need.

As a family read Luke 16: 19-31, and discuss where you might find someone in need. Each family will be given at least two bags and will be charged with finding their own personal "Lazarus" to give a bag to. If possible, be sure to get the name of the individual you give the bag to and add them to your personal prayer list.

Please sign up for the items you wish to donate so that we do not double up on items. We will also accept cash donation as well if you are unable to get to the store.

Please see Marissa Bailey, chair, or any member of the St. Photini Leadership team with any other questions.

*I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'*





# LAZARUS BAGS

## ITEMS NEEDED:

- ✦ Hand Warmers
- ✦ Razors
- ✦ Gloves
- ✦ Hats
- ✦ Protein Bars
- ✦ Bottled Water
- ✦ Chapstick
- ✦ McDonald's Gift

Cards

## TRAVEL SIZED:

- ✦ First Aid Kits/  
Band-aids
- ✦ Kleenex
- ✦ Toothbrush
- ✦ Toothpaste
- ✦ Shaving Cream







## St. Mary Magdalene 2020 Lenten Monastery Pilgrimage

### Trip Itinerary

**Sunday, March 29th:** Divine Liturgy at St. Mary Magdalene in Fenton Michigan. Depart for Holy Trinity Jordanville Monastery, arriving on Sunday Evening. *\*We will be traveling through Canada, so **Passports are required!***

**Monday, March 30th:** Morning Services at the Monastery and Breakfast. Tour of the Cathedral, Baptistry, Candle Factor, Incense workshop, and bookstore. Lunch and free time to explore, before departing for St. Tikhon's Monastery in the evening

**Tuesday, March 31st:** Early Morning Services at the monastery, followed by breakfast and a tour of the Monastery Church, Museum, and Grounds. Lunch, followed by free time in the afternoon. Depending on availability, a visit to see the weeping icon of "The Tender Heart" in Taylor, PA, followed by dinner at Cooper's restaurant in Scranton.

**Wednesday, April 1st:** Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy at the Monastery Church and a bookstore visitation. Departing early afternoon for Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA.

**Thursday, April 2nd:** Morning Services and breakfast with the Mothers and Sisters, followed by a tour of the Monastery Grounds and Bookstore. Lunch will be provided, before departing home for St. Mary Magdalene

**Cost is \$340 per person**

*(Cost does NOT include fuel, restaurants, and donations to the monasteries)*

*Email Fr. Gabriel at [frgabrielsmm@gmail.com](mailto:frgabrielsmm@gmail.com) for more information!*

**YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN**

Mother Abbess Gabriella & The Community of  
The Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery on  
Thursday, January 23, 2020, at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church for our

**~ 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Dinner To Support ~**

**The Dormition of the Mother of God  
Orthodox Monastery**

**Donation Requested**  
\$35 Adult / \$25 Student

*The Mothers will be  
bringing the Monastery  
Gift Shop to Flint!*

**Evening Schedule**

- ✓ 5:30 - *Vespers sung by the Mothers of Dormition Monastery*
- ✓ 6:15 - *Social Time & Bookstore Open*
- ✓ 6:45 - *Dinner & Speakers*
- ✓ 8:30 - *Benediction*

Names	Donation

See Your Parish Rep to make a reservation, volunteer your time or be a sponsor  
OR: Contact Assumption Church at (810) 771-4611

**☞ MAKE ALL CHECKS OUT TO: Assumption Church ☞**

- ✓ Assumption Church ..... Lori Photiou
- ✓ St. George Church..... Dn. Michael Bassett
- ✓ St. Mary Magdalene Church..... Dn. Michael Schlaack
- ✓ St. Nicholas Church..... Lena Bakousidis

**~ 100% of your donation goes to Dormition Monastery ~**

**ALL ACTIVITIES TO BE HELD AT ASSUMPTION CHURCH**  
**2245 E Baldwin Rd., Grand Blanc Township**





INVITATION  
THE ORDINATION TO  
THE EPISCOPACY  
OF THE VERY REVEREND  
ARCHIMANDRITE ANDREI

as Auxiliary Bishop of  
The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020

7:00pm Great Vespers  
Proclamation of Election and Calling of the Bishop-Elect  
Formal Reception

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2020

8:00am Matins  
9:00am Entrance of the Hierarchs  
Presentation of the Bishop-Elect and his Profession of Faith  
Hierarchal Divine Liturgy with Ordination to the Episcopacy  
1:30pm Grand Banquet

SANT GEORGE  
ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

18405 W Nine Mile Rd, Southfield Michigan

Information

Chancery (517) 522-4800 | roea.org  
Cathedral (248) 569-4833 | rocathedral.org

GRAND BANQUET AND SUPPORT

We invite you to be with us at this historic event.

**BANQUET ADMISSION IS BY ADVANCE TICKET PURCHASE ONLY,**  
and must be reserved by January 21, 2020.

We invite you also to consider being a Financial Supporter.

**BANQUET TICKETS and FINANCIAL SUPPORT**  
(517) 522-4800 ext. 106



**THE WESTIN**  
DETROIT - SOUTHFIELD

1500 Town Center, Southfield MI 48075  
(248) 827-4000 | westin.com/southfield  
**\$99 (king) | \$109 (double)**

Mention "ROEA" prior to January 15  
to receive special rate.



# Referral Program To Benefit The St. Mary Magdalene Church Expansion



Conne Terova  
Real Estate One  
Cell: (248) 318-7342  
Email:  
[cterova@gmail.com](mailto:cterova@gmail.com)  
[teamterova.com](http://teamterova.com)

Know anyone who is looking to buy or sell a home in the state of Michigan? Conne Terova of Real Estate One is offering an incentive program to benefit the St. Mary Magdalene Church Expansion Fund by offering a \$500.00 donation for every referral that results in a closed transaction!



**ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE OF  
HIS BEATITUDE  
METROPOLITAN TIKHON  
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
2019**

To the Honorable Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and Pious Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

My Beloved Brethren and Blessed Children in the Lord,

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

As we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and His baptism in the River Jordan, we call to mind the important roles that his mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and his Forerunner, John the Baptist, had in bringing about these events that manifested Christ to the world. For the Theotokos and the Baptist are indeed excellent examples for us, as we share their same calling to make Christ present in the world.

When Mary received the glad tidings that she was to become the Birth-giver of God, she humbly responded: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to thy word." She then visited her relative Elizabeth, who was six months pregnant, and when she greeted Elizabeth, the babe in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy. This babe, as we well know, was Saint John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ.

The importance of John the Baptist in the Gospels cannot be overemphasized. As the Forerunner of Christ, he not only proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, but also died a martyr's death for speaking the truth, foreshadowing that Christ, the Truth, would die for the Salvation of the world. In dying for the truth, John is not only the Forerunner to Christ, but also the Forerunner to all those who have died for Christ throughout the centuries, the countless martyrs who have struggled and been slain for Christ for more than two thousand years. Some Christians are still called to this level of witness, to this level of dying in martyrdom for the sake of Christ. The twentieth century saw more Christian martyrs than any century beforehand, in places such as Russia, Romania, and Turkey. The twenty-first in turn is seeing many Christian martyrs in places like Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Syria. We pray for strength and steadfastness for all Christians suffering persecution for the sake of Christ, and in turn we ask for the intercessions of those who have died martyr's deaths in witness of Christ.

Yet certainly, not all Christians are called to be slain for Christ, to be beheaded like John the Baptist or many of the later martyrs. Neither are all called to be like the Baptist as public preachers or wandering ascetics. For those who do not have the Baptist's calling, another route is provided: the calling to live like the Virgin Mary. For while John made Christ known to the world, it was through the Virgin Mary that Christ came to be born in the flesh. She is the Theotokos, the bearer of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the same way, Christians can "bear Christ" and make Him present. Instead of preaching God's works across hills and dales, we can keep them close and ponder them in our hearts (see Luke 2:19). By thus meditating on God's works, we will become authentically humble, gentle, and kind like Mary. And in this process of contemplating what Christ has done for us, we will gain boldness before Him in our

private conversations with Him. Forging a personal relationship with Christ, we will have boldness to ask Him and His servants for what is needed, just as Mary His Mother did at the wedding in Cana.

These two great figures, John the Baptist and Mary the Theotokos, thus help us grapple with a perennial problem of Christians: how do we keep the winter feasts of the Nativity and Theophany meaningful throughout the year? The Church's calendar points us to the solution: the day after the Nativity of the Lord, December 26, is dedicated to the Lord's Mother, and January 7, the day after the Theophany of the Lord, is dedicated to the Lord's Forerunner. Hence the Church tells us that imitation of the Forerunner and the Theotokos are the keys to making Christ's winter feasts more than just a few days of celebration. The Baptist shows us the way of outward witness, of forceful and defiant objection to the falsehood propagated in the world, while the Theotokos shows us the way of inner stillness, of contemplation of the mystery of Christ. And Christians can imitate the lifestyle of either one, because ultimately both John and the Theotokos are doing the same thing: both are witnesses to Christ, and steadfastly remain eternal witnesses to His death and resurrection.

So, give glory to Christ on the feasts of His Nativity and Theophany, while honoring and magnifying in song the Theotokos and Mother of the Light, and praising the Baptist as is his due. For they reveal to us the different ways in which Christians can witness to Christ, and are our primary examples of how to live a Christian life, not only at this festal season of Nativity and Theophany, but throughout the entire year.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

With love in the New-Born Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a cross symbol followed by a stylized, cursive name that appears to be 'Tikhon'.

+ Tikhon  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada





## **Bulgarian Diocese of Toledo** *Orthodox Church in America*

*519 Brynhaven Drive Oregon, OH 43616*

**ARCHBISHOP ALEXANDER**  
Diocesan Prelate

**Office:** (419) 693-9540  
**Fax:** (419) 693-9541  
**Mobile:** (419) 690-9979  
**email:** alexander@bdoca.org

### **NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 2019**

*"On this all-peaceful night let us neither be menacing nor boisterous...*

*On this night of the Humble One, let us be neither proud nor haughty...*

*On this day of rejoicing let us not share sorrows...*

*On this calm day let us not be quick-tempered...*

*Today the Deity imprinted itself on humanity, so that humanity might also be shaped into the seal of Deity."*

The above excerpt from the Hymns on the Nativity by St. Ephraim the Syrian celebrate the profound meaning of the birth of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Every year as Christmas approaches, we hear the lament that the corporate world has turned the feast into a commercial caricature of its original celebration. This is true, without a doubt.

However, let us also take care not to fill the celebration of our Lord's birth with empty platitudes, forgotten the day we throw out the Christmas tree. The gathering of family and friends, the exchange of gifts, the table fully laden with Christmas dinner—these are but outward expressions of an inner truth.

The birth of Christ grants us the possibility of partaking in his Sonship, becoming full inheritors of God's glory, "shaped into the seal of Deity." Christ has come to offer us an end to the isolation caused by our sin. He is born to grant us resurrection and eternal life, the greatest of all gifts for which we are so undeserving. He comes to invite us to partake in his eternal banquet, the "wedding supper of the Lamb." (Revelation 19:9)

The only-begotten Son and Word of God "appeared on earth and lived among men, and, becoming incarnate of a holy virgin, he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being conformed to the body of our lowliness that he might make us conformed to the image of his glory." (Anaphora of St. Basil) Even if we have none of the usual fare of "Christmas cheer" in our life, this truth resonates forever like that song of the angels heard by the shepherds. This, as they say, is "the true meaning of Christmas."

May the Incarnate Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, fill our hearts with light and life during this festal season, throughout the New Year, and unto the ages of ages.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!  
With love in the newborn King,

*Archbishop of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese – Orthodox Church in America*