

PREPARATION FOR THE BLESSING OF HOMES

Before the Priest arrives at your home, here are a few reminders on how to prepare:

- In the main room of the home, usually the kitchen or dining room, have placed on the table a white cloth, a candle and /or an Icon or cross. You may place a small container of Holy Water on the table. (Note: Father will be bringing his own.)
- Make a list of those living in the house including pets and all deceased you want prayed for.
- Turn off all TV's, radios, computers, etc. So as to keep focused on the blessing service.
- Make sure that pets are heeled or restrained so as not to get underfoot while Father goes through the home.
- In some customs, someone (usually a child) takes a candle and leads Father through the house while the rest follow.
- If you have any items to be blessed (Icon, Cross, etc.). Put them on the table where the blessing will take place.
- When the priest arrives, have everyone in the home gather around the table and join in the blessing. **PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT.**
- Invite friends or neighbors to participate and witness the beauty of this tradition.

NOTE: Remember, the invitation to the priest to come and bless your home is an invitation to ask for the mercy of God upon the household. The sprinkling of the Holy Water is a sign of God's presence in the home as an extension of His Holy House, the Church. It is a time to renew our commitment to God as we begin another year in His mercy and love for mankind. Please contact Fr. Andrew to make arrangements to have your home blessed by the end of January.

ANNUAL BLESSING OF LAKE ERIE

Saturday, January 8, 2022 at Noon

Weather Date: Saturday, January 15 at Noon

Location: Clemons Park across the street from
Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
110 East Main Street, Marblehead, OH



Blessing of the Lake, the
Village of Marblehead &
surrounding areas,
prayers for the civil
authorities and residents.

Noon: Join us for the Procession from Holy Assumption Orthodox
Church to Clemons Park across the street.

Return to Church following the Service for food, adult beverages,
coffee, tea, water, soda.

QUESTIONS? Please call Father Andrew

Rectory: 419-798-4591 / Cell: 570-212-8747

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assuming our fallen nature refashions and recreates us so that we might transcend the visible and find our fulfillment as human beings in the world that is invisible. Thus the Litya verse from Compline also says:

“Today heaven and earth are united, for Christ is born. Today God has come to earth and man ascends to heaven.”

In His person, the eternally begotten Son of God becomes the Son of man and assumes our fallen nature to fulfill our true humanity in His Kingdom. He transcends the sectarianism and polarities of our time by becoming the New Adam, the “first-born from the dead.” Our entire fallen humanity is recreated and united in Christ. St. Gregory the Wonderworker makes this point in his discourse on the Nativity:

“The Ancient of Days is become a Child, to make people children of God.”

The Prophet Isaiah and St. Paul speak of the fruit of this reality in verses that are read during the services of the Nativity:

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in my entire holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”
Isaiah 11:6-9

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:27-28

The incarnation of Our Lord teaches us how we can address the fallen realities of our time in our witness to the Truth in love. His Nativity shows us that all we believe, teach, and do in the Church is intimately tied to its fulfillment in His Kingdom. The minute we separate this relationship we end up preaching religion, ideology, or legislated moral codes. As to the continuing challenges the variants of Covid present us, I wish we could find a way to discuss these concerns in light of the teachings of our Faith. By not doing so, all

of the above issues become ends in themselves and thus idols; this has nothing to do with gospel, the Good News of Christ’s life-creating Death, and His Glorious Resurrection.

I pray that the Lord continue to enlighten us in our celebration of the Great Feast of His Holy Nativity and upcoming Holy Theophany. Please pray for me.

May the Nativity of Our Lord bring you blessings, joy, and peace.

With love in Christ,

The unworthy Archbishop Paul

AXIOS! Archbishop Paul marks the Seventh Anniversary of Episcopal Consecration

The 27th of December, the feast of St. Stephen the First Martyr, marks the anniversary of Archbishop Paul’s consecration to the holy episcopate. It was seven years ago today, that His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, along with other hierarchs, clergy and faithful from all over the country gathered at Holy Trinity Cathedral for this joyous event in the life of the diocese.

Archbishop Paul has been an example of dedication in his work to serve the Diocese of the Midwest. Even during these challenging times, he continues to travel the eleven states in his territory to minister to his people. He continues to develop ministries to unite the diocese, and to foster vocation. The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America also elevated him to rank of Archbishop in May of 2020.

On behalf of Archpriest Paul Jannakos, the diocesan staff, clergy and faithful of the Midwest; Axios and congratulations to our Archpastor. Many years!



Youth & Young Adult Ministry Agency Publishes “Why” and Mission Statements

At its inaugural meeting on December 3, the Board of Directors of the newly established Youth & Young Adult Ministry Agency adopted “why” and mission statements. Established by the Assembly of Bishops as the capstone achievement of the “Year of the Youth,” the new Agency will cast a vision to unite and deepen the ministry efforts of parishes and families across the Church.

After a prayerful and energetic discussion, the Agency’s Board adopted the following “why” statement to shape and guide the Agency’s work:

The Agency will equip young people to encounter Christ, embody His Church, and engage the World in His Name.

Based on this “why” statement, the Board elaborated on the work of the Agency with the following mission statement:

The Agency will equip and support clergy, parents, and ministry workers to meet the 5 needs of our young people:

To know Jesus Christ

To know one’s self in relation to Christ

To belong to the full community of the Church

To be empowered with a faith that makes a difference

To be equipped with the teachings of the Church^[SEP]

The Agency will do this by:

Providing resources, training, and events

Offering support to parishes and jurisdictions

Evaluating the effectiveness of this work on an ongoing basis

“My prayer and hope for the newly established Youth and Young Adult Agency is that it becomes a hospital for our sins, especially those of our youth,” said Bishop Thomas, Episcopal Liaison of the Assembly of Bishops to the new Agency. “Those who have been charged with the responsibility of leading us in ministering to our

youth, God willing, will be the people who diagnose our sins and remind us of the medicine that the Church offers us so that all of us will go and sin no more as we flee to the heavenly kingdom. May God grant all of our youth workers many years of fruitful service in our Lord’s vineyard.”

Further details, including the roster of Directors and initial staff, will follow in the weeks ahead.

As the Agency continues to be built, questions can be directed to a temporary email address: youth.and.young.adult.agency@gmail.com.

Righteous Juliana of Lazarevo, Murom Commemorated on January 2

Righteous Juliana of Lazarevo and Murom presents an astonishing example of a self-denying Russian Christian woman. She was the daughter of the nobleman Justin Nediurev. From her early years she lived devoutly, kept the fasts strictly and set aside much time for prayer. Having been orphaned at an early age, she was given over into the care of relatives, who did not take to her and laughed at her. Juliana bore everything with patience and without complaint. Her love for people was expressed by nursing the sick and sewing clothing for the poor.

The pious and virtuous life of the maiden attracted the attention of the Lazarevo village owner, Yurii Osoryin, who soon married her. The husband’s parents loved their gentle daughter-in-law and left the running of the household in her hands. Domestic concerns did not disrupt the spiritual efforts of Juliana. She always found time for prayer and she was always prepared to feed the orphaned and clothe the poor. During a harsh famine, she herself remained without food, having given away her last morsel to someone begging. When an epidemic started after the famine, Juliana devoted herself completely to the nursing of the sick.

Righteous Juliana had six sons and a daughter. After the death of two of her sons she decided to withdraw to a monastery, but her husband persuaded her to remain in the world, and to continue to raise their children. On the testimony of Juliana’s son, Kallistrat Osoryin, who wrote her Life, at this time she became
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**Saint Sylvester, Pope of Rome
Commemorated on January 2**

Saint Sylvester, Bishop of Rome (314-335) was born at Rome of Christian parents named Rufinus and Justa. His father soon died, and the saint remained in the care of his mother. Sylvester's teacher, the presbyter Quirinus, gave him a fine education and raised him as a true Christian.

When he was an adult, Sylvester fulfilled the Lord's command to love one's neighbor. He often received strangers and travelers, serving them like a slave in his own home. During a persecution against Christians, Sylvester did not hesitate to take in the holy confessor Bishop Timothy of Antioch, who dwelt with him for more than a year, and who converted many to Christ by his preaching.

Bishop Timothy was arrested and executed on orders of the Prefect Tarquinius. Sylvester secretly took the body of the saint and buried it. This came to the attention of Tarquinius, and the saint was arrested and brought to trial. Tarquinius demanded that he renounce Christ, threatening him with torture and death. Saint Sylvester was however not intimidated, and he remained steadfast in his confession of faith, and was then thrown into prison. When Tarquinius suddenly died after the trial, the saint was set free and fearlessly he evangelized the pagans, converting many to Christianity.

At thirty years of age Saint Sylvester was ordained as a deacon, and then presbyter, by Bishop Marcellinus (296-304). After the death of Bishop Miltiades (or Melchades, 311-314), Saint Sylvester was chosen Bishop of Rome. He encouraged his flock to live in a righteous manner, and he insisted that priests strictly fulfill their duty, and not be involved with secular businesses.

Saint Sylvester became renowned as an expert on Holy Scripture and as a staunch defender of the Christian Faith. During the reign of the emperor Saint Constantine the Great, when the period of persecution had ended for the Church, the Jews arranged a public debate to determine which faith was true. Saint Constantine and his mother, the holy Empress Helen, were present together with a large crowd.

Saint Sylvester spoke for the Christians, and the Jews had one hundred and twenty learned rabbis led by Zambres, a magician and sorcerer. Quoting the sacred books of the Old Testament, Saint Sylvester convincingly demonstrated that all the prophets

foretold the birth of Jesus Christ from the all-pure Virgin, and also His voluntary suffering and death for the redemption of the fallen race of mankind, and His glorious Resurrection.

The saint was declared the victor in the debate. Then Zambres tried to resort to sorcery, but the saint obstructed the evil by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Zambres and the other Jews came to believe in Jesus Christ, and they asked to be baptized.

Saint Sylvester guided the Roman Church for more than twenty years, earning the esteem of his flock. He died peacefully in old age in the year 335.

Righteous Juliana Con't Previous Pg

all the more demanding towards herself: she intensified her fasting and prayer, slept not more than two hours at night, and then laying her head upon a board.

Upon the death of her husband, Juliana distributed to the poor her portion of the inheritance. Living in extreme poverty, she was none the less vivacious, cordial, and in everything she thanked the Lord. The saint was vouchsafed a visitation by Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker and guidance by the Mother of God in church. When Righteous Juliana fell asleep in the Lord, she was then buried beside her husband at the church of Saint Lazarus. Here also her daughter, the schemanun Theodosia was buried. In 1614 the relics of Righteous Juliana were uncovered, exuding a fragrant myrrh, from which many received healing.

Forefeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Commemorated on January 2

The first day of the Forefeast of Theophany falls on January 2. Like the hymns for the Nativity, many of the Church's hymns of this period are slightly modified versions of the hymns of Holy Week.

One of the hymns at Matins today says that the coming Feast of Theophany will be "even more radiant" than the Feast of the Nativity.