

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
21	Marie Mirshak	33
22	George Hambly	66
23	Rose Bardwell	19
23	Victoria Tannous	13
23	Joulia Chamie	12
24	Linda Kerba	29
24	Said Bosada	66
27	Jon Samuel Haick	45

ETERNAL LIGHT

- Jan 24 In loving memory of Linda Kerba from her daughter Marie Gharghoury
- Feb 10 for the good health of Michael Ghneim and family from his parents
- Feb 24 in loving memory of Adel Younes from his family
- Mar 10 In loving memory of Yvonne Younes from her family

- **ONE-YEAR MEMORIAL for Fouad El-Hage and 14 YEARS for Ortanse El-Hage offered by their children and their families. May their memory be eternal.**

- **Next Sunday, Feb 3rd: 40 DAYS MEMORIAL SERVICE for Souraya Haddad Yared offered by Yared & Inaam yared and their family.**
- **Ushering for January 27:** Souheil El-Achhab, Ayoub Kakish, Fadia Boulos, Roula Skaf
- **Ushering for Feb 3:** Hanna Hinnawi, Jean Dahdaly, George Boutros, William Besharat
- Blessing of homes starts after January 6, please call Fr. George or fill out the form to have your home blessed.
- Sunday January 27 after liturgy, meeting with all the camp parents.
- January 29 Great Vespers with the blessing of the five loaves for the Feast of the Three Hierarchs.
- Friday February 1st Liturgy at 7 PM for the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.
- **Ladies meeting will be on Sunday February 3rd after Liturgy at the Choir loft.**
- Looking Ahead, mark your calendar: **Lent starts March 11, Palm Sunday is April 21st, Easter/Pascha April 28.**
- Please, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Attiah, Ellen, Lucy, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Ezabel and Nassar. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- Parish Life Conference will be at our church between July 4-7 of this year. We will have a table set up soon to register and buy souvenir journal ads. For more information please see Sana Besharat, Richard Smith, or Samantha Nassar.
- Holy Land Pilgrimage for our church will be May 8 to May 17 (9 days and 8 nights). Cost \$1250 USD plus flights. For more information and reservation please see or call Ramzi Shnoudeh 647/500-2081, or Maha Khashram 647/966-7749.
- Ladies Luncheon: February 24th, after Liturgy.
- **Saints on Holy Water**
Saint Demetrius of Kherson wrote, “Consecrated water is a powerful means of sanctifying the souls and bodies of those who use it.” If we take it with faith and prayer, it can cure our physical illnesses. St. Seraphim of Sarov would always make his visitors drink some holy Theophany water after confession.
Saint Luke of Crimea advised, “Drink holy water as often as possible. It is the best and the most effective medicine. I’m saying that not just as a priest but also from my experience as a doctor.”
St. Seraphim of Vyritsa always recommended his spiritual children to sprinkle raw and cooked food with holy Theophany water, which, according to him, “consecrates everything all on its own.” Whenever anyone fell seriously ill, St. Seraphim would bless them to take a tablespoonful of holy water hourly. He used to say that there are no better remedies than holy water and holy oil.

FIRE ROUTE & HANDICAPPED PARKING, AND PARKING LINES

- Please make sure not to park on the side of the church or in front of the Fire hydrant, for this is a fire route, also ensure not to park in the spots designated for handicapped parking. Anyone who parks and does not show a handicap permit on the window will be tagged.
- Blessing of homes starts after January 6, please call Fr. George or fill out the form to have your home blessed.

Request for Blessing My Home

I am here requesting father to come and bless my home

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Best Time to bless your Home: Morning _____, Evening _____

Why Do We Have Our Homes Blessed? *by Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div.*

Begin Everything with Prayer

Since we are reminded in Scripture to begin whatever we do with prayer, it has been the practice of Orthodox Christians for centuries to have new dwellings blessed either before or just after settling in. This has been extended to one's business or office, and even college dorm rooms. "The service performed by the priest to bless the new dwelling is somewhat similar to the consecration of a church [in the Russian practice] in that holy water, holy oil, and incense are used and a lesson from the holy Gospel is read. All the rooms of the house are sprinkled with holy water and each of the four outer walls are anointed with the sign of the Cross with holy oil, a candle placed before them, and after the censuring of the house, the lesson from the Holy Gospel is read [in Greek practice the service of the Small Blessing of Waters is generally done]. At the conclusion of the blessing, the inhabitants are blessed with holy water: the husband first, followed by the wife and then the children - the oldest first. Relatives and friends present are then blessed." (*Marriage and the Christian Home*, by Rev. Michael B. Henning, p.24.)

Back to "The Fall"

From Scripture we know that whatever God created was good, but with "the Fall", evil entered the world, corrupting the creation. God the Father sent His Son Jesus to save it by effecting a "new creation". This is celebrated at Theophany, specifically with the Great Blessing of Water. "The consecration of the waters on this feast places the entire world - through its 'prime element' of water - in the perspective of the cosmic creation, sanctification, and glorification of the Kingdom of God in Christ and the Spirit." (*The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II, Worship*, by Fr. Thomas Hopko, p.127.) All the readings, hymns, prayers, and actions of the day speak of God's presence in our entire world and universe, His creation.

Through water all of the creation is once again sanctified by God, becoming good again, the way God had intended.

The Feast Of Theophany

The Feast of Theophany (or Epiphany) commemorates the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. We know from the troparion of the day that "the Trinity was made manifest" to us. But there's more to it than this. "When Jesus descends into the depths of the river, there occurs a profound upheaval. It is not the one baptized who is purified, for he is spotless; but it is the water that is transfigured and illumined. This water, which was believed to be transparent and purifying, is in fact polluted, inhabited by evil spirits, servants of the old gods. ... By purifying the elements, by sanctifying matter, Jesus frees the cosmos from the powers of evil." (*The Incarnate God, Vol. I*, Catherine Aslanoff, French edition editor, translated by Paul Meyendorff, p.163.)

The Great Blessing of Water and the Home

The Great Blessing of Water takes place at the end of that day's Liturgy. Since our homes cannot be brought to the Church, the Church - through the priest and cantor - go to the homes. There the service of blessing, which began in the church, is finished with the sprinkling of water in the home. Traditionally, in most Orthodox parishes, the priest personally visits all his parishioners each year to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with the newly sanctified water of Theophany (January 6/13). By sanctifying our living quarters, our private place, we extend the grace of God to our individual dwellings. (In very large parishes a yearly visit may not be possible. In areas of the country where the winter is harsh, I know of at least one parish where houses are blessed at the beginning of the ecclesiastical year in September.)

We also bring the blessed water to our homes to use throughout the year to bless our homes and to drink whether we are ill or as part of our daily prayer life. "There are many occasions in family life when a sip of holy water can help to remind us of the blessing that was given 'to bestow sanctification', 'unto healing of soul and body', 'to be a fountain welling forth unto life eternal', as the priest prayed in the litany of Epiphany day." (*Little Falcons: Water*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1998, p.33.)

Weaving Christ into Our Lives

The blessing of homes by these holy waters maintains the spiritual association between the 'family church' and the parish, as well as again providing for the sharing of God's spiritual gifts. ... This annual blessing is not as elaborate as the blessing of the new dwelling, but because of this it should not be overlooked, for it is in this way that the grace of God is extended to individual dwellings." (*Marriage and the Christian Home*, p.25.)

If the priest comes to bless the home when the children are present, they have the opportunity to see the parish priest in a different and personal situation. If the priest permits, they can lead the way through the house, or hold a candle. They can show him their rooms or pets or favorite toys. They receive a blessing with water. For children, the house blessing shows the connection of the Church to the home.

In Summary

What does it mean to ask God to bless something? All things in the world have been spoiled right along with us. God must bless His world again in order for it to be the way that He wants it to be. For this reason, God sent His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the world: to bless everyone and everything that He made, to make all things good again. When the priest comes to bless our homes, he asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. What a wonderful way to begin the New Year!

The incubator for a life of righteousness by Abbot Tryphon

Prior to electricity and central heating, most families gathered in parlors, spending evenings with reading, sewing, and family conversations. The notion that everyone would retreat to bedrooms, kitchens, or dens, separating themselves from other family members, was unthinkable. The communal nature of the family was natural. I can remember, as a child (this really dates me), sitting together with my brother and my parents, listening to radio dramas. Before the coming of television, families would gather for evenings in the living room, where children would play with Lincoln Logs, or play board games with their parents.

Evenings spent together as family is important, for these moments not only build a bond between parents and their children, but serve as important times in which to share family values. The old saying that “a family that prays together, stays together” was a truism that is often forgotten. I remember, as a boy of six, a Catholic family living next to us who had a small family chapel, complete with altar, statues, and candles. Every evening they would all gather in that little chapel to pray the rosary. As a protestant boy, I remember wishing we had a chapel as well.

Family meals are also important times for building strong moral and spiritual foundations in children. Sitting around the dinner table is a great time for parents to develop strong bonds of trust with their children. Dinner is a perfect time for talking to your children about their friends, or school activities, or recounting the homily from the Sunday Liturgy. Family members dispersing throughout the house for the evening, can end up functioning as autonomous entities, and family bonds are unlikely to develop in a healthy manner.

The domestic church, which is such an important element of the Orthodox Christian tradition, can not be developed in a family where meals, prayers, and social life are all in separate parts of the house. Parents, in their capacity as shepherds and nurturers, have the God given responsibility to make sure the home is an incubator for a life of righteousness, and where the Orthodox faith can take root. It is in such households that these children, in turn, learn how to be good parents to their own future children.

Hebrews 10:24-25: “... and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another ...”