



Saints Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church

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CONFESSIONS:
30 MINUTES BEFORE LITURGY

Sunday, December 22, 2019

Tone 3

Page:135/285

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES FOR THIS WEEK:

Sunday	12/22/19	11:00 A.M.	<i>Sunday before Christmas</i> +for parents Helen & Joseph Petruska <i>By Mary & Dan Joscak</i>
Tuesday	12/24/19	05:00 P.M.	<i>Christmas Eve Divine Liturgy</i> for Parish Family
Wednesday	12/25/19	11:00 AM	<i>Christmas Day Divine Liturgy</i> for Parish Family
Thursday	12/26/19	11:00 AM	<i>Synaxis of the Theotokos</i> +Barbara Martchek <i>By Daughter Louise Selevin</i>
Friday	12/27/19	11:00 AM	<i>Stephen Protomartyr</i> +John & Anna Queer <i>By Ed & Richard Queer & Family</i>
Sunday	12/29/19	11:00 AM	<i>Sunday after Christmas</i> +Mildred Jama <i>By Arleen Jama</i>

SEASONAL GREETING

During Christmas During this time of Christmas until January 4, the greeting that we address each other is **CHRIST IS BORN!** (*Christos Razdajetsja!*). The response is **GLORIFY HIM!** (*Slavite Jeho!*) Let us glorify the Lord this festive season by greeting and responding with this ancient Byzantine Catholic tradition celebrating the Lord Jesus' Nativity!

SICK AND SHUT-INS

Please remember in your prayers our parishioners who are sick, homebound, hospitalized, living in nursing facilities, or need your prayers for their personal intentions:



Andrew Cencarik, Don Downey, Phillip Fall, Anna D. Fialkovich, Mark Fialkovich, Benjamin Kaefer, Jr., John Kopay, Jr., Sylvia Kopay, Pauline Massa, Mary Anne Ference Mistick, Richard Paloscko, Nancy Pcolar, Bob Newton, Rebecca McCullough, Will McCullough Shirley Carmoney Torbich, Marie Churley, Joanne Skinta and Those serving in the Armed Forces.

****If you have a family member in the hospital or other facilities, and would like us to remember them in prayer, contact Father Vitalii and we will be glad to publish their name in the bulletin – even if they are not a parishioner of Saints Peter & Paul Parish.**

DIVINE SERVICES ATTENDANCE

The attendance for Sunday, December 15, was: 42; For Tuesday, December 17, was 3.

BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY



The Babylonian captivity or Babylonian exile is the period in Jewish history during which a number of people from the ancient Kingdom of Judah were captives in Babylonia. After the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BCE, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, resulting in tribute being paid by King Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim refused to pay tribute in Nebuchadnezzar's fourth year, which led to another siege in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year, culminating with the death of Jehoiakim and the exile of King Jeconiah, his court and many others; Jeconiah's successor Zedekiah and others were exiled in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year; a later deportation occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year. The dates, numbers of deportations, and numbers of deportees given in the biblical accounts vary. These deportations are dated to 597 BCE for the first, with others dated at 587/586 BCE, and 582/581 BCE respectively.

After the fall of Babylon to the Persian king Cyrus the Great in 539 BCE, exiled Judeans were permitted to return to Judah. According to the biblical book of Ezra, construction of the second temple in Jerusalem began around 537 BCE. All these events are considered significant in Jewish history and culture, and had a far-reaching impact on the development of Judaism.

Archaeological studies have revealed that not all of the population of Judah was deported, and that, although Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, other parts of Judah continued to be inhabited during the period of the exile.[6] The return of the exiles was a gradual process rather than a single event, and many of the deportees or their descendants did not return, becoming the ancestors of the Iraqi Jews.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Fr. Vitalii is accepting requests for 2020 Divine Liturgy's on a first come first serve basis. Please submit your requests in writing with the intention and date requested to St Peter and Paul attention with your offering and place on Sunday collection basket.

The Christmas Eve Supper - (Holy Supper) brings the family together to partake in special foods and begin the holiday with many customs and traditions, which reach back to antiquity. The rituals of the Christmas Eve are dedicated to God, to the welfare of the family, and to the remembrance of the ancestors.

The Tradition of Holy Super: There are twelve courses in the Supper, because according to the Christian tradition each course is dedicated to one of Christ's Apostles. According to the ancient pagan belief, each course stood for every full moon during the course of the year. The courses are meatless because there is a period of fasting required by the Church until Christmas Day.



THIS WEEK'S USHER TEAM - Team C

OUR GIFTS TO GOD AND OUR CHURCH, DECEMBER, 15, 2019:

SUNDAY OFFERING	\$ 695.00
LOOSE CASH	5.00
CANDLES	36.00
MONTHLY	65.00
HOLY DAY	36.00
TOTAL	\$ 837.00

CATHOLIC TEACHING

JESUS AND THE LAW

At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus issued a solemn warning in which he presented God's law, given on Sinai during the first covenant, in light of the grace of the New Covenant:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets: I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law, until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus, Israel's Messiah and therefore the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, was to fulfil the Law by keeping it in its all embracing detail - according to his own words, down to "the least of these commandments". He is in fact the only one who could keep it perfectly. On their own admission the Jews were never able to observe the Law in its entirety without violating the least of its precepts. This is why every year on the Day of Atonement the children of Israel ask God's forgiveness for their transgressions of the Law. the Law indeed makes up one inseparable whole, and St. James recalls, "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it."

This principle of integral observance of the Law not only in letter but in spirit was dear to the Pharisees. By giving Israel this principle, they had led many Jews of Jesus' time to an extreme religious zeal. This zeal, were it not to lapse into "hypocritical" casuistry, could only prepare the People for the unprecedented intervention of God through the perfect fulfilment of the Law by the only Righteous One in place of all sinners.

The perfect fulfilment of the Law could be the work of none but the divine legislator, born subject to the Law in the person of the Son. In Jesus, the Law no longer appears engraved on tables of stone but "upon the heart" of the Servant who becomes "a covenant to the people", because he will "faithfully bring forth justice". Jesus fulfils the Law to the point of taking upon himself "the curse of the Law" incurred by those who do not "abide by the things written in the book of the Law, and do them", for his death took place to redeem them "from the transgressions under the first covenant".

The Jewish people and their spiritual leaders viewed Jesus as a rabbi.³⁴⁰ He often argued within the framework of rabbinical interpretation of the Law. Yet Jesus could not help but offend the teachers of the Law, for he was not content to propose his interpretation alongside theirs but taught the people "as one who had authority, and not as their scribes". In Jesus, the same Word of God that had resounded on Mount Sinai to give the written Law to Moses, made itself heard anew on the Mount of the Beatitudes. Jesus did not abolish the Law but fulfilled it by giving its ultimate interpretation in a divine way: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old. . . But I say to you. . ." With this same divine authority, he disavowed certain human traditions of the Pharisees that were "making void the word of God".

Going even further, Jesus perfects the dietary law, so important in Jewish daily life, by revealing its pedagogical meaning through a divine interpretation: "Whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him. . . (Thus he declared all foods clean.) . . . What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts. . ." In presenting with divine authority the definitive interpretation of the Law, Jesus found himself confronted by certain teachers of the Law who did not accept his interpretation of the Law, guaranteed though it was by the divine signs that accompanied it. This was the case especially with the sabbath laws, for he recalls, often with rabbinical arguments, that the sabbath rest is not violated by serving God and neighbour,³⁴⁸ which his own healings did.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED AND WAS BURIED.)

VISITATION OF THE SICK

The parishioners confined to their homes or nursing homes due to health reasons are visited monthly. Also, person who are hospitalized are visited when Fr. Vitalii is notified. It especially is important that a family member contact Fr. Vitalii whenever a loved-one is hospitalized.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: BOOK OF EZRA



Author: Unknown, Date Written: 440-350 BC, Date of Narrative: 538-457 BC

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are regarded as a single book in the Hebrew Bible. They describe the era in Jewish history: the Restoration. The Restoration is the time period in which the Babylonian exile ends and the Jews return to the Holy Land to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem. Both books are written by the same author who compiled their content in late

biblical Hebrew with a few sections in Aramaic

The events in the book of Ezra take place during the rule of Cyrus, the Persian king who took over the Babylonian Empire and the whole mid-east region. Cyrus institutes an empire-wide policy of religious toleration, sending people groups back to their native lands and funding the reconstruction of their holy places. This policy benefited the Jews greatly, allowing them to return to the Holy Land in 537 BC.

Sheshbazzar leads the first group of exiles home (2). Scholars do not agree on his exact identity, but it is clear that he was of the royal line of David (1:8). Zerubbabel, also of the royal line, succeeds him as the leader of the returning exiles.

The Jews first build an altar and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. When they lay the Temple foundation, people groups in the land want to join the effort. But Zerubbabel does not allow them to participate because they are not Jewish and they worship many gods. After this, the groups oppose the Temple's reconstruction and for about 10 years, the Jews made no progress on the Temple. Finally, with the prophetic encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, Zerubbabel takes up the project again. This time the opposition is overruled by the new Persian king, Darius. The Jews complete the Temple in 516 BC, celebrating its dedication and the Passover.

Ezra does not appear in the book until Ch. 7 when Artaxerxes I, the current ruler of Persia sends him to Judah in about 458 BC. Ezra is a scribe, a Persian official and a Levitical priest. He leads a group of exiles back to Judah (8). The lists of exiles in Ch. 2 and 8 show that the continuity of the exiles with their Jewish forefathers was essential to their preservation of the covenant. Their covenant faithfulness to the Lord hinges on their identity as the people of God. They therefore took great care to preserve their family histories in these lists.

Zerubbabel's refusal to let the "people of the land" join in reconstructing the Temple indicates the importance of Jewish identity in relation to the covenant (4:3). These non-Jewish polytheists in the land are not part of the same covenant as the Jews. Likewise the last two chapters of Ezra emphasize the importance of Jewish identity. Some of the men who stayed behind in Judah during the exile intermarried with non-Jewish women in the land. This act was against the covenant, since the Law of Moses forbade intermarriage with other people groups which had led many Israelite ancestors to worship foreign gods (Deut 7:3). After much prayer, deliberation and mourning over the crisis, Ezra and the Jewish leaders require the men who had intermarried to divorce their foreign wives (10).

Spiritually, we see in Ezra that God fulfills his promises and yet sometimes his plan of fulfillment includes serious effort on our part in the face of opposition.

GENERAL INFORMATION

For security reasons, during 11:00 AM Sunday Liturgy, **the back door will be locked at 11:15 AM**. Also, please remember during the Weekly Liturgy, the back door will be locked. Please park your car in front of the church.

JOAN SKINTA AT CARE CENTER

Woodhaven Care Ceeter, c/o Joan Skinta Room 226, 2400 McGinley Rd., Monroeville Pa 15146

SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Today’s Gospel reading is taken from the Beginning of the New Testament, from the first chapter of the Gospel according to St Matthew. This reading begins with a long list of Hebrew names that give the family tree of Jesus on the human side. All in all, some 47 names are mentioned. And it’s this long list of names which are almost impossible for us to pronounce and seem to make for a rather dull reading. Yet the first chapter of St Matthew’s Gospel is very important – so important that it is read in every Byzantine Church, every year on the Sunday before Christmas because it gives us the history of Christmas, the human story out of which Christmas came to us. All of those names are actually vivid images of living souls who prepared the way for Christmas.

Looking closer at this genealogy, one would think that Jesus would have come from a background that consisted, if not of royalty, then at least of saintly and holy persons. But what do we find in His family tree? We find sinners like ourselves. We find people who even when blessed by God, fell in times of weakness like King David. We find sinners of all kinds! An invented family tree would have been different. We see the truthfulness of the Gospel writers. They don’t lie about Jesus’ ancestry, but tell it like it is. It was from this family tree that the holiest person to walk the earth came from. He was a descendent of sinful humanity. And what this means for us is that if Jesus is to be born in your soul, if He is to become a part of our daily lives and not just someone we are acquainted with only on Sunday mornings, He is to be born into our souls in spite of the accumulation of our sins. Because He came from this family tree full of sinners we find we have something in common with Him. He is not a Creator who separates Himself from us. His family tree is our family tree. He is one of us. He has compassion for sinners who are part of His own family. And yet He rises above His ancestry.

St Matthew deliberately shatters the custom of his day by introducing into the long series of male names the names of 5 women at a time when women were simply not included in genealogies. By doing this he indicates that “in Christ there is neither male nor female”; all are equal; all are one in Christ.

Jesus has a lot of dark spots in His ancestral history. Who doesn’t? Often we think of our ancestors whoever they may be, as noble people, even heroes of their time. We desire our ancestors to be saints. And yet everyone has a dark past somewhere in his or her ancestry. In pointing out the sinners that comprise Jesus’ ancestry, it just goes to show how much like us Jesus really is. The holy Fathers of our Church, who we may also call our ancestors, always emphasized the perfect balance between the humanity of Jesus and His divinity. Sometimes it is us who steal Christ’s humanity from Him making Him distant from us, more God than human. But more often it is the faithless society around us who robs Jesus of His divinity making Him a mere man. It is the God-man that we Byzantine Catholic Christians need to acquaint ourselves with. And there’s no better time than now before the holy feast of His birth. Acquaint ourselves with Him through the message of the Gospel. Acquaint ourselves with Him personally through Holy Communion. He knows us; He wants us to get to know Him.

We Christians can now claim a new ancestry. Jesus is the beginning of a new blood stream, a new inheritance. Through our baptism we can now have the source of our blood line, not in the tainted past of our inherited ancestry, but in a new, pure source of inherited life.

Brothers and sisters, our ancestry may have its dark spots, because our lives certainly do. Yet through turning back to God and receiving His forgiveness we can step into a new genealogy from a new ancestor. Jesus blood flowing in our veins gives us a new ancestry, a new heritage, a new sense of belonging, a new life. God can see that we come from different physical parents, different families, that we all have our own brothers and sisters. But essentially God knows us as one big family. We are all brothers and sisters in His eyes, we are all related to each other with a common Father who loves and cares His children who know their Father. Your own family is a lot bigger than you may think.

May God bless us all and keep us this coming feast of His Nativity.

Sunday before Christmas

**"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham ..."
Mathew 1:1-25**

R T S H E A L T I E L P S B L K Q G B S
T O J E S A L M O N T Z J O B E D I J K
A C Y Z J O N L C E P Y U A M M Z T E I
M P I E X A B R Z S T O D Z X A A Q C S
A E R K E S A M J O T H A M U T N J H A
R R U I J A T M J L E D H M J T M B O A
A E T A E P E V O O G I Q N O H A F N C
H Z H H H H Q Y S M R Y D E S A N R I H
A A E E O A Z E E O H A M M I N A D A B
B Z S Z S B A H P N V Z D X A R S L H C
T O Q R H I D Z H L L O R G H E S G E G
H R S O A U O K I F A B I J A H E H L D
P O L N P D K F C J E S S E J O H H I A
Z E R A H K P A Z E R U B B A B E L A V
P G R R A B R A H A M L X S C O J V K I
A Y A S T E C N A H S H O N O A A T I D
J S M H Q L S K G O Z A V T B M C A M Y
C Q U Z Z I A H J O R A M N T P H M X B
Z D E J J U R I A H Z J A C O B I O K H
W B V Q B D F P G L F P F H H U M S S S

ABRAHAM	ISAAC	JACOB
JUDAH	PEREZ	ZERAH
TAMAR	HEZRON	RAM
AMMINADAB	NAHSHON	SALMON
BOAZ	RAHAB	OBED
RUTH	JESSE	DAVID
SOLOMON	URIAH	REHOBOAM
ABIJAH	ASAPH	JEHOSHAPHAT
JORAM	UZZIAH	JOTHAM
HEZEKIAH	MANASSEH	AMOS
JOSIAH	JECHONIAH	SHEALTIEL
ZERUBBABEL	ABIUD	ELIAKIM
AZOR	ZADOK	ACHIM
ELIUD	MATTHAN	JACOB
JOSEPH		

TIME TO READ THE HOLY BIBLE

Old Testament

1 In the days of . . . , Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim 2 made war on Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3 All the latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). 4 For twelve years they had been subject to Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings allied with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as Elparan, close by the wilderness. 7 They then turned back and came to Enmishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they subdued the whole country both of the Amalekites and of the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon-tamar. 8 Thereupon the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out, and in the Valley of Siddim they went into battle against them: 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar-four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits; and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into these, while the rest fled to the mountains. 11 The victors seized all the possessions and food supplies of Sodom and Gomorrah and then went their way, 12 taking with them Abram's nephew Lot, who had been living in Sodom, as well as his possessions. 13 A fugitive came and brought the news to Abram the Hebrew, who was camping at the terebinth of Mamre the Amorite, a kinsman of Eshcol and Aner; these were in league with Abram. 14 When Abram heard that his nephew had been captured, he mustered three hundred and eighteen of his retainers, born in his house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 He and his party deployed against them at night, defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. 16 He recovered all the possessions, besides bringing back his kinsman Lot and his possessions, along with the women and the other captives. 17 When Abram returned from his victory over Chedorlaomer and the kings who were allied with him, the king of Sodom went out to greet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). 18 Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine, and being a priest of God Most High, he blessed Abram with these words: 19 Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your foes into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. 21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people; the goods you may keep." 22 But Abram replied to the king of Sodom: "I have sworn to the LORD, God Most High, the creator of heaven and earth, 23 that I would not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap from anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I made Abram rich.' 24 Nothing for me except what my servants have used up and the share that is due to the men who joined me - Aner, Eshcol and Mamre; let them take their share."

Book of Genesis 14:1-24

New Testament

1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the reputation of Jesus 2 and said to his servants, "This man is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why mighty powers are at work in him." 3 Now Herod had arrested John, bound (him), and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, 4 for John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 Although he wanted to kill him, he feared the people, for they regarded him as a prophet. 6 But at a birthday celebration for Herod, the daughter of Herodias performed a dance before the guests and delighted Herod 7 so much that he swore to give her whatever she might ask for. 8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." 9 The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests who were present, he ordered that it be given, 10 and he had John beheaded in the prison. 11 His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who took it to her mother. 12 His disciples came and took away the corpse and buried him; and they went and told Jesus. 13 When Jesus heard of it, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of this and followed him on foot from their

towns. 14 When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 (Jesus) said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." 17 But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." 18 Then he said, "Bring them here to me," 19 and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over - twelve wicker baskets full. 21 Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children. 22 Then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. 24 Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. 25 During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. 27 At once (Jesus) spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw how (strong) the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 After they got into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God." 34 After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret. 35 When the men of that place recognized him, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought to him all those who were sick 36 and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak, and as many as touched it were healed."

The Gospel According to Matthew 14:1-36

2020 ENVELOPES

Please pick up your box of 2020 envelopes in the social hall. If you know someone who will be unable to pick up their 2020 envelopes, please take their box to them. If there is no box for you, please contact Father Vitalii.

Are you called to follow in the footsteps of Mary as a priest or religious or deacon to carry the Good News of God's great Love? If you think God is calling you to be a priest, religious or deacon, **contact Fr. Vitalii Stashkevych.**



PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

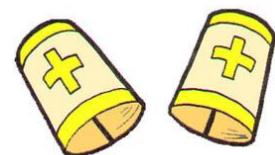
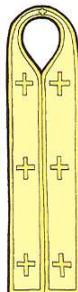
The **Byzantine Catholic Serra Club of Pittsburgh** is an organization that fosters and promotes priesthood and religious vocations in the Byzantine Catholic Church. They also support Seminarians, Priests and Religious Sisters in their sacred ministry. The Byzantine Serra Club meets monthly. If you would like to join, call William Kress 412-761-1499 or email kb.kress@gmail.com (*Next dinner meeting, January 15, 2020*) Join the Serrans in their work to ensure the future of our Church.

VESTMENTS



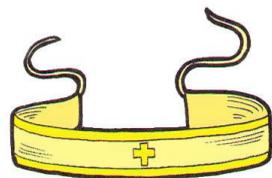
In the Byzantine Church the clergy vest in special clothing for the liturgical services. There are two fundamental Christian vestments, the first of which is the baptismal robe. This robe, which is worn by bishops and priests at the service of holy communion and which should always be white, is the “robe of salvation”: the white garment in which every Christian is clothed on his day of baptism, symbolizing the new humanity of Jesus and life in the Kingdom of God (Rev 7.9ff).

The second fundamental vestment for Christian clergy is the stole or *epitrachelion* which goes around the neck and shoulders. It is the sign of the pastoral office and was originally made of wool to symbolize the sheep—that is, the members of the flock of Christ—for whom the pastors are responsible. Both bishops and priests wear this vestment when they are exercising their pastoral office, witnessing to the fact that the ministers of the Church live and act solely for the members of Christ’s flock.



As the Church developed through history the vestments of the clergy grew more numerous. *Special cuffs* for deacons, priests, and bishops were added to keep the sleeves of the vestments out of the way of the celebrants during the divine services. When putting on their cuffs, the clergy read lines from the psalms reminding them that their hands belong to God.

A *special belt* was added as well to hold the vestments in place. When putting on the belt the clergy say psalms which remind them that it is God who “girds them with strength” to fulfill their service. Only the bishops and priests wear the liturgical belt.



All orders of the clergy wear a special outer garment. Deacons, sub-deacons, and readers wear a robe called a sticharion. It is probably the baptismal garment, decorated and made more elaborate. Deacon and sub-deacons also wear a stole called the orarion, probably originally a piece of material upon which were inscribed the liturgical litanies and prayers (orare means to pray). The deacon still holds up the orarion in a position of prayer when he intones his parts of the divine services. The sub-deacon’s orarion is placed around his back in the sign of the cross.



Priests wear their white baptismal robe over which they have their pastoral stole, cuffs and belt. They also wear a large garment called a *phelonion* which covers their entire body in the back and goes below their waist in front. This vestment was probably developed from the formal garments of the early Christian era and, under the inspiration of the Bible, came to be identified with the calling of the priestly life. When putting on his phelonion, the priest says the lines of Psalm 132:

Thy priests, O Lord, shall clothe themselves in righteousness, and the saints shall rejoice with joy always now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

To be continued ...

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

We welcome anyone to become a parishioner of Sts Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church. Only those who are registered are considered members of the Parish. When one registers to become a parish member, they assume the responsibility of rendering stewardship of time, talent and treasure to this parish family. Worship at this parish is always expected. Registration is done only by the pastor.

CHANGE FROM JULIAN TO GREGORIAN CALENDAR



The Gregorian calendar was first introduced in 1582, but it took more than 300 years for all the different countries to change from the Julian Calendar.

The Gregorian Calendar, also known as the Western or Christian Calendar, is the most widely used calendar in the world today. Its predecessor, the Julian Calendar, was replaced because it did not properly reflect the actual time it takes the Earth to circle once around the Sun, known as a tropical year.

Too Many Leap Years

The reason the Julian Calendar had to be replaced was the formula it used to calculate leap years. The Julian formula produced a leap year every four years, which is too many. The Gregorian Calendar uses a much more accurate rule for calculating leap years.

Skipped Several Days

To get the calendar back in sync with astronomical events like the vernal equinox or the winter solstice, a number of days were dropped.

The papal bull issued by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582, decreed that 10 days be dropped when switching to the Gregorian Calendar. However, the later the switch occurred, the more days had to be omitted.

This created short months with only 18 days and odd dates like February 30 during the year of the changeover.

In North America, the month of September 1752 was exceptionally short, skipping 11 days.

Switch Took More Than 300 Years

The Gregorian Calendar was first introduced in 1582 in some European countries. However, many countries used the Julian Calendar much longer. Turkey was the last country to officially switch to the new system on January 1, 1927.

The delay in switching meant that different countries not only followed different calendars for a number of years but also had different rules to calculate whether a year was a leap year.

This explains why the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 were leap years in countries still using the Julian calendar (e.g. Greece), while in countries that had adopted the Gregorian calendar (e.g. Germany), these years were common years.

Double Leap Year

Sweden and Finland had a "double" leap year in 1712. Two days were added to February, creating February 30, 1712. This was done because the Leap Year in 1700 was dropped and Sweden's calendar was not synchronized with any other calendar. By adding an extra day in 1712, they were back on the Julian calendar. Both countries introduced the Gregorian calendar in 1753.

13 Days Behind Today

Currently (1901–2099), the Julian calendar is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar.

Today's Gregorian calendar uses more accurate leap year formula, making it far more accurate than the Julian. However, it is not perfect either. Compared to the tropical year, it is off by one day every 3236 years.

The Revised Julian Calendar

This Revised Julian calendar uses even more complex rules to determine when to add a leap day. With an error of only about two seconds per year (or one day in 31,250 years), it is roughly 10 times more accurate than today's Gregorian calendar and one of the most accurate calendar systems ever devised. However, it is not used by any country, only by certain orthodox churches.