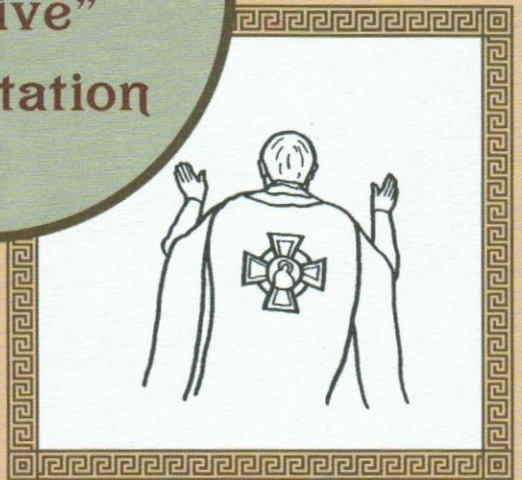
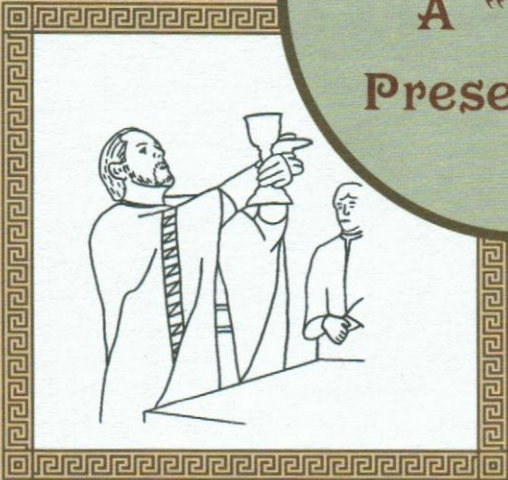


The
Divine Liturgy:
A "Live"
Presentation



A misconception that most Christians have is that on Sunday morning, we are supposed to come to the Divine Liturgy, as if we are merely asked to attend a concert or a play. This greatest of all liturgical services, however, is far more than a performance, and more significant than a retelling of the life of Christ through hymns, prayers and sacred actions. According to the theology of our Holy Church, the Divine Liturgy is thought to be a reliving of the "greatest story ever told." Time and again, the life of our Lord unfolds before us every Sunday, and we are all asked to play supporting roles in this dramatic reenactment. Indeed, the Divine Liturgy offers us a unique opportunity to be with Christ every step of the way from Bethlehem to Golgotha.

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Sunday after Theophany

January 13, 2013

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Ryan, Betty, Mary, Beth, Debra and Michael.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received December 30: Tithe Offering, \$302.00; Candles, \$22.00; Nativity of our Lord, \$30.00; Kitchen, \$137.00, for a total of \$491.00. Received January 6: Offering, \$604.00; Candles, \$23.00; Food Coupons, \$400.00; Energy, \$50.00; Holy Day. \$112.00; Diocesan Dues. \$260.00; Parish Dues. \$75.00; Kitchen, \$17.00, for a total of \$1573.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Eleni Pallas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Marilyn Korba, Eleanor Korba, Michael George, Maria Garcia and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of **\$1694.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5550.00 on this project to date!

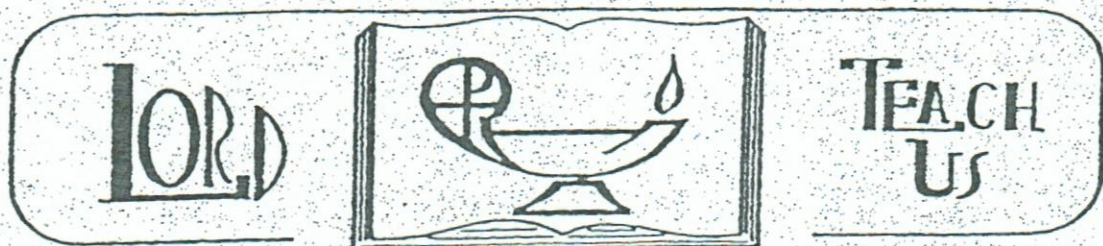
+++ **The Clothing Drive is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.**

+++ **Please pray the Lord our God grants us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory.**

+++ **The next Pirohi Sale will be Saturday, February 2.**

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

+++ **Those who would like their homes blessed are asked to advise Father as soon as possible.**



Priestly Example

*Learn to think high thoughts of what God is and with sincere hearts to aspire to him
Wisdom 1: 1.*

*...prayer is our duty; it is what God, our Saviour expects of us, since it is his will that all
men should be saved, and be led to recognize the truth 1 Timothy 2: 3, 4.*

*Do you doubt that the Lord was chastening you, as a man chastens his own son, training
you to keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and follow the path he chooses and
live in fear of him Deuteronomy 8: 5?*

*Lend me your aid, for I am yours and your bidding is all I desire. My delight, Lord is in
your bidding, ever my thoughts return to it Psalms 118: 94, 97.*

*The purpose for which any high priest is chosen from among his fellow-men and made a
representative of men in their dealings with God, is to offer gifts and sacrifices in expiation
of their sins. He qualified for this by being able to feel for them when they are ignorant
and make mistakes, since he, too, is beset with limitations...His vocation comes from God,
as Aaron's did, nobody can take on himself such a privilege as this. So it is with Christ. He
did not raise himself to the dignity of the high priesthood, it was God who raised him to it,
when he said, you are my Son, I have begotten you this day and so, elsewhere, you are a
priest forever, in the line of Melchizedech Hebrews 5: 1 - 6.*

Sunday after Theophany

“Reform your lives, the kingdom of God is at hand” Matthew 4: 17. How intimately associated is this proclamation by the first announced by repeats its importance once again. The prelude to this message was initially made by the angelic choir to the shepherds of the field outside Bethlehem. We note with some introspection they did not visit the priests at the temple in Jerusalem, because they were too busy with details of minutia “religion.” And they did not come to King Herod because he was too busy and preoccupied trying to run his part of the world.

The news came to shepherds, the poorest of the poor, the migrant workers on the slopes. In their left-alone night vigils and prayers, they prayed about the simple things, the tangible things most important to them in their lives, the most important under the circumstances – the sheep entrusted to their care. They were eye witnesses of the lambs being born and they watched the saga of the stars above because they never lost their wonder at the creation of the hands of God. They could see the Creator God in all that surrounded them.

So our God takes them from the daily miracles they could readily see and touch and because they made themselves usable to God, they were ready to see God in the things and people closest to us, causing them to touch what they could not possibly grasp. Sensing this was an astounding occurrence, God’s revelation teaches us, “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they heard and saw” Luke 2: 20.

It was not enough that they came immediately at the initial invitation of the heavenly announcement, and then returned to the care and responsibility of their sheep, but were so aroused in faith and inspired by the message that they had to come back, to see once again, to observe the miracle occurring that had been foretold centuries earlier. They wanted the certainty of devotion to Christ the Messiah. They wanted to be responsive to the first offered grace by the angelic visitors. Certainly if such a message was found necessary to be delivered them from God himself, they wanted to benefit fully and totally by its heart-felt impact.

In today’s gospel message there is a corresponding announcement. It too is made to people of good-will as were the shepherds who were eager to be disposed to assurance for their souls. What a privilege to hear from the palace of heaven a personal invitation to witness a message granting them a renewed dignity about to be restored. They sensed

a call to greatness. And what was announced on the day of his coming in the flesh, our Lord, again through the lips of John the Baptist announces to us once again a call to singular greatness.

As followers of the Saviour we need never feel dejected or overwhelmed by our frail humanity. No matter how far we wander from the holiness of his presence, we can be reconciled simply enough. All that is needed is sorrow in our hearts and souls for our missing the mark.

Utilizing the treasure of God's grace, let us arouse sorrow for our sins, let us resolve to faithfully follow in the narrow pathway of the Lord. Let us be eager to live as befits disciples of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Let us never permit to overtake us the temptation proffered by the devil which insists that once we have separated ourselves from God, we cannot return, that we cannot find the blessed heavenly assistance to renew our devotion and try seriously once again. Let us not allow the sentiment to enter our hearts that once we have fallen, we cannot rouse ourselves to security with Christ by standing in Resurrection victory and continuing in our pilgrimage toward eternal beatitude.

It is to people such as the shepherds, to us who are of ordinary lineage, to us who accept in profound gratitude the message of heaven for salvation, "...people living in darkness, seeing a great light" Matthew 4: 16, a message that only "people of good will" Luke 2: 14, would understand.

Like the shepherds we are called upon to be always eager to see God, to encounter him and not run away from him. It is He alone who can redeem and save us because we are the ones who need to be saved. We have got to be like the shepherds, like the listeners of St. John the Baptist as well as the Lord himself at the time following his baptism in the River Jordan. We have got to recognize the miracles offered us by a loving God. Are we willing to see and recognize God's presence in the circumstances and people surrounding us? Do we see in our parish priest the vehicle through which reconciliation and forgiveness are available to fallen humanity? Are you willing to pursue harmony in life even after sinning and disrupting that harmony in your own life? If so, the angelic message is reaching you, the angels who appear to men of good will appear to us constantly saying, "I want to introduce you to Jesus Christ." The angels who came to witness the baptism of the Lord sing out for your assured hearing, 'return and repent' because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. You have a second chance, you have another opportunity to renew yourself. You are not lost, you have been found, you are claimed by your Creator so that now and forever you may heartfully sing out, "Glory to God in the highest and to people of good will, peace on earth."

Born Anew and Strengthened in Faith

The sacramental Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation introduce us to life in the Blessed Trinity

Celebrating the glorious feast of the Baptism of Christ reminds us that in the course of his public ministry, the Lord imparts to his Body and Bride, the Church, her sacramental life.

When asked how we are incorporated into the Body of Christ, most of us rightly answer, "...in the sacramental Mystery of Baptism." Yes, our answer would not be complete if we omitted the two other Mysteries of Initiation. We are born anew in Baptism, strengthened in Chrismation and nourished by the Eucharist.

The word *baptize* means to immerse in water which is why the Church literally buries the baptismal candidate in water so that immersed in the death of the Lord, the child is raised in triumph of the Resurrection. Thus in this sacramental Mystery, we experience our own personal burial and death to sin and are introduced to the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Subsequently, we receive a sharing in the Pentecost gifts of the Holy Spirit in our Chrismation.

In God's plan of salvation, events such as the building of the ark by Noah and the miraculous passage of the Chosen People through the Red Sea are a forecast or prefiguring of baptism in Christ. The story of Noah shows how water is both a source of death and life, just as in baptism sin and death are drowned, even as a new life of grace is engendered. In passing through the Red Sea, Israel was freed from slavery to Egypt. So, too, when we pass through the waters of baptism we are freed from the slavery of sin. In crossing the Jordan, Israel inherited the promised land, an image of the eternal life that takes root in us and obviates our destiny. All this is fulfilled in Christ.

Christ's passage from death to life passes over into baptism. Accordingly, the risen Christ sends the Apostles out to preach the gospel and go baptize believers in the name of the Holy Trinity from the day of Pentecost onward.

Who, then, can be baptized? The short answer is "anyone not yet baptized." This includes infants who are born in sin. Through baptism they are freed from the power of satan and become children of God. When infants are baptized, their believing parents make a profession of faith for them. After attaining the use of reason, the baptized child, reared conscientiously in a family atmosphere of loving faith in Christ, grows to make its own eager profession of faith. The sponsors or Godparents and the whole Church, however share in the responsibility of attracting people into faith living, helping them prepare for baptism and to grow in the new life of faith and grace. That is why only parents who are believers and actually live a Christian lifestyle conscientiously and seriously, can expect to have their child baptized because we cannot give to others what we ourselves do not have. Pagan parents cannot be expected to provide the insights or values needed in daily living to provide the atmosphere in which baptismal grace will grow and prosper.

In today's world when faith is readily abandoned, parents who were baptized themselves and do not utilize baptismal grace to spiritually prosper, are recognized for what they are. Until they repent and return to Christ, their offspring cannot be baptized since they too, will grow up faithless as their parents. Parents of these children want them baptized for superstitious reasons and in not being faithful to Christ themselves, cannot be expected to keep and rear their children faithful either. Simply stated, they want the right thing for the wrong reasons. Those who do not live an overt Christian life cannot expect to have their request for child baptism taken seriously or honored. Unworthy parents, in having their child baptized without living as devoted followers of Christ themselves by whatever subterfuge, sin gravely because they abuse a most holy and august sacramental Mystery.

In the Church of Jesus Christ both bishop; and priest administer the sacramental Mystery of Baptism. In case of emergency necessity, any baptized believer can do so, provided they have the intention of doing what the Church does and employs the proper form. Such latitude regarding baptism is due to its importance. In emergencies, under the right circumstances the Orthodox believer pronounces "The servant of God (Name) is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. At each mention of the person of the Trinity, the candidate is immersed into water or if such an tight emergency of time occurs, the water may be poured over the child's head each time each person of the Trinity is mentioned. It must be emphasized after the emergency subsides, the child is to be brought to the church where the parish priest will recite all the prayers and execute all the liturgical ceremonies attendant to this Mystery and then register the child and circumstances in the Parish Registry.

Baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation for all to whom the gospel message has been proclaimed and who had the possibility of asking for the sacramental Mystery and its grace. In the strength of Christ's salvific will, however, others are saved, including those who die for the faith, who wish for the Mystery but are not able to obtain it, and those moved by grace, sincerely seeking God. Children who die without baptism are also entrusted to the merciful love of God.

Believers are grateful for the gift of baptism, particularly when we reflect on its effects. It not only removes our separation from our heavenly Father, but also takes away any sins committed prior to baptism in the case of adults. Through this sacramental Mystery, we share in the life of the Blessed Trinity, are joined to and allied with Christ and his Body, the Church. Associated with his self-offering and freed from sin, we are enabled to offer up every aspect of our lives to God.

Following in the triumvirate of initiatory Mysteries is the brief ritual of Chrismation, when with sacred chrism we are anointed and the Holy Spirit descends on us as fittingly as the tongues of fire descend over the heads of the disciples on Pentecost changing their entire character to apostles. The holy oil is sanctified on Holy and Great Thursday at the Ecumenical Patriarchate and distributed to all the bishops throughout the world to outwardly manifest the unity of the Church and our intimate association with God's salutary grace working in our souls and lives. Just like baptism, chrismation can only be received once. In our Church both priest and bishop administers the sacramental Mystery of Chrismation.

This Mystery has deep roots in Scripture and tradition. Old Testament prophets were anointed by the Holy Spirit. Not only was Jesus conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, but also lived his entire life and conducted his whole ministry in complete oneness with the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples and enabled them to proclaim the teaching and salutary deeds of Christ with courage and power. The Apostles imparted the gift of the Holy Spirit to newly baptized by laying on of hands. This Mystery constitutes our own personal experience of Pentecost. It brings about a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in whom we are "sealed." We are permanently and irrevocably marked both as followers of Christ and as communicants of the Church. Through this Mystery, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are imparted and deepened in us: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder. Thus we are equipped to bear witness without excuse for Christ our Saviour.

A Living Example

Building a culture of life at home

The Church of Jesus Christ for centuries repeatedly issues a clarion call for believers in Christ to counteract the present culture of death by building a new culture of life. The Church teaches that the foundation of every society, indeed of the whole world's civility, is the family. The love between spouses and between parents and children, is meant to reflect the life-giving love of the Holy Trinity. This love is at the heart of a culture that sincerely respects the pinnacle of God's creation: human beings.

It is not enough, though for us to follow the teachings of our faith by refusing to participate in the culture of death. Merely adopting a pro-life mindset is only responding halfway to the call to build a pro-life culture. Think about what the word "build" implies. It is not passive; it involves acquiring materials, using tools and laboring to create something tangible. If we are going to build a culture of life, starting in our homes, we need to be thinking about the materials, tools and labor needed to get the job done.

The bottom line is that building a culture of life will necessarily involve living by example, creating a culture that encompasses both an internal mind-set, soul-set and way of living daily that reflects the espoused values of Christ.

Of course, prayer is both a tool and a labor of love that will enhance the family's life-affirming attitude and empower believers to share that attitude with others. Devotional prayers to the Holy Family can open up the doors of grace to the patience, purity and courage which the Holy Family demonstrated. Peaceful homes that foster a purity of heart in children can readily produce a generation of courageous young people who will change the world for life.

The materials provided to build this culture of life include necessarily the teachings of the Church of Christ. The guidance provided by God's revelation to us in Scripture,

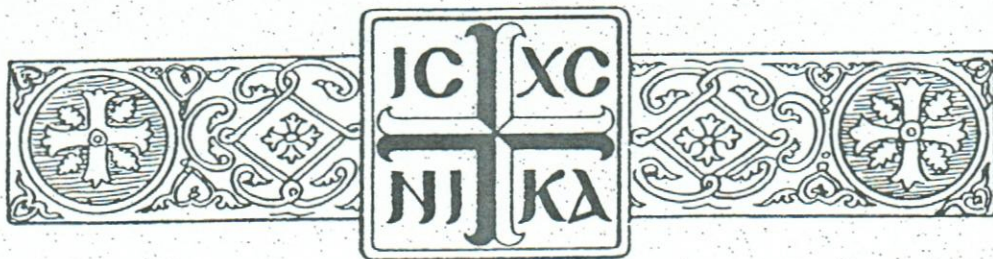
sacred tradition and its insightful teachings are an incredible gift, but like any gift, they have to be graciously received and espoused. What the Church teaches is the truth of the Saviour which helps to illumine what it means to be in the image and likeness of Christ our God. Once you see yourself and every other person from this perspective, a profound reverence for life becomes natural to us.

The next observation will perhaps be unexpected and unsettling to some. For husbands and fathers still in their parenting years, an essential tool for building a culture of life is to embrace and practice marriage as the Church always teaches: we must always be open in marriage to the creation of life. Otherwise what seems invisible and in no way an apparent negative factor in married life, is in fact a subtle and insidious poison to married love and the culture of life.

The freedom and blessings that come for living in this truth far outweigh the fear that often drives one to limit the fruitfulness of marriage. The development of a deeper love for each spouse and respect for life within the entire household will flow naturally from the family that recognizes its vocation and lives up to its challenge.

Finally, our children must be witnesses to parents doing something concrete that puts pro-life convictions into action: like donating items to a pregnancy resource center; attending pro-life events or praying outside an abortion clinic. Those who take their Christian vocation seriously can contact representatives about an important piece of legislation that promotes life well-being. Putting faith into action creates a lasting impression about our role in shaping society.

Indeed, building takes effort. Whether we study the formal theology of the Church, practicing it devotedly, or supporting a life-affirming ministry, we can learn from the model of St. Joseph who knew well the admonition of his predecessor in faith response: "Unless the Lord builds this house, they labor in vain who build it" Psalms 127: 1. The foster-father of Christ relied on spiritual strength as much as on the work of his hands to provide for his family. Our living example will serve our own family's well-being as well as that of our community, nation and world.



PSALMS

Authors—Among the authors of the Psalms are David, the temple musicians, and Moses.

Date—Generally from 1000 BC, the time of David, to several centuries thereafter.

Major Theme—*The songs of God's people.* Each psalm has its own theme, as noted in the titles.

Background—

- (1) *Types of psalms:* The Psalms are of many types, including: (a) prophecies of the coming Messiah, (b) prayers for the king, (c) personal lamentations, (d) songs of praise, and (e) hymns for special feasts.
- (2) *The prayer book of the Church:* The Psalms have become for the Church, as for ancient Israel, a book of prayer and praise. All find their fulfillment in Christ, the Son of God. Not only do the Psalms predict specific events of Christ's life, but in them He Himself intercedes for and with His people before the Father. The Psalms can also be seen as a dialogue between the Church, the body of Christ, and Christ her Head. Therefore, they make the most sense to us when they are prayed or sung (chanted), not simply read.
- (3) *Uses in the Church:* The Book of Psalms, or Psalter, is used in the Orthodox Church in three primary ways:
 - (a) In the daily cycle of prayers. The liturgical tradition appoints certain psalms as "fixed" portions of the daily services. These will be pointed out in the notes throughout the text as psalms for morning prayers, evening prayers, and prayers of the hours.
 - (b) In the weekly order of the morning and evening services (Matins [Orthros] and Vespers). When these are done in their entirety, as in the monasteries, all the psalms are chanted in the course of each week, starting at Saturday Vespers and concluding at Matins the following Saturday.

(c) In the observance of the Church year, the liturgical tradition selects particular psalms or verses for special feasts or seasons as prophetic statements illustrating the work of Christ for us. For example, the Passion Song of Psalm 21 (“They pierced My hands and My feet”) is used in the Church on Great and Holy Friday. Thus, using the Psalms is crucial to our understanding of the fullness of Christ’s ministry to His people.

(4) *Purpose:* The Psalms serve many functions. They (a) foretell coming events; (b) recall history; (c) frame laws for life; (d) reveal what must be done to obey God’s word; (e) are a treasury of good doctrine; and (f) help overcome the passions that exercise dominion over our souls, through the power of poetic expression to capture and gradually transform our thoughts.



first [**furst**]

– *noun*

1. That which precedes all others in time, order or importance.

Orthodoxy

the

Body and Bride

of

Christ

THE OPHANIES OF CHRIST

The word "theophany" derives from the Greek words *theos* ("God"), and *phainesthai* ("to show forth, appear"). Hence, a theophany is an appearance or manifestation of God. While types of Christ in the Old Testament prefigure His coming in the flesh, theophanies are recognized by the Church as being actual appearances of the pre-incarnate Son and Word of God. How this happens remains a mystery. But because the Son of God took on human nature in the fullness of time, each theophany directly prefigures Christ's Incarnation. St. John of Damascus wrote, "No one saw the divine nature, but rather the image and figure of what was yet to come. For the invisible Son and Word of God was to become truly Man."

THREE THEOPHANIES OF CHRIST

An often cited theophany of Christ occurs in the visit of the "three men" to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:1-16: "Then God appeared to him at the oak of Mamre" (v. 1). Though three men are there, Abraham addresses them in the singular, "Lord." He responds in the singular (vv. 9-15). As St. Ephraim the Syrian says, "Therefore the Lord . . . now appeared to Abraham clearly in one of the three." The three are generally considered to be Christ the Lord, along with two attending angels.

At Genesis 32:25-31, Christ is the "man" who wrestles with Jacob, after which Jacob says, "I saw God face to face" (v. 30). St. Cyril of Jerusalem asks the Jews concerning these theophanies to Abraham and Jacob, "What strange thing do we announce in saying that God was made Man, when you yourselves say that Abraham received the Lord as a guest? What strange thing do we announce, when Jacob says, 'For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved?' The Lord, who ate with Abraham, also ate with us."

In the Book of Daniel, a heathen king bears witness to another theophany of Christ. When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon peers into the fiery furnace, upon seeing a "fourth man" he exclaims, "The vision of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan 3:92).

OTHER APPEARANCES OF GOD

At times Christ appears as "the Angel of the Lord" or "the Angel of God." At Exodus 3:1-4:17, "the Angel of the Lord" appears to Moses in the burning bush and identifies Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5). He also says that His name is "I AM HE WHO IS" (Ex 3:14), which in Greek is represented by the three letters placed around Christ's head in the holy icons. St. Ambrose of Milan observes, "Christ therefore is, and always is; for He who is, always is. And Christ always is, of whom Moses says, 'He that is has sent me.'"

THE INCARNATION

When God the Son became incarnate, this can be called an everlasting theophany. For having assumed human nature, Christ not only manifests God to the world during His earthly life (Jn 1:14; see also 14:9; Col 2:9; 1Jn 1:1-3), but He ascends into heaven in the same glorified flesh in which He will return at His Second Coming (see Acts 1:9-11).

At the baptism of Christ (Mt 3:13-17), a further theophany occurs, as all three Persons of the Holy Trinity are made known: the Father in the voice from heaven, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and the Incarnate Son. Hence, the feast day commemorating this event is known as Holy Theophany. On this day the Church sings, "When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest."

Additionally, at Christ's Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor (Mt 17:1-9), the Father again is heard, the Holy Spirit is present in the brightness of the cloud, and the Son shines with the gleaming radiance of His Divinity.

Family Survival Guide

*Reflections on
Raising Kids Today*

If

*If all lips spoke the truth,
All pride was cast aside,
Greed was packed and stored away,
And jealousy subside.
If love could rule the universe,
Kindness was sown to every race,
Then one could glance into a mirror
And view God in his face....*

*Written by a 16-year-old
girl on the street*

Help Me

Help me, Dear Lord

as I travel towards You.

There are many detours

*which will try to distract
me away from You.*

Help me as I travel my path

to cherish the parents You gave me.

Help me to do my best in all my endeavors

whether I may win or lose.

Help me never to lose hope

though there may be difficult times.

Help me to choose good friends.

Help me to choose the right mate,

so that I may have a happy family someday.

Help me, though I may fall,

to continue on my journey towards You.

Help me, Dear Lord.

I want so much to be with You. Amen.

*Written by a
Covenant House kid*

Values – Teaching Them in Today’s World.

Communicating your values has never been more important than it is today. And the good news is, it all begins and ends with you.

When all is said and done, parents have far more influence over instilling values in their kids than any other factor.

Here are some simple, and very important, things we should all remember about values, and passing them along:

- Kids get their sense of what’s right and wrong from people they love and respect. No one has more influence over teaching values than you do. Your input can make all the difference!
- When it comes to teaching values action *always* speak louder than words. Kids today have a “show me” mentality. They need to see the values lived out by you. Respect for life, respect for other people, honesty, integrity ... kids get those from watching you. The old saw has never been more true ... children *do* learn what they live! .
- Families are still the best vehicle for raising children. A loving, nurturing family unit, of whatever form, creates the kind of environment kids need to learn what’s right and wrong ... and how to love themselves too. Values are best inculcated in an environment of love and acceptance.
- Always take time to sit and talk to your kids. Don’t be afraid to say what you feel (but don’t ever be too closed to listen to what your kids think).
- Always strive to teach your kids to love and respect themselves as children of God. A healthy love and respect for themselves is incredibly important for any kid. It’s also the first essential step in helping a kid also learn a love and respect for those around him, and God.

- Nobody has said it better than Jesus. Those three words, "Love Thy Neighbor...." are an important message for every kid!

You've Got a Tough Job.

Most of us were never taught to be parents. So we can't help but disappoint ourselves sometimes. How often have you heard yourself using the very words you hated hearing from your own parents?

And when our kids become teenagers, it gets even harder. They seem to reject everything we've taught them. As far as they're concerned, we know nothing. Our values and beliefs are constantly challenged. Every word we utter is seen as interference. Emotions run high.

But we're more important to our teens than ever. As they try out the values of their peers, who are more influential than ever, we counter the pull of drugs and alcohol. These entangle children every day and can ruin their lives.

The Stakes Are High.

Teenagers who don't get what they need at home look elsewhere. Some run away from home. Many more consider other ways of running from pressure — a once bright and happy son escapes to drugs, a vivacious daughter starts drinking. Think about these facts:

- Each year, one million students drop out of high school or are chronically truant.
- Four out of 10 teenage girls will become pregnant before age 20.
- Although marijuana use has declined in the past years, addiction to cocaine, especially crack, has doubled.
- One in four teens develops a drinking problem dur-

ing his teen years; about 10,000 will die in alcohol-related accidents this year.

- Each year, 5,000 to 6,000 teens die in suicide-related deaths, and the number is growing, one every 90 minutes. For every death, at least 100 other young people attempt suicide.

The Turbulent Teens.

Teens face many pressures that adults don't take seriously. Their bodies are changing — they have to adjust to the new person they see in the mirror. They feel different. They become interested in sex.

Self-doubt is constant. They feel pressure to conform and fear ridicule if they don't.

These changes can be bewildering, frightening and even depressing.

Teens can have remarkable insights. But they also surprise us with their lack of good judgment.

Your Teen Needs You.

At the time teenagers are crying out to be treated as adults, they also need a nurturing home, a refuge. And though they deny it passionately, they need structure, limits, lots of help sorting out their lives and most important, love.

In the turbulence of growing up, it is important for us parents to remember (even if our teens seem to forget) that we love each other. In the end, that's what makes the whole struggle worthwhile.

How Well Do You Know Your Kids?

You may say, "My teenager wouldn't do that." Most don't. But even if yours wouldn't, think about the following questions:

- Where is your child right now?
- What are your teen's deepest fears?
- Who is your son or daughter's best friend?

- Do your teen's friends feel welcome in your home?
Remember, a strong relationship with your children is the best way for you to guide them, and to prevent them from becoming a sorry statistic.

Getting Along With Your Teen.

Here are some ideas and techniques you can try to improve your relationship with your teen. If they don't work at first, keep trying. They take practice.

1. Make time for your teen. Find an activity you enjoy doing together and pursue it. If your invitations are declined, keep asking.
2. Listen, really listen. Because parents have so much to do and so little time, we often try to listen while cleaning, washing dishes or fixing the car. Put your chores aside so your teen knows you're really paying attention.
3. Take the long view. Don't treat minor mishaps as major catastrophes. Choose the important issues. Don't make your home a battleground.
4. Tolerate differences. View your teenager as an individual distinct from you. This doesn't mean you can't state your opinion if you disagree.
5. Respect your teenager's privacy. If a behavior is worrying you, speak up.
6. Let your teens sort things out themselves. Never say that you know how your teen feels. They believe their feelings (so new and personal) are unique. They'll learn otherwise — without your help. And never imply that their feelings don't matter or will change. Because teens live in the present, it doesn't matter that they'll soon feel differently.
7. Don't judge. State facts instead of opinions when you praise or criticize. Stating facts like "Your poem made me smile," or "This report card is all Cs and Ds!" leaves it up to your teen to draw the appropriate conclusions. Teens are sensitive about

- being judged — positively as well as negatively.
8. Be generous with praise. Praise your child's efforts, not just accomplishments. And don't comment on the person. "You're a great artist" is hard to live up to. "I loved that drawing" is a fact and comes from your heart.
 9. Set reasonable limits. Teens need them. Your rules should be consistently applied — and rooted in your deepest beliefs and values.
 10. Teach your teen to make sensible decisions and choices by encouraging independence and letting your teenager make mistakes. Don't step in unless you have to.

How to Make Anger Work.

All parents get furious at their children. We can't help it. But some parents feel bad about being angry and keep quiet. Though it's easy to say things in anger that you don't mean, anger can also spark talks that will help you and your teen get to know each other better.

Some Guidelines.

- When you get mad, don't blame or accuse. Say how you *feel* — annoyed, irritated, upset, etc. — and why. Be specific. Talk facts. Blaming only forces a teen to argue his point, arouses tempers, and kills dialogue.
- Think solution, not victory. Don't try to win arguments.
- Stick to the present incident. Fighting old battles will only aggravate a situation.
- Be careful not to attack your teen's person or character. Say, "I'm furious that you didn't clean up after the mess you made" — *not*, "You're a lazy slob!" Your son or daughter may give up trying to improve.

- If the situation is touchy, put your ideas in a letter. You can say exactly what you mean — and your teen will have time to think it over before answering.

Signs That Your Child Needs Outside Help.

- Suicidal talk of any kind. A suicidal teen may also give away valued possessions, make a will, talk about death or dying or say his family would be better off without him.
- Recent changes in sleeping or eating habits, thinking patterns, personality, friendships, study habits, activities. A sudden unexplained end to a long depression often precedes a suicide attempt. Major weight loss can be a sign of bulimia or anorexia — dangerous problems.
- Drug or alcohol use. You might notice: irrational or irresponsible behavior, lying, secretiveness, severe mood swings, a sudden increase in accidents. A teen with a problem may have dilated pupils or wear sunglasses indoors, or complain about not sleeping or not feeling well. Valuables may disappear. You may find drug paraphernalia or alcohol containers around the house.
- A recent change in friends who you feel may be involved with drugs or alcohol may indicate that your child is involved or be a sign that your child is having other problems.
- Law-breaking behavior, even if the police and courts aren't involved. You might notice new possessions and money not accounted for.
- Poor self-image. Doubts are normal. But persistently low self-esteem is a problem.
- Serious depression. Listlessness, loneliness, withdrawal, difficulty making friends.
- Rebelliousness to the point of total, continual defiance.

- Problems at school, including class-cutting, absenteeism, a sudden drop in grades.
- Fears or anxieties that interfere with everyday activities.
- Problems between family members that aren't solved by listening and discussing. In fact, family changes such as a death, divorce or remarriage are times when teens often need some outside help.

When to Get Help For Yourself.

- Things aren't going well with your family but you can't figure out why.
- You disagree totally with positions your spouse has taken on issues concerning your teen and the two of you can't find a compromise.
- You have trouble holding a job.
- You are abusing drugs or alcohol.
- You get violent with your teenager and can't control yourself.
- Your spouse gets violent with you or your child.

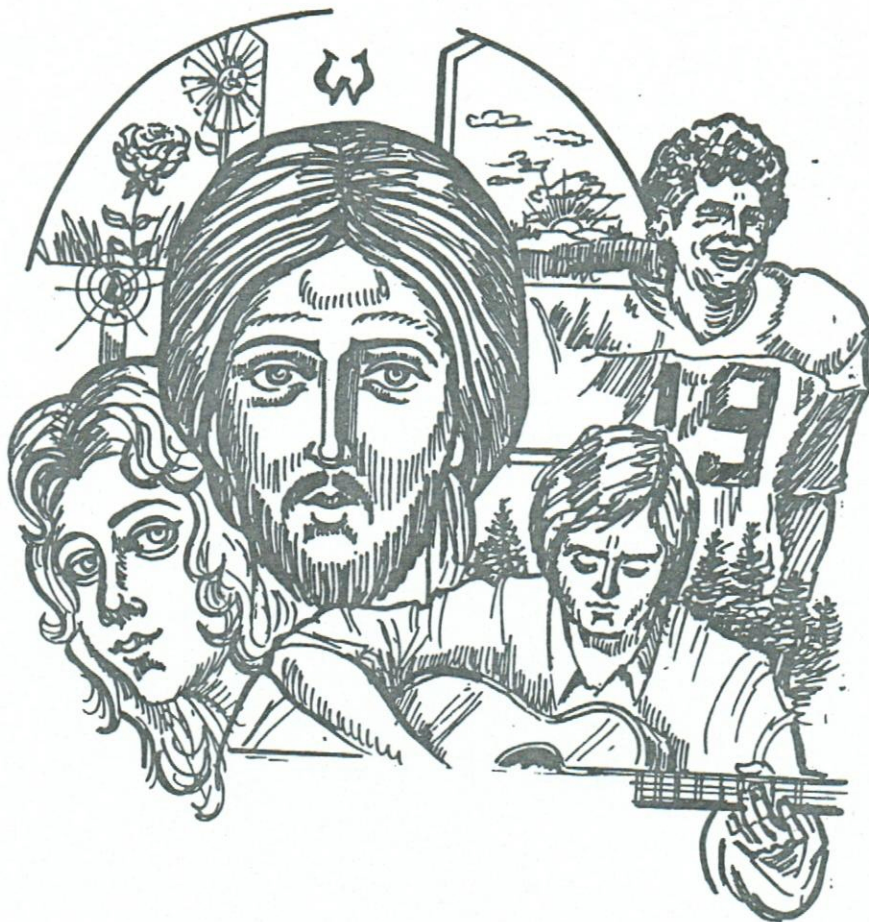
What to Do If Your Teen Runs Away.

Most kids who run away return within 48 hours. Those who stay away can find themselves in many dangerous situations. So do everything you can to bring your child home.

- Keep a notebook recording steps you've taken and dates.
- Check in with: neighbors, relatives, and your teen's friends, teachers, employer or co-workers.
- Contact local hangouts and hospitals.
- Call the police. Have an officer come to your house to take a report and pick up recent photos, dental records and fingerprints if available. Get his name; badge number and phone number; the police report number; and the name of the officer who will follow up.
- Make sure the police lists your teen in the National

Crime Information Center (NCIC) to the state clearinghouse on missing children, if there is one in your state.

- Contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for help with law enforcement officials — 1-800-843-5678.
- Call the Covenant House NINELINE for support and to check for messages. Leave a message. Also check with any local runaway hotlines.
- Contact runaway shelters locally and in nearby states.
- Make posters with photos of your teen, listing: age, height, weight, hair and eye color, complexion, physical characteristics (such as scars, birthmarks, braces or pierced ears), circumstances of disappearance, your phone number and police contacts. Distribute these to truck stops, youth-oriented businesses, hospitals, law-enforcement agencies.
- Be prepared for the first conversation with your teen. Whether in person or by phone, show concern, not anger. Say, "I love you."
- Prepare to quickly begin resolving the problems which caused your child to leave home. When your child returns home, emotions are likely to run high. Someone outside your family can help you all deal with these emotions. You may find that planned time for your teen in a temporary residence or shelter is necessary while you are resolving problems. So get outside help from a trained counselor.



*“I bound myself by oath,
I made a covenant with you ...
and you became mine.”*

Ezekiel 16:8

*(Our oath, the first thing kids see
when they walk into our shelter.)*

Learn to Listen

*Learn to listen like a teddy bear,
With ears open and mouth closed tight.
Learn to forgive like a teddy bear,
With an open heart, not caring who is right.
Learn to love like a teddy bear,
With arms open and imperfect eyesight.
Do not ask for your life's load lightened,
But for courage to endure.
Do not ask for fulfillment in all your life,
Do not ask for perfection in all you do,
But for the wisdom not to repeat mistakes.
And finally, do not ask for more,
Before saying, "Thank you,"
For what you have already received.
If you're looking for somebody to blame —
Look in the mirror.
There is no challenge that cannot be met,
And dream that cannot be achieved.*

*Written by one of our
Covenant House kids*

Need expert help or support?

*Call our NINELINE counselors
at 1-800-999-9999.*

*We'll put you in touch with
people who can help you right
in your hometown.*

1-800-999-9999

This call is free.

As the priest offers prayers over the Gifts at the Table of Oblation, the Birth of Christ takes place all over again. At the Little Entrance, we are witnesses to the beginning of our Lord's public ministry — emerging from obscurity to become a Teacher and a Friend to many. When the Beatitudes are sung, it is as if we are listening to the Sermon on the Mount overlooking the Sea of Galilee, spellbound by every word uttered by our Master. When the Gospel lesson is read, it is as if Jesus were speaking directly to us, explaining His remarkable parables in a way we can totally comprehend. As the Great Entrance is made, we stand at Golgotha, and like the penitent thief, we hear those comforting words proclaimed by the celebrant: "May the Lord God remember you in His Kingdom." As the Divine Liturgy proceeds, we are transported to the Upper Room and we become participants in the Mystical Supper as we hear those profound words: "Take and eat, this is My Body which is broken for you for the remission of sins" and "All of you drink of this, this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins." These words remind us that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are offered "in behalf of all and for all" at every Divine Liturgy. When the Gifts are returned to the Table of Oblation following the communion of the faithful, we stand on the Mount of Olives, looking upward as our Lord ascends into heaven and returns to be seated at the Right Hand of His Father.

Attending the Divine Liturgy is a privilege as well as a learning experience. It bridges the gap between what Jesus did 2,000 years ago and us today. May we come to it with frequency, and in piety and humility.