

✠ St. Gregory's Journal ✠

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From a Homily of Saint Cyril of Alexandria

died AD444

Feast Day ~ February 9

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On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. [John 2:1, 2] At an opportune time does Christ go there to perform a miracle...Since the festivities would be celebrated modestly and becomingly, the Mother of the Savior is present; He also, being invited, came, and with Him His Disciples. He came, not so much to partake of the wedding feast, as to perform His miracle; and furthermore, that he might sanctify the beginning of human generation in that which pertains to the flesh. It was but fitting that He Who was about to restore the nature itself of man, and bring it wholly to a better state, should give his blessing, not alone to those already born, but also prepare a blessing for those who were afterwards to be born, sanctifying their coming into this world.

And there is yet a third reason. It had elsewhere been said by God to man: *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children* [Gen. 3:16]. How is this curse to be lifted, or for what reason was it to be lawful to avoid the nuptials that were thus condemned? The Savior, most Beloved of men, has solved our difficulty. By His Presence He sanctified marriage, and He Who is the Joy and the Delight of all men, has taken away the ancient sadness of childbearing. *If there be in Christ a new creature, the old things are passed away, as Paul says, and behold all things are made new.* [II Cor.: 17]

He comes therefore to the wedding feast, and His Disciples with Him. It was fitting that they should be present while He performed these wonders, who were to keep in their minds the significance of these wonders, gathering up as food for their faith that which was now about to be done. The wine for the guests giving out, his Mother asks, desiring Him, that He use His wonted goodness and

kindness, saying: *They have no wine*. For since it was in His power to do all things whatsoever He wished, she urges Him to perform a miracle.

And Jesus saith to her: *Woman, what is that to me, and to thee? My hour is not yet come*. His answer the Savior has also admirably disposed. For it was not becoming to Him that He should hasten, or freely offer, to perform miracles: but, being invited to come there, that He should grant this favor rather for the purpose of supplying a need than to astonish the beholders...

Here too Christ gives us examples, that the greatest honor is due to parents, since it is out of reverence for His Mother that He now undertakes to do that which He had not yet desired to do. *His Mother said to the waiters "Whatever He says to you, do it"*. The Woman, having, as was fitting, great authority over the Lord, Her Son, persuades Him to work a miracle. She also prepares the way for it, bidding the waiters of the feast to be at hand, and to have prepared that which the Lord will presently command.

Many things, and these too are wondrous, are prefigured at the same time by this singular and earliest sign... The nuptials are celebrated on the third day, that is, in the last age of the world. For the ternary number signifies for us a beginning, a middle, and an end. And so do we divide any period of time... On the third day, He healed those who were stricken with corruption and death, that is, not in the first age, nor in the middle, but in these last times; when, becoming man, He restored all human nature, raising it in Himself from the dead. Therefore, when the Evangelist speaks of the third day, upon which was celebrated the wedding feast, he means this present age.

More, the Evangelist speaks of the place of the event. In the village of Cana in Galilee, he says. Here the careful listener will notice that the celebration was not held in Jerusalem, but outside Judea, so that the gathering was celebrated in the country of the Gentiles. For it is very plain that the Synagogue of the Jews had rejected the heavenly Bridegroom: but by the Church of the Gentiles He was received with a joyful heart.

And the Savior came to the wedding feast, not as one uninvited, but as besought by the multitude of the voices of the saints. *For the Law brought nothing to perfection* [Heb. 7:19]. The Mosaic code did not suffice for perfect happiness. Neither was that inward guide of natural sobriety equal to the task of conducting us to salvation. And so of us also can it be said: *They have no wine*. But the most bountiful God does not despise us who are striving with the hunger for good things. He offers us a wine far better than we had.



St. Bathilde

Feast Day ~ January 30

Rags to riches stories are always appealing. What child has not thrilled to the story of Cinderella, who went from being neglected and abused by her step-sisters to being the Prince's choice for his bride? And isn't the American dream about success stories like those of entrepreneurs Dave Thomas (Wendy's) and Truett Cathy (Chick-Fil-A) who built fast-food empires from very humble beginnings? The stories of the lives of the saints of the Church also include such "rags to riches" tales and these stories show us how we should measure "success" and what we should do with our material wealth.

St. Bathilde's story is one such tale. She was an Anglo-Saxon born around 626-7 along the eastern coast of England. As a teenager, she was kidnaped by marauding Danes and then sold into slavery in the household of Clovis II, king of the Franks. Given domestic chores in the palace, Bathilde approached her new station in life with patience and humility. She did her work well and was kind and cheerful to all around her. Her intelligence and beauty were soon noticed by Erchinoald, the chief steward of the palace, who was a widower. He wished to marry again and thought that this slave girl would make a good wife. Bathilde did not wish to marry him or to cause envy among the other slaves, so she dressed herself in old rags and tried to stay out of sight for awhile. Thinking that the girl had probably run away, Erchinoald chose another wife instead.

Resuming her normal clothes and continuing her work among the other slaves of the household, Bathilde once again was admired by all for her good nature and her charitable acts toward others. Soon she was noticed by another official - the young king himself! This time, the slave girl did not hide herself, but slowly came to accept the love and attention the king offered. She agreed to marry him and, at the age of 19, she became Queen Bathilde of Neustria and Burgundy.

In her new position, Bathilde found herself with all the trappings of royalty: prestige and honor, wealth, fine clothes, and a very comfortable life. But she never forgot what it was like to be a slave - to be without possessions and freedom. So she made certain that one of her main projects as queen was to buy and free slaves, especially children, whenever possible.

Bathilde and King Clovis had three sons: Clotaire, Childeric and Theuderic but Clovis died early, leaving Bathilde a





St. Eligius of Noyon

widow with three young children. When the five-year-old Clotaire succeeded his father as king, his mother became regent and managed royal affairs for her child. Her wisdom and fair judgements were respected by all the people. She continued her work against child slavery and gained an ally in this work in Bishop (St.) Eligius of Noyon and Tournai. He, too, had begun his life at court in humble circumstances - as an apprentice goldsmith - and was acutely aware of the need for advocates for slaves.

Another of Queen Bathilde's projects was the founding and support of monastic houses. Through her generosity, the abbeys of Corbie and Chelles were founded and she also contributed to those at Jumieges, Jouarre and Luxeuil.

When her sons were grown and had become kings of different areas of the Frankish territories, Queen Bathilde retired to the Abbey of Chelles for the remainder of her life. Here she was buried upon her death on January 30, 680. She was honored for her saintly life immediately following her death and was officially named a saint before the year 900. Not all historians have been kind to the memory of St. Bathilde, but it is now believed that a confusion of her with another person led to these unjust portrayals.

May we learn from St. Bathilde how to face the humiliations and disappointments of our lives with patience and charity. May we also learn to receive the triumphs and successes of our lives with humility and generosity. May we, like her, remember those who need our help and may we look to the monastics for spiritual aid. *Holy Bathilde, pray for us.*

The Divine Theophany

from *The Feasts of the Lord* by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

The feast of the *Theophany* refers to the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan by St. John the Forerunner, who is called the Baptist. This took place when Christ reached the age of thirty years, before He began His formal work of teaching and before His later Sufferings for the salvation of the human race.

The choice of thirty years for the beginning of Christ's formal activity in the world is related to the fact that the biological formation of the human organism reaches its fullness at that time. Moreover He would have been more acceptable to the Israelites at this time...

The event of Christ's Baptism by John the Forerunner in the River Jordan is called Theophany and Epiphany. In the early Church the feasts of the Nativity and the Theophany were celebrated together on the same day (6 January). In the fourth century the feasts were separated and Christmas was transferred to 25 December...

The word "theophany" comes from the apostolic passage "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" [I Timothy 3:16], and relates mostly to Christ's Nativity. The word "Epiphany" comes from the apostolic passage "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" [Titus 2:11], and is related mostly to Christ's Baptism, for it was then that people recognized the Grace of divinity.

In any case it is a fact that on the day of Christ's Baptism, with the manifestation of the Holy Trinity and the confession of the Worthy Forerunner, we have the official confession that the Son and Word of God is the "one of the Trinity" Who became man to save the human race from sin, the devil and death.



Epiphany Antiphons

Now do we celebrate a festival in honor of three days when Christ was made manifest; the day whereon the star led the Wise Men to the manger, the day whereon water was turned to wine at the wedding feast; the day whereon Christ was pleased to be baptized of John in Jordan that He might save us. Alleluia.

*Antiphon for the Magnificat at
the Blessing of Water in the evening*

Today the Church is joined to her heavenly Bridegroom; because in the Jordan Christ hath washed away her offenses, the Wise Men with their offerings hasten to the royal marriage, and the guests are regaled with water made wine. Alleluia.

*Antiphon for the Benedictus at
the Blessing of Water in the morning.*

Parish News

Thank you to all who made our Christmas celebrations so beautiful - to those who decorated, to the acolytes who served

at the altar, to the choir for their music and to all who came to joyously share in the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. *Christ is born! Glorify Him!*



This first month of a new year begins with a continuation of the celebration of the twelve-day season of Christmas and with several feast days. On January 1, we observe the Circumcision of Our Lord with Mass at 10AM (preceded by Matins at 9:30) followed by a pot-luck brunch. We celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany on Monday, January 5, with the Blessing of Water at 7PM, Mass at 7:30, and pot-luck supper afterward.

As is the custom, our priests will bless the homes of parish members during the season of Epiphany. Please speak with Fr. Nicholas or Fr. Raphael to schedule your house blessing. This year, the season is short, ending with Septuagesima - Sunday, February 8. The water which is blessed at the Epiphany service is used to sprinkle homes as we pray that in them may abide "health, purity, victory, strength, humility, goodness, meekness, fulfilment of the Law, and giving of thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost".

The parish's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 18. Coffee Hour will be a pot-luck luncheon after which reports will be made on the activities and finances of the parish and new members of the Parish Council will be elected.

The annual March for Life is an occasion for us to offer hospitality to those coming from other areas to participate. On Thursday, January 22, we plan to offer Mass (and provide breakfast) before going to the Mall for the March. Details for this will be discussed at coffee hours in the coming weeks.

Calendars for 2015 are available for a \$5 contribution. This year's calendars picture churches in the autocephalous jurisdictions of the Orthodox Church.

At the end of December, the Parish Council disbursed our charitable giving for the past year: for refugee assistance in Syria, to IOCC, OCMC, and several monasteries.

Our Food for the Hungry collection will end on Sunday, January 4, at which time the canned and packaged goods will be weighed and reported to the Archdiocese and then given to Martha's Table for help in feeding the poor of our city.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>January 2015</h1>						
<i>Sunday Services: Matins at 9AM, Sung Mass at 9:30AM</i>				1 The Circumcision of Our Lord and Octave Day of the Nativity <i>Mass at 10am</i> <i>W</i>	2 Octave Day of St. Stephen; St. Fulgentius, BC, 533	3 Octave Day of St. John, Ap. Ev.; St. Genevieve, V, 512 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
4 The Second Sunday after Christmas; Octave Day of the Holy Innocents, Mm; St. Titus, BC, c. 96 <i>W</i>	5 Vigil of the Epiphany of Our Lord <i>Mass at 7:30pm</i> <i>W</i>	6 The Epiphany of Our Lord	7 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Cedd, BC, 664	8 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Lucius & comp., Mm, c. 290; St. Severinus, Ab, 482	9 of the Octave of Epiphany	10 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Paul the First Hermit, C., c. 345 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
11 First Sunday after Epiphany; St. Hyginus, PM, c. 142; St. Theodosius, Ab, c. 529 <i>W</i>	12 of the Octave of Epiphany; St. Benedict Biscop, Ab, 690	13 Octave Day of Epiphany; St. Kentigern, BC, 603	14 St. Hilary, BCD, 367; St. Felix of Nola, PrM, 255; St. Nina, V, 335	15 St. Maurus, Ab, 584	16 St. Marcellus, PM, 309, St. Honoratus, BC, 429	17 St. Anthony, Ab, 356 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
18 Second Sunday after Epiphany; St. Prisca, VM, c. 270 <i>Annual Parish Meeting</i> <i>W</i>	19 St. Mark of Ephesus, BC, 1445	20 Ss. Fabian, BM & Sebastian, M, 3rd c.	21 St. Agnes, VM, 304	22 St. Vincent, M, 304; St. Anastasius, M, 628	23 St. Emerentiana VM, c. 304; St. John the Almoner, BC, c. 619	24 St. Timothy, BM, 97 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>
25 Conversion of St. Paul; comm. Third Sunday after Epiphany <i>W</i>	26 St. Polycarp, BM, 156	27 St. John Chrysostom, BCD, 407	28 The Second Feast of St. Agnes, VM	29	30 St. Martina, VM, 228; St. Bathildes, QMa, 680	31 <i>Vespers at 6pm</i>

Confessions may be made during the Psalms at Matins, following Vespers, and by appointment.

Coffee Hour follows Sunday Liturgy. Sunday School for children is during Coffee Hour.