

Pastoral Message from Fr. George Tsahakis

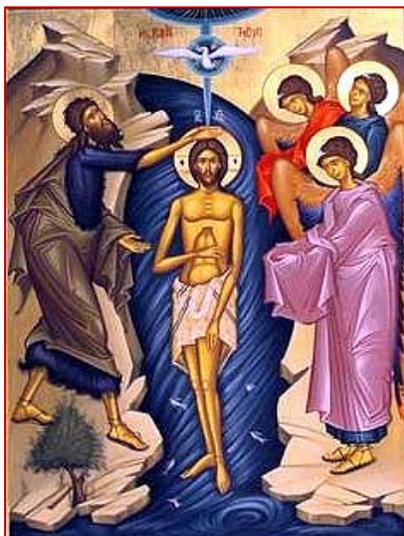
Looking forward to 2013

As we commence a “New Year,” I would like to share with you some practical guidance that someone offered me in anticipation of the “New Year”:

1. No one can ruin your day without your permission.
2. Most people will be about as happy as they decide to be.
3. Others can stop you temporarily, but only you can do it permanently.
4. Whatever you are willing to put up with is exactly what you will have.
5. Success stops when you do.
6. When your ship comes in – make sure you are willing to unload it.
7. You will never “have it all together.”
8. Life is a journey, not a destination. Enjoy the trip!
9. The biggest lie on the planet: “When I get what I want, I will be happy.”
10. The best way to escape your problem is to solve it.
11. I’ve learned that ultimately, “takers” lose and “givers” win.
12. Life’s precious moments don’t have value, unless they are shared.
13. If you don’t start, it’s certain you won’t arrive.
14. We often fear the thing we want the most.
15. He or she who laughs . . . lasts.
16. Yesterday was the deadline for all complaints.
17. Look for opportunities . . . not guarantees.
18. Life is what’s coming . . . not what was.
19. Success is getting up one more time.
20. Now is the most interesting time of all.
21. When things go wrong . . . don’t go with them.

***I pray God bless you and your family with a blessed and spiritually
rewarding New Year!
Chronia Polla! Many Years!”***

While these sayings certainly provide us with many useful insights, as we move forward in the New Year with our Lord Jesus Christ, Who watches over us, and loves us, I call upon Him to bless you and your family with His faith,



love, and hope. Let us seek to grow ever closer to Him in spirit . . . and in faith.

On Sunday, January 6th, we will commemorate the Holy Theophany of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. We will recall His great light, and His being immersed in the Jordan River, and His rising out of it for our salvation.

“Theophany” means the appearance of God. Like Holy Pascha (Easter) and Pentecost, Theophany is considered one of the great feasts of the Orthodox Church. It commemorates the baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by St. John the Baptist.

Our holy Father, St. Cyril of Alexandria, once wrote that the beginning of the world was “water”; the beginning of the Gospel was the Jordan River where the Most Holy Trinity was revealed to the senses of humankind. Our Heavenly Father spoke saying, *“You are My Son, the Beloved; with You I am well pleased.”* (Mark 1:11)

Afterwards, the Holy Spirit was seen in the form of a dove hovering over the waters, and St. John the Baptist bore witness, saying in the presence of many other bystanders (an innumerable multitude of people from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the country of the Jordan surrounding him) at the Jordan River: *“Here is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29) In other words, Christ our Lord took on the sin of the world, so that we, His followers could recognize the need for true repentance, and behold the Lamb of God.

May all of us during the coming New Year, behold the great loving Lamb of God, and direct our whole life to Him, being enlightened by faith with His Holy Theophany, and eagerly receive the joyous warmth of God’s salvation. Let us take great spiritual delight in the love of our God.

Prayer for the "New Year"

As we begin the New Year 2013, I offer the following prayer for all of us:

O Lord our God, Who have placed times and seasons under Your own authority; Who, in Your infinite compassion and goodness, have counted us worthy to enter a new Year of Your loving kindness, bless it and keep us in peace.

Loose, remit and forgive any sins that we have committed during the year that is past, and keep us free from sin in the New Year.

Enlighten us with the light of Your truth and Your divine commandments. Establish in our souls Your Holy Will, and guide us to every work that is good and pleasing to You.

Guard well our Holy Church with Your Divine Grace. Remember, Lord, our nation; train up the youth; protect the elderly; encourage the faint-hearted; gather the scattered; bring back those who have gone astray, and reunite them to Your Holy Church.

Overshadow our land with Your might, and grant it gentle rain and abundance of the fruits of the earth.

Speak of goodness in the hearts of our rulers; support and strengthen them, together with our armed forces by land, sea and air.

Let Your Kingdom come upon us, O Lord; the Kingdom of love, goodness, peace and justice; and make us worthy to praise and glorify, with one mouth and one heart, Your most honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

As we look forward to the New Year 2013, I am most thankful for God's blessings, your prayers and encouragement, and the opportunity to serve Him and you. May He bless each of us always! ***"Happy New Year!" "Kai tou chronou!"***

+Fr. George Tsahakis