Sunday, January 8th, 2017: Sunday after the Theophany of Christ
  The great blessing of the Waters of Epiphany
  Parents meeting at Sunday School about Camp
  Ladies Society Meeting during coffee hour
Tuesday, January 10th, 2017: 7:00 P.M.– Parish Council Meeting
Sunday, January 15th, 2017: Twenty-Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, January 22, 2017: Thirty-Second Sunday after Pentecost
  Outreach Program- ‘Soup Kitchen’
Sunday, January 29th, 2017: Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, February 5, 2017: Sunday of the Pharisee & Publican
  Souper-Bowl Special Collection
Saturday, February 11th, 2017: 6:00 P.M.– Arabic Liturgy
Sunday, February 12th, 2017: Sunday of the Prodigal Son
  General Assembly Meeting following Liturgy

Epiphany 2017- Blessing of Homes
With the up-coming celebration of The Feast of Epiphany and the Great Sanctification of the Water, house blessings are starting for the new year. If you would like to have your house blessed, please contact Fr. Elie and schedule an appropriate time. While it is traditional to begin house blessings following Epiphany, homes may be blessed throughout the year. May the Blessing of the Jordan River sanctify and protect each and every home and family in our community.
We Were Not Created to Die

Beloved, today we celebrate the glorious Resurrection. Of course, we mean the Resurrection from death. When we remember the Resurrection, we are also reminded of death. Death is present with the Resurrection. But people are afraid to speak about death, for it is a frightening thing. Death is really something dreadful. Whenever each one of us thinks about death for a little while, there is no doubt that he trembles.

Why Is There Death?

But the question arises: why is there death? Did God create death as he created life? God creates life as he creates good. But he does not create death, just as he does not create evil. So, why is there death? Come, beloved, let us go back to the Holy Bible. We remember that God created the first family, the family of Adam and Eve, and he did not tell them about death. A time passed and then came their disobedience against God. Death is not mentioned until after the act of disobedience, after some time.

Death and Sin

Adam and Eve were not created in order to die. Like Adam and Eve, our first father and mother, we too were not created in order to die. How much time did Adam and Eve spend in Paradise before they sinned? We do not know, but a period of time must have passed. Before sin, death did not take place. Sin took place because of the disobedience against God, which was a distancing away from God, who is life, towards death. When sin was released, God said, ‘You shall die.’ Beloved, death did not exist in the first stage of man’s creation. It came in the second stage, the stage of sin. We still live in the stage of sin, and so we still have death and we die. God did not originally intend us to die. We did not exist to be in the grave. Quite the opposite, God made us ready to be children of life, that is, his children because he is life. Death became a problem, and it is still a problem today. Is death an everlasting thing? Looking at the history of man, we do not find it said that he would not die. Death reigns over every man. But do we expect anything now other than death? In, our faith, we do: ‘I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come’. Without this doctrine, there would be no need for the Gospel or the Last Judgment. Religion tells us above all that we are called to live because God wants us to be alive. We are certain of one thing - that death and the grave are not the end. Our Lord Jesus Christ was certain of this. The Lord had a nature like our own; besides his divine nature, he was a man like we are, and he accepted us as men. In this world, he was weary, he ate, drank, walked, suffered, and he died too. He died in reality, just as we die. He remained dead for three days just as we lie dead when we are removed from this life. But he rose again. We consider that he rose in his human nature, for human nature will not remain in the grave but will rise again too. Everything will happen in its time. We celebrate the Resurrection because we shall rise from the dead. We shall not rise as ghosts, shades, or images. We shall have faces and bodies of a different kind, a new kind. Beloved, at that time we shall be able to say that life is worth living. But are we really going to live again? Today there is agony in our hearts. Look at our history, the history of this region in which Christ became incarnate, lived, died, and rose from the dead, God be praised! This region is not free from the envier, the aggressor, and the corrupter. Yes, this world is a world of death, but we do not stop at the limit of death. The justice of God will take care of matters in the end. Through his own measures and through our faith, God is teaching us that death and enmity will not prevail unto the end. We shall all triumph over the darkness of the grave, for ‘In the eyes of God, a thousand years are like but yesterday that passed away.’

A Note Regarding Holy Communion:

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical faith, only those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and recent confession may participate in Holy Communion. Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical faith, only those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and recent confession may participate in Holy Communion.
**Orthodox Vocabulary**

**Paraskeve**

Paraskeve: the eve of the sabbath, or Friday. The day of the sabbath, according to the Mosaic Law, is a day of rest consecrated to God. The eve, or paraskeve, is a time of preparation for this holy day. This name is particularly used to designate Holy Friday (Jn 19:14). The week always has a strong significance in the customs and practices of humanity; as well as in both the Old and New Testaments. Its prototype is the creative activity of God, who created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Gen 1:1-31; 2:3). A woman martyr, who is venerated particularly in Russia and in Greece, is called Paraskeve (or Praskovia), in other words, "preparation." The troparion sung on her feast day (July 26) indicates that she well deserved her name, as she was always "ready" to fight for the faith.

A possession ought to belong to the possessor, not the possessor to the possession. Whosoever, therefore, does not use his patrimony as a possession, who does not know how to give and distribute to the poor, he is the servant of his wealth, not its master; because like a servant he watches over the wealth of another and not like a master does he use it of his own. Hence, in a disposition of this kind, we say that the man belongs to his riches, not the riches to the man.

~St. Ambrose of Milan

**Outreach Program Blanket Donations**

Please donate gently USED (clean) blankets to be distributed to homeless Veterans and to the Pawtucket Food Shelter. They can be brought to the Parish Center. The last day for donations is January 22nd. Please see Linda Dvelis or any other Outreach Committee Member if you have any questions.

**Sunday After Theophany**

**Tone 4 / Eothinon 7**

**RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION: Tone 4**

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

**APOLYTIKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST: Tone 1**

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

**TROPARION OF THE DORMITION: Tone 1**

In giving birth, Thou didst keep Thy virginity and in thy repose, Thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos, for Thou art the mother of life, and Thou didst pass over into life; and through thy intercession from death Thou dost redeem our souls.

**KONTAKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST: Tone 4**

(\*The original melody\*)

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, * is signed on us who sing Thy praise * and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, * Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.
Epistle
Ephesians 4:7-13

Prokeimenon: Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.
Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous.
The reading is from Saint Paul's Letter to the Ephesians.

Brethren, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The Gospel
Matthew 4:12-17

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles - the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

~Thank you~

Father Elie, Family, Friends and Parishioners of St. Mary’s,
It is with gratitude for all the prayers, telephone calls and support for my son Mark. He is coming home today (Wednesday) and thank God he is getting stronger everyday.

Thank you,
Elaine

Summer Camp 2017 Registration is NOW OPEN!!!

Make sure you register your child for camp! Spots fill up fast!

Summer 2017 Dates:
Session 1 (2-weeks) - June 18-30
Session 1 (1-week) - June 18-25
Session 2 - July 2-14
Session 3 - July 16-28
Session 3 (Iconography Camp) - July 16-24
Session 4 - July 30-August 11

For any questions and information, call 724-238-9565 or e-mail office@avcamp.org

Please note:
✦ Our campers usually attend Session 2.
✦ We are also planning a parents meeting today in Sunday School.
St. Mary Liturgical Choir
The St. Mary Liturgical Choir welcomes new members to join its Ministry of Sacred Music. Anyone interested in joining the choir (whatever their level of musical experience) is asked to contact the choir director Dawn Boukari @ (401) 465-8909 or email her: daboukari@gmail.com

Coffee Hour
Coffee hour today is sponsored by Fatat ElKhouli in Memory of Nicholas ElKhaouli. Coffee hour will be held at the Parish Center following Liturgy.

ST. MARY CHARITABLE GIFT PROGRAM
It is with appreciation and gratitude that we welcome the participation of:

Lisa Andrews ~ Mirna Nakhoul ~ Walid Nakhoul

In our Charitable Gift Program. This gesture on their part is most meaningful during this Advent Season.

MAY GOD GRANT THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES MANY YEARS!!

PRAYERS ARE BEING OFFERED FOR
GOOD HEALTH AND BLESSING OF:

Kevin Hashway
Mark Hashway
Offered by: Elaine Wilbur

Fatat El-Khaouli & Family
Offered by: George & Sandra Matook

Fatat El-Khaouli & Family
Elaine Gauthier
Offered by: Elaine Agaty
Nora Abdelahad

Mark Hashway
Offered by: Elaine Gauthier

Bishop John & Family
Lois & George Kileyse & Family
Leon & Judy Josephs & Family
Elaine Gauthier & Family
Offered by: Bill & Mary Lou Catelli

Robert Shwaery
Offered by: Elaine Swistak

Mark Hashway
Offered by: Steven & Patricia Kileyse & Family

Mark Hashway
Offered by: Pat Nazarian

Mark Hashway
Elaine Wilbur
Elaine Gauthier
Fatat El-Khaouli & Family
Caroline Lawrence
Offered by: Nabil & Salwa Khoury

Bryan, Stephanie, Nicholas, Leila & Emily Chowning
Robert Laffey
Offered by: Elaine Gauthier

PRAYERS ARE BEING OFFERED IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Fred Hashway Jr.
Offered by: Elaine Wilbur

Nicholas Elkhaouli
Offered by: Fatat Elkhaouli

Nicholas Elkhaouli
Offered by: Fouad & Houida Elkhaouli

John Swistak
Offered by: Elaine Agaty

Matilda Josephs
Offered by: Bill & Mary Lou Catelli

Nicholas El-Khaouli
Houda Gammal
Bishop Athanasius Saliba
Offered by: Elaine Agaty
Nora Abdelahad

John Swistak
Christopher Gauthier
Offered by: Elaine Swistak & Family

Nicholas El-Khaouli
Houda Gammal
Bishop Athanasius Saliba
Offered by: George & Sandra Matook

Bishop A. Saliba
Offered by: Steven & Patricia Kileyse & Family

Christopher Gauthier
Matilda Josephs
Offered by: George, Lois, Mary & Christopher Kileyse

Christopher Gauthier
Matilda Josephs
Offered by: Leon & Judy Josephs & Family

Christopher Gautier
Matilda Josephs
Ronald Gauthier
Sophie Laffey
John Swistak
Offered by: Elaine Gauthier & Family

Bishop A. Saliba
Nicholas El-Khaouli
Offered by: Nabil & Salwa Khoury
**Stewardship Ministry**

We are grateful for the following members who have completed their 2017 Commitment Cards. Thank you!

Fr. Elie & Kh. Rouba Estephan  
Philip & Bette Ayoub  
Edward & Sue Ayoub  
Philip G. Ayoub  
Geoff Ayoub  
Elias & Samar Baalbaki  
Matthew & Megan Duncan  
Linda Dvelis  
Dimitri & Susan Ganim  
Jonathan & Tanya Gaudioso  
Roula & Ricky Greigre  
Paul & Maureen Gurghigian  
Lorice Hallal  
Keith & Maria Hallal  
Ron & Janice Hallal  
Jim & Susan Harvey  
Dianna Hashway  
Tawfik & Olga Hawwa  
Cindy Hayes  
Tony & Fadia Kabak  
Eli Kandalaft  
Elie & Julia Karam  
Nabil & Salwa Khoury  
George & Lois Kilsey  
Steven & Pat Kilsey  
Steven & Missy Kilsey Jr.  
Keith & Marlene Marshall  
Lily Massiwer  
Mary Massiwer  
Nora Matook  
Anthony & Etienne Mechrefe  
Adib & Mary Mechrefe  
George & Barbara Moussalli  
Wald & Mirna Nakhoul  
Sbdn. Chadi Saad  
Bill & Susan Salhany  
Saliba Michel & Robin Saliba  
Joseph & Rebecca Samra  
Joseph & Marlene Samra  
Donna Slemon  
Jim & Beth Schillawski  
Fred & Adele Shwaery  
Bobby Shwaery  
Bob & Kristen Silva  
Dimitrios & Nancy Sterpis  
Elaine Swistak  
Raymond & Leila Trabulsli  
Julia Vale  
Fatat ElKhouli  
Fred Kilsey & Family  
Dr. Zeyad & Norma Morcos  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
St. Mary Church  
Sam & Kay Matook & Family  
Ladies Society  
Massiwer/Gurghigian/Hayes Families  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
William Salhany & Family  
no coffee hour  
Her Loving Family  
Open for sponsorship  
Cindy Hayes  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Charitable Gift Program  
Nabil & Salwa Khoury  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Open for sponsorship  
Dr. Zeyad & Norma Morcos  
Memory of Nicholas ElKhawouli  
Memory of Michelle Kilsey  
Memory of Elias Morcos  
40 Day Memorial for Rita Sayegh  
Dinner to Benefit NAB Project  
Memory of John Massiwer  
Palm Sunday  
Pascha  
Memory of Sophie Hallal  
Memory of Don Hayes (10 years)  
Memory / Health of all Participants  
Health of Family  
Memory of Elias Morcos (dad)

If you have not completed a card yet, please ask a member of the Vestry or download one from our website.

**Coffee Hour Sponsorships**

The Parish Council has decided to implement a new system to organize our coffee hours. There are two ways to handle this: when a couple, family, or an individual decides to sponsor the coffee hour, you may do it on your own which entails purchasing the pastry & juice, making the coffee, setting up the table, and cleaning up. The second option is to donate $100 to the church so that a Parish Council member will handle the coffee hour on your behalf.

~Please consider sponsoring a Coffee Hour~

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