

The Confessor's Tongue for January 1, A. D. 2017

28th Sunday after Pentecost, St. Basil, Circumcision of Christ, Sunday before Theophany
In honor of St. Maximus the Confessor, whose tongue and right hand were cut off in an attempt by compromising authorities to silence his uncompromising confession of Christ's full humanity & divinity.

Notes on the New Year

New Year. At the present time we celebrate January 1 as the beginning of the new year. Forty five years before the Nativity of Christ the Romans celebrated the New Year on January 1 instead of March 1, as they had before, and spent this day in licentious noisy games in disguises, in mad entertainment and abominable dissolution; therefore Christians for a long time did not dedicate this day as the New Year, and their days of the New Year looking at the different countries and times were: March 1, March 25, September 1, September 23 and December 25. In 1594 French King Charles IX established that the year begins on January 1; eventually other western countries accepted this establishment. At first Russia began the year on March 1, and then later on September 1. At the end of 1699 Emperor Peter I issued a decree to begin the civil year on January 1, and 1700 was the first year, which began with this month.

The name *January* is given this month because it was dedicated to Janus by ancient Romans, represented by two faces - in front (young) and behind (old) - meaning that he stands between two times: his one face looks forward, and the other looks back at the year just expired. *V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers. Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © All rights reserved.*

January 1: Circumcision of Christ

Circumcision was established by God in the Old Testament as a sign of the covenant of God with Abraham and his posterity. The Lord Jesus Christ on the eighth day after His Nativity was obliged to undergo, in the accordance with the law, the rite of circumcision (Gen 17:14; Lev. 12:2-3) with the assigning to him the name of Jesus (Luke 2:21; 1:31). The Old Testament circumcision in the New Testament has conceded its place to the sacrament of baptism, of which it was a prototype (Col. 2:11-12). In the East evidence for the celebration of the Circumcision of the Lord arises in the fourth century. Stephen the Sabbaite wrote the Canon for the Circumcision in the seventh century. Commemorated on this feast together with the Circumcision in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and the naming Him Jesus the Holy Church sings: "Today the Master, circumcised in the flesh, is called Jesus"; "on the eighth day the Master was circumcised as a Child: He received the name Jesus for He is the Savior and Lord of the world"....By celebrating the circumcision of the Savior and His naming the Holy Church confirms our faith in that unchangeable truth that He is the God-man, "and yes, not as the heretics say that he became incarnate as an illusion, but he truly has flesh and was not opposed to the law, but its fulfiller". Together with this example of the Savior, Who "did not disdain circumcision of His flesh", "today of His own will was

circumcised in the flesh", and, "the law fulfilling the law of the Creator", "gave to His own Self an image and a plan for the salvation of all", the Holy Church teaches us to be constantly obedient and submissive to the laws for our own good and for a Christian example to others. The circumcision which the Lord accepted as a sign of the covenant of God with man, and the name as a seal of His Service for the salvation of the world (Mt. 1:21; Mark 16:17; 9:38-39; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6,16; 19:13; Phil. 2:9-10), inspire us, that as we enter into the New Covenant with God we should be circumcised "with a circumcision made without hands, by cutting off the body of sinful flesh, in the circumcision of Christ (Col. 2:11). Our Christian name must not be a dead sound, but the living testimony that we are devoted to the service of God and we are in a beneficial union in Him for His glory and our eternal salvation and blessedness. *V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers. Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © All rights reserved.*

January 1: St Basil the Great

St. Basil the Great was born in 329 in Caesarea, Cappadocia from god-fearing and noble Christian parents. The child's first education was received from his god-fearing grandmother Macrina, and his first instruction in the rules of eloquent speech was from his father in Neocaesarea. Reaching a youthful age, St. Basil traveled to the then prominent cities to complete his education.

In Athens he met Gregory the Theologian and submitted himself to him and for the rest of his life remained his faithful friend. Here he studied grammar, rhetoric, astrology, mathematics, philosophy and medicine, and has attained the most brilliant success in these subjects. Having a brilliant mind and wisdom, St. Basil at the same time distinguished himself with good moral behavior, humility and a pure way of life.

Having returned to Caesarea, St. Basil often fulfilled the duties of a lawyer. Then, having accepted baptism, together with the rank of Reader, he became interested in monasticism, and went to study monastic life in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Returning from his travels, he settled in a hermitage near Neocaesarea, devoting himself to the ascetical efforts of fasting and prayer. Together with this, seeking true knowledge and striving for divine wisdom, he was engaged in the study of Holy Scriptures, and compared translations of them, and also studied the works of Origen.

When danger threatened the faith, St. Basil left the hermitage and was revealed as a most fervent fighter for Orthodoxy. In 364 he was ordained a presbyter in the church in Caesarea. Now his zeal never knew weariness: he devoted all of himself for service to the Lord and indefatigably taught the

congregation, sometimes preaching twice a day, in the morning and evening, and sometimes after the sermon in one church he went to preach in another. The sermon blossomed so wonderfully in the mouth of St. Basil, that he sometimes postponed teaching until the next day.

Caring for the spiritual needs of his parish, St. Basil also did not disregard the physical. During a famine the inhabitants of Caesarea have found him a generous benefactor.

In 370 St. Basil was installed as the Bishop of Caesarea and in this rank, and not abandoning his ascetical paradigm of life, he fervently cared for his clergy from the first server at the altar to the last, all becoming wiser, and demanding from all strict virtue. St. Basil himself loved the beauty of the church, the elegance of the temple, harmony in worship, and this feeling inspired those around him. His very appearance: his bearing, the pale determined face, deep eyes, his calm body language of importance raised a feeling of piety in everyone. By word and purity of life that fervently edifies all his flock in faith and piety, he was "the father of orphans, protector of widows, and wealth for the poor, consolation of the ill, and guide of the wealthy, a staff for the old", "and a teacher of virtue for the youth who lived the monastic life". With burning Christian love for his neighbors, St. Basil built shelters, alms-houses, and hospitable hospices. Courageous and devoted, he was always ready for any work and deprivation for the sake of the welfare of neighbors. St. Basil was not concerned about any danger for his own life, for he not only visited, but also embraced lepers, thus giving them great joy to feel the intimacy of his devoted love for them.

As a wise defender of Orthodoxy, St. Basil "with strong divine words you brought down heresies" and "with sermons you poured out teachings to the god-fearing world". Humble and meek, condescending and merciful to sinners with infirmities, but unshakable in faith and ready to endure all for the truth of Christ, St. Basil was a strict chastiser of the evil adversaries of faith and more than anything cared about the purity of Orthodoxy not only in Caesarea but also in the entire Eastern Church. "He, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, neither slept nor dozed and because of his efforts he exhausted the rest of his body, yet up to now he did not find the cure for evil". And only due to his efforts the church in Caesarea was saved from Arianism. St. Basil died in 379 at the age of 50. From his service in the Church and his unusual high moral and selfless life St. Basil is named "the great" and is glorified as the "glory and beauty of the Church", "star and eye of the universe", "teacher of dogma", "chamber of learning", "leader of life". The following works of St. Basil have reached us: nine discourses on The Six Days, thirteen discourses on the Psalms, twenty five discourses on various events, five books Against the Arians and one On the Divinity of the Holy Spirit, rules for church deans, a *typikon* for monastics, prayers and the Liturgy known

by his name. V. Bulgakov, *Handbook for Church Servers*. Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © All rights reserved.

Parish Priorities for 2017

In the year of our Lord 2017, the parish has at least these priorities:

1. Make significant progress towards building a church,
2. Identify effective local charities, get to know the principal people running them, and support them as God guides us.
3. Continue to grow in faith towards God and love for Him and one another2-
4. Increase the cleanliness and orderliness of God's house.
5. Enhance our worship with greater punctuality in starting services, replacing old, worn vestments and liturgical items with new, improving our reading and singing.
6. Maintain and increase ties with local parishes and monasteries.

January Namedays

- 1 Reader Vasilius Colias, Geoff Stevenson (St. Basil)
- 7 John Colias (St. John the Baptist)
- 10 Rick Joines (St. Gregory of Nyssa)
- 12 Tatiana Garner (Martyr Tatiana)
- 12 Tatiana Tabet (Martyr Tatiana)
- 17 Dax Stokes (St. Anthony the Great)
- 17 Colin Stokes (St. Anthony the Great)
- 17 Antonia Colias (St. Anthony the Great)
- 21 Reader Maximus Gibson (St. Maximus)
- 24 Pamela Ward (St. Xenia of St. Petersburg)
- 31 Ash Elias Davis (St. Elias the New-martyr)

January Birthdays

- 3 Ben Lyda
- 4 Sandra Pascale
- 8 James Davis
- 9 Isabel Stone
- 21 Katherine Frederick (2002)
- 24 Olive Betz (2010)
- 24 Elijah Brown (2011)
- 25 Anya Brown (2008)
- 28 Palamia Davis

Upcoming Events 2016

- 6 January Theophany and Great Blessing of Water
- 14 January Men's Meeting
- 21 January Parish Patronal Feast
- 27-28 January Orthodox Christian Perspectives: The Church as Family, Friday at St. Barbara's, Saturday at St. Sarkis Armenian Church in Carrollton. See ntom.org for more.
- 26 February Forgiveness Vespers, 6:00 p.m.
- 16 April Pascha

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!