



The Holy Days of January

Celebrations, Observances and Information about Religious, Spiritual, and Cultural Occasions

**Office of InterFaith
Pastoral and Spiritual Care**
Senior Chaplain
Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine
extension 3321/ room 4201

Staff Chaplain
Janie Brooks
extension 5050/ room 4115

Staff/Spanish Language Chaplain
Margarita Roque
extension 2626/ room 4115

Catholic Chaplain
Fr. Tukura Michael
extension 2626/room 4115

Catholic Mass: Thursday at 12:00 noon
(East Chapel, room 3033, third floor East Tower) and **Saturday at 4:00 pm** (Main Chapel, room 3201, 3rd Floor Main Hospital)

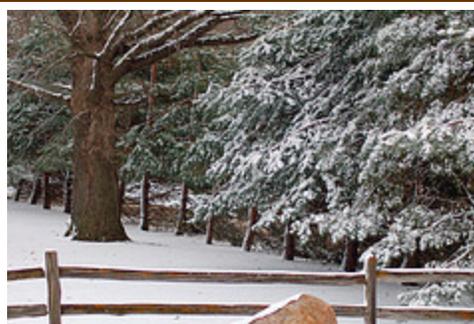
Prayer and Meditation Tuesday 12:45 pm
East Chapel, room 3033, third floor East Tower—please listen for the announcement**

Friday: Jumah Prayer R-114, floor 3.5
Main Hospital at 1:15

Sunday Worship 4:00 pm Room 3201, Main Chapel third floor, Main Hospital - please listen for the announcement**

****Because of staffing limitations leaders for these worship opportunities may not be available. We OVERHEAD announce them 1/2 hour prior to the service.**

Note the Information Boards and Brochure Racks for other information



The New Year starts off with many monthly, weekly, and daily observances. Below is just a few. Birth Defects Month, International Quality of Life Month, National Child-Centered Divorce Awareness Month, National Clean Up Your Computer Month, National Glaucoma Awareness Month, National Poverty in America Awareness Month, National Volunteer Blood Donor Month. International Snowmobile Safety and Awareness Week (15-21), Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-25), National Nurse Anesthetists Week (22-28), No Name-Calling Week (23-27). 55-MPH Speed Limit Day (2), World Braille Day (4), War on Poverty Day (8), United Nations Day (10), Cigarettes Are Hazardous To Your Health Day (11), World Leprosy Day (25), Holocaust Memorial Day (27), Seeing Eye Dog Day (29), Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day (30), and Inspire Your Heart with Art Day (31).

Holy Days with no fixed date

The Powamu Festival Hopi This is a mid-winter festival which occurs in late January or early February, lasting over the course of eight days. This ceremony celebrates the return of the Katchinas—ancestral spirits—to their six month-long stay with the tribe. During this time the Katchinas imbue the tribe with good health and bring rain and blessings for the growth of crops.'

Fires are lit in all the kivas—the ceremonial meeting rooms and baskets of wet sand are brought in; the kiva becomes warm and humid. When the kiva is entered during this time a handful of beans is planted in the sand; they sprout quickly.

The end of the ceremony is a dance in the kivas. The dancers are ornately dressed and the skin is painted red and white. Groups of dancers travel from kiva to kiva throughout the night. In the morning the Katchinas arrive bringing dolls and rattles for the girls of the tribe and bows and arrows for the boys. Both are given the bean sprouts which have been growing in the kivas. At the end of the festivities there is a feast in which the bean sprout is a main ingredient. The sprout symbolizes growth and the coming of spring.

During the next six months the Katchinas appear regularly in masked ceremonies in the Hopi villages.



A Simple Recipe for Vassilopitta

Ingredients

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
 1 cup sugar
 3 extra-large eggs
 Grated rind of 2 large oranges
 Grated rind of 2 large lemons
 1/2 teaspoon crushed/powdered sour cherry pits (Arabic mahleb, Greek makhlepi)
 2 teaspoons crushed/powdered gum mastic (Arabic miski, Greek mastikha)
 4 cups flour
 2 teaspoons baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/2 cup milk
 1 egg yolk blended with 1 tablespoon milk
 sesame seeds
 blanched almonds
 a clean coin - a quarter will do nicely - wrapped in silver or gold foil

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Thicken butter a 10-inch round spring form pan.
2. In a large bowl of an electric mixer, cream the butter until it is light and fluffy. Beat in the sugar and beat until the mixture is light. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the orange and lemon rinds, and the crushed/powdered sour cherry pits and gum mastic.
3. In a separate bowl, sift together three cups of the flour, the baking powder and salt.
4. With the mixer on low speed, gradually beat in the dry mixture alternately with the milk. The batter will be very thick. Using a wooden spoon, gradually blend in the remaining flour, beating well until completely smooth.
5. Spread the batter into the pan, press the coin into the dough until it is completely covered (don't let anyone see where you place it!), and then smooth the top. Brush the top evenly with the egg and milk mixture and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Gently press the blanched almonds into the top to make a Cross and spell out the date of the new year.
6. Bake for 45 minutes, until golden brown (if it browns too quickly, cover the top with aluminum foil). Cool in the pan for 15 minutes before removing from spring



form and thoroughly cool before slicing.

Holy Days with fixed date

January 1 Mary, Mother of God Catholic Christian The Solemnity of Mary Mother of God commemorates the divine motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the God-Bearer, Mother of our Lord and God Jesus Christ. It is celebrated on January 1st, one week after Christmas.

In the 4th and 5th centuries debates about the nature of Christ raged in the Church. The debate was about the relationship of Christ's divine and human natures. At the center of this debate was a title of Mary. Since at least the 3rd century, Christians had referred to Mary as *theotokos*, meaning "God-bearer." The first documented usage of the term is in the writings of Origen of Alexandria in AD 230. Related to *theotokos*, Mary was called the mother of God. Referring to Mary this way was popular in Christian piety, but the patriarch of Constantinople from 428-431, Nestorius, objected. He suggested that Mary was only the mother of Jesus' human nature, but not his divine nature. Nestorius' ideas (or at least how others perceived his arguments) were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, and again at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. The Church decided that Christ was fully God and fully human, and these natures were united in one divine person, Jesus Christ. Thus Mary could be called "mother of God" since she gave birth to Jesus who was fully divine as well as human. Since this time, Mary has been frequently honored as the "mother of God" by Catholics, Orthodox, and many Protestants.

When Catholics celebrate the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God they are not only honoring Mary, who was chosen among all women throughout history to bear God incarnate, but we are also honoring our Lord, who is fully God and fully human. Calling Mary "mother of God" is the highest honor we can give Mary. Just as Christmas honors Jesus as the "Prince of Peace," the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God honors Mary as the "Queen of Peace" This solemnity, falling on New Year's Day, is also designated the World Day of Peace.



January 1 Festival of St. Basil the Great Orthodox Christian

The Orthodox Church calendar does not start on January 1st, but on September 1st. In daily living, however, the year begins on January 1st. This is a very important date in the Orthodox Church since it marks the Feast Day of one of their greatest saints, St. Basil the Great.

St. Basil was born in the year 330 AD in the city of Caesarea, Asia Minor. He was one of six children who all became saints in the Orthodox Church. His brothers and sister became priests, bishops, and nuns. St. Basil studied in Constantinople and Athens. Although his fame was spread over the entire Christian world of his day, he returned to his own home town and was ordained Bishop of Caesarea on June 14, 370 C.E..

St. Basil was an authority on the monastic life. He formulated the rules and regulations for the monks of his day, and these rules still prevail in most of the Christian monasteries of the world. St. Basil prepared the Divine Liturgy; although the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is used 42 Sundays a year in the Orthodox Church, it is based on the slightly longer Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. The Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated fully ten times each year: during the Lenten period, Christmas Eve, and on January 1st, the anniversary of his death.

St. Basil was indeed one of the greatest pillars of the Church. He loved children and always assisted the sick and the homeless. He was the first bishop to establish orphanages and hospitals and old age homes. He first directed the attention of the Church to these unfortunate victims of society.

In many Greek homes, a special cake (Vassilopitta) is baked on the eve of St. Basil's Day (January 1st) with a gold or silver coin hidden inside. In the evening, just before midnight strikes and the new [calendar] year begins, all the lights are turned off for a minute to signify the dawning of a New Year. The family gaily exchanges wishes for "A Happy New Year!" and the cake is cut: one slice for St. Basil, one for each family member, one for each of the pets, and then the largest slice of all is cut for the poor people of the world. In one of these slices is hidden the coin, which brings blessings to its recipient throughout the year.

(continued)

Shinto Shrines/Worship

The principal worship of kami is done at public shrines or worship at small home shrines called kamidana. The public shrine is a building or place that functions as a conduit for kami. A fewer number of shrines are also natural places called mori. The most common of the mori are sacred groves of trees, or mountains, or waterfalls. All shrines are open to the public at some times or throughout the year.

While many of the public shrines are elaborate structures, all are characteristic Japanese architectural styles of different periods depending on their age. Shrines are fronted by a distinctive Japanese gate (torii) made of two uprights and two crossbars denoting the separation between common space and sacred space. The torii have 20 styles and matching buildings based on the enshrined kami and lineage.

There are a number of symbolic and real barriers that exist between the normal world and the shrine grounds including: statues of protection, gates, fences, ropes, and other delineations of ordinary to sacred space. Usually there will be only one or sometimes two approaches to the Shrine for the public and all will have the *torii* over the way. In shrine compounds, there are a *haiden* or public hall of worship, *heiden* or hall of offerings and the *honden*. The innermost precinct of the grounds is the *honden* or worship hall, which is entered only by the high priest, or worshippers on certain occasions. The *honden* houses the symbol of the enshrined kami.

The heart of the shrine is periodic rituals, spiritual events in parishioners' lives, and festivals. All of this is organized by priests who are both spiritual conduits and administrators. Shrines are private institutions, and are supported financially by the congregation and visitors. The better-known shrines may have festivals that attract hundreds of thousands, especially in the New Year season



The tradition of the Vassilopitta began long ago in the days when St. Basil was the Archbishop of Caesarea in the province of Cappadocia. The Emperor Valens of Cappadocia belonged to a group known as the Arians. The Arians were very much against the Orthodox teachings of St. Basil and tried hard to destroy him and his people. In order to do this, the Emperor sent a very stern soldier to warn St. Basil that all the people in his district would soon have all their earthly belongings taken from them and their city would be completely stricken with poverty and starvation. He further warned that St. Basil himself would have to make a choice between Orthodoxy and death.

St. Basil, a true friend of the poor, could not bear to see his people destroyed by the wicked Emperor, and so he called a meeting of all the kind and rich men in his district. He persuaded them to contribute money and jewels to be given to the Emperor so that the poor and needy would not be robbed. This was done, and on New Year's Eve, St. Basil again met with the Emperor's soldier. He presented to him the wonderful gifts of the good people of Caesarea. At the same time, St. Basil also answered the threat against his own life by saying:

"Fire, death by the sword and the beasts that tear our flesh with their long nails, give us joy rather than fear. You may insult; you may threaten; you may do whatever you like to enjoy your power, but let the Emperor know that even his worst threats will not persuade us to compromise with impiety."

When the soldier heard all this, he was so moved and impressed that he promised never to bother St. Basil again. Even more surprising, he refused to accept the money and valuables that St. Basil had collected for the Emperor.

January 1 Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus Christian The Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is celebrated by a number of Christian denominations, on varying dates.

The feast has been celebrated in the Roman Catholic calendar of saints, at least at local levels, since the end of the fifteenth century. The veneration of the Holy Name was extended to the entire Roman Catholic Church on 20 December 1721, during the pontificate of Pope Innocent XIII. The celebration has been held on different dates, usually in January, because 1 January, eight days after Christmas, commemorates the circumcision of the child Jesus; as recounted in the Gospel read on that day, "at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb." Medieval Catholicism, and many other Christian churches to the present day, therefore celebrated both events as the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ, usually on 1 January. Bernardino of Siena placed great emphasis on the Holy Name, which he associated with the IHS Christogram, and may be responsible for the coupling of the two elements. It is observed on 3 January by Catholics following the present General Roman Calendar, and on the Sunday between the Octave of Christmas and Epiphany (or 2 January) by Catholics following calendars of the 1914-1969 period.

In the Book of Common Prayer of the Anglican Communion since 1979, the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ celebrated on January 1 is now listed as the "Feast of the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ".[1] Many Eastern Churches celebrate the feast on January 1.[1] In the Lutheran Church, it is observed on 1 January.

January 1 Gantan-sai or Oshogatsu Shinto Gantan Sai is the Shinto New Year holiday. On this New Year's Day, the Shintos visit the shrines, mostly at midnight. They pray for the renewal of their heart, prosperity and health in the year to come. The Japanese celebrate the 7 day holiday by making visits to their friends and family to express their good wishes for the year to come. They also wear their finest clothes on this day.

Shinto is an ancient Japanese religion and neither does it have a sacred scripture, nor does it have any founder. It does not have only one God but is deeply rooted in nature. At present, there are about 4 million followers of the Shinto religion around the world.

The word Shinto refers to the 'way of the Gods'. 'It involves the worship of the Shinto Gods or Kami'. Kami are the pure spirits of Nature.

The kami though divine are very close to humanity. They, like us, live in the same world, make the same mistakes and feel and think in the same way as us. Shinto followers or even people from other religions are considered as kami after their death.

There was no idol or representation of the kami, as they were regarded to be formless and pure. Shrines were built for the kami only after the arrival of Buddhism.

The Shinto rituals of kami worship have been taken from the Chinese Taoism and Confucianism. Gradually, the syncretism between Shinto and Buddhism went on to become the main feature of the Japanese religion.

January 5 Birthday of Guru Gobindh Singh Sikh Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) was the last of the ten Gurus, the one who transformed the Sikh faith. In 1699 he created the Khalsa (Pure), a community of the faithful who wore visible symbols of their faith and trained as warriors. Today the Khalsa comprises all practicing Sikhs.

Guru Gobind Singh succeeded his father Guru Tegh Bahadur at the age of 9. His teachings were different from his predecessors' - he believed that no power could exploit the Sikhs.

He spent his childhood years studying Persian and Sanskrit, and was skilled in the art of war. His mission was to uphold right in every place and destroy sin and evil. In 1699 he chose the festival day of Vaisakhi as the occasion to transform the Sikhs into the Khalsa, a family of soldier saints.

Guru Gobind Singh introduced many of the customs that Sikhs practice today. Sikhs who have been through the Amrit ceremony of initiation become Amritdhari, initiated Sikhs. They take new names and wear the 5 Ks - five physical symbols that Sikhs must wear.

He declared the Sikh holy book as his successor instead of a human being. The Guru Granth Sahib would thus be the Sikhs' guide forever. Sikhs give it the same status and respect as a human Guru.

January 5 Twelfth Night Christian Since medieval times Twelfth Night has been celebrated with games, masquerades, and other activities. Typically, the Lord of Misrule and his assistant, the Fool, are the "officials" of the celebration. Other customs include bonfires, pantomimes, "wassailing" - toasting the orchards with cider. In some parts of Europe young boys will dress up as the Magi (the Three Kings from the Christmas Scripture) and beg from house to house. In the United States, Twelfth Night marks the beginning of Carnival. Another American custom is to take down all the Christmas decorations on Twelfth Night and have a bonfire from the tree.

January 6 Epiphany Christian In western Christian tradition, January 6 is celebrated as Epiphany. It goes by other names in various church traditions. In Hispanic and Latin culture, as well as some places in Europe, it is known as Three Kings' Day (Spanish: el Dia de los Tres Reyes, la Fiesta de Reyes, or el Dia de los Reyes Magos; Dutch: Driekoningendag).

Epiphany is the climax of the Advent/Christmas Season and the Twelve Days of Christmas, which are usually counted from the evening of December 25th until the morning of January 6th, which is the Twelfth Day. This is an occasion for feasting in some cultures, including the baking of a special King's Cake as part of the festivities of Epiphany (a King's Cake is part of the observance of Mardi Gras in French Catholic culture of the Southern USA).

For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from January 6th until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter. Depending on the timing of Easter, this longer period of Epiphany includes from four to nine Sundays. Other traditions, especially the Roman Catholic tradition, observe Epiphany as a single day, with the Sundays following Epiphany counted as Ordinary Time. In some western traditions, the last Sunday of Epiphany is celebrated as Transfiguration Sunday.

The term epiphany means "to show" or "to make known" or even "to reveal." In Western churches, it remembers the coming of the wise men bringing gifts to visit the Christ child, who by so doing "reveal" Jesus to the world as Lord and King. In some Central and South American countries influenced by Catholic tradition, Three Kings' Day, or the night before, is the time for opening Christmas presents.

The colors of Epiphany are usually the colors of Christmas, white and gold, the colors of celebration, newness, and hope that mark the most sacred days of the church year.

The traditional liturgical symbols of Epiphany are usually associated with the Magi. The symbols include either three crowns or a single crown, various portrayals of the Magi or Wise Men, three gifts, a five pointed star, or a combination of a star and crown. A more modern symbol of Epiphany is a globe or a stylized portrayal of the world.

Around January 6, the symbol +C+B+M+ with two numbers before and two numbers after (for example, 20+C+B+M+12) is sometimes seen written in chalk above the doorway of Christian homes. The letters are the initials of the traditional names of the Three Magi: Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. These letters also abbreviate the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The beginning and ending numbers are the year, 2012 in the example above. The crosses represent Christ.

A Blessing for the Marking of Doorways



Leader: Peace be with this house and with all who live here.

Response (All): And peace be with all who enter here.

Leader: During these days of the Christmas season, we keep this Feast of Epiphany, celebrating the manifestation of Christ to the Magi, and thereby to the whole world. Today, Christ is manifest to us! Today this home is a holy place because of the presence of Christ here.

Leader: Listen to the Gospel according to Matthew: 2:1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2:2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." 2:3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 2:4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 2:5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 2:6 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

2:7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 2:8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." 2:9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 2:10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 2:11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 2:12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord to you.

Response (All): Thanks be to God!

Leader: O God, Lord of all that exists, you revealed your only-begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill each of us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Response (All): Amen

Buddhist Prayer for New Year

By Ven. Shih Ying-Fa

Abbot, Cloud Water Zendo, Zen Center of
Cleveland, Ohio

May our compassion, wisdom and loving kindness dissolve the poisons of greed, hatred and delusion.

Through our compassion may we constantly work to end the suffering of all sentient beings, feeding those who have little or no food, sheltering those who are homeless, comforting those who are unwell, and assisting those who abuse substances, sexuality and each other. May we become a refuge for those in need.

Through our wisdom may we truly see that all life is interconnected and respect it accordingly. May our wisdom build bridges of understanding to span the many chasms of divisiveness. May our wisdom help us to end prejudice of all kinds; may we have respect for all cultures and races; and may we show deep respect for all faiths, recognizing each of them as paths to True Understanding.

Through our loving kindness may we put an end to fear, prejudice and hate, bringing peace to all and ending the scourge of war. May we see, as the Buddha said, that hate does not put an end to hate, that only love can end hate. May we share what we have, both spiritually and materially, so that all beings will benefit.

May all beings have True Happiness; may all beings be freed from suffering and its causes; may all beings be one with the Highest Perfect Joy; may all beings dwell in equanimity, freed from discrimination and attachment; and may all beings dwell at last in the Realm of Perfect Peace.



January 6 Feast of the Theophany Orthodox Christian The Feast of the Holy Theophany (Epiphany) of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated each year on January 6. The Feast commemorates the Baptism of Christ and the divine revelation of the Holy Trinity. At the Baptism of Christ, all three Persons of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—were made manifest. Thus, the name of the Feast is Epiphany, meaning manifestation, or Theophany, meaning manifestation of God [for an interesting article [see http://www.goarch.org/special/listen_learn_share/epiphany](http://www.goarch.org/special/listen_learn_share/epiphany)]



January 6 Nativity of Christ Armenian Orthodox Christian Historically, in the East the Nativity of Christ was celebrated together with Epiphany on the 6th of January, while in the West the Nativity was celebrated before Epiphany. In the East, the celebration centered in the Theophany of Christ witnessed by the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity and in connection with the Birth of Christ. The Armenian Monophysites, who have preserved the ancient tradition of combining the Nativity with Epiphany, still celebrate the Nativity of Christ on the evening of January 5th and Epiphany with the Sanctification of the Waters on the 6th of January.

January 7 Nativity of Christ Orthodox Christian Because most Orthodox churches use the Julian calendar rather than the Gregorian version of the Western calendar they celebrate Christmas 13 days later than other Christian churches.

January 7 Christmas Day Ethiopian/Rastafari Lidät is an Amharic word meaning “Birthday”. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, one of the oldest Christian Churches in the world, has been celebrating the Birth of Christ on the 7th of January long before European Christendom even came up with its own version of Christmas. Tradition has it that Balthasar, one of the Three Kings, was from Ethiopia, and is often depicted as a Black man even in the West.



In Ethiopia, Lidät is celebrated with a special service at church. The more devout will fast on the gahad (“Christmas Eve”), and the even more devout for 40 days prior. At home, a big feast is prepared. The main decoration depicts the Manger scene, where the Three Kings pay homage to the Infant.

Tradition has it that Balthasar, the Ethiopian King, brought the frankincense.

Only children get presents.

January 8 Baptism of our Lord Christian Although Jesus had no “need” of baptism, being perfect in every way, by submitting Himself humbly to the baptism of St. John the Baptist Christ provided the example for others.

Many of the Fathers of the Church, as well as the medieval Scholastics, saw Christ's Baptism as the institution of the sacrament. His Flesh blessed the water, and the descent of the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove) and the voice of God the Father announcing that this was His Son, in Whom He was well pleased, marked the beginning of Christ's public ministry.

The Baptism of the Lord has historically been associated with the celebration of Epiphany. Even today, the Eastern Christian feast of Theophany, celebrated on January 6 as a counterpart to the Western feast of Epiphany, focuses primarily on the Baptism of the Lord as the revelation of God to man.

After the Nativity of Christ (Christmas) was separated from Epiphany, the Church in the West continued the process and dedicated a celebration to each of the major epiphanies (revelations) or theophanies (the revelation of God to man): the Birth of Christ at Christmas, which revealed Christ to Israel; the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles, in the visit of the Wise Men at Epiphany; the Baptism of the Lord, which revealed the Trinity; and the miracle at the wedding at Cana, which revealed Christ's transformation of the world

Thus, the Baptism of the Lord began to be celebrated on the octave (eighth day) of Epiphany, with the miracle at Cana celebrated on the Sunday after that.

January 9—12 Mahayana New Year Buddhist There are many holidays and festivals celebrated by Buddhists around the world each year, most of which commemorate important events in the life of the Buddha or various Bodhisattvas. The date of the holidays are based on the lunar calendar and often differ by country and tradition.

Buddhist holidays are joyful occasions. A festival day normally begins with a visit to the local temple, where one offers food or other items to the monks and listens to a Dharma talk. The afternoon might consist of distributing food to the poor to earn merit, circumambulating (walking around) the temple three times in honor of the Three Jewels, chanting and meditation.

January 13 St. Hilary's Day Christian Saint Hilary was a native of Poitiers in Aquitaine. Born and educated a pagan, it was not till near middle age that he embraced Christianity, moved thereto mainly by the idea of God presented to him in the Holy Scriptures.

He soon converted his wife and daughter, and separated himself rigidly from all un-Catholic company. In the beginning of his conversion St. Hilary would not eat with Jews or heretics, nor salute them by the way; but afterwards, for their sake, he relaxed this severity. He entered Holy Orders, and in 353 was chosen bishop of his native city. Arianism, under the protection of the Emperor Constantius, was just then in the height of its power, and St. Hilary found himself called upon to support the orthodox cause in several Gallic councils, in which Arian bishops formed an overwhelming majority. He was in consequence accused to the emperor, who banished him to Phrygia.

He spent his three years and more of exile in composing his great works on the Trinity. In 359 he attended the Council of Seleucia, in which Arians, semi-Arians, and Catholics contended for the mastery. With the deputies of the council he proceeded to Constantinople, and there so dismayed the heads of the Arian party that they prevailed upon the emperor to let him return to Gaul. He traversed Gaul, Italy, and Illyria, wherever he came discomfiting the heretics and procuring triumph of orthodoxy. After seven or eight years of missionary travel he returned to Poitiers, where he died in peace in 368.

January 13 Maghi Sikh The Sankranti festifal of the Punjab. See below

January 14 Makar Sankranti Hindu Makar Sankranti is a major harvest festival celebrated in various parts of India. According to the lunar calendar, when the sun moves from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn in mid-January; it commemorates the beginning of the harvest season and cessation of the northeast monsoon in South India. The movement of the earth from one zodiac sign into another is called Sankranti and as the Sun moves into the Capricorn zodiac known as Makar in Hindi, this occasion is named as Makar Sankranti in the Indian context. It is one of the few Hindu Indian festivals which are celebrated on a fixed date i.e. 14th January every year.

Makar Sankranti, apart from a harvest festival is also regarded as the beginning of an auspicious phase in Indian culture. It is said as the 'holy phase of transition'. It marks the end of an inauspicious phase which according to the Hindu calendar begins around mid-December. It is believed that any auspicious and sacred ritual can be sanctified in any Hindu family this day onwards. Scientifically, this day marks the beginning of warmer and longer days compared to the nights. In other words, Sankranti marks the termination of winter season and beginning of a new harvest or spring season.

All over the country, Makar Sankranti is observed with great fanfare. However, it is celebrated with distinct names and rituals in different parts of the country. In the states of northern and western India, the festival is celebrated as the Sankranti day with special zeal and fervor. The importance of this day has been signified in the ancient epics such as the Mahabharata. So, this day also holds a historical and religious significance. As, it is the festival of Sun God and he is regarded as the symbol divinity and wisdom, the festival also has an eternal meaning to it.

January 15 Seijin Shiki (Adults' Day) Shinto Seijin Shiki, also referred to as the Coming-of-Age day or the Adult Ceremony, is held on the second Monday of January of every year. This holiday honors people who have reached or will, the age of twenty within the current year

This holiday was rooted from *Genpuku*, also known as *Kakan*, which was the original coming-of-age ceremony. To mark the entry to their adulthood, boys between the ages of 12 and 16, they were taken to shrines. There, they were presented with their first adult clothing, and their boys' hairstyles (*mizura*) were changed to the adult style. Supplementary to that, they were also given new adult names (*eboshi-na*).

In *Heian* times, the ceremony was only restricted to the sons of noble and samurai families. During the *Muromachi* era, it gradually spread to include men of lower ranks. A similar ceremony for women was called *mogi*. This was performed for girls aged between 12 and 14, and was similarly based around the presentation of their new adult clothing. The exact age was never specified and was left for the adults to determine when the child is mature enough to be deemed an adult.

In 1948, Seijin Shiki became a national holiday and the date was set to January 15th. In 1999 it was moved to the second Monday of January.

Sankranti Goodies

TIL POLI RECIPE

Indian til poli is made by stuffing sesame seed mixture in dough and frying it.

Ingredients:

2 cups cleaned white sesame (til) seeds
2 cups grated jaggery (gud) (sugar cane/cane sugar)
1 1/2 teaspoon powder of cardamoms (elaychi)
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg (jayphal) powder
1 1/2 cups flour (maida)
Oil for shallow frying

How to make til poli:

Add oil and salt to the flour and knead the dough.

Cover it with a moist cloth so it remains soft.

Roast the sesame seeds so that they become golden brown.

Cool them, add jaggery and pound them well to mix.

Add cardamom and nutmeg and mix.

Now take the dough and make balls.

Make holes in the balls and fill with the sesame seed mixture.

Seal the ball of dough around the sesame seed mixture.

Put little oil on the rolling board and press them to make round shape disks.

Now fry them in shallow oil till they become crispy and golden brown.



GRACE NOTES

GRACE NOTES are a daily inspirational e-Note sent to those who subscribe.

If you would like to receive GRACE NOTES please email the Senior Chaplain, Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine at kennisdu@childrensnational.org and ask to be added to the list.

Below is an example of a GRACE NOTE

Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of Achievement.



Golda Meir

Blessings From Your Chaplains
 Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine - extension 3321
 Janie Brooks - extension 3050
 Margarita Roque - extension 2626
 Children's National Medical Center

January 15 World Religion Day Bahá'í Bahá'ís are urged to “Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.” One way they do this is through the commemoration of World Religion Day

World Religion Day was initiated in 1950 by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The Assembly's purpose was to call attention to the harmony of spiritual principles and the oneness of the world's religions and to emphasize that religion is the motivating force for world unity.

As stated in Bahá'í scripture: “religion should be the cause of love and agreement, a bond to unify all mankind for it is a message of peace and goodwill to man from God,” and “Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein.”

It is observed the third Sunday in January by Bahá'ís in the United States and increasingly by people around the globe, with interfaith discussions, conferences and other events that foster understanding and communication among the followers of all religions.

Following is a portion of a Bahá'í prayer that is frequently read on World Religion Day:

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.

Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

-Abdu'l-Baha

January 18—25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity At least once a year, many Christians become aware of the great diversity of ways of adoring God. Hearts are touched, and people realize that their neighbors' ways are not so strange.

The event that touches off this special experience is something called the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Traditionally celebrated between 18-25 January (in the northern hemisphere) or at Pentecost (in the southern hemisphere), the Week of Prayer enters into congregations and parishes all over the world. Pulpits are exchanged, and special ecumenical worship services are arranged.

The Week of Prayer for began in 1908 as the Octave of Christian Unity, and focused on prayer for church unity. The dates of the week were proposed by Father Paul Wattson, cofounder of the Graymoor Franciscan Friars.

Ecumenical partners in a particular region are asked to prepare a basic text on a biblical theme. Then an international group with World Council of Churches-sponsored (Protestant and Orthodox) and Roman Catholic participants edits this text and ensures that it is linked with the search for the unity of the church.

The text is jointly published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and World Council of Churches, through the Council's Commission on Faith and Order, which also accompanies the entire production process of the text. The final material is sent to member churches and Roman Catholic dioceses, and they are invited to translate the text and contextualize it for their own use.

Theme for 2012

We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ
 (cf. 1 Cor 15:51-58)

Ethiopian Christianity

The Ethiopian Church claims its earliest origins from the royal official said to have been baptized by Philip the Evangelist (not to be confused with Philip the Apostle), one of the seven deacons:

Then the angel of the Lord said to Philip, Start out and go south to the road that leads down from Jerusalem to Gaza. So he set out and was on his way when he caught sight of an Ethiopian. This man was a eunuch, a high official of the Kandake (Candace) Queen of Ethiopia (42 - 52 C.E.) in charge of all her treasure. (Acts, 8:27)

The passage continues by describing how Philip helped the Ethiopian treasurer understand a passage from Isaiah that the Ethiopian was reading. After the Ethiopian received an explanation of the passage, he requested that Philip baptize him, and Philip did so.

Orthodox Christianity became the established church of the Ethiopian Axumite Kingdom under king Ezana in the 4th century through the efforts of a Syrian Greek named Frumentius, known in Ethiopia as *Abba Selama, Kesaté Birhan* ("Father of Peace, Revealer of Light"). As a youth, Frumentius had been shipwrecked with his brother Aedesius on the Eritrean coast. The brothers managed to be brought to the royal court, where they rose to positions of influence and converted Emperor Ezana to Christianity, causing him to be baptized. Ezana sent Frumentius to Alexandria to ask the Patriarch, St. Athanasius, to appoint a bishop for Ethiopia. Athanasius appointed Frumentius himself, who returned to Ethiopia as Bishop with the name of *Abune Selama*.

More history, music, liturgy can be found at <http://ethiopianorthodox.org/english/history.html>



January 20 Timkat Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Timkat is the greatest festival of the year, falling on 19/20 January, just two weeks after the Ethiopian Christmas. It is actually a three-day affair, beginning on the Eve of Timkat with dramatic and colorful processions. The following morning Christ's baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist is commemorated. The third day is devoted to the Feast of St. Michael, the archangel, one of Ethiopia's most popular saints.

Since October and the end of the rains, the country has been drying up steadily. The sun blazes down from a clear blue sky and the Festival of Timkat always takes place in glorious weather. Enormous effort is put into the occasion. Tej and tella (Ethiopian mead and beer) are brewed, special bread is baked, and the fat-tailed African sheep are fattened for slaughter. Gifts are prepared for the children and new clothes purchased or old mended and laundered.

Everyone - men, women, and children dress in the dazzling white of the traditional dress, a dramatic contrast to the jewel colors of the ceremonial velvets and satins of the priests' robes and sequined velvet umbrellas.

On the eve of the 18/19 January, Kettera, the priests remove the *tabots* from each church and bless the water of the pool or river where the next days celebration will take place. It is the *tabot* (symbolizing the Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments) rather than the church building which is consecrated, and it is accorded extreme reverence. Not to be desecrated by the gaze of the layman, the engraved wooden or stone slab is carried under layers of rich cloth.

In Addis Ababa, many churches bring their tabots to Jan Meda (the horse racing course of imperial day) accompanied by priests bearing prayer sticks and sistra, the ringing of bells and blowing of trumpets, and swinging bronze censers from which wisps of incense smoke escape into the evening air. The tabots rest in their special tent in the meadow, each hoisting a proud banner depicting the church's saint in front.



The priests pray throughout the long cold night and mass is performed around 2:00 a.m. Huge crowds of people camp out, eating and drinking by the light of flickering fires and torches. Towards dawn the patriarch dips a golden cross and extinguishes a burning consecrated candle in the altar. Then he sprinkles water on the assembled congregation in commemoration of Christ's baptism. Many of the more fervent leap fully dressed into the water to renew their vows.

Following the baptism the *tabots* start back to their respective churches, while feasting, singing and dancing continue at Jan Meda. The procession winds through town again as the horsemen cavort alongside, their mounts handsomely decorated with red tassels, embroidered saddlecloths, and silver bridles. The elders march solemnly, accompanied by singing leaping priests and young men, while the beating of staffs and prayer sticks recalls the ancient rites of the Old Testament.

January 21 St. Agnes Day When she was 12 or 13, the beautiful Agnes of Rome became the object of a rich young man's devotions. His parents -- his father being the prefect of Rome -- offered her riches if she would make a match with their son, but Agnes had already decided to consecrate herself to Jesus. They threatened to expose her as a Christian, but she still refused. She was ordered to choose between sacrificing to pagan gods or being thrown into a brothel. She refused to be taken to a Roman temple to Minerva (Athena), so was stripped naked and thrown into the brothel, where the men who visited were moved to pity and couldn't bear to look upon her. All, it is said, but one man -- the prefect's son. He mocked the more sensitive men, pushed his way into the brothel, and was struck blind when he tried to look at her. When the prefect heard what happened to his son he ran to the brothel, accusing Agnes of cruelty and enchantment, whereupon she raised the young man from the dead. He then wanted to let Agnes go and put a lieutenant in his place who first tried to kill Agnes by a fire which didn't harm her, but who then killed her with a sword.

Her remains were laid in a tomb on the Via Nomentana, and Constantine built a basilica there at the insistence of his daughter, Constantina, who was buried next to her in a separate mausoleum in C.E. 354

The lamb, as a symbol of purity, is one of the symbols of St. Agnes. In Rome on this day, the Holy Father will bless two crowned lambs, brought to the Church of St. Agnes in two baskets, decorated in red (martyrdom) and white (purity), by Trappists of the Tre Fontane Monastery. The lambs are blessed and then taken to the Convent of St. Cecilia, where the Sisters care for them and use their wool to weave the palliums worn by the Pope and his Archbishops. The palliums are conferred on new archbishops -- those appointed as archbishops during the preceding year -- on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul on 29 June.

January 23 Chinese New Year



January 25 Conversion of Saint Paul Christian Paul's entire life can be explained in terms of one experience—his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus. In an instant, he saw that all the zeal of his dynamic personality was being wasted. Perhaps he had never seen Jesus, who was only a few years older. But he had acquired a zealot's hatred of all Jesus stood for, as he began to harass the Church: "...entering house after house and dragging out men and women, he handed them over for imprisonment" (Acts 8:3b). Now he himself was "entered," possessed, all his energy harnessed to one goal—being a servant of Christ in the ministry of reconciliation, an instrument to help others experience the Savior.

From then on, his only work was to "present everyone perfect in Christ. For this I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me" (Colossians 1:28b-29). "For our gospel did not come to you in word alone, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and [with] much conviction" (1 Thessalonians 1:5a).

Paul's life became a tireless proclaiming and living out of the message of the cross: Christians die baptismally to sin and are buried with Christ; they are dead to all that is sinful and unredeemed in the world. They are made into a new creation, already sharing Christ's victory and someday to rise from the dead like him. Through this risen Christ the Father pours out the Spirit on them, making them completely new.

So Paul's great message to the world was: You are saved entirely by God, not by anything you can do. Saving faith is the gift of total, free, personal and loving commitment to Christ.

January 28 St. Thomas Aquinas Day Thomas Aquinas is the preeminent spokesman of the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation. He is one of the great teachers of the medieval Catholic Church, honored with the titles Doctor of the Church and Angelic Doctor.

At five he was given to the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino in his parents' hopes that he would choose that way of life. In 1239 he was sent to Naples to complete his studies. It was here that he was first attracted to Aristotle's philosophy. By 1243, Thomas abandoned his family's plans for him and joined the Dominicans, much to his mother's dismay. On her order, Thomas was captured by his brother and kept at home for over a year.

Once free, he went to Paris and then to Cologne, where he finished his studies with Albert the Great. He held two professorships at Paris, lived at the court of Pope Urban IV, directed the Dominican schools at Rome and Viterbo.

His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church is his writings. The unity, harmony and continuity of faith and reason, of revealed and natural human knowledge, pervades his writings. One might expect Thomas, as a man of the gospel, to be an ardent defender of revealed truth. But he was broad enough, deep enough, to see the whole natural order as coming from God the Creator, and to see reason as a divine gift to be highly cherished. The *Summa Theologiae*, his last and, unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology. He stopped work on it after celebrating Mass on December 6, 1273. When asked why he stopped writing, he replied, "I cannot go on.... All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me." He died March 7, 1274.



January 28 Vasant Panchami Hindu Vasant Panchami is a Hindu festival celebrating Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, music and art. Traditionally during this festival children are taught to write their first words; brahmins are fed; ancestor worship (Pitr-tarpan) is performed; the god of love Kamadeva is worshipped; and most educational institutions organize special prayers for Saraswati. The color yellow also plays an important role in this festival, in that people usually wear yellow garments, Saraswati is worshipped dressed in yellow, and yellow sweets are consumed within the families. To read more go to <http://www.hinduism.co.za/vasant.htm>



January 31 Birthday of Guru Har Rai Sikh Guru Har Rai (a630—1661) was the seventh of the Sikh Gurus