

## Chaplaincy Services

### *Holy Days With No Fixed Date*

**Hopi Bean Sprout, or Powamu, Ceremony** During the Powamuya ceremony in February, the katsinam arrive in force to help the Hopi prepare for the next growing season and to initiate children into the Katsina Society, thus preparing them for growth as well. The most important katsina ceremony is a series of rituals that promotes fertility, germination, and early growth of seeds. It also initiates children between six- and ten-years-old into the Powamuya Society. The children are then allowed to participate in katsina performances.

One important event during Powamuya is the planting of beans. Within the kiva, men under the supervision of Powamuya officers plant fifty to a hundred beans in a bucket filled with earth. A fire is kept going day and night to help the beans grow. Patsavu Hu' katsinam regularly inspect the plants. The planting and growth of the beans inside the warm kiva is seen as a good omen for the success of the coming harvest.

On the sixteenth day, the katsinam give away mature bean sprouts in a public ceremony followed by a procession of many katsinam who dance and give away dolls, dancing wands, decorative plaques, bows and arrows, lightning sticks, rattles, and moccasins. Among the dancers are Ogre katsinam who frighten children into behaving properly.

*Wupamo* katsina is a chief katsina or Mongkatsinawith leadership duties and responsibilities. A guard who supervises the Whipper katsinam, he is also in charge of cleaning the streets and kivas before ceremonies. During Powamuya, he keeps people off the procession route. He moves very quickly, using yucca whips to correct the behavior of the Mudhead katsinam.

*Ewtoto*, the chief of all katsinam, is a katsina spiritual father and an important member of the katsina priesthood. Because he controls the seasons, he appears several times during Powamuya, and again during Niman. During Powamuya, he helps to bring rain to the villages by drawing cloud symbols on the ground with corn flour.

*Soo' tukwnang* represents clouds and appears with the Sa' lako' vityu, two Sa' lako who play music for the Sa' lako dance. This particular Soo' tukwnang is a male figure who appears at Powamuya and during the Mixed Dance in which a variety of katsinam dance in long lines in the plaza.

*Sikyaqöqlö* is an artist and farmer who makes colorful gifts and gives them to children during the Bean Dance. He is also a storyteller.

*Nata'aska* is an uncle in the ogre family and a chief or Mongkatsina. These katsinam always appear during the procession of ogres at the beginning of Powamuya. They stand in pairs at the back of the crowd, growling and dragging their saws on the ground, stamping the ground furiously, and impatiently waiting to be fed. As they dance and sing, they tell children they will eat them and chew their bones and no one will see them again.

*Kwikwilyaqa* gets his name from the stripes on his nose. A clown and mimic, he makes the crowd laugh by imitating people and katsinam who catch his eye during ceremonies. He appears twice during the Powamuya procession and also during the Mixed Dance. Photo: PhillipCoppens.com



**Iroquois Midwinter Ceremony** The Midwinter ceremony is series of rituals, observed by the six tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy, which celebrates new beginnings and serves as a spiritual new year. The ceremony does not have an official date on the calendar, but rather is determined when the first new moon arrives while both the Ursa Major and Ursa Minor constellations are visible, which occurs in either February or January. It takes place over 9 days as The major events of the Midwinter Ceremony consist of the Tobacco Invocation, the Dream Sharing Ritual, the False Face Society, the Peach Stone Game, the Bear Dance, the White Dog Sacrifice, the Great Feather Dance, The Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes, and a closing ceremony. These events take place over the course of ten days with no specific order, but generally begin with The Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes and ends with a closing ceremony.

Generally, the first of the activities is the Big Heads and the Stirring of the Ashes. A group of anonymous messengers called the Big Heads visit the tribe's longhouse. They wear ceremonial outfits made of buffalo skins and braided cornhusk masks which symbolize the hunt and the harvest. They also carry a corn mashing mallet used in the Stirring of the Ashes. In the Stirring of the Ashes, the Big Heads go from house to house stirring the ashes in fire pits of each household while they ask that the New Year brings renewal and fertility to the land. This is gesture of gratitude to "The Creator" as ashes serve as a symbol of the earth and the cycle of life (Pierce).

The next ritual to usually take place after the Stirring of the Ashes is the Tobacco Invocation. It consists of sprinkling tobacco in the embers remaining from the Stirring of the Ashes or outright smoking as an offering. The smoke that rises from the burning tobacco symbolically rises to the heavens to sign of giving thanks and to give messages to the Creator and other spirits (Molin).

The Dream Sharing Ritual serves as a ritual of healing. It serves as a way to get rid of troubling thoughts and a way to make wishes come true as the Iroquois believe that dreams represent ways to resolve real life problems. Tribe members would describe their dreams in front of others so they may give their interpretation of the events that take place in the dreams. The person who has the best interpretation has to then aid the tribe member in seeing that the issue gets resolved. For dreams that represent physical or mental ailments, they dreamer is sent to the False Face Society which is a group of medicine men.

The False Face Society is a group of Iroquois medicine men who wear masks made out of wood. These people can consist of either men or women, but only the men wear the traditional masks. They are said to have the ability to scare off the evil spirits that cause illness. Those who are deemed of needing healing during the Dream Sharing Ritual are sent to these medicine men during their gathering. Healing rituals consist generally of blowing or rubbing hot ashes from a fire on those in need of curing.

The Bear Dance is another healing ritual that coincides with the False Face Society gathering. It is conducted by both men and women by lumbering and waddling like bear counter clockwise around a person that was ill. This can be done either privately or publicly. The Iroquois believed that this dance can heal the problems of person that were placed upon them from the previous year.

The next event is the Peach Stone Game. This game symbolizes the Iroquois creation story where the Creator and his evil brother played a game in competition during the creation of the Earth, the renewal of the Earth like the Stirring of the Ashes, and the battle for survival of crops. The game consists of six peach pits which are coloured black (through burning for example) on one side. They are placed in a bowl and shaken while two teams take turns placing bets in the form of beans on how many black sides will face up. The teams are given an equal number of beans, and the first team to lose all of their beans loses the match. The results of this game are also used to predict the successfulness of the coming year's harvest.

One of the following events is the White Dog Sacrifice. Originally, this ritual consisted of killing a white dog, a symbol of purity, by strangulation as to leave no marks. The dog was then adorned in red paint, feathers, beads, wampum, and ribbons. It was placed on fire along with tobacco so that smoke may carry their, sacrifice, and prayers to the Creator. Today, however, the act of killing a white dog is replaced by a white basket due to the animal cruelty in the original proceedings of the ritual.

The final event before the closing ceremonies is the Great Feather Dance. The dance is held on eight night of the nine-day festival, and serves as way to welcome the new spiritual year as well as thanking the Creator. Dancers wear traditional tribal clothing and turtle shell rattles, and dance to two singers that sit facing each other. They give thanks to all the Creator has bestowed upon them during the previous year by dancing in rhythm and shaking the rattles.

The event finally concludes with a closing ceremony where a speaker presenting an overview of the events and address of thanksgiving. New tribal council members who will lead the people until the next event are chosen and presented to the crowd. By the end of this ceremony, all members of the tribe are purified and a new year is welcomed. *Photo: artinreallife.com*



### Holy Days With Fixed Date

#### January 1 *Mary the Mother of God*



**Catholic Christian** During the Twelve Days of Christmas, the Catholic Church celebrates many important feasts, including the feasts of Saint Stephen, the first martyr (December 26), whose martyrdom is recorded in Acts 6-7; Saint John the Apostle (December 27), who wrote the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, as well as three epistles; the Holy Innocents (December 29), the children who were slaughtered at the order of King Herod, when he was trying to kill the Christ Child; and the Holy Family (normally celebrated on the Sunday after Christmas, and on December 30, when Christmas falls on a Sunday).

None, however, is as important as the feast celebrated on the octave (eighth day) of Christmas, January 1: the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.

In the early centuries of the Church, once Christmas began to be celebrated as its own feast on December 25 (having originally been celebrated with the Feast of the Epiphany, on January 6), the Octave (eighth day) of Christmas, January 1, took on a special

meaning.

In the East, and throughout much of the West, it became common to celebrate a feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on this day. This feast was never established in the universal calendar of the Church, however, and a separate feast, celebrating the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ (which would have taken place a week after His birth), eventually took hold of January 1.

With the revision of the liturgical calendar at the time of the introduction of the Novus Ordo, the Feast of the Circumcision was set aside, and the ancient practice of dedicating January 1 to the Mother of God was revived—this time, as a universal feast.

In fact, the Church regards the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, as so important that it is a Holy Day of Obligation. (See *Is January 1 a Holy Day of Obligation?* for more details.) On this day, we are reminded of the role that the Blessed Virgin played in the plan of our salvation. Christ's Birth was made possible by Mary's fiat: "Be it done unto me according to Thy word."

One of the earliest titles given by Christians to the Blessed Virgin was Theotokos—"God-bearer." We celebrate her as the Mother of God, because, in bearing Christ, she bore the fullness of the Godhead within her.

**January 1 *Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus* Orthodox Christian** The second chapter of the Gospel of Luke records the circumcision of Jesus: *And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.*

The circumcision of Jesus has traditionally been seen, as explained in the popular 14th century work the Golden Legend, as the first time the blood of Christ was shed, and thus the beginning of the process of the redemption of man, and a demonstration that Christ was fully human, and of his obedience to Biblical law. The "Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord" is a Christian celebration of the circumcision, eight days (according to the Semitic and southern European calculation of intervals of days) after his birth, the occasion on which the child was formally given his name, Jesus, a name derived from Hebrew meaning "salvation" or "saviour". It is first recorded from a church council held at Tours in 567, although it was clearly already long-established.

The feast day appears on 1 January in the liturgical calendar of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It also appears in the pre-1960 General Roman Calendar and is celebrated by churches of the Anglican Communion (though in many revised Anglican calendars, such as the 1979 calendar of the Episcopal Church, there is a tendency toward associating the day more with the Holy Name of Jesus) and virtually all Lutheran churches.

It has now disappeared from the Roman calendar, replaced on January 1 by the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, but is still celebrated by Old Catholics and some traditionalist Catholics. It was for many centuries combined on January 1 with the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, before the two were separated, and now that the Feast of the Circumcision has disappeared as such from the official Catholic calendar, the other feast may be regarded as celebrating this too.

**January 1 Feast of St. Basil Orthodox Christian** 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 our Church. His brothers and sister became priests, bishops, and nuns. His parents were very devoted to the faith and gave their children a great spiritual heritage which they cultivated in their lifetime. The family of St. Basil was the greatest Christian family of the 4th century. St. Basil studied in Constantinople and Athens. He studied with his best friend, St. Gregory, in the cultural centers of the world. St. Basil was one of the greatest writers and speakers of the Christian Church. 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 AD.

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 which we love and know so well. Although the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is used 42 Sundays a year in our Church, it is based on the slightly longer Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. St. John merely shortened the lengthy prayers and made minor alterations in other prayers. The Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated 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.

Why was St. Basil given the name "Great"? Only a few people in the world were ever given the magnificent title, "Great"! Alexander the Great was so-called because he conquered the world, but St. Basil was called "Great" because he conquered the hearts and souls of men for Jesus Christ. His whole life was dedicated to Jesus and the message of Christianity. He had the humility of Moses, the zeal of Elijah, the piety of Peter, the eloquence of John the Theologian, and the dedication of Paul. He died in the Lord on January 1, 379 AD.

*Reprinted from Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days by Fr. George Poulos, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, Department of Religious Education, 1974, p. 39. Photo: catholiconline.com*

#### A Tradition for Observing the Feast at Home

In many Greek homes, a special cake 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.

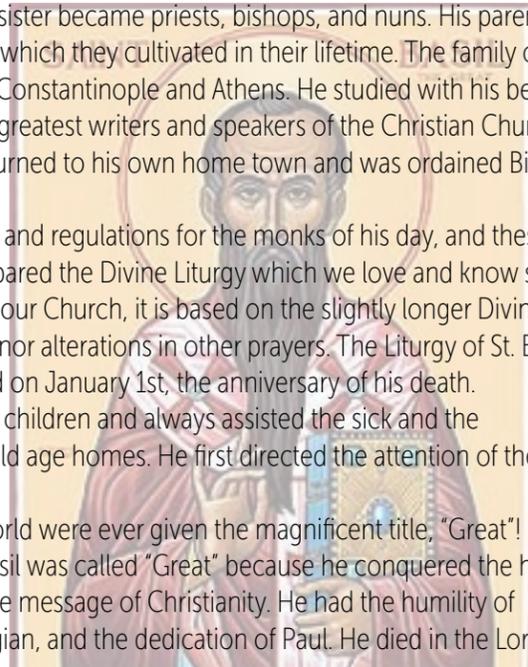
The tradition of the Vassilopitta began long ago in the days when St. Basil was the Archbishop of Caesarea in the province of Cappadocia. The Emperor Valens of Cappadocia belonged to a group known as the Arians. The Arians were very much against the Orthodox teachings of St. Basil and tried hard to destroy 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.

*The original source for this wonderful summary of the Vassilopitta tradition is unknown.*



**January 1 Gantan-sai Shinto** On this day the faithful visit shrines to thank the kami (spirits within objects in the Shinto faith), ask the kami for good fortune, and make resolutions for the year ahead.

They say prayers for the renewal of hearts, good health and prosperity. People wear their best clothes and visit one another's homes to offer good wishes for the New Year.

**January 5 Twelfth Night Christian** In Christianity, Twelfth Night is a holiday on January 5 that marks the 12th and final night of the Christmas season. The Twelve Days of Christmas are the twelve days beginning on night of Christmas (December 25) and ending on Epiphany (January 6).

In the Middle Ages, this December period was one of continuous feasting and merrymaking, which climaxed on Twelfth Night, the traditional end of the Christmas season. Contrary to popular belief, Christmas is not the "first day of the Christmas." Instead, it might be better described as the twelve days "after" Christmas.

By ancient reckoning, days and nights were counted separately, and the important night was often the night before, not the night of, the celebration (hence modern traditions of Christmas Eve and All Hallows' Eve, or Halloween). The 12 day count actually begins with the eve of December 25, the "first night." The day of December 26 is the "first day," the eve of December 26 the "second night," and so on. The famous Twelfth Night is the eve of Epiphany, and the twelfth day is Epiphany itself.



#### *Twelfth Night: Traditions and History*

During the twelve days of Christmas, traditional roles were often relaxed, masters waited on their servants, men were allowed to dress as women, and women as men. Often a Lord of Misrule was chosen to lead the Christmas revels. Some of these traditions were adapted from older, pagan customs, including the Roman Saturnalia. Some also have an echo in modern day pantomime where traditionally authority is mocked and the principal male lead is played by a woman, while the leading older female character, or 'Dame' is played by a man.

*Photo: Pinterest*

**January 5 Birthday of Guru Gobindh Singh Sikh** Gobind Singh was born on December 22, 1666, his father was Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 9th guru of Sikhism. Gobind Singh at the age of nine became the 10th Guru, and last Guru of Sikhism. As a child he was very admired by everyone for his leadership skills and the wisdom he displayed. His studies included Punjabi, Sanskrit, Braj, Arabian and Persian languages. His father died in 1675 at Chandani Chowk, he was beheaded for not accepting to become a Muslim under the orders of the Emperor.

Since his father had declared that his son Gobind Singh would become the next Guru after his death, at the early age of nine, Gobind Singh became Guru of the Sikhs. He instilled a martial spirit into his followers so that they would not fear the persecutions of the Emperor. During his life he wrote many poems about love, worship of one god, equality and putting away superstition and idolatry.

As the threats to Sikhs grew around Guru Gobind Singh, he decided to do something that would mark forever Sikhism. He sent letters to all followers to meet at Anandpur for the annual harvest festival of Vaisakhi. He then talked to everybody that came to his call. He asked for anyone who would be ready to die for God, he had to ask the question three times before one of the followers came forward to him, Daya Ram offered his head in sacrifice. He was led by the Guru inside a tent. He then returned with a bloody sword in his hands and made the same question to everyone. Another volunteer came forward, and the same thing happened, they went inside the tent and the Guru came out with the sword full of blood. This happened three more times.

Finally the five volunteers came out of the tent dressed as the Guru and unharmed. They were the first Khalsa, the Panj Piare, the five beloved ones. The Guru then himself asked the new Khalsa to initiate him into the new formed Khalsa to become the fifth member of this group. The Khalsa were the spearhead of defense of Sikhs against any aggression. (continued)

Guru Gobind Singh was assassinated as he intended to make peace with Bahadur Shah I. He left a great number of writings and told his disciples to consider Guru Granth Sahib, the collection of all writings from the previous Gurus as their eternal Guru and that this book would be the passage to meet the Gurus and understand their teachings.

#### Birthdays of Guru Gobind Singh Traditions, Customs and Activities

The Birthday celebration lasts for 3 days. Two days before the birthday there is a team of men and women that start reading the Guru Granth Sahib from start to end without interruption, this is called the Akhand Path and is done at any Gurdwara, Sikh worship place.

The day before the birthday a procession is organized, the Panj Pyares lead the procession and are followed by musicians, dancers and gatka teams performing martial arts. On the day of the birthday at early morning there are morning hymns, or Asa di Var, followed by an exposition of the Guru Granth Sahib. During the day there is food serving and everybody joins in prayers and joyous singing. Around sunset it is time for the Rehras, evening prayers.

**January 6 Epiphany/Dia de los Reyes Christian** Epiphany is commonly known as Three Kings' Day or the Feast of the Epiphany. It means "manifestation" or "showing forth". It is also called Theophany ("manifestation of God"), especially by Eastern Christians. Epiphany refers not only to the day itself but to the church season that follows it – a season that has a varied length because it ends when Lent begins, and this depends on the date of Easter.

It commemorates the first two occasions on which Jesus' divinity, according to Christian belief, was manifested: when the three kings (also known as wise men or Magi) visited infant Jesus in Bethlehem, and when John the Baptist baptized him in the River Jordan. The Roman Catholic and Protestant churches emphasize the visit of the Magi when they celebrate the Epiphany. The Eastern Orthodox churches focus on Jesus' baptism.

Epiphany is one of the oldest Christian feasts. It was celebrated since the end of the second century, before the Christmas holiday was established. Like other Christian seasons, the church appropriated Epiphany from an old pagan festival. As early as 1996 BCE, the Egyptians celebrated the winter solstice (which then occurred on January 6) with a tribute to Aeon, the Virgin. It is important to note that the holiday was established prior to the Gregorian calendar's introduction.

In some European countries, such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia, children dress as the three kings and visit houses. In their roles as the kings, or wise men, they sing about the Jesus' birth and pay homage to the "king of kings". They are rewarded with praise and cookies.

*Dia de los Reyes Magos* is the Latin American celebration of Epiphany. In many Latin American countries, it is the three wise men and not Santa Claus who bring gifts for children. Children write letters to the wise men telling them how good they were and what gifts they want. In France Le Jour des Rois (the Day of Kings), sometimes called the Fête des Rois, is celebrated with parties for children and adults. The galette des rois, or "cake of kings", highlights these celebrations. This cake is round and flat, cut into the pantry, covered with a white napkin and carried into a dining room.

Children in Spain fill their shoes with straw or grain for the three kings' horses to eat and place them on balconies or by the front door on Epiphany Eve. The next day they find cookies, sweets or gifts in their place. The "three kings" make an entry in many cities in Spain on Epiphany Eve, accompanied by military bands and drummers in medieval dress.



**January 6 Nativity of Christ Armenian Christian** "Armenian Christmas," as it is popularly called, is a culmination of celebrations of events related to Christ's Incarnation. Theophany or Epiphany (or Astvadz-a-haytnootyoon in Armenian) means "revelation of God," which is the central theme of the Christmas Season in the Armenian Church. During the "Armenian Christmas" season, the major events that are celebrated are the Nativity of Christ in Bethlehem and His Baptism in the River Jordan. The day of this major feast in the Armenian Church is January 6th. A ceremony called "Blessing of Water" is conducted in the Armenian Church to commemorate Christ's Baptism.

It is frequently asked as to why Armenians do not celebrate Christmas on December 25th with the rest of the world.

Obviously, the exact date of Christ's birth has not been historically established-it is neither recorded in the Gospels. However, historically, all Christian churches celebrated Christ's birth on January 6th until the fourth century.

According to Roman Catholic sources, the date was changed from January 6th to December 25th in order to override a pagan feast dedicated to the birth of the Sun which was celebrated on December 25th. At the time Christians used to continue their observance of these pagan festivities. In order to undermine and subdue this pagan practice, the church hierarchy designated December 25th as the official date of Christmas and January 6th as the feast of Epiphany. However, Armenia was not effected by this change for the simple fact that there were no such pagan practices in Armenia, on that date, and the fact that the Armenian Church was not a satellite of the Roman Church. Thus, remaining faithful to the traditions of their forefathers, Armenians have continued to celebrate Christmas on January 6th until today.

**January 7 Feast of the Nativity Orthodox Christian** Many Orthodox Christians in countries such as the United States fast before Christmas Day. Many people identify the Nativity Fast as the period of preparing to celebrate Jesus Christ's birth. It is believed that fasting helps people shift their focus from themselves to others, spending less time worrying about food and using more time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. In return, fasting before the Nativity enables one to fully enjoy, appreciate and celebrate the Nativity of Christ.

Many Orthodox Christians attend a special church liturgy on Christmas Day on January 7. Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas Day with various traditions. For example, many churches light a small fire of blessed palms and burn frankincense to commemorate the three wise men's (also known as Magi) gifts to baby Jesus. Some parishes have joint celebrations for Christmas Day.

**January 7 Baptism of Jesus Christian** In submitting Himself humbly to the baptism of St. John the Baptist, however, Christ provided the example for the rest of us. If even He should be baptized, though He had no need of it, how much more should the rest of us be thankful for this sacrament, which frees us from the darkness of sin and incorporates us into the Church, the life of Christ on earth! His Baptism, therefore, was necessary--not for Him, but for us.

**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 out 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.

**January 8 Feast of the Holy Family Catholic Christian** Although major feast days dedicated to each member of the Holy Family—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—also exist, the Feast of the Holy Family commemorates their life together, and the celebration focuses on religious family life. Because of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, a feast for the Holy Family has been observed by the Copts from early times. In Western Christianity, however, a cult of veneration for the Holy Family as a group, rather than as individuals, did not arise until the 17th century and was not officially recognized until the feast day was formally instituted in 1921 under Pope Benedict XV. Originally celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany (January 6), the Feast of the Holy Family was moved to the Sunday after Christmas in 1969, bringing it within the Christmas season.

**January 13 Maghi Sikh** For Sikhs, Maghi means primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, literally, the Forty Liberated Ones, who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh.

The action took place near a pool of water, Khidrane di Dhab, on 29 December 1705. The bodies were cremated the following day, the first of Magh (hence the name of the festival), which now falls usually on the 13th of January. Following the custom of the Sikhs to observe their anniversaries of happy and tragic events alike, Maghi is celebrated with end-to-end recital of the Guru Granth Sahib and religious divans in almost all gurdwaras.

**January 18- 24 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Christian** At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (see John 17:21). Hearts are touched and Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world exchange preachers or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

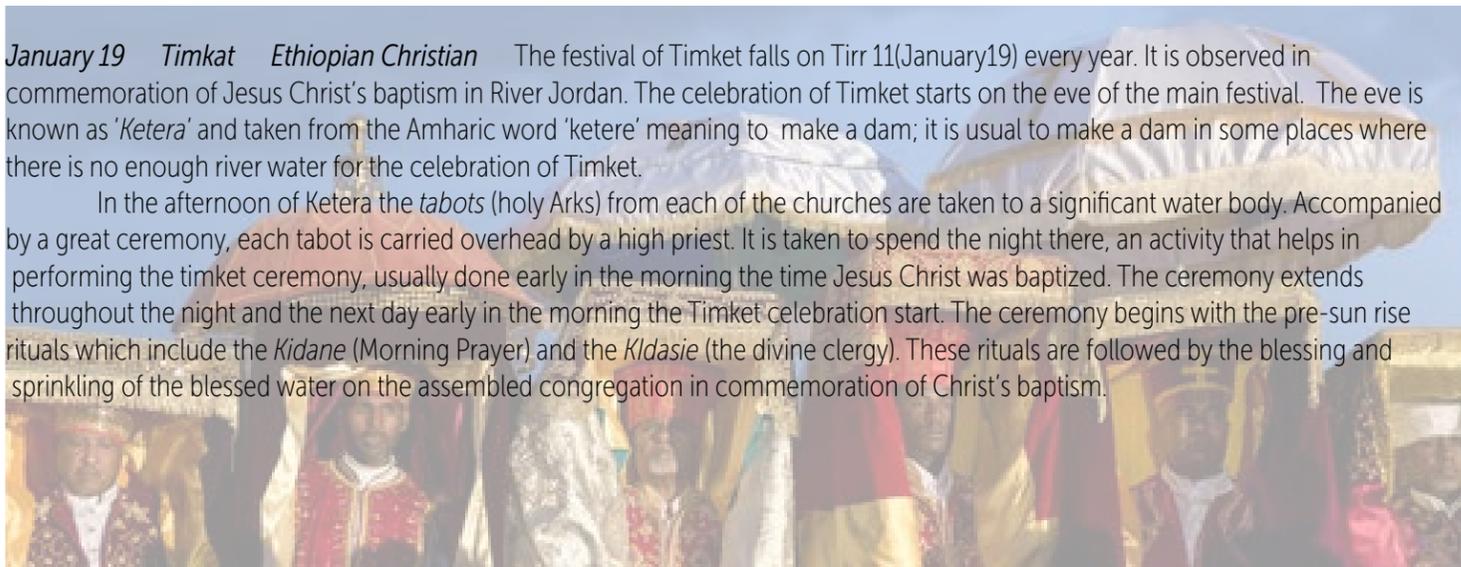
Traditionally the week of prayer is celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter Paul. In the southern hemisphere, where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate it, for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for unity.

The theme for the week of prayer in 2018, "Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power" is inspired by Exodus 15:6. The resources for the week have been prepared by members of different churches in the Caribbean. *Photo: official logo for 2018 from the Graymoor Institute*



**January 19 Timkat Ethiopian Christian** The festival of Timket falls on Tirr 11(January19) every year. It is observed in commemoration of Jesus Christ's baptism in River Jordan. The celebration of Timket starts on the eve of the main festival. The eve is known as '*Ketera*' and taken from the Amharic word 'ketere' meaning to make a dam; it is usual to make a dam in some places where there is no enough river water for the celebration of Timket.

In the afternoon of Ketera the *tabots* (holy Arks) from each of the churches are taken to a significant water body. Accompanied by a great ceremony, each tabot is carried overhead by a high priest. It is taken to spend the night there, an activity that helps in performing the timket ceremony, usually done early in the morning the time Jesus Christ was baptized. The ceremony extends throughout the night and the next day early in the morning the Timket celebration start. The ceremony begins with the pre-sun rise rituals which include the *Kidane* (Morning Prayer) and the *Kidasie* (the divine clergy). These rituals are followed by the blessing and sprinkling of the blessed water on the assembled congregation in commemoration of Christ's baptism.



According to the interpretation of the Ethiopian Church, the term Timket is taken from the Ge'ez word Asteryo meaning "reveal". This meaning is associated with the revelation of the trinity, or the unity of God the father, the son, and the Holy Ghost during the baptism of Christ. In Greek language, the word "baptism" refers to immersion in water, thus Christ himself was baptized by being immersed in water, river Jordan. Consequently, Timket is supposed to be performed by immersion in a body of water. But, in most cases, priests usually sprinkle the blessed water over the congregation, except in few cases where a larger pool is available immersion or to swimming like that of the bathing Palace Fasiledes in Gondar.

At about 10 or 11am, each tabot begins the journey back to its respective church. This involves an even more colorful ceremony with a variety of traditional and religious songs. The priests wear astonishing brocade ceremonial clothes and carry decorated umbrellas, while chanting to the accomplishment of drums and the rhythmic clink of the sistrum and other instruments. Although it is colorfully celebrated throughout the country, Timket is highly regarded in Addis Abeba, Lalibela and Gondar.

In Gondar, the bathing palace of Fasiledas is still dedicated to this colorful ceremony. It is still filled with water each year by a canal from the River Keha for the colorful Timket celebration.

**January 21 Triodion Begins Orthodox Christian** The period preceding lent.

**January 21 World Religion Day Baha'i** Baha'i is a form of faith that emerged in 19th century Persia and follows three core principles: unity of God, religion and humankind. The Baha'is believe that there is a single God and the spirituality of all religions in the world stem from this single god. They also believe that all humans are born equal and have the same rights and duties irrespective.

Keeping in line with this philosophy, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States announced the institution of World Religion Day in 1949. The first such day was observed in 1950.

The day calls for members of all religions in the world to recognize that all religions have common spiritual goals.

**January 22 Vasant Panjami Hindu** Vasant Panchami is a famous festival that marks the end of the winter season and ushers in the springtime. Sarasvati is the Hindu goddess of the Vasant Panchami festival. Young girls wear bright yellow dresses and participate in the festivities. The color yellow holds a special meaning for this celebration as it signifies the brilliance of nature and the vibrancy of life. The whole place bursts with yellow during the festival.

People dress in yellow and they offer yellow flowers to others and to the gods and goddesses. They also prepare and feast on a special pastry called kesar halwa or kesar halva, which is made from flour, sugar, nuts, and cardamom powder. This dish also includes saffron strands, which gives it a vibrant yellow color and mild fragrance. During the Vasant Panchami festival, India's crop fields are filled with the color yellow, as the yellow mustard flowers bloom at this time of the year. Pens, notebooks, and pencils are placed near the goddess Devi's feet to be blessed before they are used by students.

The celebration of the Vasant Panchami is centered on the Hindu goddess Sarasvati. Sarasvati is the goddess of wisdom. She embodies the different facets of learning such as the sciences, arts, crafts and skills. She is said to be calm and collected. She is often pictured seated on a lotus or a peacock, wearing a white dress.

The Goddess Sarasvati is the goddess of intellect and learning. She has four hands which symbolize ego, intellect, alertness and the mind. She carries a lotus and scriptures in two of her hands and she plays music on the veena (an instrument similar to a sitar) with her other two hands. She rides on a white swan. Her white dress is a symbol for purity. Her swan signifies that people should have the ability to discern the good from the bad.

The goddess Sarasvati, sitting on a lotus, symbolizes her wisdom. She is also well-versed in the experience of truth. When the goddess is seen sitting on a peacock, it is a reminder that a strong ego can be held back by wisdom.



**January 31 Tu BiSh'vat Jewish** Tu BiSh'vat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th (tu) of the Hebrew month of Sh'vat. Scholars believe that originally Tu BiSh'vat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. In the 17th century, Kabbalists created a ritual for Tu BiSh'vat that is similar to a Passover seder. Today, many Jews hold a modern version of the Tu BiSh'vat seder each year. The holiday also has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones and friends.

*Sources for this newsletter: peabody.harvard.edu, firstnationsrituals.blogspot.com, thoughtco.com, rbsocc.org, theologic.com, elsebesmit.com, timeanddate.com, allabout sikhs.com, reformjudaism.com, oikumene.org, littlkearmenia.com, aglobalworld.com, religionfacts.com, britannica.com, dynastyethiopiaticours.com. All photos are from the subscription service Shutterstock.com unless otherwise identified.*

### *Join our Grace Note Family*

*Grace Notes are daily inspirational email sent to a subscriber list. If you would like to receive Grace Notes please email the senior chaplain and ask to be included (kennisdu@childrensnational.org). Below is an example of a recent Grace Note*

Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.  
Helen Keller



#### Chaplaincy Staff:

Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine, room 4201, x.3321  
Margarita Roque, habla Espanol,, room 4115, x 2626  
Rev. Eliezer Oliveira, habla Espanol, room 4115, x 5050  
Rev. Matthew Schlageter, room 4115, x 6736  
Rev. Lavender Kelley, room 4115, x 4638

Catholic Mass is held Thursday at noon and Saturday at 4 pm in the Main Chapel, third floor Main, room 3201

Jumma Prayer is held Friday at 12:15 pm in the Main Chapel, third floor Main, room 3201