

**St. Basil Antiochian Orthodox Church**  
**His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York**  
**And Metropolitan of all North America**  
**His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, Auxiliary Bishop**  
**Of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast**  
**The Very Reverend Father Peter Nugent, Pastor**  
**3916 Hudson St., Metairie, LA 70006**  
**504.888.8114**  
[\*\*sbno@att.net\*\*](mailto:sbno@att.net)  
[\*\*www.stbasilneworleans.org\*\*](http://www.stbasilneworleans.org)

**The Venerable Martyrs Theodore and Theophanes the Branded**

Theodore and Theophanes were blood brothers, born in Palestine and well educated in both secular and spiritual wisdom. They were monks in the community of St. Sava the Sanctified and later were ordained presbyters. They suffered harshly for their defense of icons under three emperors: Leo the Armenian, Michael Balbus and Theophilus. The demented Theophilus beat them with his own hands and ordered that they be branded with iron on their faces with derisive verses, for which they were called "the Branded." They were cast into prison in the town of Apamea in Bithynia. Theodore died there from his pains and wounds. Theophanes, freed at the time of the Emperors Theodore and Michael, was consecrated Metropolitan of Nicaea by Patriarch Methodius. St. Theodore died in the year 833. These two wonderful brothers suffered for Christ and received a wonderful reward from Him in the Immortal Kingdom of Light.

*from: The Prologue from Ochrid*

**St. Basil**  
**Antiochian**  
**Orthodox Church**



**December 27, 2020**  
**Protomartyr Stephen the Archdeacon**  
**The Sunday after the Nativity of Christ**

# Welcome!

## To Our Guests:

While we are not yet in formal inter-communion with other faith traditions, we have much respect for their rites of worship and sanctuaries of prayer. In our tradition, **Holy Communion is open only to those Orthodox Christians who are in good standing with the Church and have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and a recent confession.** Please do not be offended by this if you are not an Orthodox Christian or in good standing with the Church. We welcome you to our church and invite you to receive a blessing and partake of the blessed bread at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

*In our tradition... the church temple is a house of prayer. Upon entering it, please refrain from unnecessary conversation before, during and after church services, most especially during the Divine Liturgy from the time of the consecration of the Gifts until the last person has received the Eucharist. At the end of the Divine Liturgy, please come quietly forward to receive a piece of the antidoron and exit the church temple without talking. During coffee hour in the Church Hall is the appropriate place to exchange personal greetings and converse with one another. May God bless your reverence and piety.*

**Epistle Reading:** Acts: 6:8-7:5, 47-60

**Gospel Reading:** St. Matthew 2:13-23

## Saints of the Day

Protomartyr Stephen the archdeacon; Venerable-confessors Theodore and Theophanes the Branded.

## A Message from the Parish Council at Year's End

Dear Parishioners,

As we continue to cope with the Covid virus, we are coming to the end of 2020. We have had a stable year financially even when attendance was lower than usual. The Lord continues to bless our Parish with no outbreaks of the virus. We have a large catechumen class and have visitors who are actively considering joining our Parish. We have also come through several hurricanes without significant damage. As we count our blessings, please remember your pledge to St. Basil. If you are behind in your giving, we would much appreciate it if you could catch up

by the end of the year. May you have a blessed Nativity season—Rob Booms, Chairman of the Parish Council.

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Thursday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Royal Hours, 9:00 A.M.  
Thursday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> – Nativity Compline, 6:30 P.M.  
Friday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> – Orthros, 8:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 A.M.  
Saturday, Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> – No Great Vespers & Confessions  
Sunday, Dec. 27<sup>th</sup> – Orthros, 8:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 A.M.  
Thursday, Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> – Divine Liturgy, 6:30 P.M. (St. Basil)  
Saturday, Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> – No Great Vespers & Confessions  
Sunday, Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup> – Orthros, 8:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 A.M.  
Tuesday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> – Royal Hours, 8:30 A.M.; Vespers Liturgy, 10:00 A.M.  
Wednesday, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> – Orthros, 8:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 A.M.  
Wednesday, Jan. 6 – Badnjak Service, 6:30 P.M.  
Saturday, Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> – Great Vespers & Confessions, 5:00 P.M.  
Sunday, Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> – Orthros, 8:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 A.M.  
Saturday, Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> – Great Vespers & Confessions, 5:00 P.M.  
Sunday, Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> – Orthros, 8:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 A.M.

## **Orthodox Thoughts from Theo, the Parish Possum**



The possum family under the altar has heard that St. Basil is getting a church bell! We are quite excited about this. Bells were first rung in the Orthodox church at the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople in the year 865. Our Orthodox possum relatives in Russia tell us that churches there have used bells since 988. The largest liturgical bell in the world is there. It weighs 445,000 pounds. Called the “Tsar Bell,” it sits at the Kremlin in Moscow. St. Basil’s bell weighs approximately 600 pounds. Since it is over 100 years old, it will need to be cleaned and a place for it will have to be prepared. Like all church bells in the Eastern church, the dapper strikes a stationary bell (the bell itself does not swing as in the Western church). While Fr. Peter has not decided at what times it will be rung, such a bell is typically used at the beginning and end of the liturgy and when the Holy Gifts are consecrated. Jefferson Parish has no restrictions on when church bells can be rung, but St. Basil will respect its human and animal neighbors early in the morning and late at night. The possums look forward to joining in the making of a joyful noise to the Lord! Blessings to all—Theo

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### ***Spiritual Counsels...***

"The Lord stands far from the wicked, but He listens to the prayers of the virtuous." – Prov. 15:29

**Today's Ushers:** Greg Lindley. **Next Week:** Tania/Sevin Russell.

**Today's coffee hour:** Team 4. Thank you. **Next Sunday:** Team 1.

### **A-Peal for the Bell...**



The bell was originally used in the National Shrine of St. Anna in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Please consider contributing to the cost of the bell and its installation. Any gifts should be marked "Church Bell". You are also invited to several upcoming fundraising lunches and hope that you can attend. —Rob Booms, Chairman of the Parish Council



### ***The Bookstore Bee***

This month in the bookstore, we would like to bring attention to a variety of items we have in stock for the Nativity season, from Christmas cards and ornaments to beautiful tapestry bookmarks, prayer ropes and children's books. We have something for everyone's gift giving or stocking stuffer needs. Join us in the church hall after liturgy and browse around!

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The **Advent Fast** began Saturday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, and is divided into two periods. The first period is Nov. 15 – Dec. 19, with the traditional fasting discipline observed (no meat, poultry, dairy, eggs, fish, alcohol and oil). There is an allowance, however, for alcohol and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and an allowance for alcohol, oil and fish on Saturdays and Sundays. The second period is Dec. 20–24, with the traditional fasting discipline observed. There is an allowance, however, for alcohol and oil only on Saturday and Sunday.

Please be advised that our teams for coffee hour have changed. Our new teams will start the first Sunday of December. If you have any questions please feel free to speak with Tania Russell.

Church calendars, house blessing forms, pledge forms and boxes of offering envelopes for 2021 for each family in the parish are now available in the dining room of the church hall. Please be sure to get yours this Sunday.

Please note that face coverings are required to attend the Badnjak service scheduled for Jan. 6 at 6:30 P.M.

As of Dec. 4, 2020, 44 pledges were received for 2020 totaling \$86,950. The donations for November 2020 totaled \$14,278.25. The expenses were \$11,058.08, for an end-of-month balance of \$27,606.19. Thank you.