



ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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Greek Orthodox Community Readies for Epiphany Celebration

“The Feast of Theophany, the Feast of Lights.”

Annual Divers Dance January 2
Blessing of the Fleet January 5
Arrival of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios January 5
Diving For the Cross on January 6
Epiphany Glendi on January 6

TARPON SPRINGS, FL (December 15, 2009) – The annual celebration of the Baptism of Jesus Christ by St. John the Baptist in the River Jordan will be celebrated on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Tarpon Springs, Florida. A procession to Spring Bayou will commence immediately following the church service for the Blessing of the Waters and Cross retrieval.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, and Bishop Demetrios of Xanthou will be among the participants in this year’s observance said the Reverend Fr. Michael Eaccarino, Dean of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral. “This Holy Event,

which is not merely a yearly symbolic re-enactment but a “real time” transformation of nature, we here in the Tarpon Springs area become recipients of the true metamorphosis of our environment. We are protected from above.”

Leading up to the feast day, the Blessing of the Fleet will take place Tuesday, January 5th at 11:00 am – noon. Clergy will bless the fisherman, their vessels, and the water in which they travel, and wish them safe and prosperous journeys. The service will occur at the Sponge Docks on the Anclote River, which feeds into the Gulf of Mexico. Both commercial fishermen and recreational boaters will participate.

In addition, January 5th His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios will hold a news conference prior to the Pan-Orthodox dinner at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Clearwater, Florida.

On January 6th, Epiphany observances begin at 8 a.m. with Orthros (Matins) followed by the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral at 10 a.m. The cathedral is located at 36 N. Pinellas Ave.

Following the Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of the waters, Archbishop Demetrios, hierarchs, clergy, dignitaries and thousands of people will form an impressive procession to Spring Bayou, with school children in traditional costumes, choir members, Greek Folk dance groups from throughout the Tampa Bay Area. There, an invocation is recited, a young lady releases a white dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit to fly over the Bayou, and the Archbishop casts a white cross into the water. Some sixty five young men will dive for the cross, each seeking the honor of retrieving it. The winner then kneels with the cross before the Archbishop for a blessing.

Following the ceremony, an Epiphany Glendi (festival) with food, drink, live music and dancing begins at the Spanos-Pappas Community Center Theofilos

Hall 348 N Pinellas Avenue. Admission is \$3. There will also be shows of traditional Greek dancing performed by the Levendia, the nationally award winning Greek dance troupe in addition to children's games and activities.

The Epiphany divers will be honored by the His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios at the Glendi, the cross victor and divers will be there throughout the day's festivities.

The 2nd annual Divers Dance will be held on January 2nd at the Spanos-Pappas Community Center, Theofilos Hall. The VIP reception will begin at 6:30, with dinner being served at 7:30. Tickets are \$25 per person. Further information and ticket reservations are available; please contact Ana Patsalides at 727.410.1691. This event is sponsored and catered by Sweet Bay with a VIP reception underwritten by Home Owners Choice Insurance, & music sponsored by Arista entertainment.

Further announcements include December 25, announcement of the Dove Bearer.

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