



■ † Circumcision of the Lord and Commemoration of St. Basil the Great

## Our Inner Renewal, Through Circumcision of the Heart\*



**S**ince New Year's Day is the beginning of the year, we ought to gather in our soul those thoughts, feelings and dispositions that will direct our affairs throughout the coming year in a Christian manner.

**We** will find this the moment we bring to mind the meaning of New Year's Day in the spiritual life.

**In** the spiritual life, New Year's Day is when one who has been living carelessly becomes zealous about salvation and pleasing God. When one makes this resolution, then all is rebuilt afresh both internally and externally, upon new beginnings; the old passes away and all is new. If you have this, renew it; if not, acquire it—and for you this will be New Year's Day.

**A** worthy celebration of the Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord and of the commemoration of St. Basil the Great is also connected with the foregoing.

**The** essence of the change we have described is that a person begins henceforth to live solely for God and his salvation, whereas previously he lived exclusively for himself, preparing his own destruction.

**Now** he abandons former habits and comforts, and all those things in which he previously took pleasure. He cuts off pas-

sions and lustful dispositions and undertakes works of strict self-denial.

Such a change precisely represents that which, according to the Apostle, circumcision of the heart should be (cf. Romans 2:29).

The Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord reminds us of this and obligates us to put it into practice, while St. Basil the Great provides us with an example to follow.

Hence, all the themes which fill our consciousness on New Year's Day come together into one: **our inner renewal through the circumcision of the heart.**

If it pleases the Lord to give someone this mind-set on New Year's Day—that is, not only to think in such a way, but also to bring all of this into his life—he will celebrate New Year's Day in a most perfect Christian manner, and will prepare for a Christian passage of the entire year. On the subsequent New Year's Day he will only have to renew and revive what he has now undertaken.



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(\*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God.*