



# SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## CHRIST IS BAPTIZED! IN THE RIVER JORDAN!

**January 6, 2013**      **The Holy Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Divine Liturgy 9:30 am**  
January 12      Saturday      Great Vespers      4:00 pm  
January 13      32<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost / Sunday after Theophany      Divine Liturgy      9:30 am

**Saints of the Day:** Venerable Macarios of Mount Athos (1431). Repose of Saint Theophan the Recluse, Bishop of Tambov (1894). Hieromartyr Romanus, Monk of Lacedemonia, beheaded by the Turks (1695). New Hieromartyr Archpriest Andrew Zimin, his wife Lydia, his mother-in-law Domnica, his two daughters and his servant Maria, of Ussurisk (1919). Saint John (1942). Venerable Laurence of Chernigov (1950). Saint Schottin Hermit of Kilkenny (6 c.). Saint Diman (or Dimas) Dubh of Connor, Bishop (658). Saint Edeyrn of Brittany, Hermit (6 c.). Saint Eigrad (6 c.). Saint Hywyn (Owen) of Aberdaron (516). Saint Melanius of Rennes, Bishop (530). Saint Merinus the Hermit (6 c.). Saint Peter of Canterbury, Abbot (608).

**Please remember in your prayers:** Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Mother Raphaela, Michael, Ed, Maria, John, Michael, James, Nancy, Priest Sergius, Archpriest Jason, Archpriest John, Archpriest Vincent, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy.

**God Grant Many Years!** Prayers for the health of Erin Albrecht were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father Udics.

**God Grant Many Years!** Prayers for the health of Olga Prawlocki were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Sonia Buttino.

**God Grant Many Years!** Prayers for the health of Archpriest James Parsells, Jerome Tarris, Michelle Ray and David Johnson were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father Udics.

**God Grant Many Years! Aunt Olga Prawlocki's 102<sup>nd</sup> Birthday** will be celebrated with a party at Valley Health on January 11 from 10:30 am. Everyone's welcome!

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Joan A. Wilson Loiacano (80) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of her family.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Olga Hrobuchak (d. 12/31/2012) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of her family.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the souls of Nick and Vera Keblish were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Sonia Buttino.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Helen Pearl were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Andre Tirenin were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

### **Holy Theophany (Epiphany): the Baptism of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ**

Theophany denotes the feast whereby through the Baptism of the Lord the Most Holy Trinity has been revealed to the world (Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22). God the Father spoke from Heaven about the Son, the Son was baptised by the holy Forerunner of the Lord John, and the Holy Spirit descended upon the Son in the form of a Dove. From ancient times this feast was called the Day of Illumination and the Feast of Lights, since that God is Light and has appeared to illumine "those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death" (Mt 4:16) and to save through grace the fallen race of mankind.

In the ancient Church it was the custom to baptise catechumens at the vespers of Theophany, such that Baptism also is revealed as a spiritual illumination of mankind.

The origin of the feast of Theophany came about in Apostolic times. Mention is made concerning it in the Apostolic Decretals. From the II Century there is preserved the testimony of Sainted Clement of Alexandria concerning the celebration of the Baptism of the Lord and performing the night vigil before this feast.

In the III century on the feast of Theophany there is known the dialogue concerning Divine-services between the holy martyr Hippolytus and Saint Gregory the Wonderworker. In the following centuries – from the IV to IX Century – all the great fathers of the Church – Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostomos, Ambrose of Milan, John Damascene, had their own comments about the feast of Theophany. The monks Joseph the Studite, Theophanes and Byzantios composed much liturgical music for this feastday, which even now is sung for Divine-services. The Monk John Damascene said, that the Lord was baptised not because He Himself had need for cleansing, but so that "by water to bury human sin," to fulfill the law, to reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and finally, to sanctify "watery nature" and to proffer it to us in the form and example of Baptism.

On the feastday of the Baptism of Christ, Holy Church asserts our faith in the mystery – most sublime and incomprehensible to human intellect – of the Three Persons of the One God. It teaches us to confess and glorify as equally-honoured the Holy Trinity One-Essence and Undivided. It exposes and collapses the fallacies of the ancient pseudo-teachings, which attempted with reason and by human terms to explain the Creator of the world. The Church shews the necessity of Baptism for believers in Christ, and it inspires for us a sense of deep gratitude for the Illumination and Purification of our sinful nature. The Church teaches that our salvation and cleansing from sin is possible only by the power of the grace of the Holy Spirit, wherefore it is necessary to preserve worthily these gifts of the grace of holy Baptism – keeping clean this priceless garb, about which the feast of the Baptism tells us: “As many as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27). See also: Discourse on the Day of the Baptism of Christ by St John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople.

#### **CONCERNING THE HOLY WATER** from the *Menaion*

Let it be known to all concerning the Holy Water that those who deprive themselves of it are not doing a good thing, for the Grace of God was given for the sanctification of the world and all creation. Therefore it is sprinkled in all places and even over common and profane things. And so, what is the reason not to drink of this? (But know that all uncleanness in us is not from partaking of things that are eaten, but from our filthy deeds. If we are cleansed of these deeds, without doubt we may drink of this Holy Water.)

About this the rational swallow, the golden-voiced Ecumenical Teacher, John, Patriarch of Constantinople, in his sermon for those Christians who had come to the Holy Church of God for baptism ... witnesses... saying: “Why not on the day in which Christ was born, but on the day in which He was baptized is the appearance spoken of? Because this is the day on which He was baptized and sanctified the nature of water.”

For this reason, on the Eve of the Feast, all draw and carry water to their homes and keep it and preserve it throughout the whole year. The day of sanctifying the waters becomes a clear sign of God’s Grace, for the nature of these waters is not spoiled for a long time, but it endures for a whole year, or many years. Today the waters that are drawn remain fresh and new and after an extended time is as on the day in which it was drawn.

**THE BLESSING OF WATER.** In the Book of Genesis, we read that creation began when the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters. (Gen. 1:2) Throughout the Bible, water plays an important and a 'mystical role' in human existence and in man's relationship with God the Creator.

Water has the capacity to produce death, as recounted in the story of Noah and the ark (Gen. 6); or to produce life, as noted in the story of Moses' striking the rock in the desert to produce water for the parched wanderers (Numbers 20). While the waters of the Red Sea parted to allow the Hebrews to pass over in safety (and thus preserve life), the same waters came rushing upon the Pharaoh and his army drowning them.

In the New Testament, we see water becoming the means by which the Trinity was revealed during the Baptism of Jesus, which we celebrate on the Feast of Theophany on January 6 each year. In the Baptism of Jesus, at the hands of John the Baptist, the spiritual significance and potential of water as the source of life is again revealed and reaffirmed just as in Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

In a sermon on Theophany, Saint John Chrysostom says: “On this day Christ was baptized; through His Baptism He sanctified the element of water. There let us all draw of the water and store it in homes, because on this day the water is consecrated.”

In blessing water on the Feast Day, we ask and pray that the original purpose of water, as a source of life, blessing and holiness be revealed to us as we drink it. In the Garden of Eden, Adam enjoyed a unique and lordly relationship with Creation. After the Fall as he was expelled from Paradise, he heard the words, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.” (Genesis 3:17) From that point Adam would be subject to Creation, and not a master. Yet through Christ, the curse is lifted, just as the curse of death is lifted from the human race through the Resurrection. Because of Christ's coming and His work of salvation and redemption (as the hymns say, “dispensation”), Man and Creation are reconciled. Creation is able once more to meet not only the physical needs of man, but the elements of creation can be, and are, sources of grace and healing as we worship the Lord of Life.

When we bless water - or any other material object - and when we celebrate the Mysteries (Sacraments) of the Church, we reverently and gratefully proclaim that Christ Himself (in the words of the Divine Liturgy) “offers and is offered” blesses and sanctifies the world (cosmos) as the Great High Priest.

The celebration of the Great Blessing of Water is an affirmation that through Christ's own baptism, He who is our loving Lord has lifted the curse of Adam's sin, and given the creative goodness of God's creation back to mankind once again.

**House Blessing** – at your convenience. Please phone Father with suggested dates and times for blessing your home. Your home should be neat and tidy, but don't worry if it isn't perfect.

Prepare a small bowl for holy water and the container of holy water standing ready. Have a candle in a candlestick holder, with matches. It would be good to have an icon ready also. Make a list with people who live in the house on one side, and people departed this life on the other side (either side by side or front and back), marked which is which. Inform Father what to bless and what not (upstairs, downstairs, garage, basement etc.).

As many of the house's residents should be at home that evening. Turn off the television and any distractions (radios, cd-players, computer games etc.). Someone should be prepared to lead Father from room to room – this person should carry the lit candle. If you don't have holy water, let Father know in advance and he can bring some with him. If you want more than just enough to bless the house, you can pick it up in the holy water font in church. If you have holy water from last year or older, use it to water your houseplants or pour it out on the ground where no one walks.

By the way, this is not the time or place for blessing objects. They should be brought to church so that they can be placed on the altar during the divine liturgy and then blessed with their own blessing.