

From the Divine Office for the Theophany

He who covers Himself with light as with a garment has deigned for our sake to become as we are. Today He is covered by the streams of the Jordan, though He had no need to be cleansed by them: but through the cleansing that He Himself receives, He bestows a rebirth on us. O wonder! Without fire, He casts anew-and without shattering, He refashions. And He saves those who are enlightened in Him, Christ our God, the Savior of our souls! (Vespers)

As the Prophet said, a great light has risen upon heathen Galilee, upon the land of Zebulon, the land of Nephtali: this light is Christ. A people living in darkness has seen a great light, a dawn appearing like lightning from Bethlehem. The Lord, born from Mary, the Sun of Justice, shed His rays upon the whole inhabited earth. Come, then, naked children of Adam: let us clothe ourselves in Him, that we may warm ourselves. You are a protection and veil to the naked, a light to those in darkness. You came and appeared, O Inaccessible Light! (Orthros)



**SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY
JANUARY 8, 2023**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

1- Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His love endures forever.

O Son of God, Who were baptized by John in the Jordan River, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

2. Let the house of Israel say: He is good, for His love endures forever.

O Son of God, Who were baptized by John in the Jordan River, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

3. Let those who fear the Lord say: He is good, for His love endures forever.

O Son of God, Who were baptized by John in the Jordan River, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God, and He has appeared to us.

People: *O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!*

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6) pg. 41

The angelic powers were around Your tomb, and the guards became as dead, and Mary stood at the tomb, seeking Your spotless body; Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it, and You met the Virgin O Bestower of life. O Lord, who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Troparion of Theophany (Tone 1)

At Your Baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed: for the Father's voice bore witness to You by calling You His Beloved Son, and the spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God who have appeared to us, and enlightened the world, glory to You.

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 15

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kondakion of the Theophany (Tone 3)

Today You have appeared, O Lord, to the universe and Your light, O Christ our God, has been impressed upon us who sing to You with full knowledge: You came and appeared, O Inaccessible Light.

TRISAGION: All of you who have been baptized into Christ...

The Lord Jesus: God and Man Christ is clearly Lord in icons of this feast. Several signs of His divinity and preeminence are found in the way He is shown. In Western depictions of His baptism Jesus is often shown with His head bowed and hands folded in prayer. That is never the case in our icons. He is shown standing erect, often with His hand raised in blessing.

In some older icons Christ is depicted naked. We are back in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve, created in communion with God, are naked and unashamed. The original creation is restored and renewed with the coming of Christ.

"Once You clothed the shameful nakedness of our forefather Adam; now You are stripped naked of Your own will! You covered the roof of heaven with waters; now You wrap Yourself in the streams of Jordan, only merciful Christ."

In later icons Christ is depicted with a drape around His waist, which represents the winding sheet in which He was wrapped for burial. The river is often depicted in the shape of a cave, suggesting the tomb in which He was laid.

In some icons the water envelops His sacred body which is visible in it. We are thus reminded of the death and resurrection of Christ into which our baptism immerses us.

In other icons Jesus is not submerged into the water at all. He is depicted astride the river as He blesses it. The River Jordan did not cleanse Christ; it is Christ's presence in its midst which sanctifies the water

Other Signs of God's Presence

The icon of the Theophany, as well as many of its hymns, includes other elements which point to the divine activity present in Christ at His baptism. Among them are:

John the Forerunner: The presence of John the Baptist is an essential part of the story of Jesus' baptism. In icons, however, the depiction of John is more about Christ than it is about him. In some icons John is shown bowing to the Lord, bent in awe before the One he had come to announce. In other icons John is depicted as gazing up toward heaven, as if beholding the manifestation of the Father and the Spirit. In either case, although he was the focus of all other baptisms which he performed, John was not the center of this one.

The Axe: In some icons we see a tree stump with an axe embedded in it near where John is standing. This recalls John's prophetic words to the Pharisees, *"even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"* (Mt 3:10). The axe ready to cut signifies that the Messiah is at hand.

The Seascape: In some icons Christ is shown standing on one or two rocks, sometimes arranged in the form of a cross. Here we are reminded of the resurrection icon in which the Lord is depicted astride the gates of Death. In that icon the personification of Death often lies bound beneath His feet. In the Theophany icon it is often snakes or a sea creature under His feet. In both cases what is depicted is Christ's victory over the powers of darkness. *"You crushed the heads of the dragons in the water"* (Ps 73:14).

"When You bowed Your head to the Forerunner, You crushed the heads of the dragons; and when You stood in the midst of the stream, You let Your light shine upon all creatures, that they might glorify You, Our Savior, who enlighten our souls!"

The Sea: At the bottom of the icon we often find two small figures with astonished looks on their faces, often astride dolphins. They personify these psalm verses, alluding to the Exodus but often heard during the feast of the Theophany: *"The sea saw and fled; Jordan turned back... What ails you, O sea, that you fled? O Jordan, that you turned back? O mountains, that you skipped like rams? O little hills, like lambs? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob"* (Ps 114:3, 5-7).

Today the prophecy of the Psalms swiftly approaches its fulfillment: "The sea looked and fled: Jordan was driven back" before the face of the Lord, before the face of the God of Jacob! He came to receive baptism from His servant, so that our souls washed clean from the defilement of idolatry, might be enlightened through Him!

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today

HS Anthony Poti

HS Lauren Abraham

+Diane Moossa

+Joseph DeMauro. Requested by Nick Rahall & family

This week's Coffee is hosted by Ryan and Tina Dumont & family

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Anthony & Diana Esper

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Vi Gazal, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Anthony Poti, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, Richard Abraham, Sr., Daneil Sarrouf, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt William Rahall, Lauren Abraham and the people of Ukraine.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

CALENDARS

The 2023 calendars are at the rear of the church. Please take only one until we're sure everyone has gotten one. We will not do a general mailing of calendars. If you know someone who would like a calendar and can't get to church, please let me know and I will send them one.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 777
Candles	\$ 18
Christmas Flowers	\$ 48
Christmas Offerings	\$ 75
Stole	\$ 225
Memorials	\$ 325
TOTAL	\$1,468

God bless you for your generosity!



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.



HOUSE BLESSINGS

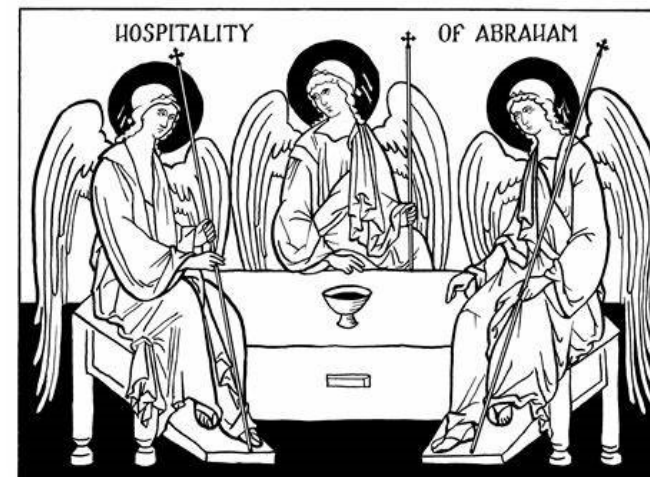
The post-Theophany period is the traditional time for blessing homes. If you would like me to come and bless your home, please see me after the Divine Liturgy or contact me at (978) 314-1962 (Brymc56@comcast.net).

I would love to come and spend some time with you!

Fr. Bryan

ADULT EDUCATION

We will begin an adult education series on February 7, 2023 at 6:30PM. Our text will be Fr. Justin Rose's book "Come, Follow Me." It is a Byzantine Christian approach to evangelization and disciple-making. It fits in well with Bishop Francois' motto: Becoming Disciples, Making Disciples. Please plan to join us!



God Revealed at the Jordan – Icon of the Theophany

WHAT DO WE CELEBRATE on January 6? Well, it's obvious, isn't it? Just look at the icon: it's Jesus' baptism!

Actually, neither the icon nor the feast celebrates the fact that the Lord Jesus was baptized. Rather we remember *what happened at His baptism* and what it represents for us as we live our life in Christ. We do not call this the Feast of Christ's Baptism, focusing on the historical setting. Rather we call it the Feast of the Holy Theophany, or "manifestation of God."

Manifestation of the Trinity

The troparion of the feast sets the tone for our reflection: "At Your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed; for the Father's voice bore witness to You, calling You His beloved Son and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ God, who have appeared to us and enlightened the world, glory to You!"

The story of this theophany is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In John's Gospel, as we shall see, the Baptist alludes to it as he describes the character and mission of Jesus.

The Father's Voice: Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell of a voice from heaven heard at Jesus' baptism calling Him "My beloved Son" (Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22). None of the Evangelists say outright that this was the voice of God, but since their picture of Jesus as the Son of God is clear in the Gospels, we can draw no other conclusion.

In icons of the Theophany this voice is depicted symbolically by the ray of light which originates in a geometric shape – often a semicircle – and rests over the head of Jesus.

The Dove: All the Evangelists, including John, describe the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. In John's Gospel the Baptist offers his own testimony: "He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit;' and I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1:33, 34).

In icons the dove is enclosed in an aureole, symbol of divine glory, in the midst of the ray representing the Father's voice. St John of Damascus compared the dove which appeared at the end of the flood to the dove at Jesus' baptism. "As, at that time the world was cleansed of sin through the waters of the flood, then the dove brought an olive branch to Noah's Ark announcing the end of the flood, and peace came to the Earth, so, in like manner the Holy Spirit descends as a dove to announce forgiveness of sins and God's mercy on the world. Then [it was] an olive branch, now it is our Lord's mercy.

The graphic presence of the Father (by His voice), the Son (in the flesh) and the Holy Spirit (in the form of a dove) is the first such manifestation of the Holy Trinity in the New Testament. The second such revelation is at the Holy Transfiguration of Christ as His ministry is drawing to a close.



BISHOP'S APPEAL

The Bishop's Appeal is in full swing. The Appeal makes it possible to grow the diocese by helping to establish new outreaches and missions, train candidates for the diaconate and priesthood as well as assist our retired priests.

Bishop Francois' motto is: *Becoming Disciples, Making Disciples.*

Let us become disciples and help make disciples. Let each of us share our time, talents, and treasure to build up the Diocese of Newton.

Prokimenon

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

Reader: Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

People: For we have hoped in You.

Epistle: Eph. 4:7-13

Alleluia

Your favor, O Lord, I will sing forever; from generation to generation, my mouth will proclaim Your faithfulness.

Verse: For You have said, "My kindness is established forever." In heaven You have confirmed Your faithfulness.

Gospel: Mt. 4:12-17

Hirmos of the Theophany (Tone 2)

O my soul, magnify the Higher in honor and glory than the heavenly powers! All tongues are at a loss to praise you properly, and every intelligence, even supernatural, is rapt in wonder when it comes to honor you, O Theotokos. But in your graciousness, accept our faith, knowing our holy longing. Intercessor of Christians, we extol you.

Kinonikon

The grace of God our Savior has appeared to all people. Alleluia.

After Communion

Troparion of Theophany

