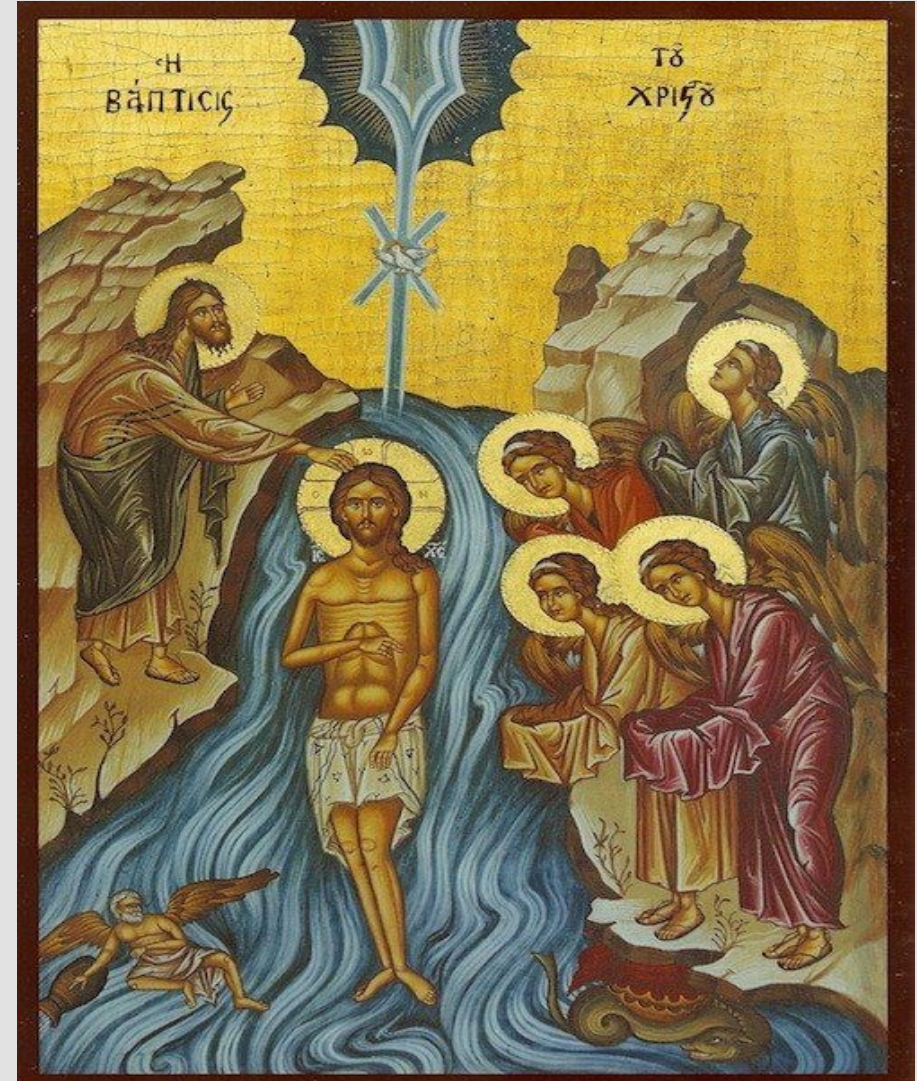


Hymns for the Sunday Before Theophany

Christ has been revealed. God has been made manifest, as David once announced. He draws near to His servant, seeking baptism at his hand. O River Jordan, be filled gladness! Mountains and hills, earth and sea, leap for joy! O hearts of men, exalt as you receive the spiritual light! (Vespers)

Make ready, Zebulon, and prepare Naphtali! And you, Jordan River, stop your flow and receive with a thrill of joy the Master coming to be baptized. And you, Adam, rejoice with the first mother, Eve, and hide not as you did of old in Paradise: for Christ at the sight of your nakedness has come forth to clothe you with the robe of innocence. Indeed, Christ has come to renew the whole creation. (Troparion)

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM
January 5, 2020**



Baptism of the Lord

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY

Antiphon (1st)

1. Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior save us!

2. Say to God: “How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that enemies cringe before You.”

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior save us!

3. Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior save us!

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come let us worship and bow down before Christ.

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

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 5, Pg. 40)

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our Salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross, and to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of the Paramony (Tone 4)

After Elias had gone up to heaven, Eliseus threw his mantle in the Jordan River which separated, opening a way, a dry path between two walls of water where he could pass: a true symbol of our baptism by which we pass through this passing life. Christ has been at the Jordan River to sanctify the waters.

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 Paramony (Tone 3)

Today the Lord has been seen in the waters of the Jordan River. He has cried out to John, saying; “Be not dismayed at having to baptize Me, for I have indeed come to save Adam, the first man to have been created.”

At first, the Armenian Church adopted this arrangement. In the sixth century, when the division between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Churches became fixed, the Armenians reverted to their older practice.

Manifestation to Israel

The original single feast of the Nativity-Theophany celebrated the first revelations of His divinity, His incarnation and the beginning of His ministry as Lord and Savior of mankind. It put forth a number of themes which we now find spread out throughout the festal season.

On the feast of the Nativity (and of Christ’s circumcision on January 1) we celebrate God becoming man in a particular place and time. Jesus is born in the heart of God’s chosen people, Israel, and He is adored by them in Mary and Joseph and the shepherds who came to the cave. These feasts celebrate the particular revelation of God to the nation of Israel in terms of its sacred history, as we proclaim in this verse from vespers: “Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and celebrate, all you lovers of Zion; for the temporal bonds with which Adam was condemned have been loosed; Paradise has been opened for us and the serpent has been annihilated, having beheld now that the one deceived by her of old has become a mother to the Creator. O, the depth, riches, wisdom and knowledge of God: that the instrument of death which brought death to all flesh, has become the first-fruit of salvation to all the world because of the Theotokos. The all-perfect God has been born from her as a babe; and by His birth He has sealed her virginity; by His swaddling-clothes He has loosed the chains of our sins; and by His babyhood He has healed the pains and sorrows of Eve. Let all creation, therefore, exchange glad tidings and rejoice; for Christ has come to recall it and to save our souls.”

Manifestation to the Gentiles

Our vision of Christ’s coming work is widened as the Magi, pagan astrologers, arrive “from the East” to worship Him. The gifts they bring represent kingship (gold), priesthood (frankincense) and a self-emptying death (myrrh). In them Christ’s kingship over all nations is revealed. He is to be “*a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel*” (Lk 2:32).

“You have shone forth from the Virgin, O Christ, super-sensual Sun of righteousness. And a star pointed to You O uncontainable One contained in a cave, and the Magi were led to worship You. Wherefore, with them we magnify You. O Giver of life, glory to You!”

Manifestation to All Creation

On the feast of the Theophany, another aspect of Christ’s incarnation is celebrated. His coming transforms, not only humanity, but all creation. In His baptism, He sanctifies the waters, a primordial element of creation according to Genesis, representing the ultimate transfiguration of all things in the Kingdom of God. As we hear at the great blessing of water on the feast of the Theophany, “Today land and sea divide between them the joy of the world, and the world is filled with rejoicing. The waters behold You, O Lord; the waters behold You and they fear. The Jordan turns back its course, and the mountains shout with glee as they behold God in the flesh.”

“Of old the prince of this world was named king of all that was in the waters; but by Your baptism he is choked and destroyed, like Legion in the lake. With Your mighty arm, O Savior, You have granted freedom to Your creation, which he had enslaved” (Canon at Compline on the Fore-feast of the Theophany).

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Amelia Filewicz, Michael Filewicz, deceased members of Filewicz & Harayda Families. Requested by the Filewicz Family

Jan. 12 Health and Salvation of all the members of the Yanni Family. Requested by Mae Yanni

- ◆ Last Week's Attendance/Donations: **41/\$1,182**
- ◆ Your Christmas donations will allow us to purchase new a Gospel Book and cover. Thank you for your generosity! We will also be purchasing two new sets altar cloths: One through a generous donation from the Delnore family and the other through the generosity of one of our parishioners.



HOUSE BLESSINGS

In our Byzantine tradition, it is customary to have one's house blessed after the feast of Theophany. I would like to come and bless your homes and spend time getting to know you a little better. Please call the Rectory or email me (Brymc56@comcast.net) to schedule a time for me to bless your home .

- Fr. Bryan

Welcome to those who are visiting today. We are happy to have you worship with us. If this is your first time here, please come downstairs to the Hall, introduce yourself, have some refreshments, and get to know the Community. If you have any questions about the Melkite Church and its traditions, please don't hesitate to ask Fr. Bryan.

Weddings — One year notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Baptisms — One month notice. Contact Fr. Bryan for Sacramental Preparation.

Please let Fr. Bryan know about anyone who is sick, in the hospital, or homebound so that he can visit and bring them the Eucharist on a regular basis.



Theophany Divine Liturgy

Monday January 6 @ 7:00PM - Divine Liturgy followed by the Great Blessing of Water

COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST WITH US!

If you would like to send Fr. Paul a note or card, his new address is:

Rt. Rev. Paul G. Frechette
St. George Melkite Church
1617 W. State St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233



Sunday before Theophany - One Feast or Two?

WHAT'S WITH THE ARMENIANS? Every other Church – whether on the Julian or Gregorian Calendar – celebrates Christ's Nativity on December 25 and His Theophany on January 6. The Armenian Church celebrates both feasts together on the same day, January 6. So what's with them?

The Ancient Practice

The oldest practice documented in Christian history is that of a single celebration of Christ's birth, the adoration of the Magi, all the events of Christ's childhood recorded in the Scriptures, as well as His baptism by John in the Jordan and His first miracle, at the wedding feast of Cana. St Cyril of Alexandria writes about it at the beginning of the third century.

In the next century, St Gregory the Theologian, writing in the year 380, refers to this practice, still observed in his Church in Asia Minor: "Now if the Feast of the Theophany, and so also of the Nativity, for it is called both, since two names are ascribed to one reality... The name is Theophany, since He has appeared, and Nativity, since He has been born" (Oration 38, *On the Theophany or the Nativity of Christ*, 3).

Scholars today believe that a single feast of the Manifestation of God was observed in the West as well, but on December 25. In both cases, the date was determined by the date believed to be the date of the crucifixion. In the ancient world it was commonly believed that the date of a truly great person's death coincided with the date of his conception or birth. Some rabbis still teach that a righteous person is entrusted with a mission on the day of his conception or birth. In one who completes his mission in the most perfect way possible, this perfection is expressed in the fact that his mission ends on the same day that it was begun.

In the East it was believed that April 6 was the date of Christ's conception and crucifixion; consequently January 6 marked the celebration of His birth. In the West, the corresponding dates were March 25 and December 25.

After the first Ecumenical Council in AD 325, Christians in East and West became more aware of the practices of one another's Churches. The East adopted the Roman date of December 25, dedicating it to the events of Christ's birth. According to St John Chrysostom, this happened at Antioch in approximately 378. Preaching there in 388 on the Feast of the Nativity, he states that its observance was not yet quite ten years old. It quickly spread to the other Churches in the East. The East then devoted January 6 to the commemoration of the Lord's baptism. The Synaxarion read at orthros on the Feast of the Nativity notes that the day is devoted to all the events of Christ's birth: "On the twenty-fifth of this month we commemorate the nativity according to the flesh of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ... On this day we commemorate the veneration of the Magi... On this day we commemorate the shepherds who beheld the Lord." To this day, we read Luke's story of Jesus' birth and the visitation of the shepherds at the evening Vesper-Liturgy and the story of the Magi from Matthew's Gospel at the morning Liturgy.

In the West, the division was slightly different, with January 6 dedicated to the visit of the Magi, as well as the baptism of Christ, as the following antiphon for vespers on the Roman feast of the Epiphany shows: "We keep this day holy in honor of three miracles: this day a star led the Wise Men to the manger; this day water was turned into wine at the marriage feast; this day Christ chose to be baptized by John in the Jordan for our salvation, alleluia."

Prokimenon

Reader: O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

People: O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have called: O my Rock, be not deaf to me!

People: O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Reader: O Lord, save your people

People: And bless your inheritance.

Epistle: 2 TIM 4:5-8, Sunday Before Theophany

Alleluia Verses

May God have mercy on us and bless us.

Verse: May he let his face shine upon us and have mercy on us.

Gospel: MK 1:1-8, Sunday Before Theophany

Hirmos: "It is Truly Meet... (Pg. 26)

