

FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Consider the following in your observance of the Great Feast of the Theophany.

- ✧ Read the scripture passages relating to the Baptism of our Lord: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22.
- ✧ Ask your priest to come bless your home. Schedule a time when your entire family can be there. Invite your neighbors, friends, and relatives, especially if they are not active in a church community. Having your home blessed provides an ideal opportunity for sharing your faith with others.



Orthodox Christians celebrate the Great Feast of Theophany, which commemorates the Baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan, on January 6.

In the early Church, the Nativity, or Birth, of Our Lord was celebrated on the same day as His Baptism. Only later were the two events accorded separate commemorations.

The word theophany literally means

- ✧ the shining forth of God or
- ✧ the manifestation of God.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD



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When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness to You, and called You His beloved Son. And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ, our God, who has revealed Yourself, and has enlightened the world: Glory to You!
(Troparion of Theophany)

IDENTIFYING WITH HUMANITY

Jesus Christ is fully human. Although He is our Creator, He loves us so much that He becomes one with us by taking on our human nature. Through His baptism, Jesus not only serves as an example for us, but He reveals Himself as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (Jn 1:29) and the One beloved of the Father whose mission it is to save creation from sin and death (Lk 3:21; Mk 1:35).

REVEALING HIS DIVINITY

Jesus Christ is fully God. When He took on our human nature, He did not relinquish or diminish His divinity. He is the second person of the Trinity, one in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, yet distinct in person. As Jesus was baptized, the voice of God the Father testified to this: “This is My beloved Son,” while the Holy Spirit descended upon Him “like a dove” (Mt 3:16).

THE BLESSING OF WATER

Water is essential to life. Yet, in this fallen world, water can also be a destructive force. Through His baptism, Jesus restores water to its rightful place within nature while revealing Himself as *the* Source of Life who fills all things with His presence.

We express this by blessing water on the Great Feast of Theophany, thereby proclaiming Christ as the “Living Water,” the Source of Life.

In the days following Theophany, the clergy visit and bless the homes of the faithful, signifying

- ✧ the desire to sanctify those who live therein;
- ✧ our acceptance of Jesus Christ as the true head of the household; and
- ✧ our faith in the Son of God who takes on our nature so that we might become more like God.

CELEBRATING THEOPHANY

By celebrating Theophany, we

- ✧ acknowledge Jesus’ two natures—divine and human;
- ✧ proclaim that He has come into the world to save us; and
- ✧ accept His invitation to become beloved daughters and sons of His Father.