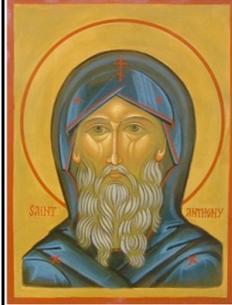


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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THEOPHANY (BAPTISM OF THE LORD)

TONE 4 —Afterfeast of the Theophany.

Ven. George the Chozebite (6th c.). Ven. Domnica of Constantinople (474). Emilian the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzicus (9th c.). Hieromartyr Carterius of Caesarea in Cappadocia (304). Martyrs Theophilus the Deacon, and Helladius, in Libya (4th c.). Martyrs Julian and his wife, Basilissa, at Antinoë in Egypt (313). Ven. Elias the Hermit, of Egypt (4th c.). Martyr Abo the Perfumer, of Tiflis (Georgia—790).



FIRST ANTIPHON

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was in his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion!

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

The sea saw Thee and fled: Jordan was driven back. What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest, and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Refrain)

SECOND ANTIPHON

I am well pleased for the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer. He hath inclined His ear unto me; therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live! Refrain: O Son of God, Who art baptized in the Jordan, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

The sorrows of death encompassed me, and the pains of hell took hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow, and called upon the Name of the Lord. (Refrain)

Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea, our God is merciful! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

Troparion of the Theophany (see below) introduced by the following verses:

- *Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!*
- *Let the house of Israel confess that He is good, for His mercy endures forever!*
- *Let all who fear the Lord confess that He is good, for His mercy endures forever!*

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. The Lord is God and hath appeared unto us. *Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!*

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone4): Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF THEOPHANY (Tone 1): When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity wast made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness unto Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath appeared and enlightened the world: glory to Thee!

Glory ... Now and ever ...

KONTAKION OF THEOPHANY (melody of "Today the Virgin gives birth"): On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world; and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise and chant with knowledge: Thou has now come, Thou has appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable!

In place of the Trisagion: *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ!*

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous.
Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven.*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

(Eph 4:7-13) **Brethren:** grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unit of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Today's epistle echoes something that we confess in the Creed: that Christ died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven *for us and for our salvation*. He is not the Messiah (Hebrew for "the anointed one") to impress us with His wisdom and power, to parade God's glory before our eyes without benefiting us in the least. Quite the contrary is true: **"grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."** In other words, whatever He has, he gives to us. As we hear in the many parables about God's generosity, He does not hold back from us the fatted calf, the best wine, the finest robe—the full measure of Christ's gift is a grace *for us*.

If God came to be with us in the flesh (as we have just celebrated at Christmas), he did so in order to take up before God the very human nature he had taken on: **"He who descended is the same who also ascended far above the heavens."** Whatever He touches, He sanctifies; therefore, if he came to be one of us, he also made it possible for us to be like Him: "as many as received the Son of God, He gave the power to become sons of God" (John 1:12).

It is on the basis of this theology that Saint Paul speaks of the grace given to all believers in Christ. The Giver is one, yet the gifts are many and of many kinds: **"some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers"** (and, in fact, we can add many more and varied gifts).

Note, however, that these gifts from God have a definite purpose. They are not the enjoyment of the recipient, they are not some magical powers, so that we feel good about ourselves and become puffed up. The grace of God is not some "cosmic energy" that we can tap into to boost our well-being, and Christians are not in the business of "white magic"! Rather, the gifts are **"for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain ... to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."** In other words, the many kinds of gifts are given *for our brothers and sisters*, and they serve our individual and communal common spiritual growth in the Spirit.

Let us keep in mind that the events we have just celebrated—the birth, circumcision, and baptism of our Lord—are the beginning of our salvation, the door through which **"grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."**

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Matt 3:13-17) At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased."

"Theophany" means, in Greek, "appearance/manifestation/ showing of God." What is shown to us? The Baptism of Christ is a further act of humility, by which the Lord and Master enters the life of a servant. The hymns of the Church proclaim in poetic theology that "He who has established the heavens" and "wraps Himself with light as in a garment"—God—came to us as a helpless baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and fed milk at His Mother's breast. After Christmas, on January 1, we celebrate the Circumcision of the Lord, and sing that the Giver of the Law submits to that Law

and is circumcised according to the Law. And now Christ comes to be baptized by John like all those who were coming to receive a baptism of forgiveness in the expectation of the Messiah.

Saint John the Baptist knows that Christ does not “need” the washing of the Jordan as a sign of repentance. And yet, the Lord wants to **fulfill all righteousness**. Yet again we can find the paradox of God’s amazing humility: He who came to baptize the whole world with the power of the Holy Spirit submits to the Jordan Baptism. Pause and consider also that on Theophany we bless the water. Why? Because when Christ was baptized in the Jordan, He did not receive anything from that washing—rather He sanctified the water and He revealed to the Baptist and to us as “the One” who came, as St. Paul writes, “*to purify us; through the washing and renewing of the Holy Spirit.*”

The Baptism brought by Christ, and with which all Christians have been washed is *NOT* the same as the baptism of repentance administered in the Jordan. Ours is a much greater gift: *the washing and renewing of the Holy Spirit*, which binds us to Christ, and makes us children of God. Still, as we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord, and sing of the “appearance” or “theophany” of God’s grace, we are reminded that He came for us and our sake, and that we are called to live in Christ, to renew our lives and live *soberly, righteously, and godly*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY, 1 PM — Blessing of Waters at Moraine State Park!

➤ **Directions:** from Butler take Route 422 W to the South Shore exit of Moraine State Park and turn right. Turn left at the sign for Bear Run Launch (at the corner where you see the State Park office) and go up the hill. At the top of the hill turn left following the sign for Bear Run Launch and go down the hill to the parking area.

HOUSE BLESSINGS: If you wish to receive the blessing of Theophany in your homes, please talk to Fr. Bogdan, or email, or call him to schedule a visit!



SUNDAY, JANUARY 22:

Celebration of Saint Anthony the Great, our patron saint.

We will be hosting our brothers and sisters from the other two Orthodox parishes, people from Cranberry, and some of the nuns at Transfiguration Monastery. Our guest and speaker will be **Rev. Dr. Silviu Bunta**, a priest in the OCA and professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of Dayton. donate the collection to a monastic community (since they are the followers of Saint Anthony, “the father of monasticism”). We will take a **special collection** for our monastic sisters in Ellwood City (since they are the followers of Saint Anthony, “the father of monasticism”).

In terms of food, we are planning a chili festival. Since we can probably count on 80-100 persons eating with us after the service, please bring lots of food!

