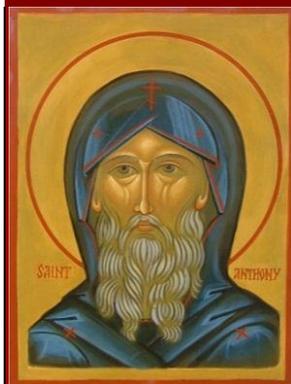


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



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THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

2014

TONE 3 — Prophet Micah (9th c. BC); Hieromartyr Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and Martyr Theonas (303); Ven. Syncletica of Alexandria (ca. 350); Virgin Apollinaria of Egypt (ca. 470); Ven. Phosterius the Hermit (9th c.); Ven. Menas of Sinai (6th c.). Ven. Gregory of Crete (ca. 820). Ven. Romanos, Martyr (1694).

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. *O Son of God, Who art baptized in the Jordan, save us who sing unto Thee, "Alleluia"!*

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!

Special Hymn in place of the Trisagion: *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!*

Since we serve the Liturgy of Saint Basil, the hymn for the Theotokos is "In thee rejoices all creation..."

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.
O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever!*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to Titus

(Tit 2:11-15, 3:4-7)

My child Titus, the saving grace of God has appeared to all people, which chastens us to reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, that we may live soberly, righteously and godly in this present age; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God, our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, who are zealous for good works. But when the kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward mankind appeared, He saved us not by works done in righteousness, which we ourselves have done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Even in a private letter, such as the one addressed to his disciple Titus, Saint Paul shows himself to be the great theological mind of the apostolic Church. The few lines we are assigned to read on today's feast of Holy Theophany provide a dense package of spiritual nourishment. This is not something to read and set aside, but to read, re-read, ruminate, and ask God to "unpack" for us.

The first and last sentences of the reading lay bare the very heart of the Gospel that the Apostle brings to us: *the saving grace of God has appeared to all people . . . that being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* This is what we celebrate today—the "appearing," the "revelation" or "epiphany" of God among us. At the river Jordan God shows His face to us, full of kindness, full of grace, full of power to save: *the saving grace of God has appeared to all people . . . the kindness of God our Savior, and His love toward mankind appeared.*

Christ is not revealed for the sake of His own glory, but for our sake—that we might *become heirs* of God. In another sentence we read, *that we may live soberly righteously and godly in this present age.* St. Paul implies

that living in hiding from God is a sort of drunkenness from which the Lord comes to awaken us and render us *sober*; a state of filth from which He comes *to purify us; through the washing and renewing of the Holy Spirit*, a state of indifference to ourselves and our fellow humans from which He comes to shake us up, and to makes us *zealous for good works*.

At the Jordan baptism, Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the Lord who comes to us bearing the riches of God's saving grace, so *that we may live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age*.

Why should we be mindful of the appearance of God saving grace and kindness? Because we all are *looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God, our Savior Jesus Christ*. If we are praying that God's Kingdom come, on earth as in heaven, we must prepare ourselves and become "compatible" with that endtime appearance of Christ: we must, as the Apostle counsels, even in this present age, live *soberly, righteously, and godly*. In doing so we allow God render us "compatible" with the final "appearance" or "epiphany" of His Second coming, when the present age will yield to the age to come, and all corruption and malice and suffering of fallen humankind will be transformed into the life befitting the children of God.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is 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 Thee, and Thou dost 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.

St. 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*.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Julie, Sula and Vito; Dollie and her family, Cristina and Miruna, Chris (Abraham), Sam, Richard (Johns), George (Georgiades) and family, Bill, Georgia and Scot, Karyn, Victoria, Dolores (Bingham), Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Brooke, Thomas Joseph; Abbess Pelagia and the nuns of St Thecla Monastery in Syria, who have been abducted.

DEPARTED: Alex (Julie Smolen’s brother), Connie (Svolos), Hilda, Andy (Michaels), Jeannie (Ferver), David (Sipos), Edmund, Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Abie, Joseph (Rose’s father), Fred (Dollie’s uncle), Bob (Diane’s father), Eugenia (Cristina’s godmother), Faynasia, Niculai, Abie (Abraham).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

The priests and parishioners of St. Anthony, St. Andrew, and Sts. Peter and Paul, as well as the nuns of the Holy Transfiguration monastery will gather a traditional outdoor blessing of the waters.

- **Where?** Moraine State Park, South Shore of Lake Arthur, Bear Run boat launch. We will gather at the Bear Run Launch parking area (see directions below), and then together make a procession to the fishing pier from which the service will be served.
- **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.

NEXT SUNDAY: Feast of Saint Anthony!

We will celebrate our patron saint with a pan-Orthodox service, joined by the clergy and people at St. Andrew and Sts. Peter and Paul. Our guest speaker is Fr. Anthony Yazge, who is also our Dean, and in charge of the programs at the Antiochian Village.

You can extend hospitality to all our guests by contributing to the helping with clean-up after the service. We are hoping that the other two churches will join us in the celebration and the lunch following. (The plan is to have a spectacular chili lunch, with many, many types of chilis -- hot, mild, with beans, no beans, vegan, Texas style, Chicago Style, etc, etc, etc).