

The Sunday after Theophany Matthew 4:12-17

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (KJV)

God's Holy Church continues to remember and celebrate the Lord Jesus Christ's baptism in the Jordan River by John. Celebrating Jesus' baptism is a major feast in the Church worthy of extended attention and consideration.

Each believer's baptism is an identity changing experience meriting considered thought throughout life. At Holy Baptism, the believer "puts on Christ" and afterwards is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Thoughts and efforts following baptism are to be directed toward the Kingdom of God. God's Holy Church offers the opportunities and nourishment during the remaining time of life to continue on the path to life eternal.

The Holy Mysteries of the Church, Confession, Communion, Marriage, Ordination and Holy Unction strengthen the believer's bond with Christ. Prayers and the Divine services keep the believer united with Christ.

The hunger in the soul requires attention throughout life. God's Church is where to satisfy the hunger. Nourishment from sources outside the Church are insufficient to keep the soul at peace.

The Lord God in wisdom provided the Church for believers until the glorious Second Coming. God's Church enables believers to experience Christ fully and to prepare for the Second Coming and Final Judgment.

Continuous and lasting joy exist in the Church for the attentive and serious believer. The present Gospel describes the light associated with Christ which prevails over any darkness.

During these days when the Coronavirus and world events often create gloom and despair, the light of Christ offers brightness, hope and promise. Following Christ is the certain path to the Heavenly Kingdom.

Each person has the opportunity to pray during the course of the day. The Lord Jesus Christ welcomes the person heeding the message to repent of sins. Regardless of age and state in life, sincere repentance makes a difference.

St. John the Baptist preached repentance. Jesus Christ preached repentance. Repentance affords new beginnings in life. Believers constantly sin. We all say and do things we do not want to do or say that are harmful to ourselves and/or others.

When we fall into sin, we need to repent and begin again. Repentance and confession afford new beginnings. God's love heals and welcomes the person choosing to repent.

The Divine services guide believers and provide nourishment for the mind, heart and soul. Care of the body includes receiving the Precious Body of Blood of Christ on a regular basis.

Fasting according to the Church's teachings including abstaining from activities perilous to the soul keeps the believer focused on the Kingdom of God. The Holy Gospel enriches attentive hearts, minds and souls.

Considering Christ's baptism and our own personal baptism grounds the believer in the Church. God's presence through the centuries is verified in the Holy Gospel.

Believers are expected to continue to learn and grow in Christ throughout life. Stagnancy is dangerous to the soul. Procrastination and lukewarm faith put the soul in peril.

Believers are given the time of life only once. Time is never replaced. Choosing to actively live in Christ and follow Christ is an investment in the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ said: "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Mt.6:20)

The remaining time of life is unknown. The day Jesus Christ will return for the Second Coming and Final Judgment is not known. The day each person will take his or her last breath is not known.

The time of life is to be used wisely and purposely to thank and glorify God and seek God's Kingdom. Peace, love and joy exist in life for believers centered in Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Prayer, effort and work are required to rid the mind, body and soul of the filth that emanates from sin. Repentance changes the heart and mind. God is ever-present to help the believer in the effort to repent and change for the better.

Baptism is the healthiest beginning of life. Baptism is the important beginning of life. The way the believer utilizes the remaining time of life determines the believer's present and ever-lasting experiences.

Afterfeast of Theophany. Sunday after Theophany. St. Theodosius the Great.
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