

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 Kingdom is embraced as the primary goal for believers from the time of Holy Baptism. The journey to God's Kingdom is to continue from Holy Baptism throughout the remaining days of earthly life.

The Lord Jesus Christ connects repentance with preparing for the Kingdom. Centuries have passed since Jesus spoke of repentance. Repentance remains essential for the believer.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the highest authority for earthly believers. The Lord's message of repentance is to be taken to heart throughout earthly life. God's Kingdom is the goal. Repentance is necessary for the goal to be achieved.

The present Gospel speaks about great light in darkness and light in the shadow of death. When believers are immersed in sin, life is very dark and death to the soul is entirely possible.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the saving Light when life is very dark and sin endangers the soul. Every person sins more than he or she is fully aware. Jesus Christ lights the path out of darkness showing the way for the soul to safety.

Believers heeding Jesus' message to repent will follow Christ's Light along the path to the Kingdom. Jesus' teachings and His life, death and Resurrection give the believer direction and nourishment for life's journey.

Jesus' goodness and mercy in the forgiveness of sins and His Precious Body and Blood keep the believer on the road to God's Kingdom. Prayer and fasting keep the believer away from the dangers of life's pitfalls.

The Divine services of God's Holy Church nourish and strengthen the believer. The Church is the fortress and safe haven against the ills of the world. Believers are renewed in Christ and protected by attending the Divine services.

The saints and martyrs of God's Holy Church are examples for believers to learn from and to seek as intercessors. The Mother of God is the Protectress of believers. The Mother of God is the shining example of purity in life.

The Church is currently celebrating the Lord Jesus Christ's Baptism in the Jordan. Remembrance of each believer's Baptism comes to mind when Jesus Christ's Baptism is celebrated.

The believer's Christian identity is forever established at Holy Baptism and Chrismation. The believer puts on Christ and is sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Life's journey taken up following Baptism carries with it the expectation of faithfulness to Jesus Christ. Believers are expected to be faithful to Christ by honoring His teachings and commandments.

The journey to God's Kingdom begins and continues within the Church. Believers benefit from the presence and support of the Church until Christ's Second Coming and the Final Judgment.

Every day is a day to prepare for Christ's Second Coming. Every day is a time to prepare for the Great and Final Judgment. Personal thoughts, relationships and behavior establish the record for the Great and Final Judgment.

Celebrating the Feast of Theophany is integral to the liturgical life of the Church. Heeding Jesus Christ's message to repent is firmly consistent with life in the Church.

Repenting believers turn away from sin and direct their lives to actively following the Lord Jesus Christ. Serious believers guard the heart, mind and soul. Faithful believers seek Jesus Christ as first and foremost in life.

John the Baptist gave his life for Jesus Christ. John the Baptist is a foremost example of humility in understanding his relationship with Christ. At the time of Theophany, St. John the Baptist captivates the attentive believer's mind.

Joy radiates in creation when Jesus is Baptized in the Jordan and the Holy Trinity is made manifest. Believers have much to think about at this time when the Feast of Theophany is celebrated throughout the world.

Believers benefit by personally measuring and assessing how well the Baptismal commitment to Jesus Christ is being honored in daily life. An honest assessment of life reveals the extent of personal sin.

Repentance is the way to remain on the narrow path to God's Kingdom. Repentance restores Jesus Christ and God's Kingdom as primary goals in life. Peace fills the heart, mind and soul when the believer sincerely repents.

Baptismal joy is renewed when the believer repents and Jesus Christ is first and foremost in life. Attentively celebrating the Feast of Theophany encourages, hastens and fosters repentance in serious believers.

The Sunday after Theophany. Holy Martyr Polyeuctus; Holy Hieromartyr Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic