

## Theophany Matthew 3:13-17

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (KJV)

God's Holy Church celebrates the Great Feast of Theophany today. The Lord Jesus Christ being Baptized by John in the Jordan is celebrated every year in the Church. Great joy is associated with this Feast.

The Divine Son of God entering the Jordan River is a renewing of Creation. The Holy Trinity is manifested in the Feast with the Voice from Heaven and the appearance of the Spirit like a dove.

Some church celebrations include the release of doves in the joy of the Feast. Water is commonly blessed in the churches on the Feast of Theophany. Believers drink the blessed water and it is used for the blessings of homes.

Believers take containers of holy water to their homes to use throughout the year. Great faith is centered in the application of holy water for personal use. Love of God is manifested in the celebration of the Feast of Theophany.

Attentive believers contemplate the manifestation of the Trinity at the time of Jesus' Baptism. Serious believers deeply consider St. John the Baptist's humility. The Feast of Theophany is time to consider one's personal relationship with God.

The Feast of Theophany comes shortly after the celebration of Jesus Christ's Birth. Both Feasts convey newness. Being a Christian involves responsible behavior consistent with the teachings and life of Jesus Christ.

Prayer and fasting facilitate growth in Jesus Christ. The Great Feasts of the Church provide encounters with Christ in the festal celebrations. Great Feasts always include the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Attentive believers learn from each Divine Liturgy and are transformed when receiving the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. When parishes bless nearby bodies of water on the Feast of Theophany the communities are enriched.

God's blessings work through the water being blessed in the churches and in the communities where water is blessed. Faith is certainly involved in the act of great blessing of waters.

Faith is always a part of the Christian life. God rewards the faith of believers. God opens the pathways to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life for those deeply rooted in faith.

The storms of life are weathered and overcome with strong faith. The Light of the Resurrected Christ burns brightly in the hearts of faithful believers. Jesus demonstrated that the waters of Baptism are good by His personal example.

Each Christian believer experiences baptism. Each believer is sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit at Chrismation. Believers confess belief in the Holy Trinity at Baptism and at each Divine Liturgy.

The Confession of Faith, The Creed, is lived daily in the actions of faithful believers. The Lord God helps and guides believers in the long journey from the Baptismal font to the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

The Church offers the instructions and teachings necessary for believers to journey to God's Kingdom. The Great Feasts of the Church, particularly the Divine Liturgies of the Feasts offer a foretaste of the Heavenly Kingdom. The contents of the Divine services edify the attentive believer and lift open hearts and minds.

The Divine services of the Church open the hearts, minds and souls to the presence of the Lord God. Believers experience the Lord in the Divine services. Believers come to know the peace, love and joy of God.

During the Divine Liturgy believers are inspired to lay aside earthly cares. The presence of God exists in the Divine Liturgy. Believers are blessed to experience God's presence.

The Great Feast of Theophany draws believers to the Church. Believers are mindful of their own baptism as they celebrate Jesus' Baptism. The Baptismal waters are empowered by Jesus Christ.

Theophany inspires believers to think carefully about God's Creation and the responsibility to care for Creation. Humans have a very responsible part in caring for the environment.

The land and earth's resources are not to be abused. They are to be used in ways pleasing to the Lord God. The Feast of Theophany each year is an opportunity to reassess personal responsibility in caring for Creation.

Thank God for the Church's celebration of Jesus' Baptism. Thank God for the opportunity to celebrate the Feast in freedom. May the joy of the Feast be a time of personal renewal in the Lord God.

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The Feast of Theophany. January 6/19, 2025. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.  
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