

Notes from the Sermon on Sunday, January 8, 2023:

***What Happens to Water and Us on Epiphany?***

Scriptures:

***Ephesians 4:7-13***

***Matthew 4:12-17***



Each Divine Liturgy is a tapestry of the whole liturgical year. There are hymns, Scriptures, liturgical verses, and images from Pascha/Easter night, Pentecost, Christmas, and today we can hear as well an important verse from the Feast of Epiphany that we are currently celebrating:

**“Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord; God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us.”**

Every Liturgy presents us with the theme of how God and all of creation are revealed for what they really are:

- 1) **The Holy Trinity:** The Festal Hymn (the Troparion), based on the Scriptural story, reminds us that when Jesus is baptized the three persons of the Holy Trinity are present or manifested:

When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan,  
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.  
For the voice of the Father bore witness to You,  
and called You His beloved Son;  
and the Spirit in the form of a dove  
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.  
O Christ our God, You have revealed Yourself//  
and have enlightened the world, glory to You.

The Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirms the word of the Father, that Jesus is His “beloved Son.”

2) **Jesus**, upon His baptism, in a sense, begins His ministry by being Himself the light that shines among the people “who sat in darkness.” He reaffirms the message and sermon of John the Baptist by proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:16-17). Repentance literally means to “change your mind” or to re-examine that way you are thinking and living.

3) **Water** is blessed on this day, not to identify a kind of sacred water that is different from “regular” water, but to say that all water – and in fact, all of creation – is meant to be a way for God to reveal His saving presence in our midst and for the “healing of our souls and bodies.”

4) **US**: The petitions from the **Blessing of Water** were repeated to remind us of how the “power, operation, and descent of the Holy Spirit” were offered for the transformation of both the water AND us.

For these waters that they may be sanctified by the **power, operation, and descent** of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

For these waters, that the **cleansing operation** of the super-substantial Trinity may come down on them, let us pray to the Lord.

For these waters, that they **may become healing for souls and bodies**, and the **banishing of all contrary powers**, let us pray to the Lord.

That the Lord God may send down the blessing of Jordan to sanctify these waters, let us pray to the Lord.

For all those **requesting from God help and protection**, let us pray to the Lord.

That He **may illumine us with the light of understanding**, by means of the Trinity One in Essence, let us pray to the Lord.

That the Lord our God **may show us to be children and heirs of His Kingdom**, through partaking of and sprinkling with these waters, let us pray to the Lord.

5) **CONCLUSION**: Every Divine Liturgy presents us with the language and images from the major feasts of the liturgical year, so that being reminded again and again in small, repetitive ways we may

- come to know more fully how God desires to be revealed to us;
- in doing this we will learn how all of creation is made available by God for the healing of our souls and bodies,
- so that we may participate more completely in the “building up of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).