

# Blessing of Homes

## The Service

When the priest arrives, he is to be greeted by all family members, each asking his blessing and reverencing his right hand or the hand in which he is holding the cross. All members of the household should be present for the House Blessing. If you live alone, please arrange for a friend or neighbor to join you for the prayers, for propriety's sake.

All who are present in the house should gather around the icon with the candle. They should, if they are able, join in saying the Trisagion Prayers and sing the Troparion of the Feast of Theophany. During the service everyone in the house prays together for the living and the dead, and all who live and have lived in the house. Then a family member leads the priest through the house with the candle. As he goes, he sprinkles holy water, and prays for a blessing upon each room and the activity that goes on there. When they have gone through the entire house, the family gathers again around the table and the priest blesses each person present.

## Preparation

Traditions of the ceremony differ according to local custom, but these general guidelines should be observed:

1. A *candle* with an *icon* and a small *bowl of Holy Water* will be placed in a suitable place, such as kitchen or dining room table, or a home altar. This is where the service will begin.
2. Also, a clearly written *list of the names* of loved ones for whom prayers are to be offered, including members of the family and all those living in the house. Also, the names of departed loved ones are mentioned. The list should have a clear distinction between the living and the departed.
3. The home atmosphere should be calm and peaceful. All televisions, radios, stereos, electronic devices etc. in the home should be turned off.

## Why we bless our homes

As Christians, we are engaged in a struggle to reclaim our fallen nature for the Kingdom of God. We often talk about this in terms of our own salvation, but the Church, addressing all of creation in a holistic manner, also reaches out and reclaims a bit here and a bit there of creation in general. We do this in order that we might restore the usefulness of creation for working out our own salvation. Hence, we bless anything that might help us in our salvation - and by blessing it we reclaim it consciously for the Kingdom of God.

There are few things more vital to our lives than our homes. In our homes we pray, we work, we talk to others, we order our lives, we work out our marriages, etc. What more important place to reclaim for the Kingdom of God. We do not wish to live in a place which is occupied by the enemy. For the most effective working out of our salvation, we must drive the enemy out of our homes, and keep him at bay by our prayers, our righteous life, and the annual sprinkling by Holy Water at Theophany.

## Some concluding thoughts

While it has sometimes been the practice to give the priest a gift, Fr. Herman asks that you do not give him a gift or envelope. If you feel moved to give a gift, please give it to the Church and not to him personally. For example, a gift to St Andrew's designated for the camp scholarship fund for our young people would be appreciated.

If you'd like to invite the priest for a meal, please pre-arrange it. Please remember that all refreshments should observe the fasting rules appropriate to that day.

Please call or email Fr Herman ([frherman1@gmail.com](mailto:frherman1@gmail.com); 215-527-8571) if you would like to schedule or confirm a time for a home blessing. May the blessing with Holy Water add to the peace and salvation of your home.

May the mercy and love of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you and your family always.

Fr. Herman