

January 5, 2019

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

I pray this New Year brings with it many opportunities for us to come closer to God in our knowledge of and love for him and our neighbors.

On January 6 we celebrate the Liturgy for the Great Feast of Theophany or Epiphany where the Father, His Son and His Holy Spirit are made manifest in the river Jordan. At this Liturgy we will have the great blessing of the water. This water which we bless will be used throughout the coming year to bless the homes and dwellings of the Faithful.

These house blessings are a deliberate and conscious way of acknowledging and accepting God's presence into our homes and making God central to our home life outside of the public sphere. God should be inside us and outside us and in our homes and outside our homes. That is to say we should be with God in our private and public lives. The water represents cleansing and life.

Water is necessary for life, of course, but too much water brings disaster. Just the right amount of water brings blessings to us. We read in Genesis chapter 1 that the Spirit of God hovered over the waters and thereby "tamed" it so it would bring blessing and not destruction. Also in chapter 6 of Genesis we read that on account of the corruption God found at the time of Noah he destroyed the world by means of the flood. In our Orthodox prayers we pray for the gentle rains. We pray for an amount of rain that is just right for fruitful harvests, which provide from the earth what is necessary for our survival, so that we may live and serve him with thankful hearts.

The water blessed on Theophany is a means of our remembrance of God's provisions for us. We bring it into our homes to remember that God provides just what we need, not too much, not too little, but "gentle" rains so that we may grow in love for God and those with whom we dwell. We drink it with reverence and bless our homes with it, asking God that his blessings be granted to all those who live and dwell therein. In it we seek not more nor less than we need. Too little is not sufficient. But too much would be a disaster. We ask for what we need so that we are enabled to live to please him. Remember, in the Lord's Prayer we ask for \*daily\* bread. The bread we need to do God's will \*today\*.

For those who would like to bring these blessings of Theophany into their homes during this new year, please contact me so that we may set aside a time for a home blessing. Also posted here is a preparation guide for having one's home blessed.

May God bless you in this New Year, granting you all your prayers which are unto salvation.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Herman

