



The Theophany (or Epiphany)

Celebrated January 6th (January 20th)

"The true light has appeared and bestows enlightenment on all. Christ, who is above all purity, is baptized with us; He brings sanctification to the water and it becomes a cleansing for our souls... Salvation comes through washing; the water, the Spirit; by descending into the water, we ascend to God. Wonderful are Your works, O Lord, glory to You!"

From the Matins of Theophany.

Epiphany means "shining forth" or "manifestation". The feast is often called "Theophany", which means the shining-forth and manifestation of God. The emphasis in the present-day celebration is on the appearance of Jesus as the human Messiah of Israel and the Divine Son of God, One of the Holy Trinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Thus, during His baptism by John [the Forerunner] in the Jordan, Jesus identifies Himself with sinners as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world (**John 1:20**), the "Beloved" of the Father, whose messianic task it is to redeem men from their sins (**Luke 3:21; Mark 1:35**). And He is revealed as well as One of the Holy Trinity, testified to

by the voice of the Father, and the Spirit in the form of a dove. This is the central epiphany glorified in the feast day - the Holy Trinity.

*Adapted from **The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship**, by Fr. Thomas Hopko.*

About the Icon

Christ stands in the Jordan River at the center of the Theophany icon. Dressed in animal skins and a green cloak, the disheveled Forerunner and Baptist John stands on the bank to the left of Christ with his hand raised. The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, is directly over Christ. To the right, the angels worship the Trinity revealed.

*Adapted from **The Icon Book**, by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie, and Matusiak.*

Click [\[HERE\]](#) for a black & white icon of Theophany to color (GIF format, 30 KB).

Troparion

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, who has revealed Yourself
And has enlightened the world, Glory to You!

Kontakion

Today You have appeared to the universe,
and Your Light, O Lord, has shone on us,
who with understanding praise You:
You have come and revealed Yourself,
O Light Unapproachable!

Some Things To Do

- ☛ Have your children prepare containers for Holy Water to take Liturgy the day of the feast. Plastic or glass containers (with lids) should be washed thoroughly, then may be decorated on the outside. A cross or small Theophany icon may be attached with rubber cement.
- ☛ With parents' guidance, children should prepare their rooms for blessing and select one personal possession to be blessed as well: a new icon for their room, a baseball glove for an avid player, etc.
- ☛ Hold a "Dress Rehearsal" in preparation for the priest's visit to bless your home: practice singing the troparion together, and plan the route for the children to lead the priest from room to room carrying a lit candle.

Adapted from a compilation by Fr. Stephen Belonick, Binghamton, NY.

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