

WHY WAS JESUS BAPTIZED?

On the great Feast Day of THEOPHANY, we commemorate, our Lord's baptism in the Jordan River by John. Have you ever wondered why Jesus was baptized? Why did the Sinless One need to submit to a ritual that symbolized the washing away of sins? St. John himself must have had the same question in his mind. The Gospels tell us that when Christ approached him in the Jordan, he was reluctant to baptize Him, saying: "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" (Matthew 3:14) In the following verse of Matthew's Gospel, Christ answers: "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

Therein lies our answer. Jesus certainly did not NEED purification. But by making the purification of humanity His own, He would wash away the sin of humanity, grant regeneration and reveal the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Thus, Christ's baptism was necessary for the fulfillment of all of God's righteousness. St. Gregory of Nyssa puts it beautifully: "JESUS ENTERS THE SINFUL WATERS OF THE WORLD, AND WHEN HE COMES OUT, HE PURIFIES THE ENTIRE WORLD WITH HIM."

The Church refers to baptism as a "new birth." In this "new birth," a true mystery takes place, for in the Sacrament of Baptism, we die, going down into the water to be mystically united to Christ in His death. Then we live again, rising up out of the water in His Resurrected humanity.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Visual, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

ABOUT COMMUNION

We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the "unity of the Faith" for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.

If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.





St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Church

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WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community. We are glad you are worshipping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X within the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.

If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table.

We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally.

Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 06 THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among a barbarous people; Judah became His sanctuary; Israel His dominion.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

The sea beheld and fled: Jordan turned back. What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? And thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back? **(Refrain)** Glory... Both now... **(Refrain)**

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

I am filled with love, for the Lord will hear the voice of my supplication. For He hath inclined His ear unto me, and in my days will I call upon Him.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who wast baptized by John in the Jordan; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

The pangs of death have encompassed me; the perils of hades have found me. Tribulation and sorrow have I found, and I called upon the name of the Lord. **(Refrain)** Merciful is the Lord, and righteous; and our God hath mercy. **(Refrain)** Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Israel now confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let them now who fear the Lord confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.

~ During the Little Entrance, after the verses of the Third Antiphon, chant the Apolytikion of Theophany.

Then, the following:

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EPIPHANY 2025 – BLESSING OF HOMES

The central sign of our acceptance of God's sanctification of the creation is the blessing of the homes of faithful Orthodox Christians.

We bless homes:

- a. To reveal the home as what God created it to be, a way to heaven.
- b. To rid the home of every evil.
- c. To know that the family is a small church unit in Christ, to consecrate the home and all activity in it to God.
- d. To have the home and all who live in it with the fullness of God.

Only the Church reveals what life is, and she alone is the Kingdom of God on earth. The Church lives within Christ, revealing Him to us. As the Church, we sprinkle blessed water throughout the home, as we chant, ***“When you, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the Fathers voice bore witness to you and called you His Beloved Son, while the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed these words. O Christ our God, who has appeared to us and has enlightened the world, Glory to you.”***

The priest consecrates the home to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this act, the Church blesses, reveals and sanctifies.

When the priest comes for the house blessing, please adhere to these guidelines:

1. *Have as many family members there as possible.*
2. *Setup a place for prayer, in the dining room or kitchen, with an icon and a candle.*
3. *Print the first names of those for whom specific prayers are to be offered, including all family members on a sheet of paper, making a clear distinction between living and departed.*
4. *Take this time to get to know Father Elia better, asking any questions you may have.*
5. *If a child needs some time to talk to Father, respect his/her privacy and make the opportunity.*
6. *Make Father Elia aware of any special needs you may have.*
7. *Tell Father Elia about any family members who are in nursing homes or in need of a visit*

Please remember that Father Elia will be making many visitations. A lengthy social visit may not be possible at this time. If you would prefer a visit outside the Epiphany season, please let Father know.

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST

Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. The Lord is God and hath appeared unto us. Save us, O Son of God, Who wast baptized by John in the Jordan; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

~ *After the Entrance, sing these hymns in the following order.*

APOLYTIKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

~ *Do NOT sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.*

KONTAKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

*(**The original melody**)*

On this day Thou hast appeared * unto the whole world, * and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, * is signed on us who sing Thy praise * and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, * Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.

THE ANTI-TRISAGION HYMN (Sung in place of “Holy God”)

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia. *(thrice)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Dynamis!

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.

THE EPISTLE

Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus. (2:11-14; 3:4-7)

My son Titus, the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world; awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds. When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (3:13-17)

At that time, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by Thee, and Thou dost come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased.”

~ *The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great continues with the following variables.*

ST. BASIL LITURGY MEGALYNARION

All creation rejoiceth in thee, O thou who art full of grace: the angelic hosts and the race of men. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virgins, of whom God was incarnate and became a little child, even our God who is before all the ages; for he made thy womb a throne, and thy body more spacious than the heavens. All creation rejoiceth in thee, O thou who art full of grace. Glory to thee.

~ NOTE: Every Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great requires "All creation rejoiceth in thee" for the megalynarion. However, as the faithful depart the church, the choir can sing the megalynarion of the Theophany of Christ, which is provided after the Dismissal.

KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) OF THEOPHANY IN TONE EIGHT

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Alleluia.

~ After Communion, instead of singing "We have seen the true light," sing the Festal Apolytikion: "When Thou, O Lord."

Upcoming Events

<p><u>This Week</u></p> <p>Sunday, 1/5 8:45 am: Matins Service 10:00 am: Divine Liturgy The Great Blessing of the water Coffee Hour: <i>Guests are always welcome!</i> Antiochian Women Monthly Meeting: after coffee hour Saturday, 1/4 Catechism Class —4:00pm Great Vespers—5:30pm, Confessions</p>	<p><u>January</u> <u>25th Anniversary Celebration</u> <i>(see schedule on page 10)</i> Please add your name to the list for meals on the bulletin board, if you are planning to attend; RSVP to the invitations. 1/11 at 8:30 am— work day</p> <p><u>February</u> 2/1: Teen SOYO Garage Sale 2/9 at 12pm—Annual Parish Meeting</p>
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Announcements

Epistle Readers



January 5th	Kiev	St. Paul to St. Timothy. (4:5-8)
January 12th	Eric Ziems	St. Paul to the Ephesians. (4:7-13)
January 19th	Roger Davis	St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)
January 26th	Sam Jacobs	St. Paul to St. Timothy. (4:9-15)



THANK YOU TO TITO, SUSAN & SARA FOR TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR
 PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE CALENDAR IN THE NARTHEX
 TO CONTRIBUTE FOOD TO A FUTURE COFFEE HOUR

Work Day Saturday, January 11 at 8:30am-Noon

We need to get our Church ready for the Anniversary weekend. Contact Michealle at (301)787-1174

2025 PLEDGE DRIVE

(Our Goal for 2025 is \$125,000.00)

The Pledge Form for 2025 is available for you.

A copy has been emailed.

Please sign one and turn it in ASAP

Thank you to the following Parishioners who already signed their pledge card:

- Anonymous
- Armstrong, Samuel
- Bobrovsky, Michael & Natalie
- Brown, Kevin
- Carey, Michealle
- Doda, Alina
- Dragu, Ionica & Marcel
- Ferrell, Zachary
- Good, Eric & Marsha
- Hall, Alix
- Holland, Michael & Skylla
- Jackson, William & Sheree
- Lieberman, Michael & Alyssa
- Matos, Subdeacon Adrian & Carrie
- Mooney, Michael
- Morales, Tito
- Riter, Tristan & Jennie
- Shalhoub, Fr. Elia & Odette
- Singleton, Steven & Traci
- Skaff, Paul & Bobbi
- Thieme, Deborah & John
- Trainham, Jarod
- Vaughn, Isaac

Total from 23 Pledges General Fund

\$79,170.00

Addressing Directly

His Eminence Metropolitan Saba – “Your Eminence,...” Or “Sayadna” in Arabic

His Grace Bishop Nicholas – “Your Grace,...” or “Sayadna” in Arabic

Priests – “Father,...” or “Abouna” in Arabic

Deacons – “Deacon,...”

Referencing in Conversation

His Eminence Metropolitan Saba – “His Eminence...”

His Grace Bishop Nicholas – “His Grace...”

Priests – “Father,...”

Deacons – “Deacon,...”



SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY BELOVED IN CHRIST

A prayer for the New Year.

"O Master, Lord our God, the Fountain of life and immortality, the Creator of all things, both visible and invisible, Who governs the seasons and the years and guides all things with Thy wise providence; we thank Thee for all the blessings Thou hast poured out upon us during the past years of our lives, and we beg Thee, O all-bountiful Lord, bless this coming year with Thy goodness, direct our civil authorities in the path of goodness, bestow Thy heavenly blessings upon all Thy people: health, salvation and growth in virtue. Deliver Thy Holy Church, our country, city and state from every assault of the devil, and grant us peace and tranquility, calm our fears and grant us patience. And grant that we may always offer thanksgiving unto Thee, the Father who is from everlasting, together with Thine only-begotten Son, and Thy most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit: God glorified in three Persons, and may joyfully praise Thine all-Holy Name. Amen." (Taken from the Orthodox Service of Thanksgiving for the New Year)

**Kh. Odette and I wish each of you and your families
a very blessed and prosperous year in 2025 !**

In Christ,
Fr. Elia Shalhoub
Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor

Depression

By Abbot Tryphon

Fighting off the demon of despondency Depression is one of the plagues of the modern age, overtaking many with its insidious poison, and ravaging many a life. The pain and suffering that comes with deep depression can infect those who surround the sufferer, for the depression of one person can spread like mold on stale bread. Psychiatrists are kept busy writing prescriptions, and drug companies rake in the money manufacturing the “cure”. Families are destroyed, marriages come apart, and young people surrender hope, all because of depression. Saint John Cassian wrote: “But first we must struggle with the demon of dejection who casts the soul into despair. We must drive him from our heart. It was this demon that did not allow Cain to repent after he had killed his brother, or Judas after he had betrayed his Master.” This period of Covid-19 lockdown is the perfect time to confront the spirit of depression, for the increased time spent in private prayer contributes to the healing of the soul, taking our minds off our problems, and turning our hearts towards the things of God. Prayer, together with spiritual reading, come together to bring about the healing the soul longs for. This is the time when calls to family, friends, and neighbors who are vulnerable to depression, and need warm human interaction, sequestered in their homes as they are, and remind them this pandemic will come to an end. Then we’ll all get together over a meal, and share all the hugs we’ve stored up. Now is the time to plan gift exchanges via zoom calls, letting everyone feel a part of our life, even though they may be alone in their apartment or home. Perhaps we can even order a special Christmas dinner to be delivered to the home of a shut-in, and share our celebratory meal via zoom or facetime.

(The Very Reverend Abbot (The Very Reverend Abbot Tryphon is Igumen of All-Merciful Saviour Orthodox Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington.)

SAINTS AND FEASTS: EPIPHANY SUNDAY

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Saviour according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Saviour also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvellous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized and the voice was heard from the Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.