



6 – 12 Jan, 2019

Epiphany

**‘For all of you who were baptized into Christ
have clothed yourselves with Christ’ Galatians 3:27**

Epiphany

- † The word ‘epiphany’ comes from the Greek epiphainen, a verb that means ‘to shine upon,’ ‘to manifest,’ or ‘to make known’
- † So Epiphany celebrates the revelation that Jesus was the Son of God
- † In the past, Christians celebrated the birth of Jesus, His baptism, His first miracle at Cana and the visit of the Wise men, at Epiphany
- † Today Epiphany focuses on His baptism in the Jordan River at the hands of John the Baptist
- † In the West, they also celebrate the Wise men’s visit, while in the East, Epiphany, known as Theophany, meaning the manifestation of God, celebrate Christ’s Baptism and the revelation of the Trinity

If Jesus is the Son of God and therefore sinless, then why did He get baptized?

- † Our Lord voluntarily submitted Himself to the baptism of Saint John the Baptist which was intended for sinners in order to ‘fulfill all righteousness’ and fulfill the Father’s will (*Mat 3:15*). His baptism served several purposes:
 1. By being baptized, He confirmed the ministry of John and showed support to what John was doing in the Name of God
 2. Jesus’ baptism was a foreshadow to His crucifixion; He was confessing sin on behalf of the nation, as Nehemiah, Ezra, Moses, and Daniel had done
 3. He was inaugurating His public ministry and was identifying with the penitent people of God, not with the critical Pharisees who were only watching
 4. *‘He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men’ (Phil 2:7)*. In doing this, He did not empty Himself of any part of His essence as God. Instead, He gave up His privileges as God and took upon Himself existence as a man. While remaining completely God, He became completely human
 5. As Christ was baptized and descended into the waters of the Jordan, He purified the waters entering in like a fiery coal. These are now the purified waters that we enter into at baptism, for the cleansing of our souls and bodies

Theophany

- † God, the Trinity, was revealed in a veiled way to the Jews
- † The Spirit Who had hovered over the waters of the first creation descended then on the Christ, after His Baptism at the hands of John, as a prelude of the new creation, and the Father revealed Jesus as His 'beloved Son'
- † The Second Person of the Trinity is now flesh and dwells among us (*Joh 1:14*)
- † Heaven is waiting to open for us; all we need to do is to love others, humble ourselves before others, serve others, consider ourselves the least among others. Then we will be like Jesus, Who humbled Himself and went under the water, and God will raise us from the water and the Father will declare us His anointed children as He declared Christ

The cleansing power of Jesus and His Blood

- † Jesus Himself affirmed *'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'* (*Joh 3:5-7*)
- † Water alone cannot bring salvation as we know by the witness of John the Baptist himself and by the way the sacrament of baptism is administered after Jesus. For what is water without the Cross of Christ? (*Joh 5:1-9*)
- † When Peter resisted the washing of his feet by the Lord Jesus (*Joh 13:1-17*), Jesus told him *'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me'* (v. 8) shows the cleansing power of Christ's death and Resurrection, for only by participating in Christ's death can we be raised with Him (*Rom 6: 3- 11*)
- † The washing was a symbol of spiritual cleansing (vv. 10- 11). If Peter did not participate in the cleansing, he would not enjoy fellowship with Christ (*1 Joh 1: 9*)
- † Those who have been baptized, have no need ever to be baptized again, for baptism is indelible. The sins the believer assumes during his life must still be washed through ongoing repentance

Our baptism is alive through repentance

- † After His resurrection, Jesus gave the mission to His disciples *'go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'* (*Mat 28:19-20*)
- † Holy Baptism is the gateway to our Christian life
- † Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God
- † We become members of Christ, and become incorporated into the Church and start sharing in her mission

- † Through baptism, we become a new creation through Christ Who saves us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit (*Tit 3:5*)
- † Saint Symeon the New Theologian said, 'He whose tears (of repentance) did not baptize him, he is baptized with water only and not with the Holy Spirit'. In other words, that person reached the Jordan River and got baptized with water but did not reach Christ
- † Jesus Himself said '*very truly I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit*' (*Joh 3:5*)
- † Saint John Climacus said, 'The Baptism received by us as children we have all defiled, but we cleanse it anew with our tears (of repentance)'

Bibliography

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Legend

 Refers to mandatory readings

Verse to memorize

'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me' John 13:8

During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon
2. for CrossTalk to find a locale
3. for David, Gisele, Habib and Karim
4. to become more of saints and less of sinners
5. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think
6. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth
7. to deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him
8. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor
9. to all the sick

10. to all those in prison
11. to the unity of the Christians
12. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity
13. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management
14. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them
15. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights
16. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region

During this coming week, we will lift the Armenian Orthodox Church in prayer

<p><u>الصلاة الربانية</u> أبانا الذي في السموات ليتقدس اسمك ليأت ملكوتك لتكن مشيئتك كما في السماء كذلك على الأرض أعطنا خبزنا كفات يومنا واغفر لنا ذنوبنا وخطايانا كما نحن نغفر لمن أخطأ وأساء إلينا ولا تُدخِلنا في التجارب لكن نجنا من الشرير أمين</p>	<p><u>قانون الايمان</u> نؤمن بالله واحد الأب ضابط الكل خالق السماء والأرض كل ما يُرى وما لا يُرى وبربٍ واحدٍ يسوع المسيح، ابن الله الوحيد المولود من الأب قبل كل الدهور إله من إله، نور من نور، إله حق من إله حق مولود غير مخلوق، الذي له وللاب جوهر واحد الذي به كان كل شيء والذي من أجلنا نحن البشر ومن أجل خلاصنا نزل من السماء وتجسد من الروح القدس ومن مريم العذراء وتأنس وصليب عنا على عهد بيلاطس البنطي وتألم ومات وقبر وقام في اليوم الثالث كما جاء في الكتب وصعد إلى السماء وجلس عن يمين الله الأب وسوف يأتي بمجدٍ عظيم ليدين الأحياء والأموات والذي لا فناء لملكه وبالروح القدس، الرب المحيي، المنتيق من الأب والإبن الذي هو مع الأب والإبن يُسجد له ويُمجد الناطق بالأنبياء وبكنيسة واحدة، جامعة، مقدسة، رسولية ونعترف بمعمودية واحدة لمغفرة الخطايا ونترجى قيامة الموتى والحياة في الدهر الآتي أمين</p>
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