

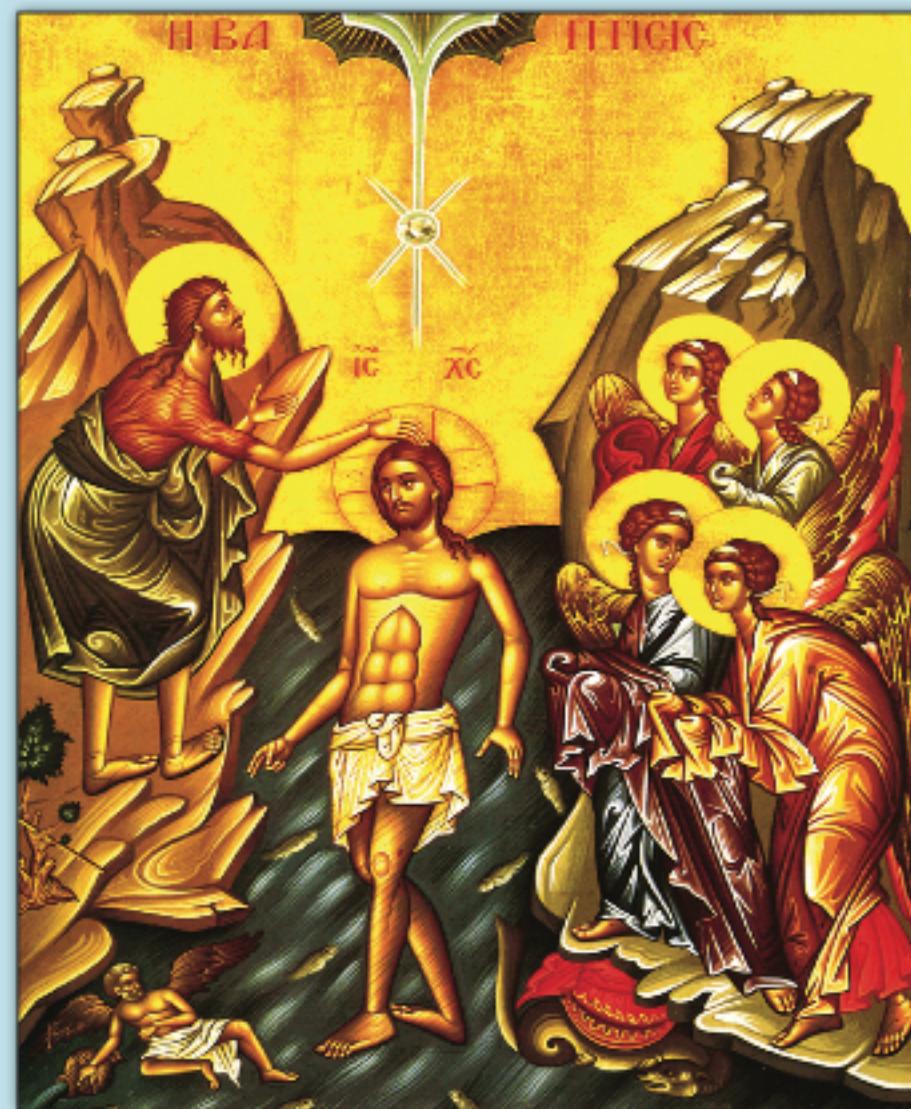
The Christ

Now, in the mystery of Christ's Baptism in the Jordan River, we again encounter and represent the truth of the Lord's incarnation and His manifestation as the Christ. Jesus' Baptism is in fact His definitive manifestation as the Messiah or Christ to Israel, and as the Son of the Father to the entire world. Here we find the dimension of the Epiphany which was His manifestation to all nations. The Father's voice from heaven shows that Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove shows the Trinitarian nature of the Christian God. The true and unique God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shows Himself in Christ, through Him, with Him and in Him.

The Baptism in the Jordan returns to the great Christmas theme of "Christification", Jesus of Nazareth's spiritual anointing, His presentation

as the Anointed One par excellence, the Messiah or the One sent by the Father for the salvation of mankind. The Spirit that descended on Jesus shows and seals in an incontrovertible way the "Christification" of Jesus' humanity that the Word had already fulfilled from the first moment of His miraculous conception by Mary. Jesus, from the very beginning, was always the Lord's Christ, He was always God. Yet, His one, true humanity, that which is perfect in every way, as the Gospel records, constantly grew in natural and supernatural perfection. "And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and with men" (Lk2:52). In Israel at 30 years of age, one reached full maturity and therefore could become a master. Jesus came of age and the Spirit, descending and remaining on Him, definitively consecrated His whole being as the Christ.

SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY



Icon of Theophany -- January 6th



Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Parish

14610 S. Will-Cook Road Homer Glen, IL 60491
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Email: AnnuncByzChurch@aol.com
Pastor: Fr. Thomas J. Loya, STB, MA
Deacon: J. Timothy Tkach

January 4, 2026 Sunday Before Theophany Schedule of Services

Sunday	4	<u>Sunday Before Theophany</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners
Monday	5	<u>Vigil of Theophany of Our Lord - The Great Blessing of Water</u> 7:00 PM Divine Liturgy - +Maria Loya McCloskey by the Loya family
Thursday	8	7:00 PM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Joel Super by Catherine Baranko
Saturday	10	<u>Saturday After Theophany</u> 8:00 AM Divine Liturgy - +Michaeleen Forkal by Bernard Venardi 5:00 PM Vespers
Sunday	11	<u>Sunday After Theophany</u> 9:00 AM Matins 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy - Health & Salvation of Parishioners

We pray for the sick and homebound of our parish, especially:

Dot Wochok	Mary Ann Baran	Mary Ann Horne	Francis Hughes
Gary Dorencz	Michele Lewis	Kim Hughes	Ken Hrusosky
James Forkal	Richard Adamowski	Marianne Horvath	Katelyn Fuentes-wc

Annunciation of the Mother of God Byzantine Catholic Parish

In all decisions regarding parish membership and Sacramental life, the pastor exercises the final decision and the confidentiality of the persons involved must be respected.

Parish Membership is determined by three things:

1. Being registered in the parish for a sufficient amount of time
2. Faithful and consistent participation in the liturgical life of the parish especially on Sundays and Holy days.
3. Regular financial support of the parish. Use of offertory envelopes by parish members is required for weekly donations

The Sacred Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation and Matrimony are available only to those persons who comply with the above requirements of parish membership.

A Biblically based stewardship is part of the vision of Annunciation parish. Parishioners are encouraged to practicing tithing and also to consider Annunciation parish in planned giving such as trust funds, etc.

Couples who are planning to be married at Annunciation parish must be free to be married in the Church and must contact the pastor at least six months prior to their proposed wedding date. Persons applying for annulments of a previous marriage should not set a Church wedding date unless their annulment has been granted.

Couples who are cohabitating or involved in same sex civil unions or so-called same sex "marriages," as well as couples who are contracepting are asked to seek the pastor's help in understanding the Church's teaching and in conforming their lives to the moral teaching of the Church. Such persons **cannot receive Holy Communion** until their lives are reconciled with the Church.

Parish members entering the hospital or who are home-bound should contact the pastor or parish business office.

Prior to undergoing surgery or going under anesthesia parish members should contact the pastor.

No eulogies or public addresses by laity are permitted during funeral services.

Cremation is permitted but not encouraged. Ashes are not permitted in the church. Funeral services with the body of the deceased in the church must take place prior to cremation. Ashes are to be buried according to the burial rite of the Church. Ashes cannot be scattered or kept in homes.

Appropriate behavior and dress are required for all liturgical services. No audible conversations, or waving across the church. Electronic devices must be turned off. No food, candy, or gum chewing. Dress code is formal and modest for all services.

Abstinence from meat is to be observed every Friday. If this is not possible an equivalent penitential practice is to be observed.

Traditionally, at the feast of our Lord's Theophany on January 6th, we consecrate water which is used to sanctify the homes of all the faithful. In bringing the blessed water to our homes, and sprinkling it in each room, we rid our homes of any evil influence, and rededicate it to God in a special way. As we were once renewed by the waters of our own baptism into Christ, so too our home, and our entire lives, are re-dedicated and renewed unto Christ our God each year at this time.



If you are interested in having Fr. Tom bless your house, please fill out the House Blessing Form in the Business Office.

BINGO Sunday, January 11th

Marian Village
15624 Marian Dr - Homer Glen, IL

Doors open at 2:30PM
Bingo begins at 3:00PM

RSVP to Raychel Techman at
708-401-8622 or
rtechman@franciscancommunities.org

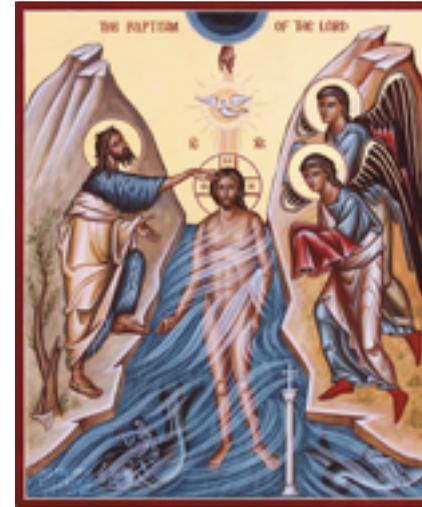
Cost
\$5

Theophany of Our Lord

Monday, January 5th

7:00PM

Vespers/Divine Liturgy/Great Blessing of Water



Next to Easter, Theophany is the second most important feast day on the Byzantine calendar.

This is the day when we celebrate the manifestation of God in three persons as Christ was baptized in the Jordan waters. This year, we will celebrate this Glorious Feast on the Eve of Theophany, Monday Jan 5th, with Vespers/Divine Liturgy and the Great Blessing of Water.

Jesus Christ our Hope

A catechetical study

Sunday, January 18th

Jan - The Church is the Hope of the Nations

Our guest speaker this month is **Nicholas LaBanca**.

Nicholas is a Senior Evangelization Specialist for Augustine Institute and is a freelance Catholic writer to which his articles have appeared in several Catholic News Outlets. He is the father of five boys and frequently attends Annunciation with them and his wife Angela. Nicholas is a Latin Rite Catholic by birth, however, to honor his maternal grandmother's Eastern Catholic upbringing, they are dedicated to raising their family in both lungs of the Catholic Faith.



Manifestation, illumination - with these two ideas there goes a third: renewal, regeneration, re-creation. Christ's baptism in Jordan renews our nature, for it is the prelude to our baptism in the font; and it renews and regenerates, not our human nature only, but the whole material creation.

To understand this idea of renewal, it is helpful to begin by asking a question which is, in fact, posed repeatedly in the texts for the feast. Why was Christ baptized? We are baptized because we are sinful: we go down dirty into the water, and we emerge cleansed. But what need had Christ, who is sinless, to undergo baptism in the Jordan? To this, the liturgical texts answer: 'Though as God He needs no cleansing, yet for the sake of fallen man He is cleansed in the Jordan' (Matins of the feast, First Canon, Canticle Five); 'As man He is cleansed that I may be made clean' (Compline on January 5, Canon, Canticle One). 'For the sake of sinful man': in reality it is not He who is cleansed in the Jordan but we ourselves. In taking manhood upon Him at His Incarnation, Our Lord assumed a representative role: He became the New Adam, summing up the whole human race in Himself, just as the first Adam summed up and contained all mankind in himself at the Fall. On the Cross, although sinless, Jesus Christ suffered and died for the sins of all humanity; and in the same way at His baptism, although sinless, He was cleansed for all men's sins. When He went down into the Jordan, as the New Adam, He carried us sinful men down with Him: and there in the waters He cleansed us, bearing each of us up once more out of the river as a new creature, regenerated and reconciled.

In Christ's baptism at the hands of John, our own baptismal regeneration is already accomplished by anticipation. The many celebrations of the Eucharist are all a participation in the single and unique Last Supper; and in a similar way all our individual baptisms are a sharing in the baptism of Christ - they are the means whereby the 'grace of Jordan' is extended, so that it may be appropriated by each one of us personally. As an indication of the close connection between Christ's baptism and our baptism, it may be noted that the prayer at the Great Blessing of the Waters on Theophany is almost identical with the prayer of blessing said over the

January 6

Theophany

The Baptism of Jesus Christ

But Christ's descent into the river has also a further significance. When Christ went down into the waters, not only did He carry us down with Him and make us clean, but He also made clean the nature of the waters themselves. As the troparion of the forefeast puts it, 'Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters.' The feast of the Theophany has thus a cosmic aspect. The fall of the angelic orders, and after it the fall of man, involved the whole universe. All God's creation was thereby warped and disfigured: to use the symbolism of the liturgical texts, the waters were made a 'lair of dragons.' Christ came on earth to redeem not only man, but - through man - the entire material creation. When He entered the water, besides effecting by anticipation our rebirth in the font, he likewise effected the cleansing of the waters, their transfiguration into an organ of healing and grace.

If water acts as a means of grace pre-eminently in the sacrament of baptism, it is also used as a means of sanctification on many other occasions as well. That is why Orthodox are encouraged to drink from the water that has been blessed at Epiphany and to sprinkle themselves with it; they take it also to their homes and keep it there to use from time to time. In all this they are not guilty of superstition. If they act so, it is because they are convinced that in virtue of Christ's Incarnation, of His Baptism and Transfiguration, all material things can be made holy and 'spirit-bearing.' 'At Thine appearing in the body, the earth was



sanctified, the waters blessed, the heaven enlightened' (Compline on January 5, Canon, Canticle Four). This, then, is part of the meaning of Theophany: in the eyes of one who is a Christian, nothing should ever appear trivial or mean, for the redemptive and transforming grace of the Saviour extends to all things, however outwardly despicable.

At Theophany there is the same emphasis as at Christmas upon Christ's self-emptying - upon the contrast between the inward glory which as God He never ceased to possess, and His entire humility as man. God by nature, in His self-abasement He did not refuse baptism from John: 'As a servant Thou dost bow Thy head beneath the hand of the servant' (Compline on January 5, Canon, Canticle One); 'One of the Trinity bowed His head and received baptism' (Matins of the feast, First Canon, Canticle Nine). To emphasize the point more vividly, constant references are made to the bewilderment and hesitation of the Baptist: 'The Forerunner was seized with trembling and cried aloud, saying: *"How shall the lamp illuminate the Light? How shall the servant set his hand upon the Master? O Saviour, who takest away the sin of the world, sanctify both me and the waters"*' (Blessing of the Waters). This theme is specially developed on the day following the feast, which is observed as the Synaxis of St. John the Baptist.