

THE TRADITION OF THE Theophany House Blessing

During the days following the Feast of the Theophany (January 6th), it is customary for the Priest to visit the homes of his parishioners, bringing with him the “Jordan Water” (i.e. the water blessed at the Theophany Divine Liturgy) for the traditional Theophany House Blessing. All who reside in the household should make every effort to be present for the Blessing.

In anticipation of the arrival of the Priest to the house, a small table should be placed on the eastern wall of the main room of the dwelling, or in front of the icon corner; the table should be prepared with a lighted candle and an icon with Christ (unless the table is at the icon corner, in which case no additional icons are needed—only the lighted candle). In addition, a clearly printed list of the names of the members of the household should be provided for the Priest. If any member’s baptismal name is different than their birth name, it should be provided in parentheses.

Upon the arrival of the Priest, he is to be greeted by all of the family members, each of whom asks the Priest’s blessing and reverences his right hand. Then a family member lights the candle and ensures all televisions, radios, cell phones, etc. in the home are turned off. Lights should be turned on in all the rooms of the house that are to be blessed. Then the entire family gathers with the Priest before the table to begin the Theophany House Blessing.

The Priest begins the service:

PRIEST: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

ALL: Amen.

PRIEST: Glory to Thee, our God. Glory to Thee.

O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

ALL:

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (thrice)

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

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

Our Father, who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

PRIEST:

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

ALL:

Amen.

Then the Priest leads all in the chanting of the Apolytikion of Theophany in Tone 1:

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity was 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.

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST: Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians.

ALL: Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST:

Again we pray for our father and Metropolitan N., our Bishop N., and all our brotherhood in Christ.

ALL:

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST:

Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, pardon and forgiveness of sins for the servants of God, (all those who dwell in the house that is to be blessed) NN., and for all pious and Orthodox Christians who live and dwell in this community.

ALL:

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST:

For Thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

ALL:

Amen.

Turning to face the people, the Priest blesses them, saying:

PRIEST: + Peace be to all.

ALL: And to thy spirit.

PRIEST: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

ALL: To Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: Our God our Saviour, the True Light, who wast baptized by John in the Jordan to renew all men by the water of regeneration, and who didst condescend to enter under the roof of Zacchaeus, and didst thereby bring salvation to him and all his household: Do Thou now also, the same Lord, keep safe from harm all those who dwell herein. Grant them sanctification, purification and health of body, and grant their petitions which are unto salvation and life everlasting: For blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory together with Thine unoriginate Father and Thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

ALL: Amen.

Then the head of the household takes up the lighted candle and leads through the house the Priest, who sprinkles each room with the “Jordan Water.” During the Theophany season (January 6th through the Leavetaking on January 14th) the festal Apolytikion “When Thou, O Lord wast baptized ...” is chanted repeatedly throughout the House Blessing; but should the House Blessing take place after the Leavetaking, the Apolytikion of the Cross (also in Tone 1) “O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance...” is chanted rather than that of Theophany. The other members of the household may walk behind the Priest if they wish or they may remain at the table. The procession through the house ends at the table, where the Dismissal is said:

PRIEST: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our Hope. Glory to Thee.

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

Lord, have mercy. (thrice) Father, bless.

PRIEST: May He who deigned to be baptized by John in the Jordan for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother, patroness of our community, at the supplications of the holy and righteous ancestors of God Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints: have mercy on us, and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

ALL: Amen.

Again facing the holy icons, the Priest holds the hand-cross and intones:

PRIEST: Grant, O Lord, a peaceful life, health, salvation and furtherance in all good things to Your servant(s), (all those who dwell in the house that has been blessed) NN., and preserve him/her/them for many years!

He turns and blesses the people thrice with the hand-cross as all sing the “Many years.”

Those who dwell in the house then approach the Priest to reverence the hand-cross.