



10825 Robinwood Lane*
Sonora, CA 95370 U.S.A.
209-288-2150

Pastor:

Fr. Joseph Ramos
(209) 280-8376
jandmramos@msn.com

Subdeacon Nicolas Teshin
(209) 743-7544

Natalie Teshin
(209) 984-2199

The Feast Of Theophany

The Feast of Theophany (or Epiphany) commemorates the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. We know from the troparion of the day that “the Trinity was made manifest” to us. But there’s more to it than this. “When Jesus descends into the depths of the river, there occurs a profound upheaval. It is not the one baptized who is purified, for he is spotless; but it is the water that is transfigured and illumined. This water, which was believed to be transparent and purifying, is in fact polluted, inhabited by evil spirits, servants of the old gods. ... By purifying the elements, by sanctifying matter, Jesus frees the cosmos from the powers of evil.”

The Incarnate God, Vol. I, Catherine Aslanoff, French edition editor, translated by Paul Meyendorff, p.163.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Christ is born!

What a bright and joyous season, the Nativity of our Lord, and this continues on through the commemoration of His baptism in the Jordan River, on the Feast of Theophany!

I can find no better words to share with you concerning this than a homily given to us by our Father among the saints, Archbishop John Maximovich of San Francisco.



“Today the nature of the waters is sanctified. Today the Son of God is baptized in the waters of the Jordan, having no need Himself of cleansing, but in order to cleanse the sinful human race from defilement.

Now the heavens open and the voice of God the Father is heard: This is My beloved Son. The Holy Spirit descends upon

the Savior of the world, Who stands in the Jordan, thereby confirming that this indeed is He Who is the incarnate Son of God. The Holy Trinity is clearly made manifest and is revealed to mankind.

The waters of the Jordan are sanctified, and together with them all the waters of creation, the very nature of water. Water is given power to cleanse not only the body, but also man’s whole soul, and to regenerate the whole man unto a new life through Baptism.

Through water all of nature is cleansed, for out of water the world was made, and moisture penetrates everywhere, giving life to everything else in nature. Without moisture neither animals nor plants can live; moisture penetrates into rocks, into every place in the world.

The waters are sanctified and through them the whole world, in preparation for renewal and regeneration for God’s eternal Kingdom which is to come.

Every year on this day the glory of God is revealed, renewing and confirming what was accomplished at Christ’s Baptism. Again the heavens are opened; again the Holy Spirit

*Corner of Jamestown Rd.
& Robinwood Ln.
(2 blocks north of
Racetrack Rd.)

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descends. We do not see this with our bodily eyes, but we sense its power. At the rite of blessing, the waters which are thereby sanctified are transformed; they become incorruptible and retain their freshness for many years.

Everyone can see this—both believers and unbelievers—both the wise and the ignorant.

Whence does the water acquire this property?

It is the action of the Holy Spirit.

Those who with faith drink these waters and anoint themselves with them receive relief and healing from spiritual and bodily infirmities. Homes are sanctified by these waters, the power of demons is expelled, God's blessing is brought down upon all that is sprinkled with these waters. Through the sanctifying of the waters God's blessing is again imparted to the whole world, cleansing it from the sins we have committed and guarding it from the machinations of the devil.

Today the Holy Spirit, descending upon the waters when the Cross of Christ is immersed into them, descends upon all of nature. Only in man, He cannot enter without his will.

Let us open our hearts and souls to receive Him and with faith cry from the depths of our souls:

'Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works, and there is no word which sufficeth to hymn Thy wonders.' "

Affectionately,

Fr. Joseph

Upcoming Events

- Eve of the Theophany with the indoor Great Blessing of Waters, Thursday, January 5th at 6:00 p.m.
- Divine Liturgy with the outdoor Great Blessing of Waters, Sunday, January 8th.
Please note: Coffee Hour will be at the Hurst Ranch where the Great Blessing of Waters will take place.
- Bible Study on Orthodox Spirituality begins, Tuesday evening, January 31st at 6:00 p.m.



NOTE: *The new liturgical calendars for 2017 are in. Be sure to pick yours up this Sunday.*

At the same time, please bring in your "Change for a Change" cans so that we can send the proceeds to Global Belief Project and then start collecting for our next charity project.

St. Susanna Cleaning Schedule

*Blessed are those who love the beauty
of God's house*

Team 1—Week of January 8

Team 2—Week of January 22

MANY YEARS

Birthdays:

Sara Arsheid	January 11
Julian Arsheid	January 14
Dave Harmer	January 14
Maddie Reighard	January 18
Asa Campbell	January 19

Namesdays:

Bryant Gomes	January 2
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Anniversaries:

Alex and Natalie Teshin	January 26
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Hours Readings

January 1	Rdr Tikhon
January 8	Rdr Tikhon
January 15	Rdr Tikhon
January 22	Rdr Tikhon
January 29	Rdr Tikhon

Anyone who would like to read the Hours before liturgy, please contact Subdeacon Nicolas Teshin at 209-536-1625 to be added to the list or for more information.

Prayer List

PLEASE JOIN US IN GIVING THANKS TO GOD:

- For the skill and devotion of those beautifying our temple and gardens.
- For the beauty of the Mother Lode, and for the privilege we have been given to live here.
- That the Holy Mother of Jesus continues to care for the unborn.
- That many of our petitions are being answered.

PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR GOD'S HELP:

- For seasonal rain.
- “St. John, please intercede for us before God for the membership growth of St. Susanna.”
- For repose of the souls of our service men and women who have given their lives for people of foreign lands.
- To safeguard all the troops who remain in hostile lands.
- To help us forgive fanatics.
- That many may come to Orthodoxy through our witness and example.
- To bless our monasteries and the men and women who dwell in them.
- For the building of a monastery in Sonora.
- For the health of Fr. Ignatius.
- For health and strength for Anna.
- For health and spiritual strength for Alex.
- For Ellen, that she be cured of cancer and have strength during her treatments.
- For health and strength for Anastasia.
- For healing of Presbyteria Chrisy.
- For health and healing for Rob.
- For health and healing for Keri.
- For health and healing for Natasha.
- For health and healing for Fred.
- For health and healing for Nina.
- For health and healing for Judy.
- For Ramey for healing from an undiagnosed disease.
- For health of Metropolitan Hilarion.
- For health and healing for Andres.
- For health and healing for Violet.
- For health and healing for Lise.
- For health and healing for Loretta.
- For health and healing for Stephen.

*(To ask us to pray for you, your family, or friends,
please email Alex Teshin at alex@teshin.com
or call 209-536-9999.)*

January 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00am St. Basil the Great/ Circumcision of Christ Divine Liturgy (2 Tim. 4:5-8 and Mark. 1:1-8) Potluck Luncheon	2	3	4	5 6:00 pm Strict Fast Great Vespers w/indoor Great Blessing of Waters for Theophany	6 Theophany - no service	7 6:00 pm Great Vespers
8 9:00am *Sunday After Theophany Divine Liturgy w/ outdoor Great Blessing of Waters (Eph. 4:7-13 and Matt. 4:12-17)	9 6:00 pm *Tentative Parish Council Meeting	10	11 WO	12	13	14 6:00 pm Great Vespers
15 9:00am Sanctity of Life Sunday Divine Liturgy (Col. 3:12-16 and Luke. 18:18-27) Potluck Luncheon	16	17	18	19	20 FWO	21 6:00 pm Great Vespers
22 9:00am Divine Liturgy (1 Tim. 1:15-17 and Luke. 18:35-43)	23	24	25 FWO	26	27 FWO	28 6:00 pm Great Vespers
29 9:00am Zacchaeus Sunday Divine Liturgy (1 Tim. 4:9-15 and Luke. 19:1-10)	30	31 6:00 pm Adult Education	Notes: *Outdoor Blessing of Water at Hurst Ranch after Liturgy. Coffee hour and house blessing of Leslie Hurst's home to follow. * Due to the New Year and Theophany Schedules, the Council Meeting is tentatively set for Monday, Jan 9 th . Council Members please get ahold of Fr. Joseph or Subdeacon Nicolas if the date does not work.			