

The Service of the Great Blessing of Water

Feast of Holy Theophany



The Sacred Rite of Great Blessing of the Waters

Stichera – Tone 8 *(by St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem)*

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters crying:

“Come, one and all,
receive the Spirit of wisdom,
the Spirit of understanding,
the Spirit of the fear of God, //
from Christ Who now has shone forth.”

Today the nature of the waters is sanctified.

The Jordan is parted in two;
it holds back the flow of its waters //
as it beholds the washing of the Master.

Thou hast come to the river as a Man, O Christ the King,
and hasten to be baptized like a servant by the Forerunner, //
on account of our sins, O good God Who lovest mankind.

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

To the voice of one crying in the wilderness,

“Prepare the way of the Lord,”
Thou didst come, O Lord taking the form of servant.
Thou didst ask to be baptized though Thou hast no knowledge of sin.
The waters saw Thee and were afraid.
The Forerunner trembled and cried aloud:
“How will the Lamp illumine the Light?
How will a servant lay his hand on the Master?
Thou dost take away the sin of the world, O Savior. //
Sanctify both me and the waters.”

Old Testament Readings

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah. (35:1- 10)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Thus says the Lord: “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and

Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not pass over it, and fools shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah. (55:1- 13)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Thus says the Lord: "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Harken diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to Me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, My steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. Behold, you shall call nations that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified you. Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man His thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that He may have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from Heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the

myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off."

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah. (12:3- 6)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Thus says the Lord: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: 'Give thanks to the Lord call upon His name; make known His deeds among the nations, proclaim that His Name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for He has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.'"

Prokeimenon, Epistle, and Alleluia

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 3rd Tone: The Lord is my Light and my Savior, whom shall I fear?

Choir: The Lord is my Light and my Savior, whom shall I fear? *(music page 12)*

Reader: The Lord is the defender of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

Choir: The Lord is my Light and my Savior, whom shall I fear?

Reader: The Lord is my Light and my Savior...

Choir: ...whom shall I fear?

Deacon: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading is from the first Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. (*I Cor. 10:1-4*)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Reader: Brethren, I want you to know that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same supernatural food and all drank the same supernatural drink; for they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Deacon: Peace be unto you, reader.

Reader: And to your spirit. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: The God of glory thunders; the Lord is upon many waters.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Deacon: Wisdom. Let us attend. Let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Priest: The reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint Mark (1:9-11)

Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: At that time: Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from Heaven, "Thou art My beloved Son; with Thee I am well-pleased."

Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

The Great Litany

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this holy house and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our Metropolitan _____, for (Arch)Bishop _____, for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the president of our country, for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this city, for every city and country, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For seasonable weather, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For travelers by land, by sea, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may be sanctified by the power, action and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the purifying operation of the supersubstantial Trinity may descend on this water, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That it may be given the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan, by the power, operation, and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That Satan may swiftly be crushed under our feet and that every evil counsel directed against us may be brought to ruin, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord our God will deliver us from every attack and temptation of the Enemy and make us worthy of the good things which He has promised, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That we may be enlightened by the light of knowledge and piety through the descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord God will send down the blessing of the Jordan, and sanctify these waters, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may become a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, for the healing of soul and body, and for every good thing, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may spring up to eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may serve to the averting of every evil purpose of enemies visible and invisible, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For those who draw from this water and take it for the sanctification of their dwellings, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may become a cleansing of souls and bodies for all those who draw in faith and drink it, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That we may be counted worthy to be filled with holiness through the partaking of these waters, by the invisible manifestation of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord our God will hearken to the entreaty of us sinners and have mercy on us, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary with all the Saints; let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

The Great Prayer by Saint Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son, Thou art in the bosom of the Father, the true God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, Who hast come into the world to illuminate it. Enlighten our minds with Thy Holy Spirit and accept us who offer unto Thee majesty and thanksgiving for Thy marvelous works which are from all eternity, and for Thy saving providence in these latter days in which Thou hast clothed Thyself in our frail and lowly substance, and hast condescended to the stature of a servant; Who yet art King of all; Who also didst receive Baptism in the Jordan at the hands of a servant: that Thou, O Sinless One, having sanctified the nature of the water might make for us a way which should be unto a new birth, through water and the Spirit, and unto the deliverance first instituted for us. Celebrating the memory of this divine mystery, we beseech Thee, O Lord Who loves mankind; sprinkle us, Thine unworthy servants, according to Thy divine promise, with pure water, the gift of Thy tenderness of heart. May the supplications of us sinners over this Holy Water be well-pleasing unto Thy goodness; and may Thy blessing through it be given to us and all Thy faithful people to the glory of Thy holy and adorable Name. For unto Thee belongs all glory, honor, and

worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvelous are Thy works, and no words suffice to hymn Thy wonders. (3x)

For Thou, by Thy will, from nothingness hast brought all things into being; by Thy majesty Thou dost uphold all creation, and by Thy providence Thou dost direct the world. When Thou hadst formed the universe out of four elements, Thou didst crown the circle of the year with four seasons. All the reason-endowed powers tremble before Thee. The Sun sings Thy praises, and the Moon glorifies Thee; the Stars, also, stand before Thy presence. The light obeys Thee. The deeps shudder with awe before Thee; the water-springs do Thy bidding. Thou hast spread out the Heavens like a curtain. Thou hast established the earth upon the waters. With sand hast Thou walled in the sea. Thou hast shed abroad the air for breathing. The Angelic Powers serve Thee. The Archangelic hosts adore Thee. The many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, as they stand round about and fly, veil their faces with awe before Thine unapproachable glory. For Thou, the God Who cannot be circumscribed, Who art from everlasting and didst come down upon earth, taking on the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of mortals. For Thou couldst not endure, O Master, because of Thy tender-hearted mercy, to behold the children of men tormented by the Devil; but Thou didst come, and didst save us. We confess Thy grace; we proclaim Thy mercy; we conceal not Thy gracious deeds. Thou has set at liberty the generations of our race; by Thy birth Thou has sanctified a virgin's womb. All creation sings praises unto Thee, Who didst reveal Thyself; for Thou, our God, didst manifest Thyself upon earth, and didst dwell among us. Thou didst hallow the streams of the Jordan, in that Thou didst send down from Heaven Thy Holy Spirit, and didst crush the heads of the serpents which lurked there.

Wherefore O King Who lovest mankind, come down now also through the descent of Thy Holy Spirit, and sanctify this water. (3x)

And impart unto it the grace of redemption, the blessing of the Jordan. Make it a fountain of immortality, a gift of sanctification, the remission of sins, the healing of infirmities, the destruction of demons; unapproachable by hostile powers, filled with Angelic might. And may it be unto all those who shall draw it, and shall partake of it unto the purification of their souls and bodies, unto the healing of their passions, unto the sanctification of their houses, and unto every expedient service. For Thou art our God, Who through water and the Spirit renewed our nature, which had fallen into decay through sin. For Thou art our God, Who with water didst drown sin in the days of Noah. For Thou art our God, Who by the sea, through Moses, didst set free from slavery to Pharaoh the Hebrew race. For Thou art our God, Who didst cleave the rock

in the wilderness, so that Water poured forth, and Who made the floods to well forth abundantly; and didst satisfy Thy thirsty people. For Thou art our God, Who by fire and water, through Elijah, didst set Israel free from the errors of Bă'ăl.

Do Thou, the same Master and sanctify now also this water by Thy Holy Spirit. (3x)
Grant also unto all who shall be sprinkled therewith, and shall partake thereof, and shall anoint themselves therewith, sanctification, blessing, purification and bodily health.

Save, O Lord, and show mercy upon our Metropolitan _____, our (Arch)Bishop _____, the honorable priesthood, the deaconate in Christ, all the clergy and all Thy people here present, together with those who are absent for a just cause.

Save, O Lord, our faithful rulers. Preserve them under Thy protection in peace, and subdue under them every enemy and adversary, granting all their petitions which are for salvation and eternal life; that with the elements, with Angels and with mortals, and with all things visible and invisible, they may magnify Thy most holy Name, together with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: Incline Thine ear, O Lord, and hear us, O Thou Who wast graciously pleased to receive baptism in Jordan, and didst sanctify the waters. Bless all us who, by the bowing of our necks, do outwardly signify our humility of mind: and graciously grant that we may be filled with Thy sanctification, through our partaking of this water, and through sprinkling therewith. And may it be for us, O Lord, the health of our souls and bodies. For Thou art the sanctification of our souls and bodies; and unto Thee we ascribe glory, thanksgiving and worship, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, and good, and life -giving Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Troparion - Tone 1

When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest,
for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee,
and called Thee His beloved Son,
and the Spirit in the form of a dove
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.

O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself,
and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee! (3x)

*And after the priest has blessed the entire church building and faithful with water, a sticheron in
Tone 6:*

Tone 6

Let us the faithful praise the greatness of God's plan for us.
For He Who alone is pure and undefiled
becomes a man because of our transgressions.
He is cleansed with our cleansing in the Jordan,
sanctifying both us and the waters,
and crushing the heads of the dragons in the waters.
Therefore, let us draw water in gladness,
for upon those who draw in faith
the grace of the Spirit is invisibly bestowed by Christ God, //
the Savior of our souls.

Choir: Blessed be the name of the Lord henceforth and forevermore. (3x)

Psalm 33

Choir: I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the
Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together! I sought the Lord, and He answered
me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to Him, and be radiant; so your faces
shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him
out of all his troubles. The Angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and
delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes
refuge in Him! O fear the Lord, you His Saints, for those who fear Him have no want!
The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good
thing.

The Dismissal

Deacon: Wisdom!

Choir: Master, bless!

Priest: Christ our God, the Existing One, is blessed, always, now and ever, and unto
ages of ages.

Choir: Amen. Preserve, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and all Orthodox Christians,
unto ages of ages.

Priest: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Choir: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos: we magnify you.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (3x). Master, bless.

Priest: May He Who deigned to be baptized by John in the Jordan for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the prayers of the Most-pure, Mother; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable Apostles; of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; 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 loves mankind.

Choir: Amen.