

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

ASPECTS OF THE FEASTDAY OF THEOPHANY

The Feast of Theophany marks the time that our Lord was baptized in the waters of the Jordan. It is termed the day of “**Divine Manifestation**” because of the revelation that day of Christ’s true identity, along with that of the Holy Trinity.

It is not supprising that **WATER** is emphasized this day, since Jesus went to the Jordan River to receive baptism by St. John the Baptist. So the blessing of this basic element of life has a prominent part in the Feast.

Many people also know this day as the Feast of “**Enlightenment or Illumination**.” “**LIGHT** is one of the earth’s remarkable substances. St. Basil the Great, in his profound work on the six days of creation, wrote that the making of light was God’s first gift and blessing to mankind. It has been said that man has polluted the air, the land, the seas, but light cannot be defiled.

No wonder that light has theological dimensions and has a part in the thinking, praying, and worship of the Church. Christ called Himself the “**Light of the world.**” What is perhaps the oldest hymn of Christendom, sung at Vespers, speaks of “**Serene light, the glory of the Immortal Father . . .**” And we cannot conceive of a worship service in church without the illumination from lamps and candles.

The Church as always felt that the baptism of Christ has great spiritual significance. It is viewed as a renewal of nature, a re-creation to undo the harm of man’s sin, a restoration to pristine wholeness and holiness. Indeed, this is a magnificent Feast of the Church!