

I have heard various accounts of Baptism that stress one of the various verbs above, but never (outside of Orthodoxy) *all* of these operative verbs. A legitimate question would be, “What is it about Baptism that makes it all of these things?”

In short, it is our union with the death and resurrection of Christ. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (Rom 6:3-5)

But if all these things are true of *our* Baptism, what can we say about *Jesus’* Baptism? Christ’s Baptism is an entrance into His Pascha – it is His death and resurrection made manifest in the waters of the Jordan. That, of course, is a strange thing to say (or contemplate) but it is how the Church contemplates it:

The Lord refashions broken Adam in the streams of the Jordan.

And He smashes the heads of dragons lurking there.

The Lord does this, the King of the ages;

for He has been glorified.

The Lord clothed material flesh

with the immaterial fire of divinity.

Now He wraps Himself in the flowing waters of the Jordan.

The Lord does this, the Lord born in the flesh from the Virgin;

for He has been glorified.

(From the Matins of Theophany)

Everything about Christ’s Baptism echoes Pascha. Its feast is thus called by some, “The Winter Pascha.” When the Christian life is rightly understood, everything has this Paschal shape. It is the image according to which we were created (the Lamb that was slain). It makes it possible for us to say with St. Paul: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

This life in union with the Crucified and Risen Christ is the very heart of our existence. We are not so much “moral agents” as “cruciformed persons.” We do not merely “try not to sin,” we are “dead to sin.” For this reason, we say that prayer is the “one thing needful.” Prayer is our actively uniting ourselves to Christ, for apart from Him, “we can do nothing.”

The Cross cannot be loved from a distance or theologized at arms-length. It is revealed to us only in union. It is a continual ‘yes’ to Christ and ‘yes’ to neighbor and enemy.

The waters saw You, O God; The waters saw You, they were afraid; The depths also trembled.

The clouds poured out water; The skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about.

The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightnings lit up the world;

The earth trembled and shook.

Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters,

And Your footsteps were not known.

You led Your people like a flock

By the hand of Moses and Aaron.(Ps. 77:16-78:1)

UPCOMING EVENTS AND SERVICES

~~~ Church School Today~~~

Bowling outing Feb. 4th Cambridge Springs following Coffee Hour THIS MONTH—

- **Choir Party- Jan. 9th 6pm Terry Jouver’s house**

- **Parish Council Meeting – Wed. Jan 10th 6:00pm**

- **Pro-Life Breakfast – Jan. 13th 9:00am Bay Front Center – See Jane for tickets**

- **Men’s Fellowship Meeting – Sun. Jan. 14th**

- **Orthodox Bible Study – Thursday Jan. 18th– 6pm @ The Tarot Bean Café- Meadville, PA**

- **Vespers for St. Anthony The Great Tuesday, Jan 16th 6pm - With a talk on the Desert Fathers to follow.**

- **MARCH FOR LIFE – Friday, Jan. 19th – Washington D.C.**

- **Pan-Orthodox Blessing of Lake Erie – Sat. Jan. 20th 12noon – Dobbs Landing -- Voodoo Brewery to Follow for lunch**

- **Ladies Altar Meeting – Sun. Jan. 21st Following Coffee Hour**

- **Erie March fro Life - Sat. Jan. 27th 11am Perry Square, Erie**

GREAT AND HOLY LENT BEGINS Feb. 19th

MISSIONS TEAM

Anyone wishing to serve as a missionary for a summer trip may inquire of the missions team. Also, OCMC sponsors varois trip around the world. See the poster in the Hall.

*Please support our Kenyan Orthodox children. Please contact Marilyn Filipos.

“Rejoice” scripture verse for the week:

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments, And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels. (Prophet Isaiah 61:10) – The priest prays this while vesting for Liturgy.

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church



25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA

1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector*

Lord’s Day – Jan. 7th, 2018 Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the

Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

CHRIST IS BAPTIZED IN THE JORDAN! AND WE WITH HIM!

31st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6. Afterfeast of the Theophany . Synaxis of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John. Sunday after Theophany.

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Melissa, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Eugene, John, Ann, Thomas, Catherine, Timothy, Jeremiah, Renee, Delani, Emily, The Homebound... Vincent, Tanya, Richard, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers..Dankos ...Catechumens –Rick and Christian Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – Ann, Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James, Sean, Liam, Susan, James, Joel, Jen, Roger, Jasmine, Cassandra

Today’s Hymns Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body.

Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.

Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.//

O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

Tone 1 Troparion of the Feast

When Thou, O Lord, wast 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.**

Tone 2 Troparion (John the Baptist)

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with songs of praise, but the Lord’s testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown indeed to be the most honorable of the Prophets, for in the waters thou didst baptize Him Whom thou didst preach. After suffering with joy on behalf of the truth, thou didst proclaim even to those in hell the God Who appeared in the flesh, Who takes away the sin of the world// and grants us great mercy!

Tone 6 Kontakion (St John the Baptist)

The river Jordan trembled, and was driven back, filled with fear at Thy coming in the flesh, while John drew back in awe as he fulfilled the ministry of the Spirit. The ranks of Angels stood amazed when they beheld Thee baptized in the stream. And we who were in darkness are filled with light.// We praise Thee, O God made manifest, as Thou dost enlighten all.

Tone 4 Kontakion of the Feast

Today Thou hast shone forth to the world, O Lord, and the light of Thy countenance has been marked on us. Knowing Thee, we sing Thy praises: “Thou hast come and revealed Thyself,// O unapproachable Light.”

Tone 1 Prokeimenon (Sunday after the Theophany)

**Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee! (Ps 32/33:22)
v: *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befits the just!* (Ps 32/33:1)**

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (St John the Baptist) The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall hope in Him. (Ps 63/64:10)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**v: *I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. (Ps 88/89:1)*
v: *For Thou hast said: “Mercy will be established forever; My truth will be prepared in the heavens.” (Ps 88/89:2)***

Today’s Scripture Readings:

Ephesians 4:7-13

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Acts 19:1-8

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ⁷ Now the men were about twelve in all. And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

Matthew 4:12-17

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,

By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles:

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,

And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death

Light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

John 1:29-34

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.” And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

THEOPHANY – THE WATERS WERE AFRAID

When I was seven years old, I “went forward” one Sunday morning in response to a preacher’s invitation. I wasn’t at all certain what was going on, but I mostly thought that I was “choosing sides.” Later that week, the preacher came and visited my home. He met privately with me and plied me with questions. When he was done, he shook his head and said to my mother, “He’s only seven years old, but he’s saved.” And with that, I was scheduled to be Baptized the next Sunday evening. No one explained anything to me about being Baptized. Indeed, I’m not sure they knew of anything to explain. I was quite short, and had to tread water that Sunday evening – thus I was “bobbed” as much as I was “dunked.”

In Orthodoxy, if someone asked what is going on in Baptism, the best answer would likely be, “Everything.” In the Baptismal Liturgy, the priest prays:

But show this water, O Master of all, to be the water of redemption, the water of sanctification, the purification of flesh and spirit, the loosing of bonds, the remission of sins, the illumination of the soul, the washing of regeneration, the renewal of the Spirit, the gift of adoption to sonship, the garment of incorruption, the fountain of life. For You have said, O Lord: ‘Wash and be clean; put away evil things from your souls.’ You have bestowed upon us from on high a new birth through water and the Spirit. Therefore, O Lord, manifest Yourself in this water, and grant that he (she) who is baptized therein may be transformed; that he (she) may put away from himself (herself) the old man, which is corrupt through the lusts of the flesh, and that he (she) may, in like manner, be a partaker of Your Resurrection; and having preserved the gift of Your Holy Spirit, and increased the measure of grace committed to him (her), he (she) may receive the prize of his (her) high calling, and be numbered with the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, in You, our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.

As far as I can tell, that is pretty much everything. For good measure, just after the Chrism is wiped off the newly-illuminated, the priest says: You are *justified*. You are *illumined*. You are *sanctified*. You are *washed*: in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.