

Getting Ready for an Orthodox Home Blessing

Christ, by entering the Jordan, sanctified it, and with it all creation. Material creation once again became "very good" as it was in the beginning.

The central sign of God's sanctification of all things through the feast of Theophany is the act of blessing the homes of faithful Christians. The priest visits all members of the Church to pray with them in the place where they live, and to bless their surroundings with Holy Water. He asks God to have mercy on the house, to rid it of every evil and to fill it with every blessing. The blessing of homes is a custom of special beauty and significance. We ask Christ to bless and enter into our homes and our lives. We ask Him to be with us, as we desire to be with Him. We ask that by the sprinkling of blessed water, the Holy Spirit renew us, our families and our lives in our homes.

Thus the house itself, together with the living persons of the family, is "filled with all the fullness of God".

To prepare for the priest's visit to bless your home:

- ✠ Make a list of the first names of those family members you wish to pray for when the priest arrives, with the living and the deceased in separate columns.
- ✠ On your dining room table or family altar, place:
 - a lighted candle,
 - a Theophany icon or icon of Christ, and
 - a wide bowl (to hold the holy water the priest will bring).
 - Be sure your prayer list is there, too!
- ✠ Turn on a light in each room, so the priest can see where he is going.
- ✠ Turn off all TVs, stereos, and computers.
- ✠ Secure any pets that might jump up on the priest or family, or "get underfoot" as you move from room to room. (Pets may be blessed, too!)

What to expect:

When the priest comes, all who are present in the house should gather around the icon with the candle. They should, if they are able to join in, say the Trisagion Prayers¹ and sing of the Troparion of the Feast of Epiphany². Then a family member leads the priest through the house with the candle. As he goes, he sprinkles holy water, and prays for a blessing upon each room and the activity that goes on there. The children may lead the priest around the house with a lit candle, if he permits. When they have gone through the entire house, the family gathers again around the table and the priest blesses each person present."

¹Trisagion Prayers

+Glory to You, our God, Glory to You.

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.

+Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (3 times)

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

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3 times)

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

Our Father, who art in Heaven, 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.

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. Amen.

²Troparion of the Feast of Epiphany

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan
The worship of the Trinity was made manifest
For the voice of the Father bore witness to You
And called You His beloved Son.
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove,
Confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself
And have enlightened the world, glory to You!