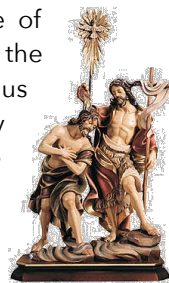


The Feast of the Epiphany celebrates this wonderful mystery of Jesus' Baptism; and we cannot wonder at the Eastern Church having selected this Day for one of the solemn administrations of the sacrament of Baptism. The same custom was observed, as we learn from ancient documents, in certain Churches in the West. John Mosch tells us, that, as regards the Oriental Church, the Font was more than once miraculously filled with water on the Feast of the Epiphany, and that immediately after having administered the Sacrament, the people saw the water disappear. The Roman Church, even as early as the time of St. Leo, decreed that Easter and Pentecost should be the only two days for the solemn administration of Baptism; but the custom of blessing the baptismal water with great solemnity on the Epiphany was still retained, and is observed even now in some parts of the West.

The Eastern Church has always religiously observed it. Amidst all the pomp of sacred rites, accompanied by his Priests and Ministers, who are clothed in the richest vestments, and followed by the whole people, the Bishop repairs to the banks of a river. After reciting certain beautiful prayers, which we regret not being able to offer to our readers, the Bishop plunges into the water a Cross richly adorned with precious stones; it represents our Lord being baptised by St. John. At St. Petersburg, the ceremony takes place on the river Neva, and it is through a hole made on the ice that the Metropolitan dips the Cross into the water. This same ceremony is observed by those Churches in the West, which have retained the custom of blessing the baptismal water on this Feast.

The faithful are very anxious to carry home with them the water of the stream thus sanctified; and St. John Chrysostom, in his twenty-fourth Homily, on the Baptism of Christ, speaks to his audience of the circumstance, which was well known by all of them, of this water never turning corrupt. The same has been often seen in the Western Church.

Let us honour our Lord in this second Manifestation of his divinity, and thank him, with the Church, for his having given us both the Star of Faith which enlightens us, and the Water of Baptism which cleanses us from our iniquities. Let us lovingly appreciate the humility of our Jesus, who permits himself to be weighed down by the hand of a mortal man, in order, as he says himself, that he might fulfil all justice, (1 St. Matth. iii. 15.) for having taken on himself the likeness of sin, it was requisite that he should bear its humiliation, that so he might raise us from our debasement. Let us thank him for this grace of Baptism, which has opened to us the gates of the Church both of heaven and earth; and let us renew the engagements we made at the holy Font, for they were the terms on which we were regenerated to our new life in God.



January 2021 Calendar

1	Octave of Christmas (1st Friday)	11:00 am
2	BVM on Saturday (1st Saturday)	11:00 am
3	Most Holy Name of Jesus Bristol: 9am Mass & 11am Mass Taunton: 11am; Holnest: 4pm	
4	Feria	8:00 am
5	Feria	8:00 am
6	Feast of the Epiphany Bristol: 11am Mass & 6pm Mass Taunton: 11:30 am	
7	Feria	8:00 am
8	Feria	8:00 am
9	BVM on Saturday	8:00 am
10	Most Holy Family Bristol: 9am Mass & 11am Mass Taunton: 11am; Holnest: 4pm	
11	Feria	8:00 am
12	Feria	8:00 am
13	Baptism of Our Lord (Colleton Manor Mass 11:30am)	8:00 am
14	St. Hilary	8:00 am
15	St. Paul the First Hermit	8:00 am
16	St. Marcellus I	8:00 am
17	2nd Sunday after Epiphany Bristol: 9am Mass & 11am Mass Taunton: 11am; Holnest: 4pm	
18	Feria	8:00 am
19	Feria	8:00 am
20	Ss. Fabian & Sebastian	8:00 am
21	St. Agnes	8:00 am
22	Ss. Vincent & Anastasius	8:00 am
23	St. Raymond of Penafort	8:00 am
24	3rd Sunday after Epiphany Bristol: 9am Mass & 11am Mass Taunton: 11am; Holnest: 4pm	
25	Conversion of St. Paul	8:00 am
26	St. Polycarp	8:00 am
27	St. John Chrysostom	8:00 am
28	St. Peter Nolasco	8:00 am
29	St. Francis de Sales	8:00 am
30	St. Martina	8:00 am
31	Septuagesima Sunday Bristol: 9am Mass & 11am Mass Taunton: 11am; Holnest: 4pm	



THE CLOISTER

SOCIETY OF SAINT PIUS X

Saint Saviour's House, Saint Agnes avenue

BRISTOL BS4 2DU

Email: stsaviours@fsspx.uk Telephone: 01179775863

Dear faithful,

At the beginning of this new calendar year, we would do well to thank God for the blessings of the year past, however veiled those blessings may seem to us to be. Sometimes the greatest graces come to us in the form of great tribulations. Is it not the case that the Our Lord was the Son in whom His heavenly Father was well pleased and yet He carried the cross and died upon it, thus winning the greatest graces of Redemption for mankind? So, like Our Lord, we continue to carry the cross of adversity whenever it comes to us. This coming year will also be full of blessings and adversities, often all mixed up together and indistinguishable the one from the other. The current covid-19 situation will continue to rage for its duration. We use common sense, take the precautions as are necessary and prudent and put everything into Our Lord's hands.

The tribulations which God allows to befall us are for our spiritual betterment and to obtain graces for ourselves and our families, society in general and for the Church. It is related in the history of the Carmelite sisters of Compiègne who were martyred during the French revolution, that they sang psalms and hymns and parts of the church's offices of Vespers and Compline as they were driven to the place of execution. Each one of them invoked the Holy Ghost by reciting the 'Veni Creator Spiritus' as they placed their heads on the guillotine block, as if they were making a new religious profession prior to entering into eternal life by martyrdom.

But the graces obtained through their tribulations must have been many. It is thought, by many spiritual writers, that their sacrifice was so pleasing to God, that perhaps he bestowed graces of conversion upon those around them and even brought the horrors of the Revolution to a quicker end than would have been.

The Carmelite sisters sang as they made their way to eternity. We too should begin this new year by singing in our hearts of the wonders of God, rather than being too quick to complain of the difficulties of the situations which we face. We should lift up our hearts, as the opening prayers of the preface of the Mass encourages us to do. St John in the Apocalypse describes how the angels spend much of their time (if one could use such an expression!) in singing God's praises: "And I beheld and I heard the voices of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the ancients; and the number of them was thousands and thousands, saying with a loud voice: The lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and benediction. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in them: I heard them all saying: to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the lamb, benediction and honour and glory and power for ever and ever." (Apoc. Ch 5)

With every good wish and blessing.

Fr John McLaughlin



Dom Gueranger on the Epiphany:

The Feast of the Epiphany is the continuation of the mystery of Christmas; but it appears in the Calendar of the Church with its own special character. Its very name, which signifies *Manifestation*, implies that it celebrates the apparition of God to his creatures.

For several centuries, the Nativity of our Lord was kept on this day; and when, in the year 376, the decree of the Holy See obliged all Churches to keep the Nativity on the 25th December, as Rome did – the Sixth of January was not robbed of all its ancient glory. It was still to be called the Epiphany, and the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ was also commemorated on this same Feast, which Tradition had marked as the day on which that Baptism took place.

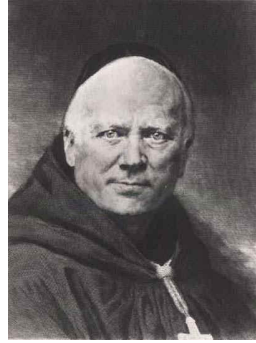
The Greek Church gives this Feast the venerable and mysterious name of *Theophania*, which is of such frequent recurrence in the early Fathers, as signifying a *divine Apparition*. We find this name applied to this Feast by Eusebius, St. Gregory Nazianzum, and St. Isidore of Pelusium. In the liturgical books of the Melchite Church the Feast goes under no other name.

The Orientals call this solemnity also *the holy* on account of its being the day on which Baptism was administered, (for, as we have just mentioned, our Lord was baptised on this same day). Baptism is called by the holy Fathers *Illumination*, and they who received it *Illuminated*. Also, this Feast is called, in many countries, *King's Feast*: it is, of course, an allusion to the Magi, whose journey to Bethlehem is so continually mentioned in today's Office.

The Epiphany shares with the Feasts of Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, the honour of being called, in the Canon of the Mass, a *Day most holy*. It is also one of the *cardinal* Feasts, that is, one of those on which the arrangement of the Christian Year is based; for, as we have Sundays after Easter, and Sundays after Pentecost, so we also count six Sundays after the Epiphany.

The Epiphany is indeed a great Feast, and the joy caused us by the Birth of Jesus must be renewed on it, for, as though it were a second Christmas Day, it shows us our Incarnate God in a new light. It leaves us all the sweetness of the dear Babe of Bethlehem, who hath appeared to us already in love; but to this it adds its own grand manifestation of the divinity of Jesus. At Christmas, it was a few Shepherds who were invited by the Angels to go and recognise THE WORD MADE FLESH; but now, at the Epiphany, the voice of God himself calls the whole world to adore this Jesus and hear him.

The mystery of the Epiphany brings upon us three magnificent rays of the Sun of Justice, our Saviour. In the calendar of pagan Rome, this sixth day of January was devoted to the celebration of the triple triumph of



of Augustus, the founder of the Roman Empire: but when Jesus, our Prince of peace, whose empire knows no limits, had secured victory to his Church by the blood of the Martyrs – then did this his Church decree, that a triple triumph of the Immortal King should be substituted, in the Christian Calendar, for those other three triumphs which had been won by the adopted son of Caesar.

The Sixth of January, therefore, restored the celebration of our Lord's Birth to the Twenty-Fifth of December; but, in return, there were united in the one same Epiphany, three manifestations of Jesus' Glory: *the mystery of the Magi* coming from the East, under the guidance of a star, and adoring the Infant of Bethlehem as the Divine King; *the mystery of the Baptism of Christ*, who, whilst standing in the waters of the Jordan, was proclaimed by the Eternal Father as Son of God; and thirdly, *the mystery of the divine power of this same Jesus*, when he changed the water into wine at the marriage-feast of Cana.

But did these three Mysteries really take place on this day? Is the Sixth of January the real anniversary of these great events? As the chief object of this work is to assist the devotion of the Faithful, we purposely avoid everything which would savour of critical discussion; and with regard to the present question, we think it enough to state, that an almost endless list of writers, assert that the Adoration of the Magi happened on this very day. That the Baptism of our Lord, also, happened on the sixth of January, is admitted by the severest historical critics, even by Tillemont himself; and has been denied by only two or three. The precise day of the miracle at the marriage-feast of Cana is far from being as certain as the other two mysteries, though it is impossible to prove that the sixth of January was not the day. For the children of the Church, it is sufficient that our Holy Mother has assigned the commemoration of these three manifestations for this Feast; we need nothing more to make us rejoice in the triple triumph of the Son of Mary.

Let us open our hearts to the Joy of this grand Day; and on this Feast of the Theophany, of the Holy Lights, of the Three Kings, let us look with love at the dazzling beauty of our Divine Sun. The Shepherds, who were called by the Angels to be the first worshippers, have been joined by the Prince of Martyrs, the Beloved Disciple, the dear troop of Innocents, our glorious Thomas of Canterbury, and Sylvester the Patriarch of Peace; and now, to-day, these Saints open their ranks to let the Kings of the East come to the Babe in his crib, bearing with them the prayers and adorations of the whole human race.

**Dom Gueranger on the Baptism of Our Lord:**

The thoughts of the Church, today, are fixed on the Baptism of our Lord in the Jordan, which is the second of the three Mysteries of the Epiphany. The Emmanuel manifested himself to the Magi, after having shown himself to the Shepherds; but this manifestation was made within the narrow space of a stable at Bethlehem, and the world knew nothing of it. In the Mystery of the Jordan, Christ manifested himself with greater publicity. His coming is proclaimed by the Precursor; the crowd, that is flocking to the river for Baptism, is witness of what happens; Jesus makes this the beginning of his public life. But who could worthily explain the glorious circumstances of this second Epiphany?

It resembles the first in this, that it is for the benefit and salvation of the human race. The Star has led the Magi to Christ; they had long waited for his coming, they had hoped for it; now, they believe. Faith in the Messiah having come into the world is beginning to take root among the Gentiles. But faith is not sufficient for salvation; the stain of sin must be washed away by water. *He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved.* (St. Mark, xvi. 16.) The time is come, then, for a new manifestation of the Son of God, whereby there shall be inaugurated the great remedy, which is to give to Faith the power of producing life eternal.

Now, the decrees of divine Wisdom had chosen water as the instrument of this sublime regeneration of the human race. Hence, in the beginning of the world, we find *the Spirit of God moving over the Waters*, (1 Gen. i. 2.) in order that they might even then conceive "a principle of sanctifying power," as the Church expresses it in her Office for Holy Saturday (at the Blessing of the Font). But before being called to fulfil the designs of God's mercy, this element of Water had to be used by the divine justice for the chastisement of a sinful world. With the exception of one family, the whole human race perished, by the terrible judgment of God, in the waters of the great flood.

In order that Water should have the power to purify man from his sins, it was necessary that it should be brought into contact with the sacred Body of the Incarnate God. The Eternal Father had sent his Son into the world, not only that he might be its Lawgiver, and Redeemer, and the Victim of its salvation – but that he might also be the Sanctifier of Water; and it was in this sacred element that he would divinely bear testimony to his being his Son and manifest him to the world a second time.

Jesus, therefore, being now thirty years of age, comes to the Jordan, a river already celebrated for the prophetic miracles which had been wrought in its waters. The Jewish people, roused by the preaching of John the Baptist, were flocking thither in order to receive a Baptism which could indeed, excite a sorrow for sin, but could not effect its forgiveness. Our divine King approaches the river, not, of course, to receive sanctification, for he himself is the author of all justice – but to impart to Water the power of bringing forth, as the Church expresses the mystery, a new and heavenly progeny. (The Blessing of the Font.) He goes down into the stream, not, like Josue, to walk dry-shod through its bed, but to let its waters encompass him, and receive from him, both for itself and for the Waters of the whole earth, the sanctifying power which they would retain for ever. The saintly Baptist places his trembling hand upon the sacred head of the Redeemer, and bends it beneath the water; the Sun of Justice vivifies this his creature; he imparts to it the glow of life-giving fruitfulness; and Water thus becomes the prolific source of supernatural life.

But, in this the commencement of a new creation, we look for the intervention of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. All Three are there. The heavens open; the Dove descends, not, as a mere symbol, prophetic of some future grace, but as the sign of the actual presence of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love, who gives peace to men and changes their hearts. The Dove hovers above the head of Jesus, overshadowing, at one and the same time, the Humanity of the Incarnate Word and the water which bathed his sacred Body.

The manifestation is not complete; the Father's voice is still to be heard speaking over the Water and moving by its power the entire element throughout the earth. Then was fulfilled the prophecy of David: *The Voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of majesty hath thundered. The Voice of the Lord breaketh cedars*, (that is, the pride of the devils). *The Voice of the Lord divideth the flame of fire*, (that is, the anger of God). *The Voice of the Lord shaketh the desert, and maketh the flood to swell*, (that is, announces a new Deluge, the Deluge of divine Mercy). (Ps. cxviii. 3, 5, 7, 8, 10.) And what says this Voice of the Father? *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* (St. Matth. iii. 17)

Thus was the Holiness of the Emmanuel manifested by the presence of the Dove and by the voice of the Father, as his Kingly character had been previously manifested by the mute testimony of the Star. The mystery is accomplished, the Waters are invested with a spiritual purifying power, and Jesus comes from the Jordan and ascends the bank, raising up with himself the world, regenerated and sanctified, with all its crimes and defilements drowned in the stream. Such is the interpretation and language of the Holy Fathers of the Church regarding this great event of our Lord's Life.