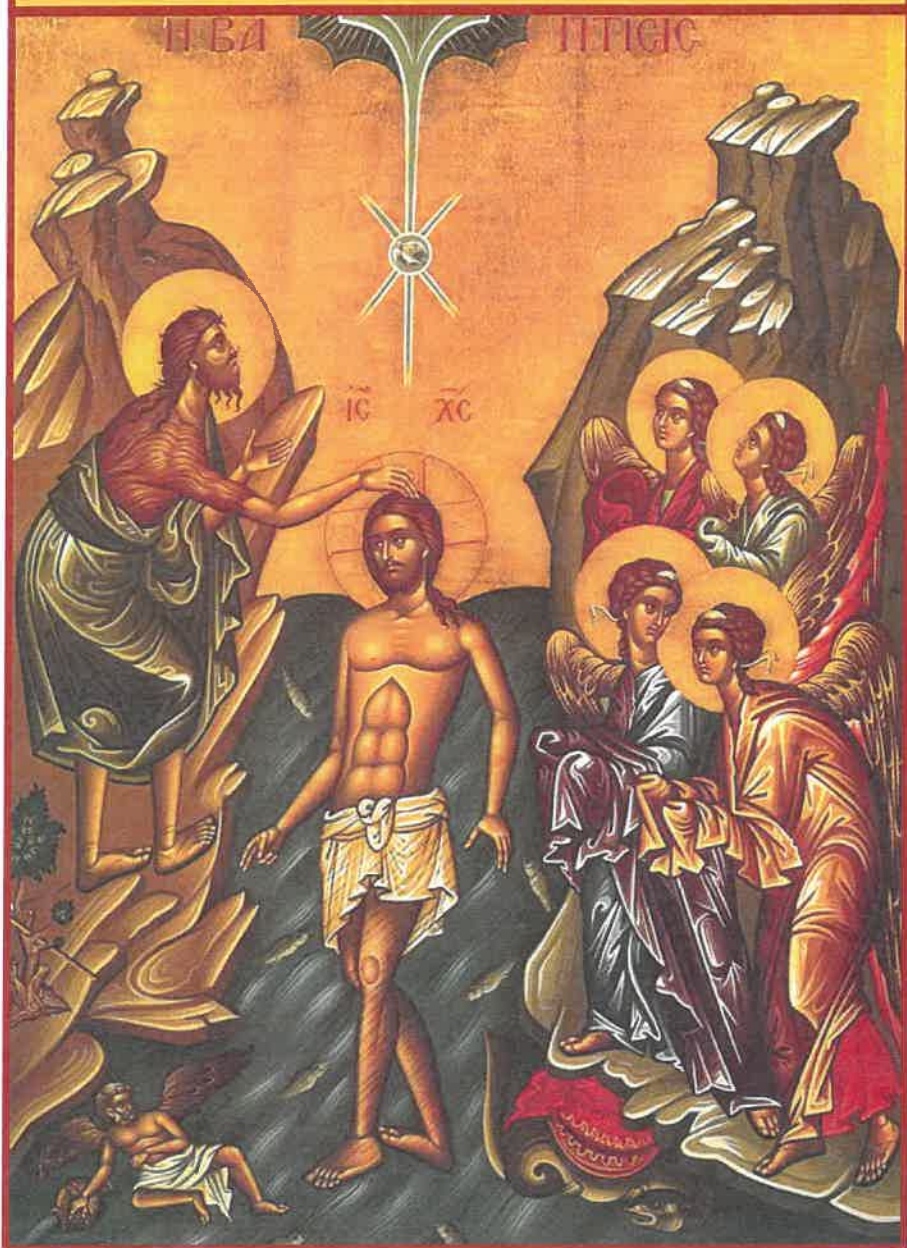
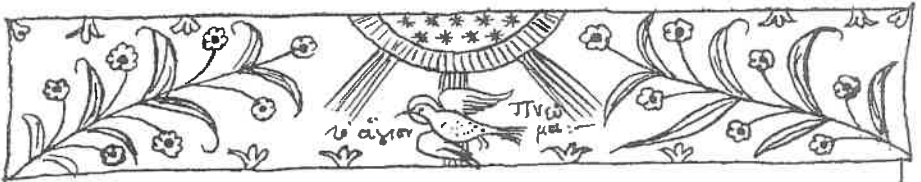


THE GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS
ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY
THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD





THE GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY THE- OPHANY OF OUR LORD

Tone Eight

(by Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem)

Chantor: The voice of the Lord thunders upon the waters saying: "Come all of you, and receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, from Christ who is made manifest"

Today the nature of the waters is sanctified, and the Jordan River is parted in two; it holds back the stream of its own waters, seeing the Master wash Himself.

O Christ the King, You have come unto the river as a man. In Your goodness, You made haste to receive the baptism of a servant at the hands of the Forerunner, John the Baptist, for the sake of our sins, O You who loves mankind.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Now and forever and to the ages of ages.
Amen.

At the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord," You have come, O Lord, taking the form of a servant, and You who knew no sin, ask for baptism. The waters saw You and were afraid; the Forerunner was seized with trembling and cried aloud, saying: "How shall the lamp illuminate the

Light? How shall the servant set his hand upon the Master? O Savior who takes away the sin of the world, sanctify both me and the waters."

The Readings from Scripture

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophet Isaiah (35.1-10)

Priest: Wisdom. Let us listen attentively.

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, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless 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. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. 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.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophet Isaiah (55.1-13)

Priest: Wisdom. Let us listen attentively.

Reader:

Thus says the Lord: Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have 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? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, 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 their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor 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 do not return there until they have watered 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 out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, 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 that shall not be cut off.

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophet Isaiah (12.3-6)

Priest: Wisdom. Let us listen attentively.

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 on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done glorious deeds; let this be known in all the earth. Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Priest: Let us listen attentively.

The Prokeimenon, Tone Three

The Lord is my light and my savior: whom shall I fear?
(*Psalm 26.1*)

The Lord is the defender of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?
(*ibid.*)

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading is from the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (10.1-4)

Priest: Let us listen attentively.

Reader:

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors 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 spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.

The Alleluia, Tone Four

v. 1. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters (*Psalm 28.3*).

v. 2. The God of glory thundered, the Lord is upon many waters
(*ibid.*)

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Priest: Wisdom. Arise. Let us hear the holy Gospel.

Peace be with all.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the holy Gospel according to
Saint Mark (*1.9-11*). Let us listen attentively.

People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Priest: And it came to pass in those days Jesus came from
Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the
Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the wa-
ter, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit de-
scending like a dove on him. And a voice came from
heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I
am well pleased."

People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

THE GREAT LITANY

Priest: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the peace of God and the salvation of our souls, let
us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our Archbishop (*name*), the honorable presbyters, the deacons in the service of Christ, for all the clergy and laity, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For our country, the president, and all those in public service, that they might be strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this parish and city, for every city and country, and for the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and temperate seasons, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this water, that it may be made holy by the power and action and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For these waters, that the cleansing action of the Trinity supreme in being may descend upon them, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For these waters, that they may be given the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan River, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That the Lord may send down the blessing of the Jordan and sanctify these waters, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this water, that it may become a fountain of immortality, a gift of holiness, a remission of sins, for the

healing of soul and body and for every purpose that is expedient, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this water, that it may become a spring, welling up unto eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this water, that it may serve to avert every evil purpose of enemies visible and invisible, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For this water, that it may bestow cleansing of soul and body upon all who draw it with faith and partake of it, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That the Lord our God may hearken unto the voice the prayer of us sinners and have mercy upon us, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy upon us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Remembering our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Choir: To You, O Lord.

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, True God, source of life and immortality, Light of Light, who came into the world to enlighten us, shine upon our understanding with Your Holy Spirit and accept us who offer unto You glory and thanksgiving for all Your great and wondrous works from all ages, and for Your saving dispensation in these last times. For You have clothed Yourself in our poor and infirm nature, and have submitted Yourself to slavery, You who are King of all. Moreover, You have accepted to be baptized in the Jordan River by the hand of your servant, John the Baptist, that having sanctified the nature of the waters, O sinless Lord, You might lead us to a new birth through water and the Spirit, and restore us again to our original freedom. Celebrating in remembrance of this divine mystery, we beg You, O loving Master who

loves mankind: sprinkle upon us, Your unworthy servants, according to Your divine promise, this cleansing water, the gift of Your compassion. Grant that the petition of us sinners over this water may be acceptable unto Your goodness, and that Your blessing may be granted to us and to all Your faithful people, unto the glory of Your holy and venerated Name. For unto You, together with Your Father who is without beginning, and Your all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, are due all glory, honor, and worship, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

On January 6th only the priest says the following prayer, composed by Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Priest: O Trinity supreme in being, in goodness, and in divinity, almighty, who watches over all, invisible, incomprehensible, Maker of spiritual beings and rational natures, innate Goodness, Light that none can approach and that enlightens everyone who comes into the world: Shine also upon me Your unworthy servant. Enlighten the eyes of my understanding that I may boldly sing the praises of Your measureless beneficence and Your might. May the prayer that I offer for the people here present be acceptable to You. Do not let my faults hinder Your Holy Spirit from coming to this place, but suffer me now uncondemned to cry to You, O most good Lord, and to say: We glorify You, O Master who loves mankind, almighty, pre-eternal King. We glorify You, the Creator and Maker of all. We glorify You, O Only-begotten Son of God, born without father from Your Mother, and without mother from Your Father. In the feast of Christmas we saw

You as a child, while in the present celebration we behold You full-grown, our God made manifest, perfect God from perfect God. For today the time of celebration is at hand for us: the choir of saints assembles with us and angels join with us in keeping festival. Today the grace of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended upon the waters. Today the Sun that never sets has risen and the world is filled with splendor by the light of the Lord. Today the moon shines upon the world with the brightness of its rays. Today the glittering stars make the inhabited earth fair with the radiance of their shining. Today the clouds drop down upon mankind the dew of righteousness from on high. Today the Uncreated of His own will accepts the laying on of hands from His own creature. Today the Prophet and Forerunner, John the Baptist, approaches the Master, but stands before Him with trembling, seeing the condescension of God towards us. Today the waters of the Jordan River are transformed into a fountain of healing by the coming of the Lord. Today the whole creation is watered by mystical streams. Today the transgressions of the human race are washed away by the waters of the Jordan. Today Paradise has been thrown open to us and the Sun of Righteousness has dawned upon us. Today the bitter water, as once with Moses and the people of Israel, is changed to sweetness by the coming of the Lord. Today we have been released from our ancient lamentation, and as the new Israel we have found salvation. Today we have been delivered from darkness and illumined by the light of the knowledge of God. Today the blinding mist of the world is dispersed by the Epiphany of our God. Today the whole creation shines with light from on high. Today error is laid low and the coming of the Master has cleared a path of salvation for us. Today the heavenly

powers above keep feast with us below, and those below commune with those above. Today the triumphant assembly of the Orthodox keeps this holy festival with great joy. Today the Master hastens towards baptism that He may lift us up to the heights. Today He that bows not, bows down to His own servant that He may set us free from bondage. Today we have purchased the Kingdom of Heaven: for the Lord's Kingdom shall have no end. Today earth and sea share the joy of the world, and the world is filled with gladness. The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You and were afraid. The Jordan turned back, seeing the fire of the Godhead descending bodily and entering its stream. The Jordan turned back, beholding the Holy Spirit coming down in the form of a dove and flying about You. The Jordan turned back, seeing the Invisible made visible, the Creator made flesh, the Master in the form of a servant. The Jordan turned back and the mountains skipped, looking upon God in the flesh; and the clouds gave voice, marveling at Him who was come, the Light of Light, true God of true God. For today in the Jordan they saw the triumph of the Master; they saw Him drown in the Jordan the death of disobedience, the sting of error, and the chains of hades, and bestow upon the world the baptism of salvation. Therefore, sinner and unworthy servant though I am, I recount the majesty of Your wonders and, seized with fear, in compunction I cry aloud to You:

The priest then sings in a louder voice:

Priest: Great are You, O Lord, and wondrous are Your works!
No words suffice to sing of Your wonders (*3 times*).

Chantor: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You. (*each time following above*)

Priest: For You by Your own will have brought all things out of nothingness into being. By Your power You sustained creation, and by Your providence You govern the world. Out of the elements you have formed the creation: with four seasons have You crowned the cycle of the year. All the spiritual powers of heaven tremble before You. The sun sings Your praises; the moon glorifies You; the stars supplicate before You; the light obeys You; the deeps are afraid at Your presence; the fountains are Your servants. You have stretched out the heavens like a tent. You have established the earth upon the waters. You have walled about the sea with sand. You have poured forth the air that living things may breathe. Angelic powers minister to You; the choirs of archangels worship You; the many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, standing round You and flying about You, hide their faces in fear of Your unapproachable glory. You, the boundless God without beginning and beyond words to describe, have come upon earth, taking the form of a servant and being made in the likeness of man. For You, O Master, in Your mercy and compassion could not bear to see the human race beneath the tyranny of the devil. You came and saved us! We confess Your grace, we proclaim Your mercy! We do not conceal your goodness. You have set free generation after generation of our kind. You have made holy the Virgin's womb by Your birth. At Your Epiphany the whole creation sang Your praises. For You, our God, have appeared on earth and lived among us. You have made holy the streams of the Jordan River, sending down from on high Your most Holy Spirit, and broken the heads of the dragons hidden therein.

The priest makes the sign of the Cross over the water three times, and sings:

Therefore, O loving King, be present now as then through the descent of Your Holy Spirit, and make this water holy. (*3 times*)

Confer upon these waters the grace of redemption, the blessing of the Jordan. Make it a source of incorruption, a gift of holiness, a remission of sins, a protection against disease, to the destruction of demons, inaccessible to demonic powers and filled with angelic strength: that all who draw from it and partake of it may have it for the cleansing of their soul and body, for the healing of their passions, for the sanctification of their homes, and for every purpose that is good and beneficial. For You are our God, who has renewed through water and the Spirit our fallen nature grown old through sin. You are our God, who drowned sin through water in the days of Noah. You are our God who, through the waters of the Red Sea, at Moses' hand set free the Hebrew nation from their bondage to Pharaoh. You are our God who has split the rock in the wilderness: the waters gushed out, the streams overflowed, and You satisfied Your thirsty people. You are our God who by water and fire through Elijah has brought back Israel from the error of Baal.

The priest sings:

O Master, now as then make this water holy by the descent of Your Holy Spirit (*3 times*).

Grant to all those who touch it, who anoint themselves with it or drink from it, holiness, blessing, cleansing, and health. Save, O Lord, Your servants our faithful rulers. Keep them in peace under Your protection; put under their feet every enemy and adversary; bestow upon them whatsoever they ask unto salvation and eternal life. Remember, O Lord, our most holy Patriarch (*name*),

our Archbishop (*name*), and all the priests, the diaconate in Christ, the whole order of clergy, and the people here present, together with all our brethren absent for a just cause. Have mercy upon them and upon us according to Your great mercy. So, by the elements of nature, by the angels. and by the human race, by things visible and invisible, may Your most holy Name be glorified, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Peace be with you all!

Choir: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To You, O Lord.

Priest: Incline Your ear and hearken to us, O Lord, for You accepted baptism in the Jordan River and made the waters holy. Bless us all who by the bowing of our heads outwardly show You that we are your servants. Deem us worthy to be filled with Your holiness through partaking of this water and being sprinkled with it, that it may bring us, O Lord, health of soul and body.

Priest: For You are the sanctification of our souls and bodies, and to You we give glory, thanksgiving and worship, together with Your Father without beginning, and Your all holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages.

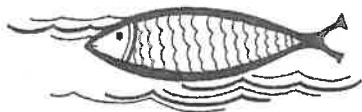
People: Amen.

The Priest now makes the sign of the Cross over the water with the precious Cross: then, holding the Cross upright in both hands, he plunges it into the water, and lifts it from the water once again. As he does this, he sings the troparion of the feast:

Tone One

When You, were baptized in the Jordan River, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made known. For the voice of the Father bore witness to You, calling You His beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed His word as sure and steadfast. O Christ our God, the light of the world, glory to You.

The Priest then plunges the Cross a second and a third time in the water, doing as before, and the troparion is repeated a second and a third time. Next he dips a branch of basil in the water and sprinkles the congregation and the church.



After the congregation has been blessed, the priest concludes the service with the dismissal from the Liturgy.

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: May the blessing of the Lord and His mercy come up on you, through His divine grace and love, always, now and forevermore.

People: Amen.

Priest: Glory to You, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to You!

The Dismissal

Priest: May Christ our true God, who for our salvation condescended to be baptized in the Jordon at the hands of John (if it is a Sunday and who rose from the dead, otherwise directly to:) through the intercessions of His most pure and holy Mother the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; by the power of His precious and life-giving Cross; the protection of all the angelic powers of heaven; the prayers of the holy, glorious prophet and forerunner John the Baptist; the holy, glorious and praiseworthy apostles especially St. Paul the apostle whose name our church bears; the holy and victorious martyrs; our venerable and God-bearing fathers; the holy and righteous ancestors of God Joachim and Anna; of Saint (*name*), whose memory we celebrate today, and all Your saints;

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: AMEN.

At the end of the Liturgy, the rest of the clergy and the people approach and kiss the cross. And the priest sprinkles water on the head of each one with a branch of basil. Clergy and people may also drink of the water which has been blessed. During this time, the following hymn is sung:

Tone Six

Come O faithful people, let us praise the greatness of God's dispensation towards us. Becoming human because of our transgression, He who alone is clean and undefiled was cleansed in the Jordan River that we might be made clean, sanctifying us and the waters, and crushing the heads of the dragons in the water. Let us then draw water in gladness, O brothers and sisters: for upon those who draw with faith, the grace of the Spirit is invisibly bestowed by Christ our God and the Savior of our souls.



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