

*Did you know . . .*

## **The Baptism of the Lord**

Today the Church celebrates the Baptism of the Lord, bringing to an end the Season of Christmas. It recalls Our Lord's second manifestation or epiphany.

"In the Eastern Church this feast is called Theophany because at the baptism of Christ in the River Jordan God appeared in three persons. The baptism of John was a sort of sacramental preparatory for the Baptism of Christ. It moved men to sentiments of repentance and induced them to confess their sins. Christ did not need the baptism of John. Although He appeared in the 'substance of our flesh' and was recognized 'outwardly like unto ourselves,' He was absolutely sinless and impeccable. He conferred upon the water the power of the true Baptism which would remove all the sins of the world: 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who takes away the sin of the world.'" [Excerpted from Msgr. Rudolph G. Bandas, Catholic Culture]



There are many customs on this feast day. For example, in the Ukraine the faithful gather in the front of the church where a cross of ice is placed. Since there are no rivers near churches, a tub is filled with water and is placed in front of the ice cross. During special and very unique services the water is blessed and brought home. This is taken in before breakfast is eaten. The remains are kept during the year to keep the home safe from fire, lightning and sickness.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a time for us to reflect on the gift of our own baptism: In this sacrament, we have been united with Christ and have been lifted up above our broken human nature, becoming sharers in God's divine nature.

### **Prayer for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**

*Author Unknown*

Open the heavens, Almighty Father,  
and pour out your Spirit upon your people.  
Renew the power of our Baptismal cleansing,  
and fill us with zeal for good deeds.

Let us hear your voice once again,  
that we may recognize in your beloved son  
our hope in inheriting eternal life.

Grant this through Jesus Christ,  
your Word made flesh,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
in the splendor of eternal light,  
God, forever and ever, Amen.

**Judy Pearson**