

Message for Holy Theophany 2006*



Beloved brethren in Christ; beloved children in the Lord; Feast-loving assembly of the Orthodox:

On this splendid and radiant Feast Day, with rejoicing and compunction we proclaim and confess, along with the Church:

“Today the unsetting Sun hath risen and the world is filled with splendor by the light of the Lord”;

“Today we have been delivered from darkness and illumined with the light of the knowledge of God”;

“Today error is laid low and the coming of the Master hath made for us a way of salvation”!

In very truth: today, in the River Jordan, our Lord, in undergoing Baptism, **recasts** and **purifies** our earthly human nature in the Fire of His Divinity, **washes** it clean of the filth and pollution of sin through the sanctified water, and **illumines** us with the true Light of the knowledge of God.

Thus, the sure **way of salvation** is marked out before us: the purification from the passions of every Baptized person, through true Faith, observance of the commandments, communion of the Immaculate Mysteries, and unceasing prayer, precedes the illumination and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; the mind and the heart are first purified and then illumined by the Light of Divine Grace.

Our enemy, the Devil, and our fallen and passion-driven nature endeavor to thwart man's sanctification and to darken him, that he might succumb to sin and persist in ruinous **error** and **unbelief**, in **wickedness** and **indolence**. All of these tribulations and temptations are overcome through unceasing **repentance** and a sure and steadfast **confession** of the Faith, without fear or faintheartedness. When our **confession** is motivated by a **spiritual**, and not by a carnal **way of thinking**, when, that is, it is made with boldness indeed, but with humility and love for our neighbor, then it brings us peace, stability, and hope.

Then, truly, do we hear the voice of our Sweetest Savior assuring us: "*Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father Which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father Which is in Heaven*" (St. Matthew 10:32-33).

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Beloved children in the Lord:

If our **confession** is **God-pleasing**, then we shall abide in the love and the truth of Christ the Light-Giver. And if our persecutors banish us from their earthly wealth and ephemeral glory, our Lord Jesus will find us, honor us, and make us worthy worshippers "*in spirit and in truth*" and **partakers** of the **heavenly wealth** and **eternal glory** of His Person, than which there is nothing higher, more felicitous, or more blessed in life!

Our Holy Synod in Resistance paternally exhorts its beloved children: "*Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light*" (St. John 12:35-36).

May the luminous Veil of the Most Holy *Theotokos* protect all of us, along with our pious nation, our ecclesiastical and political leaders, and the entire world, unto the glory of God and the salvation of all. Amen! □

* Delivered by His Eminence, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili during the solemn celebration of Holy Theophany in Oropos, Attika, on 6 January 2006 (Old Style).