



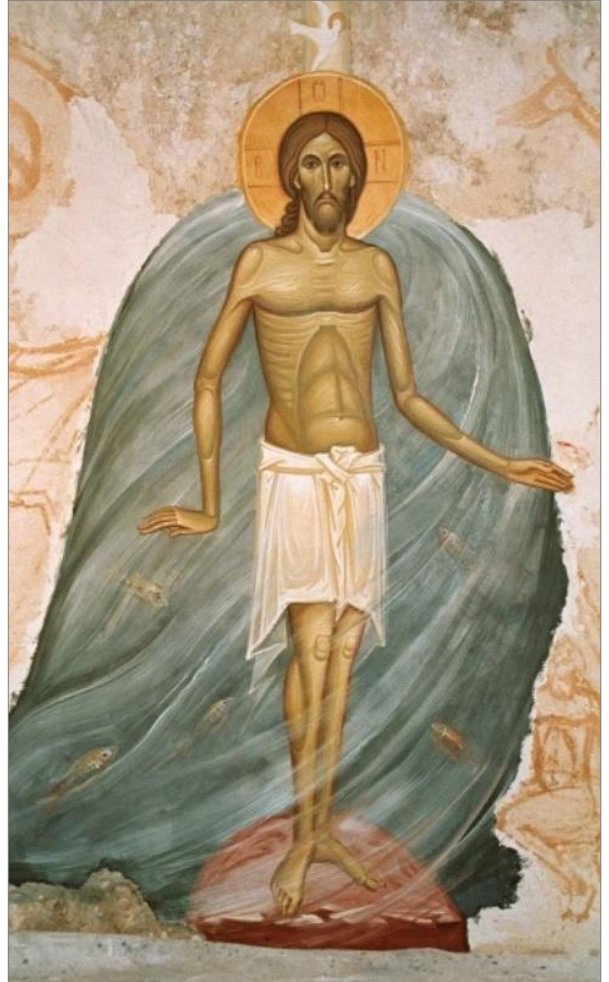
**Theophany**  
**Matthew 3:13-17**

*“And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”*

The loneliness of the human soul is both a place of refuge and distress for the human being. It is the solitude of the Son who makes the voice to be heard within the heart. The voice of the Father today is the answer before time for His Son on the cross: “My God, My God why have you forsaken Me?” (Ps 22) It is the voice of the Father that speaks to every human heart adopted by His Son through the cross and His resurrection. We all look for this solitude that reveals within the heart the voice of the One who loves us all. We look for this solitude because we desire communion.

Today God reveals Himself to us as a communion of persons. Theophany happens within a world that is wounded by segregation and alienation. Broken down by sin. The humanity who beholds today the love of the Father, the obedience of the Son and the communion of the Holy Spirit, is a humanity who broke communion with each other and with God.

We pray today for all forms of brokenness that the human heart experiences. We remember the pieces of broken communion we have encountered within the community over the years, and we pray on the feast. We remember sons and daughters wandering the streets, leaving behind parents who look for comfort without finding one. We remember the sins of parents that wound their children, we remember the



wounds of marriage and family life, the loss because of illness and death, the abandonment of the many people we know who die alone on the streets or as victims of overdose. The foreseeing death that cannot be avoided. The refusal of growth into communion of the innocents, the forgetfulness by the community of those who are no longer desired. We remember the current wars that leave behind multitudes of victims and refugees who don't know when and how they are going to see and embrace again their children. Even at their best, different forms of communities always marginalize the lowly ones who are betrayed. The most we can do is to remember them in prayer so that the heart may learn to receive them. We pray with little hope.

We all carry with us the wound of a broken communion. In all kind of forms and shapes, the brokenness at the end leaves the same mark within the soul. Somehow, at Theophany, all this brokenness experienced within the heart is made known to us even more. What is then for us, the perfect communion revealed today at Theophany? How can we enter within this communion that is inviting when we carry the scars of brokenness within us? Is it a sign of a time to come that we vaguely remember or a sign of a time that has been coming?

Today the flow of the river Jordan is changed. The water is cleansed. The essence of what moves our lives, the *dynamis* is towards new life and communion and not towards self destruction. Through Theophany, there is such a place within our heart now. A new opening. A real one. This new *dynamis* brings us to a place of encounter and not to a place of segregation where within the soul a void has been created. Now is the time to trust the movement and enter the waters. It is not the time to be afraid and sit back. It is the time to find our obedience to what has been revealed to us within the heart.

With all the gravity of sin, humankind never lost the desire for real communion. Even when it chooses to close within itself, the movement is a search in darkness for the light. It is the darkness that has power to take over the soul and to increase its alienation. Today this power is lost. Within the brokenness of humankind, the light is revealed in the mists of community. Through Theophany we don't struggle anymore against the current that takes us to a place of alienation but let ourselves be carried to the grace that works its healing in us by bringing us together within the communion of the saints. Theophany is a time of radical change, the reward of true repentance. The fear is not of the waters because they are clean, but rather of the change and the cleanliness that they bring to the soul. The voice of the Father is taking us towards this change. John the Baptist heard it as well, and he became obedient to the humility of the Son. Even against his own will.

## **Community life**

Bradley was chrismated on the feast of Theophany, taking the name of Jacob. Jacob was wounded by the angel taking a glimpse at his face. Today, Jacob is healed, by listening within his heart the voice of the Father. In Christ we are all adopted and become His beloved sons and daughters. The community is here for him to testify this voice because we have heard it as clearly as he did. As Jacob undertakes this new path of life as a witness for the community, for the sake of God, we are all here to be a living witness of the new reality that echoes for eternity within his soul.

During the week, the loneliness of many people who come to the community to break bread or to serve was revealed when answering the question how people celebrated the coming of the new year. The answer was predominantly “alone”. Both volunteers and people who were in the room had partaken of the same reality. This was revealed more throughout the week. On Thursday, an older person came from the west end of the city, to check out the bakery, and as he entered the chapel he also shared his thoughts on predominant social reality. He used the word “flatten”, to describe the experience of the spirit within the modern society, especially in Canada, he said. Which is the opposite of a community life and creativity. Somehow, at first glance, the community inspired him and gave him hope. He wants to return and bring his mother and a catholic priest friend. He said he discovered something within the community that opposes the flattening and alienation of the spirit that we live today. Whatever that might be, it is made of a communion of lonely hearts who were not afraid to embrace the flow of new life, the waters that are now sweet and bring us together to a place of encounter. With the One who today is approaching us in humility.

## **Mission church collections**

Dec 24/25 2023 Mission Donations \$3,603.20, Candle/wine \$10, Candle box \$33.05.



## **St. Silouan Chapel at St John's Mission**

155 Broadview Avenue Toronto, ON M4M 2E9

416-466-1357 • [info@stjohnsmmission.org](mailto:info@stjohnsmmission.org) • [stjohnsmmission.org](http://stjohnsmmission.org)



## **St. Zoticos Orthodox Church at Good Neighbours Mission**

193 Markham Rd Scarborough, ON M1J 3C3

647-358-4105 • [stzoticos.org](http://stzoticos.org)

We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate, 'Mother Church of Christ's poor,'  
under the Omophorion of Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa