

# ***Third Day of the Nativity (Blessing of Water) – Blessed is the Revelation of Christ***

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St. Sarkis Armenian Church. Carrollton, TX  
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Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:13-23*

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

On January 6, the Armenian Church celebrated the nativity and theophany of Jesus Christ. In accordance with the traditions of the Armenian Church, this feast lasts for eight days and for those eight days, we greet one another with the phrase, “Քրիստոս ծնաւ եւ յայտնեցաւ (Kristos tznay yev haytnetsav/Christ is born and revealed)”; to which the response is “Օրհնեալ է յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի (Orhnyal eh haytnootyoonun Kristosi)/Blessed is the revelation of Christ”.

Yet, what does this mean? The verb *to be born* means to come from someone or somewhere. In Jesus’ case, He was born of the Virgin Mary, but also came from heaven; the bosom of the Father. This means that God physically became man, with a body like ours and hungered, thirst, grieved, cared, died and was resurrected – just like us. *To reveal* means to uncover, bring into the open and to draw attention to. Today we celebrate Christ’s divinity being brought into the open at His baptism. For at His baptism, the Holy Trinity was present: the Father’s voice was heard from the heavens, the Son (Jesus Christ) was baptized and the Holy Spirit was seen descending from the heavens as a dove.

The response “Օրհնեալ է յայտնութիւնն Քրիստոսի (Orhnyal eh haytnootyoonun Kristosi)/Blessed is the revelation of Christ” is a beautiful phrase, because through His birth and baptism, we know God in Jesus Christ. The word, *revelation*, comes from Latin and literally means, “to remove a veil, uncover”. This is why the final book of the Bible is called the Book of Revelation, because that which will happen was revealed (uncovered) to St. John (this is also why the Greek word for revelation, *apocalypse*, also means “to uncover”).

Yet, we hear these words, and even this exact response, every Sunday during the Divine Liturgy. When the deacons chant that we must give the Kiss of Peace, we say that Christ is revealed amongst us and not only do we kiss and hug each other, but we also sing and rejoice – but why? Right before the Kiss of Peace, the priest slightly removes the chalice covering, uncovering the Body of Christ – the bread. This is the first time the faithful witness Christ

among them during the Divine Liturgy. In reality, the priest *reveals* to everyone Christ and we celebrate that He is here with us.

In a few moments, we will remember the revelation of Christ by blessing water and recalling His baptism at the River Jordan by St. John the Baptist. However, we must constantly bring to mind that God is revealed to us every day, but we often do not notice Him. It is not unusual for two people to look at the same object and see two different things. This past week my family and I went to an art museum. There was one painting of two lines and a dot. My daughter asked me what that was and I told her, “It is art” to which she responded, “That’s not art because even you could do that dad!”

We see how people see things differently – even where God is. Some see Him in nature, while others see Him in family gatherings or on the streets and even in the church. However, there are those who tell me on my visits that they don’t come to church because it is full of hypocrites, liars and gossipers. When I hear this, I tell them they are right – the church is full of hypocrites, liars and gossipers. St. John Chrysostom says, “The Church is a hospital for the sick, not a resort for the righteous.” This is the purpose of the Church and where we should all go to be healed.

We must see Christ in each other, but in order to do that, we must put our pride, prejudices and egos to the side and allow the Holy Spirit to reside in our hearts. When we do that, Christ will be revealed in the people we come in contact with in our everyday lives.

Amen.