

Theophany Reflection

“Repentance is the beginning, middle and end of the Christian way of life (St. Gregory Palamas).”

It is the beginning of a blessed New Year! There seems to be joy in the hearts of many as the need to embrace a positive new beginning of things is once again given to us. The Church too, sends out a strong and powerful message with the Feast of Theophany, on January 6 (Liturgy 10 AM, Blessing of Waters 10:45 AM), which is echoed loudly in the words of St. Gregory – *repentance is the beginning, middle and end of the Christian Way of life*. The word for repentance in Greek is *metania* which means to have a *change* in one’s thoughts, thinking and way of living in the world. Let us enter once again into the waters of baptism and the great gift of Christ it brings into our lives.

When St. John the Baptist explained the meaning of repentance he was specific and gave instructions according to the occupation of each person. St. Gregory points out that following confession *fruit* would appear in the lives of those repenting.

The Fruit of repentance (St. Gregory)

Righteousness – doing and being right before God. To have Christ dwelling in us so that we treat everyone as if Christ is dwelling in them. To live righteously is to work truthfully with all clients. This requires ceasing to lie and deceive others just to take advantage of them or a situation.

Almsgiving – sharing from the abundant blessings given to us by God. Having made enough money to live on and take care of our basic needs – with an abundance we can now take care of the needs of others with joyful hearts and thankfulness of everything received. Withholding from others deprives us of the joy of being able to give unto others as we have been given.

Moderation – being content with what God has blessed us with. To live not beyond one’s means but within the boundaries of God’s blessings is accomplished by not desiring what others have. Envy is the absence of moderation.

Love – caring for others who have no one to care for them. What does it mean to love in the workplace? It means to seek the benefit of someone else over oneself. It means to give someone our entire attention and listen to their needs and not my need to make a sale. It means to treat each person without labeling them with any other label than *child of God*.

Truthfulness – integrity and honesty dictate our behavior in our professions. When we are true with God; we can begin to be true to ourselves and others. Integrity is being able to speak the truth in love. It means being able to be who we truly are in the presence of others. It means being able to pursue truth above all else even when it means knowing that someone else may be able to help someone better than we can and having the honesty to be able to tell them so.

“As I speak these words to you, brethren, I feel no small pain in my soul, that we who were long ago granted Christian baptism have not yet accomplished those very things which John demanded of those approaching his own baptism...Christ who takes away the sin of the world enters the water before us to be baptized...He draws the grace of the all-holy Spirit from above to dwell in the water with Him, so that later when those being baptized as He was enter the water, He is there, clothing them ineffably with His Spirit, attaching Himself to them, and filling them with the grace that purifies and illumines reasonable spirits (Gregory Palamas).”