

## **The Earth is the Lord's**

*From the Great Blessing of Holy Water on Theophany*

The voice of the Lord upon the waters cries out, saying, 'Come all of you, receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, of Christ who has appeared'.

Today the nature of the waters is made holy, and Jordan is parted and holds back the flow of its waters as it sees the Master washing himself.

As man, Christ King, you came to the river, and in your goodness you hasten to accept the baptism of a servant at the hands of the Forerunner, on account of our sins, O Lover of mankind.

The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaias.

[55,1-13]

Thus says the Lord: You that thirst, go for water. And as many of you as have no money, make your way and buy. And eat and drink wine and fat without money and price. Why do you spend money on what is not food, and toil for what does not satisfy? Hear me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in good things. ... But when the Lord comes near you, let the impious abandon his ways and a lawless man his plans. And return to the Lord and you will find mercy, and cry out, for he will abundantly forgive your sins. For my plans are not like your plans, nor are my ways like your ways, says the Lord. For as rain or snow comes down from heaven and does not return until it has saturated the earth and it brings forth and sprouts and gives seed to the sower and bread for food, so will my word be. Whatever comes out of my mouth will not return to me empty, until everything that I wished has been fulfilled. And I will make my ways and my commands prosper. You will go out with gladness and be taught with joy. For the mountains and hills will leap up, welcoming you with joy, and all the trees of the field will clap with their branches.

For there to come down upon these waters the cleansing operation of the Trinity beyond all being, let us pray to the Lord.

For there to be given them the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan, let us pray to the Lord.

For us to be enlightened with the enlightenment of knowledge and true religion through the visitation of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

For this water to become a gift of sanctification, a deliverance from sins, for healing of soul and body and for every suitable purpose, let us pray to the Lord.

For this water to become water springing up to eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.

**Great are you, O Lord, and wonderful your works, and no word is adequate to sing the praise of your wonders (x3).**

**Therefore, O King, lover of mankind, be present now too through the visitation of your Holy Spirit, and sanctify this water. (x3)**

*As you were baptised in the Jordan, Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to you, naming you the Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the sureness of the word. Christ God, who appeared and enlightened the world, glory to you.*

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Because God is love, one realizes that the greatest blessings are the trials, not the easy things .... The way of Orthodoxy is filled with difficulties and crosses, but it yields you to the path wherein you glorify God for all things and are thankful for all things – the Resurrection.

Abbot Vasilios of Iveron Monastery