

# You want to bless my house?!



**Yes I do!** Traditionally in the Orthodox Church, on or around the feast of Theophany, the parish priest will come and visit each home blessing it with Holy Water- literally bringing the grace of the Feast with him by blessing the home. Now sometimes when people hear that it is house blessing time, there is a look of abject panic on their faces exclaiming: “*You want to bless my house?*” No doubt the possible mountain of clutter, the needle-less stick that was once the Christmas tree in the living room, and other holiday leftovers come to mind with the quick thought— “How can we hide all of this!?” The purpose of the visit is not, in the least, to cause unneeded anxiety to anyone (well maybe the demons...) The Church Fathers speak of the home as a small church, and we know from our experiences in life that the home *is* the first Church. We also see this in our parishes in which the structure is similar, with a father (the priest), a mother (Matushka), and a family of loving people. Therefore, it is only right and proper to have our homes sanctified each year as a renewal of this affirmation.

If you so desire to have me visit and bless your home, there are a few things that should be prepared to help the event go more smoothly:

- The house blessing is an actual Church service served in the home, so it helps to have the same kind of environment as we try to have in Church. Turn off the TV, radio, XBOX, whatever. Get the family together (and any friends if they would like to participate) around the ikon corner, or at a place specially prepared, such as at the dining room table. Have an ikon of the Feast of Theophany, or another special family ikon placed on a table with a taper candle.
- Try to make a path for me. I really doubt that cassocks were made for walking up and down steps and other such obstacles, especially with hands full, so the less I have to dodge the better. Secure pets away from the area, (having the priest attacked by the family iguana is bad...☺) If it is dark, turn on the lights throughout the house, and make sure that the doors to all rooms are open.
- If possible, write out a list of the names of the family members in the household, as well as relatives and friends that you wish to have prayed for in this service. Also, make a list of departed family members and friends to be remembered at the small service.

Remember, this is your time with your priest. If you have any questions or concerns, this is the opportunity for you to express them, and to spend some fellowship with me. Through this, we can grow together in Christian love as members of the family of Christ. If anyone has any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. I encourage everyone to participate in this! I am really looking forward to sharing this ancient tradition in your home this Theophany season. Besides, this tradition instills a resolute spirit in our Orthodox people — who else can have water thrown in their faces and no one even blinks an eye!?



## Tropar of the Feast: Tone 1

*“When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, and called Thee His Beloved Son! And the Spirit, in the form of a Dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ, our God who hast revealed Thyself, and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee!”*