

St. George Newsletter

January 2013

On the blessing of homes on Theophany

priest Sergei Sveshnikov

Why Bless a Home?

The Orthodox Church teaches that we do not have two separate lives—a secular one and a spiritual one—but one human life, and that all of it must be holy. We must not be Christians for just a few hours on Saturday and Sunday, spending the rest of our life godlessly, that is to say, without God. The person who has united with Christ in the sacrament of baptism cannot be a part-time Christian, but must be faithful to Christ everywhere and at all times—in church, at work, at home, in relationships with other Christians, and in those with non-Christians—we must be faithful to Christ in the fullness of our life.

The Holy Orthodox Church teaches us that a temple is not only a building in which we worship, but that we are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16); that the Body of Christ is not only that of which we partake at the Divine Liturgy, but that we are the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27). And just as the Gifts of the Eucharist are treated with reverence and kept in sanctified vessels in the altar, so should every Christian's life be full of reverence and sanctity not only during a church service, but likewise outside the walls of the temple. A Christian's home must become a small temple, work—labor for the glory of God, and family—a small Church. The Orthodox Church helps her children strive for holiness in their lives and brings sanctification to every Christian home—a small temple. The Church blesses the very foundation of a home in the same way that it blesses the foundation of a church, it blesses a new Christian home in the same way that it blesses a new temple, and yearly, after the

blessing of a parish temple with the water of Theophany, the Church brings this holy water into the homes of the faithful. The prayers for the blessing of a temple are different from those for the blessing of a home, because the function of a home is different from that of a temple, but the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit is one. And just as in the baptism of our Lord all of creation is washed clean and sanctified, every year after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (January 19, according to the secular calendar) Christians sanctify themselves and their homes with the water of Theophany.

The Church teaches us to sanctify everything: dwellings, places of work, all our pursuits, and the fruits of our labor. And just as a temple and sacred vessels, once sanctified and set aside for sacred use, can no longer be used for anything profane, in the same way a Christian washed in the baptismal waters, and his home, and all his works can no longer be the dwelling of sin and the works of satan, but only and always—the temple of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the will of our Heavenly Father. This is why the Church blesses everything that can be found in a Christian home; and if something is not worthy of being blessed, then there should not be a place for it in the home of a Christian.

How Much Does It Cost?

The prayer of the Church is priceless; it can be neither sold nor bought. The Church equally blesses the home of every Christian, regardless of his financial situation. However, we must note the obvious: it is not only angels who come to bless our homes, but together with them come the ministers of the altar—people very much like the rest of us, who also must take care of their families, and to whom petrol is dispensed only for money, just like to all of us. Thus, it is customary to make a donation to the

clergy for their time and work. The amount of this donation is determined solely by each family's individual circumstances and considerations.

The Blessing of a Home

In order to have your home blessed for the first time or to arrange for a yearly Theophany blessing, you must personally contact the Rector of your parish church. Historically, clergy could walk to every home in their parish and bless it on the very day of Theophany. In our current situation in the United States, when many parishioners live tens of miles from the church, it is important to approach the Rector in advance and arrange for an appropriate time for his visit.

For a yearly Theophany blessing of a home prepare a small table in your icon corner covered with a clean cloth, candles, and a vessel with holy water. For a first-time blessing of a home it is also necessary to prepare a very small amount of pure olive oil.

Although parishioners often wish for the priest to stay for dinner or supper after the blessing of their home, it is necessary to remember that the priest may be blessing several homes in one day and cannot physically eat several dinners and/or suppers in a row. Do not be offended if the priest must hurry away to another home. Long spiritual talks over a cup of tea are very important, but it is equally as important to find for them a proper time on a different day, or to ensure in advance that the priest has time after the blessing of your home.

GALA BANQUET 2013

Dinner, dancing, and entertainment

Friday, March 1st

from 6:30 pm

ARBAT BANQUET HALL
375 E 3300 S
SALT LAKE CITY

TICKETS

\$100

TABLES (10 SEATS)

\$900

PURCHASE EVENT TICKETS ON OUR

WEBSITE:

stgeorgeslc.org

OR BUY IN PERSON AT

SUNDAY LUNCHES

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