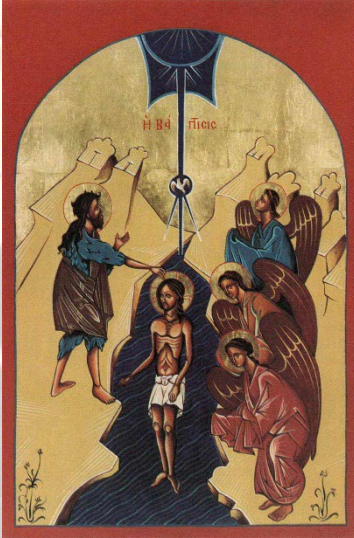


CREATE: THE CLEARING

Lent, 2024 with Icons Through Western Eyes with Russell Hart

2/18/24 - The Baptism



The Eastern Church refers to the Baptism of our Lord as Epiphany, or "manifestation," because at His baptism, our Lord was first revealed to the people.

In the upper part of the icon we see the heavenly sphere penetrating the earthly realm. From this sphere a ray descends revealing the form of a dove. Thus we see depicted the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The river takes the form of a cave, which symbolizes the abyss of death. This device recalls the One who empties Himself [Philippians 2:7] by taking the form of a servant, subject to death with the whole of creation.

Here the Master comes to the servant to be baptized, while at the same time blesses the waters of chaos that they may become the means of new birth into the life of Christ. Thus it revealed that the cleansed life is what matters to God. Jesus received this baptism so that we, who desire to become part of this new creation, might do likewise. Without humiliation and confession, there can be no forgiveness, and thus, no turning to God.

The gentle, forgiving person is so deeply convinced of sin as to be more fully aware of God's great mercy. This is what it means to be filled with the presence of God.

Christ is alive and goes before us
To show and share what love can do.
This is the day of new beginnings;
Our God is making all things new.

~Brian Wren