



## Holy Theophany

Theophany (or Epiphany as it is known in the West) is one of the greatest and most important feasts of the Orthodox Church after Pascha and Pentecost; greater even perhaps than the Nativity of Christ, with which it was once joined. Theophany is when Jesus is revealed for the first time to all people as the Son of God. In the waters of the River Jordan, which are mystically present when we bless our water in church and at our local River Colne, God reveals himself to be a relationship of perfect unity and reciprocal love; the Holy Trinity. The Father speaks, declaring to the whole world, “You are My Beloved Son in Whom I am well-pleased” even as the Holy Spirit descends upon Christ, the Son and Word of God, in the form of a dove, setting Him on an equal par with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is at Theophany that we Christians affirm that Jesus is not simply a good man or a wise teacher, but actually God Himself, who simultaneously shows His humility in submitting to John the Baptist's earthly baptism of water and His Glory through the descent of the Holy Spirit and the declaration of the Father. Because of this assurance of Jesus as God, we can be confident in His defeat of death and sin and the renewal of our fallen human nature through the mystery of Baptism and the other mysteries of the Orthodox Church and by accepting



Him in our hearts and minds as our true Lord and Master. Let us take the opportunity this Theophany to renew our own baptisms in a spirit of repentance and humility, to consciously ‘put on Christ’ and thereby sanctify our lives and the world around us, as all creation is sanctified by Christ’s baptism in the River Jordan.

**Father Mark**

### Services January 2023

**Saturdays:** Great vespers 4.30pm

**Sundays:** Holy Liturgy 10:30am (during the cold snap: no Mattins or Hours before the Liturgy)

Sunday 1 Jan Sunday after Nativity, Sunday before Theophany, Circumcision of Christ, St Basil. Holy Liturgy 10:30am

Friday 6 Jan Holy Theophany of Christ. Holy Liturgy 9:30am (No Water Blessing)

Sunday 8 Jan Sunday after Theophany, Holy Liturgy 10:30am & Blessing of River Colne at Middlemill

Tuesday 10 Jan St Gregory of Nyssa Holy Liturgy 9:30am

Sunday 15 Jan Holy Liturgy 10:30am

Wednesday 18 Jan St Athanasius & Cyril of Alexandria Holy Liturgy 9:30am

Sunday 22 & Sunday 29 Jan Holy Liturgy 10:30am

Monday 30 Jan Ecumenical Teachers Holy Liturgy 10:30am

**Project Updates:** Fund almost reaches appeal total however we still need to raise money for individual items. More details in the previous newsletter which can also be found on our website. Thank you all for your support on this. God bless!

**Newsletter:** I thank Fr. Alexander & Fr. Mark for allowing me the opportunity to take over the newsletter. My family and I have relocated from London to Colchester 2 years ago. You will often see me attending the services during the week alone or at weekend with my two children and my husband, Silviu - who is currently working on St Martin’s iconostasis. I look forward to any feedback the community may have regarding the newsletter about how we can develop it further.



With love in Christ,  
Ligia Iftime

We would like to **congratulate Father Mark** for his ordination into priesthood that took place last month. After the ordination, His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan explained how important it is to let children come to the church, and he encouraged everyone to do so. It has been such a joy to see so many people attending, including Fr. Mark's lovely family and Fr. Patrick from Sudbury who is now starting a new congregation in Suffolk. We also **send our warmest welcome to James Gomm** who is now a member of our parish.

There will be a meeting this month where our parish will discuss about St Helen's Chapel and what's going to happen with it, if we are going to keep it or not. Services are currently limited at St Helen's Chapel because of the scaffolding works, **we encourage as many people as possible to attend the services taking place during the week at St Martin's Church.**

We are now looking forward to 2023 where we hope that the parish projects will go through a next phase.

Ligia Iftime

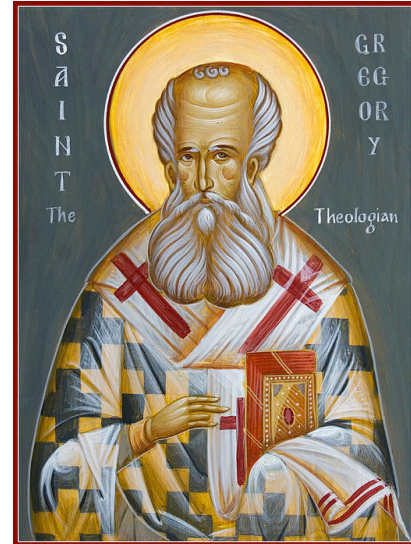
**A word from the Fathers: Life in Christ**  
(Anonymus writer, 4th Century):

"Whatever they may be doing, brothers should bear themselves lovingly and happily with one another. (...) The many members of body form but one body and they support one another mutually as each fulfils his task. (...) This is how brothers should behave with one another. The one who prays should not judge another who is working, for not praying. On the contrary, everyone, whatever he does, shall do it for the glory of God."

## St Gregory the Theologian Archbishop of Constantinople

This great Father and Teacher of the Church was born in 329 in Cappadocia. During his studies, as he was sailing from Alexandria to Athens, a violent sea storm put in peril his life and salvation, since he had not yet been baptised. He vowed to God to dedicate his whole self to Him, and the tempest gave way to calm. At Athens St Gregory was later joined by St Basil, whom he already knew; but now their acquaintanceship grew into a lifelong brotherly love.

After their studies in Athens, St Gregory became St Basil's fellow ascetic, living a monastic life together. Around Year 379, St Gregory came to the assistance of the Church of Constantinople, which had already been troubled for 40 years by the Arians. At that time, the Arians had taken all the churches and he was forced to serve in a house chapel dedicated to St Anastasia the Martyr. From there he began to preach his famous five sermons on the Trinity, called the Triadica. When he left Constantinople two years later, the Arians did not have one church left to them in the city.



Having governed the Church until 382, he delivered his farewell speech in which he demonstrated the Divinity of the Son - before 150 bishops and the Emperor Theodosius the Great; in his speech he requested and received from all, permission to retire from Constantinople. He returned to Nazianzus where he lived to the end of his life and reposed in the Lord in 391, having lived 62 years.

May St Gregory pray for us all!

**Also in January: Saint Fillan (9 Jan) patron saint, healer of those suffering from mental illnesses.**

**St Martin's Church, West Stockwell Street, CO1 1HN**  
**St Helen's Chapel, Maidenburgh Street, CO1 1UB**

Both temples are off the High Street, but accessible from there only on foot. Nearest car park NCP Nunn's Road, CO1 1EJ.

Confessions: Saturdays 5pm, after Vespers or by arrangement.  
Holy Marriage, Holy Baptism, Funerals, Memorials etc: by arrangement.

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We are grateful to those continuing to support our church by regular or occasional gifts: God bless you.

**Bank details:**

**Orthodox Parish of St Martin & St Helen: Registered Charity No: 1134418**

**IBAN:** GB05BUKB20226780219819  
**Sort Code:** 20-22-67  
**Account No:** 50349364  
**Appeal Account No:** 80219819

**Parish Website:** <http://www.orthodoxcolchester.org.uk/>