

Patriarch Daniel performs Great Blessing of Water: Theophany is the feast by which God's love is revealed to humans



The Baptism of the Lord or Theophany “is the feast by which God’s love is revealed to humans: the Father’s love, who sees His eternal Son as a Man in the waters of the Jordan river,” His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel said last Saturday before performing the Great Blessing of Waters.

At the Baptism of the Lord in Jordan, when the voice of God the Father was heard from heaven, testifying about the divinity of the Son, “God (also) included in His love the humanity of Christ and all people who would believe in Christ and receive baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity,” His Beatitude explained.

“When the voice of the Father from heaven said: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, he did not refer only to the divinity of the Son, but also to the humanity that He assumed. When He said: This is my beloved Son, He also referred to the human nature that Jesus assumed to elevate, sanctify and deify it.”

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The Baptism of the Lord is “a celebration that actualizes our own baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity,” His Beatitude also said.

In addition to forgiving sins, “baptism gives us the beginning of a new life: life in Christ or the Holy Spirit.”

A celebration that actualises our own baptism

“This new life is the beginning of eternal life. Eternal life is not life after death, as is sometimes misunderstood. Eternal life is the communion of humans with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and it begins with baptism. Saint Basil the Great notes that through baptism, we receive not only the forgiveness of sins but also the grace of adoption, becoming sons of God by grace, through the Holy Spirit,” His Beatitude continued.

Also, “baptism is the foundational Holy Mystery of spiritual life. The other Holy

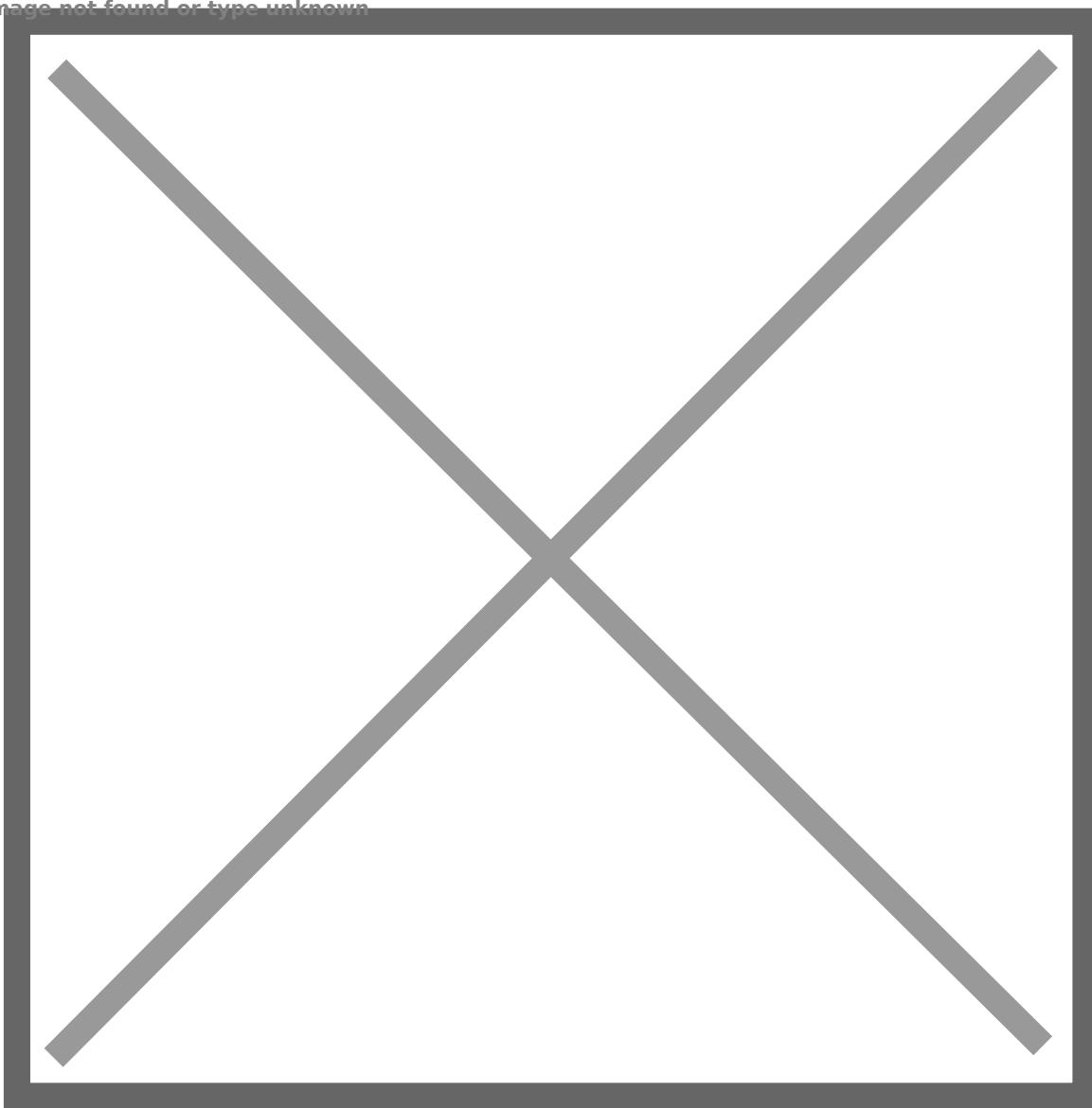
Mysteries cannot be received in the Church without baptism. The foundation of all the Holy Mysteries is the Holy Baptism performed in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” Patriarch Daniel noted on Jan. 6.

“What is accomplished by baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity? As the Holy Apostle Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Romans, we accomplish our crucifixion together with Christ and our resurrection together with Christ - the mystery of the Cross and the mystery of the Resurrection in our lives.”

Therefore, “on the feast of Theophany, we celebrate both the Baptism of the Lord in the waters of the Jordan and the remembrance and renewal of our own baptism.”

Great Holy Water and its works

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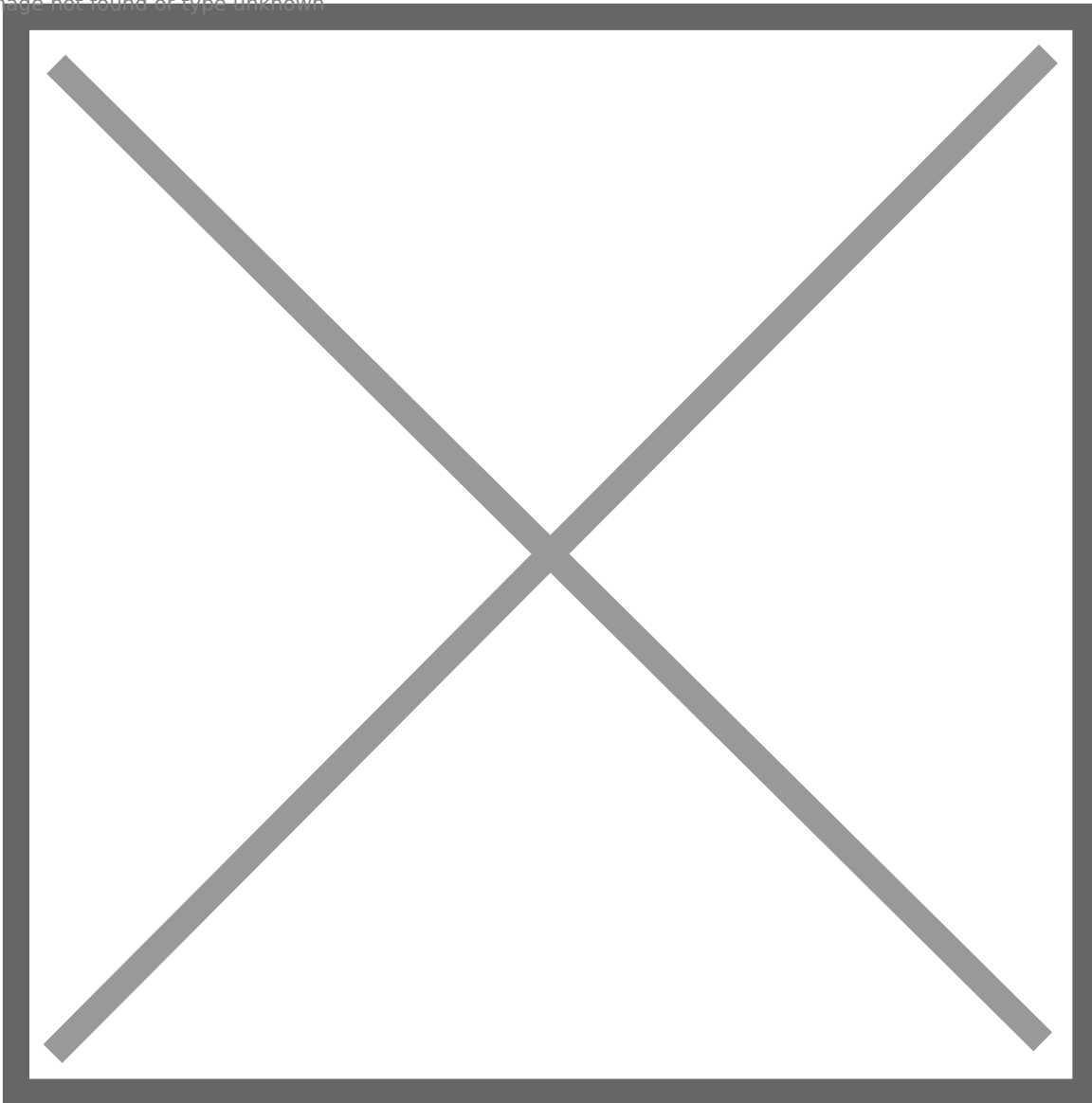
This actualisation is made through the sanctifying action of the Great Holy Water, which is sanctified only once a year through a unique and exceptional service.

“Orthodox Christians want to sanctify not only their soul and body, but also their homes, and the space in which they live and work,” the Patriarch of Romania emphasised.

His Beatitude explained why the Great Holy Water and the service by which this water is sanctified through a distinct service are so unique and performed only once a year: on the eve of the feast, for the sanctification of the houses of the faithful, and/or on the day of the feast of Theophany.

“The sanctification is special because the descent of the Holy Spirit is not invoked only three times for the blessing of the water, but two times thrice, that is, in two rows. This procedure is theologically called the Double Epiclesis, that is, the Holy Trinity is invoked first - because at the Baptism of the Lord, the Holy Trinity appeared at the Jordan - and second - because the Holy Trinity was also invoked at our baptism when we were baptised.”

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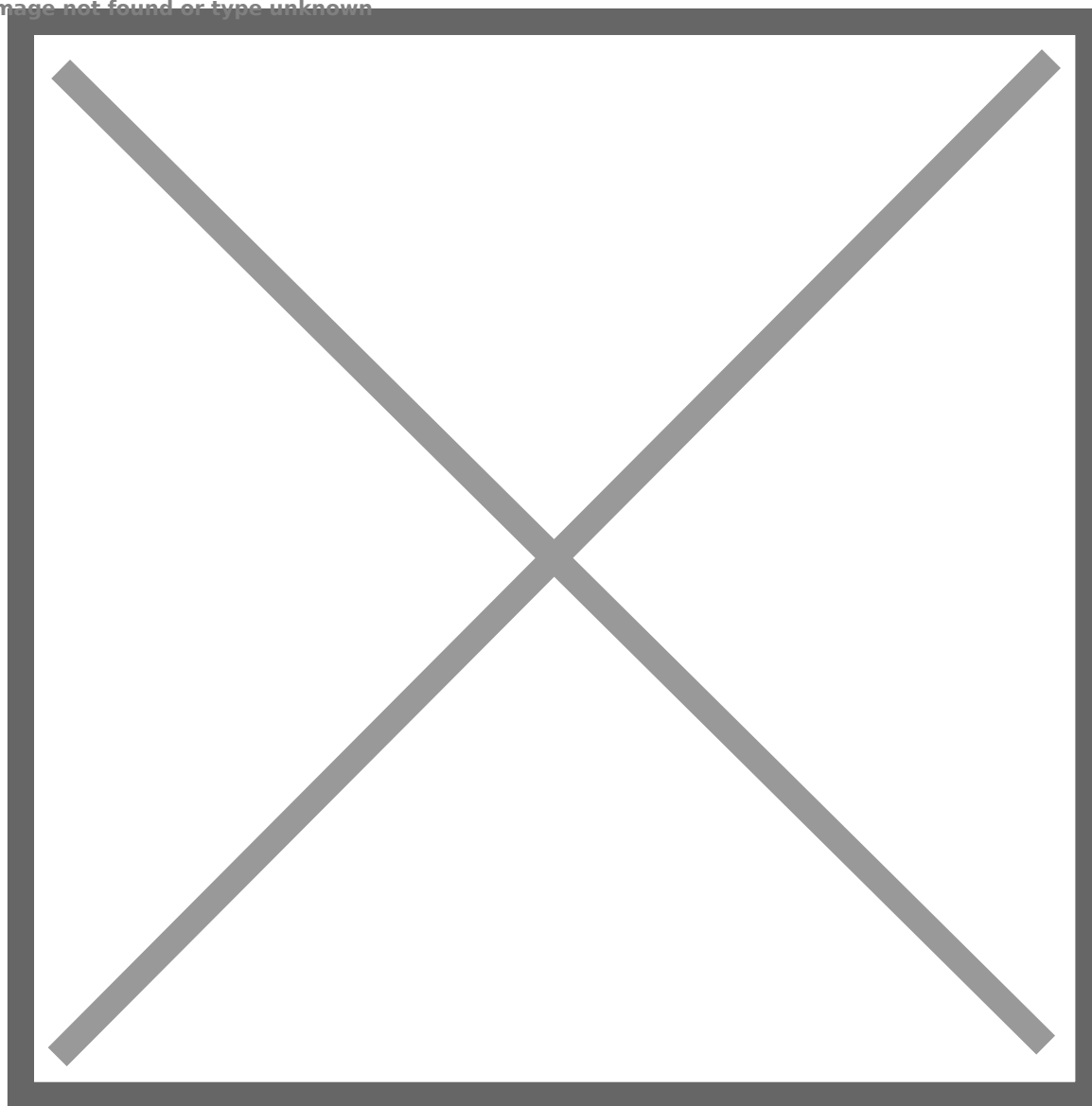


Patriarch Daniel listed the three actions of the Great Holy Water:

- **sanctification:** Both the human nature (soul and body) and the surrounding nature (house, household, garden) are sanctified, are placed under the protection and blessing of the Most Holy Trinity.
- **healing** of spiritual and physical diseases and grave passions: Those who have grave passions and are not remitted by the priest are not allowed to receive Holy Communion, so they are offered the Great Holy Water as a consolation.
- **liberation:** The Great Holy Water is administered with prayer to ward off evil spirits and to get out of difficult situations, when going through troubles and trials.

Appreciation for involvement

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The Patriarch of Romania thanked the Afumați II Parish in Ilfov County, which helped to fill 28,000 half-litre bottles of holy water, distributed free of charge at the Baldachin of the Saints near the Patriarchal Cathedral.

His Beatitude also thanked the institutions that contributed to the smooth running of the events: the Romanian Gendarmerie, the Romanian Police, the Road Brigade, the Bucharest-Ilfov Emergency Situations Inspectorate, the Bucharest-Ilfov Ambulance Service, the Sector 4 Local Police, the volunteers of the Patriarchal Cathedral and the Young Volunteers in Action group of the Archdiocese of Bucharest.

Patriarch Daniel officiated the service of the Great Blessing of Water on the esplanade of the Patriarchal Residence, together with Bishop Qais of Erzurum

(Patriarchate of Antioch), the Patriarchal Auxiliary Bishops Varlaam of Ploiești and Paisie of Sinaia and with Assistant Bishop Timotei of Prahova of the Archdiocese of Bucharest.

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