

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 1**  
**The creation of the world (Genesis 1:1-13)**

A reading from Genesis.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth,  
the earth was a formless wasteland,  
and darkness covered the abyss,  
while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

God saw how good the light was.

God then separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.”

Thus evening came, and morning followed – the first day.

Then God said, “Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters,  
to separate one body of water from the other.”

And so it happened:

God made the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it.

God called the dome “the sky.”

Evening came, and morning followed – the second day.

Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin,  
so that the dry land may appear.”

And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin,  
and the dry land appeared.

God called the dry land “the earth,”  
and the basin of the water he called “the sea.”

God saw how good it was.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth vegetation:  
every kind of plant that bears seed  
and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.”

And so it happened:

the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed  
and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it.

God saw how good it was.

Evening came, and morning followed – the third day.

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**Old Testament Reading 2**  
**The crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14: 15-18, 21-23, 27-29)**

A reading from Exodus.

The LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward.

And you, lift up your staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea, split the sea in two, that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land.

But I will make the Egyptians so obstinate that they will go in after them. Then I will receive glory through Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots and charioteers.

The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I receive glory through Pharaoh and his chariots and charioteers.”

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD swept the sea with a strong east wind throughout the night and so turned it into dry land.

When the water was thus divided, the Israelites marched into the midst of the sea on dry land, with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.

The Egyptians followed in pursuit; all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and charioteers went after them right into the midst of the sea.

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea flowed back to its normal depth. The Egyptians were fleeing head on toward the sea, when the LORD hurled them into its midst.

As the water flowed back, it covered the chariots and the charioteers of Pharaoh's whole army which had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not a single one of them escaped.

But the Israelites had marched on dry land through the midst of the sea, with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.

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**Old Testament Reading 3**  
**The waters of Marah (Exodus 15: 22 through 16: 1)**

A reading from Exodus.

Then Moses led Israel forward from the Red Sea, and they marched out to the desert of Shur. After traveling for three days through the desert without finding water,

they arrived at Marah, where they could not drink the water, because it was too bitter. Hence this place was called Marah.

As the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

he appealed to the LORD, who pointed out to him a certain piece of wood. When he threw this into the water, the water became fresh. It was here that the LORD, in making rules and regulations for them, put them to the test.

"If you really listen to the voice of the LORD, your God," he told them, "and do what is right in his eyes: if you heed his commandments and keep all his precepts, I will not afflict you with any of the diseases with which I afflicted the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

Having set out from Elim, the whole Israelite community came into the desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai.

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 4**  
**The crossing of the Jordan (Joshua 3:7-8, 15-17)**

A reading from the Book of Joshua, the son of Nun.

Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know I am with you, as I was with Moses.

Now command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant to come to a halt in the Jordan when they reach the edge of the waters.”

No sooner had these priestly bearers of the ark waded into the waters at the edge of the Jordan, which overflows all its banks during the entire season of the harvest, than the waters flowing from upstream halted, backing up in a solid mass for a very great distance indeed, from Adam, a city in the direction of Zarethan; while those flowing downstream toward the Salt Sea of the Arabah disappeared entirely.

Thus the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

While all Israel crossed over on dry ground, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD remained motionless on dry ground in the bed of the Jordan until the whole nation had completed the passage.

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 5**  
**Elisha crosses the Jordan (II Kings 2: 6-14)**

A reading from the Second Book of Kings.

Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here; the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live," Elisha replied, "I will not leave you." And so the two went on together.

Fifty of the guild prophets followed, and when the two stopped at the Jordan, stood facing them at a distance.

Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and struck the water, which divided, and both crossed over on dry ground.

When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask for whatever I may do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha answered, "May I receive a double portion of your spirit."

"You have asked something that is not easy," he replied. "Still, if you see me taken up from you, your wish will be granted; otherwise not."

As they walked on conversing, a flaming chariot and flaming horses came between them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

When Elisha saw it happen he cried out, "My father! my father! Israel's chariots and drivers!" But when he could no longer see him, Elisha gripped his own garment and tore it in two.

Then he picked up Elijah's mantle which had fallen from him, and went back and stood at the bank of the Jordan.

Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the water in his turn and said, "Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" When Elisha struck the water it divided and he crossed over.

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 6**  
**Naaman is cleansed in the Jordan (II Kings 5: 9-14)**

A reading from the Second Book of Kings.

Naaman, captain of the hosts of the king of Assyria, came with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house.

The prophet sent him the message: "Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean."

But Naaman went away angry, saying, "I thought that he would surely come out and stand there to invoke the LORD his God, and would move his hand over the spot, and thus cure the leprosy.

Are not the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleansed?" With this, he turned about in anger and left.

But his servants came up and reasoned with him. "My father," they said, "if the prophet had told you to do something extraordinary, would you not have done it? All the more now, since he said to you, 'Wash and be clean,' should you do as he said."

So Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 7**  
**Wash yourselves clean! (Isaiah 1: 16-20)**

A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD: Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil;

learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow.

Come now, let us set things right, says the LORD: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; Though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool.

If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land;

But if you refuse and resist, the sword shall consume you: for the mouth of the LORD has spoken!



**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 8**  
**Jacob and Esau (Genesis 32: 1-10)**

A reading from Genesis.

Jacob continued on his own way. Then God's messengers encountered Jacob.

When he saw them he said, "This is God's encampment." So he named that place Mahanaim.

Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, with this message: "Thus shall you say to my lord Esau: 'Your servant Jacob speaks as follows: I have been staying with Laban and have been detained there until now.

I own cattle, asses and sheep, as well as male and female servants. I am sending my lord this information in the hope of gaining your favor.'"

When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We reached your brother Esau. He is now coming to meet you, accompanied by four hundred men."

Jacob was very much frightened. In his anxiety, he divided the people who were with him, as well as his flocks, herds and camels, into two camps.

"If Esau should attack and overwhelm one camp," he reasoned, "the remaining camp may still survive."

Then he prayed: "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac! You told me, O LORD, 'Go back to the land of your birth, and I will be good to you.'

I am unworthy of all the acts of kindness that you have loyally performed for your servant: although I crossed the Jordan here with nothing but my staff.'"

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 9**  
**Moses saved from the Nile (Exodus 2: 5-10)**

A reading from Exodus.

Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river to bathe, while her maids walked along the river bank. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it.

On opening it, she looked, and lo, there was a baby boy, crying! She was moved with pity for him and said, "It is one of the Hebrews' children."

Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call one of the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?"

"Yes, do so," she answered. So the maiden went and called the child's own mother.

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will repay you." The woman therefore took the child and nursed it.

When the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her son and called him Moses; for she said, "I drew him out of the water."

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 10**  
**God can do with water what he will (Judges 6: 36-40)**

A reading from the Book of the Judges of Israel.

Gideon said to God, "If indeed you are going to save Israel through me, as you promised,

I am putting this woolen fleece on the threshing floor. If dew comes on the fleece alone, while all the ground is dry, I shall know that you will save Israel through me, as you promised."

That is what took place. Early the next morning he wrung the dew from the fleece, squeezing out of it a bowlful of water.

Gideon then said to God, "Do not be angry with me if I speak once more. Let me make just one more test with the fleece. Let the fleece alone be dry, but let there be dew on all the ground."

That night God did so; the fleece alone was dry, but there was dew on all the ground.

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 11**  
**Elijah and the priests of Baal (I Kings 18: 30-39)**

A reading from the First Book of Kings.

Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." When they had done so, he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been destroyed.

He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the LORD had said, "Your name shall be Israel."

He built an altar in honor of the LORD with the stones, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two seahs of grain.

When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood.

"Fill four jars with water," he said, "and pour it over the holocaust and over the wood." "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he said, and they did it a third time.

The water flowed around the altar, and the trench was filled with the water.

At the time for offering sacrifice, the prophet Elijah came forward and said, "LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things by your command.

Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that this people may know that you, LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to their senses."

The LORD'S fire came down and consumed the holocaust, wood, stones, and dust, and it lapped up the water in the trench.

Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, "The LORD is God! The LORD is God!"

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 12**  
**Elisha cleanses the waters (II Kings 2: 19-22)**

A reading from the Second Book of Kings.

Once the inhabitants of the city complained to Elisha, “The site of the city is fine indeed, as my lord can see, but the water is bad and the land unfruitful.”

“Bring me a new bowl,” Elisha said, “and put salt into it.”

When they had brought it to him, he went out to the spring and threw salt into it, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘I have purified this water. Never again shall death or miscarriage spring from it.’”

And the water has stayed pure even to this day, just as Elisha prophesied.

**The Vigil-Eve of Theophany, at Vespers**  
**Old Testament Reading 13**  
**The LORD will not forget (Isaiah 49: 8-15)**

A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Thus says the LORD: In a time of favor I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you,

To restore the land and allot the desolate heritages,

Saying to the prisoners: Come out! To those in darkness: Show yourselves!

Along the ways they shall find pasture, on every bare height shall their pastures be.

They shall not hunger or thirst, nor shall the scorching wind or the sun strike them;

For he who pities them leads them and guides them beside springs of water.

I will cut a road through all my mountains, and make my highways level.

See, some shall come from afar, others from the north and the west, and some from the land of Syene.

Sing out, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, break forth into song, you mountains.  
For the LORD comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted.

But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.”

Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb?  
Even should she forget, I will never forget you, says the LORD.