

January 2

D. Forefeast of the Theophany

From the church hymns for this day: “With pure lips and souls undefiled”, “let us sing hymns of the Forefeast, let us piously proclaim the honorable baptism of our God: for he wills to approach His Forerunner in the flesh. As a man He asks for the baptism of salvation for the regeneration of all”, “for the renewal of souls”. “Christ is made manifest. God is revealed”, “Who knows no sins at all, as one guilty”, “for the servant comes asking for baptism”: “let the faithful hymn Your extreme humility”. “Let us come with Christ to the Jordan”, “let us flee from every impure passion”, “come thoughtfully with purifying streams of tears to the worthy baptism of the divine image”, “that the light being specially revealed, cleansing all with divine rays, O Master, we are revealed everything.” “Look upon Christ who voluntarily humbled Himself. He even took the form of a servant. Let us humble ourselves beneath His mighty hand, Who was adopted by the Spirit: that we may honor His baptism with pure deeds”.

Troparion, tone 4

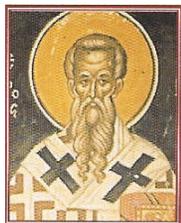
**Prepare, Zebulon,
Adorn yourself, O Nephtali.
Stop your flow, River Jordan.
Receive the Master with Joy.
Rejoice with Eve, O Adam.
Hide not in Paradise as of old,
For the One who beheld you naked
Has now appeared to enrobe you anew. //
Christ has come, willing to renew all of creation.**

Kontakion, tone 4

**Today the Lord is in the stream of the Jordan and cries to John:
Do not be afraid to baptize me. //
I have come to save the first Adam.**

**Check concerning the Aposticha in the Typikon (Ustav) for January 2.
In the same place concerning the canons at Compline and about the troparions and kontakions in the Liturgy following the Little Entrance on the days of the Forefeast of Theophany.**

Memory of our Father among the Saints Sylvester, Pope of Rome



Saint Sylvester was born in Rome of Rufinus and Justa. He lost his father early and his virtuous mother gave him an education for a learned and devout presbyter. St. Sylvester, having learned “book knowledge” and “good morals”, particularly distinguished himself by his love for hospitality to strangers. From his love for God and neighbor he entered the house for pilgrims, and following the example of the Savior he himself washed their feet and offered them “every kind of rest”. Having become 30 years old and at this time already “accomplished in virtue and faith”, St. Sylvester was enlisted among the clergy of the Roman church and received the rank of deacon, and later that of presbyter from Pope Marcellinus. His actions won him universal love and respect. Elected in 314 as Bishop of Rome, he in this dignity was “like a lighted candle placed on a candelabrum”. “Overcoming illnesses through the action of the Spirit”, St. Sylvester “healed the unhealthy passions”, “turning from the lies of delusion”, “he drove away the lies of heresies”, “he humbled the strictness of the Jews, creating great miracles openly before them”, and “he led the majority of the Hellenes to God”. Firm in his faith, and by the light of Christ zealous in the education of unbelievers and those in error, and like a father cared for those entrusted to his supervision and for the education of souls to Christianity, St. Sylvester, “all adorned by virtue”, peacefully departed to the Lord in extreme old age in 335. According to the witness of the Russian pilgrim Anthony, the relics of St. Sylvester were in the St. Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople in 1200. Today most of his relics are in Rome in the church of his name.

Kontakion, tone 4

**O God-bearer of the King and God,
Having been acquainted with fasting,
You were revealed as a priest among priests:
O Father Sylvester the glory of pastors,
From where the angelic hosts now rejoice together,
Being glad in the heavens, //
Save in love those who keep your memory.**

Epistle: Heb. 7:26-28, 8:1-2; sel. 318. **Gospel:** John 10:1-7; sel. 50.

If January 2 falls on Saturday, the Epistle and the Gospel for the Sunday before Theophany is read at the liturgy. If January 2 falls on Sunday, then “at Matins we read the Gospel for the Sunday before the Theophany and then the Gospel for the Sunday: but at the Liturgy we read the Prokimenon, the Epistle, the Alleluia and the Gospel for the Sunday before Theophany, and also for the saint: we read the order according to the selection (zachalo), if there is no regression (otstupka)” (the Typikon (Ustav) Dec. 26); if there is a

regression (otstupka) then the ordinary Gospels for the Sunday are read on that day on which the regression (otstupka) falls.

Hieromartyr Theogenes, Bishop of Parium¹

The son of a bishop, arrested in Phrygia during the reign of Licinius, he was forced into military service and, because he resisted, he was put on a column and was severely beaten with sticks; imprisoned he refused food; after severe torture he was drowned in the sea in 320. His body was taken by Christians and buried at the city wall and many wonders were performed at his grave.

Venerable Sylvester of the Caves

The Venerable Sylvester lived in the 12th century. He continued the writing of the Chronicles of Nestor and also wrote 9 Lives of the Saints who were servants of God in the caves. In the service he is referred to as "the blessed" and he had the wonderful ability to banish "demonic assaults" (Canon of the Caves. Fathers of the Near Caves). His relics openly repose in the Kiev caves of the Venerable Anthony.

Venerable Theopemptus died in peace.

St. Theodota, the mother of the first two holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian, died in peace.

Venerable Mark the Deaf died in peace.

Holy Martyr Sergius, after being tortured for his faith in Christ, was beheaded by the sword in Caesarea, Cappadocia in 304.

Martyr Theopistis was stoned to death.

St. Cosmas, Archbishop of Constantinople, was raised to the patriarchal see in 1075 and died in peace in 1081.

Martyr Zorses (George) was hanged in 1770.

Holy Righteous Juliana of Lazarev

She was born near Murom of a rich and devout nobleman Nedjurevykh. Having become orphaned at 6 years old, she was taken into the house of relatives. Prayer, fasting, needlework, visitation of the ill and charity to the poor were her favorite pastimes. For this she had to endure many troubles because her friends mocked her for her devout life. At 16 she was married to a rich man, but even in her married life she continued to her ascetical efforts of prayer, fasting and acts of

mercy. With her servants she was indulgent and polite, and with gentle admonishment and teaching she achieved agreement and love among them, and whenever possible, she tried to do everything alone and was burdened by their services. Sometimes secretly she was busy with handiwork, doing such work during the entire night, and the money, which she received from the sale of the handicrafts, she gave to the poor or for the adornment of the temple. When an epidemic appeared she washed the dead and buried many at her own expense. After the death of her husband, she went on a strict fast and prayer, and slept no more than two hours per night on fragments of wood or iron, walked in boots which were filled with potsherd or walnut shells. She died in peace on January 2, 1604. In 1614 her relics were found incorruptible and exuding myrrh. She reposes in the village of Lazarev near Murom in a hidden place.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0006-8.
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¹ The city of Parium is on the shore of the Hellespont (Sea of Marmara) in Mysia in Asia Minor