

June 24

G. ☩ *Nativity of the Honorable, Glorious, Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John*



See Jan. 7 about St. John the Forerunner. This feast was already established in the 4th century. It (see June 25) has a one day Afterfeast¹.

Troparion, tone 4

**O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ,
Although we cannot worthily praise you,
We lovingly honor you:
For through your glorious and honorable nativity,
You ended barrenness and your father's silence,
Preaching the incarnation of the Son of God to the world.**

Kontakion, tone 3

**Today the formerly barren woman gives birth to the Forerunner of Christ,
Who is the fulfillment of every prophecy:
Of whom the prophets prophesied,
Having laid his hand on Him in the Jordan,
Being revealed as Prophet, Herald and Forerunner of God the Word.**

Magnification: see page 634.

Paramoia: 1) Gen. 17:15-17, 19; 18:11-14; 21:1-8; 2) Jg. 13:2-8; 13-14, 17, 18, 21. 3) Is. 40:1-3, 9; 41:17-18; 45:8; 48:20, 21; 54:1. **Matins Gospel:** Lk. 1:24-25, 57-68, 76, 80; sel. 3-4. **Epistle:** Rom. 13:11-14; 14:1-4 sel. 112. **Gospel:** Lk. 1:1-25, 57-68, 76, 80; sel. 1-4.

Martyrs Orentius, Pharnacius, Eros, Firmus, Firminus, Cyriacus and Longinus

They were brothers by birth and served as warriors during the reigns of Emperor Diocletian and Maximian. St. Orentius during the war with the Scythians fought alone with the Scythian leader Marothom and by the power of Christ defeated him. For refusal in his case to sacrifice to idols and for his confession of Christ he and his brothers were exiled to the Caucasus. On the way to the place of exile the holy martyrs died in different places: Eros died near the place called Preamble (camp) on June 22, Orentius died in Rize (on southern coast of the Black Sea) on June 24, Pharnacius died in Kordile (in the same place) on July 3, Firmus and Firminus died in Apsar [Apsari, Gumusduven] (on the Eastern shore of the Black Sea) on July 7, Cyriacus died in Zagani or Zegani (in the same place) on

July 14, Longinus died at sea on the way to Livik the place of exile on July 28 and was buried in Pitiunde (now Pitsunda, to the north of Zengam).

Martyr Panagiotes of Caesarea

As a youth he suffered for his faith in Christ by the Turks in Constantinople in 1765. His body was buried beyond the city in the cemetery of the Life-bearing Spring.

Sts. James and John of Meniugi

Children of pious peasants, who lived 60 versts [39.6 miles] from Novgorod, died as child martyrs. Their relics, being glorified by wonders, repose in a hidden place in the former Meniugi monastery 40 versts [26.4 miles] from Novgorod on the shore of the Meniugi River.

St. Nicetas, Bishop of the City of Remesiana

A Slav, born in the city of Remesiana (now Nirot near the city of Sofia) and was the former bishop there. Having received an excellent education in Rome, he used it all his life to spread the Gospel among Slavonic people. He died peacefully about 420.

¹ In antiquity on the night of June 24 they gathered various herbs (loosestrife, valerian, thistle, touch-me-not), attributing to them a wonderful power. They especially searched for a fern, which blossoms with a fiery color only on this night and which is needed during the search for treasure. They bathed for health and jumped through lit fires for protection from infection and illnesses. They searched for treasure. They rolled a burning wheel from the hill, indicating for them that from now on the sun turns to the winter. They played all sorts of games for entertainment during the entire day. All these and many other superstitious customs, rites and beliefs associated with this day say that in pagan times the main summer feast of Kupala was celebrated at this time. Under the name of Kupala our ancestors idolized the beneficial power of water and vivifying heat of the sun for plants and believed that this Kupala is also hidden in the water, in the fire and in the herbs. In Christian times our ancestors, due to their backwardness and mixing the pagan with the Christian, attached the feast of Kupala to the feast of St. John the Baptist, giving the Forerunner the name Ivan Kupala. In some places this description of the superstition applies even at the present time and for eradication of these superstitions, humiliating for Christians and offensive to the memory of John the Baptist of the Lord, requires strong pastoral influence on the inhabitants of these districts.