

September 7

B. Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

The following are from the church hymns for this day. "Today David exults, Jesse now leaps for joy and Levi is magnified; Joachim the righteous rejoices in spirit, and Anne is freed from childlessness". "Mountains, break out in gladness, Apostles and Martyrs, dance, Ascetics and Righteous now rejoice". "Today has been brought to birth the bridge which leads humanity to light, heavenly ladder" and "Now the fog of wickedness begins to grow less; for the living cloud of the sun has dawned from barren loins". "As we see her today in the bosom of Anne, leaping for joy, with faithful Joachim" "Let us offer praise to the Redeemer, the Lord who from a barren womb gave us the Mother of God" and "In gladness today with joy sing the praise of the nativity of the Mother of God".

Troparion, tone 4

**From Jesse's root and from David's loins
Mary the child of God is being born for us today,
And so the universe rejoices and is renewed;
Heaven rejoices together with the earth.
Praise her families of nations,
Joachim rejoices and Anne keeps festival as she cries,
"The barren gives birth to the Mother of God, //
The nourisher of our life"**

(Text: © Archimandrite Ephrem 10 February 2001)

Kontakion, tone 3

**Today the Virgin and Mother of God, Mary,
The untouched bridal chamber of the heavenly Bridegroom
Is being brought to birth from barren womb by God's counsel,
To be made ready as the chariot of the Word of God;
For to this she was predestined, //
The gate of God and Mother of true life**

(Text: © Archimandrite Ephrem 10 February 2001)

Refer to the Chapter in the Typikon and Menaion if the Forefeast and St. Sozon fall on a Sunday.

Holy Martyr Sozon



Born in Cilicia, he was a shepherd. But even the preoccupations of a shepherd did not prevent him from practicing spiritual efforts in prayer, fasting and reading the word of God. Being thus edified, he also enlightened his young friends in his occupation in the light of the knowledge of God. On a pagan feast in the city of Pompeiopolis, St. Sozon, burning with zealousness for the true faith and "wishing to be stabbed in love for the sake of God", came at night to a pagan temple and here, "arming himself with a cross", took from a golden idol an arm, shattered it and distributed the pieces to the needy. The news about the missing arm of the idol rapidly spread among the city dwellers and everyone became unglued. St. Sozon, armed "with the sling of faith", went to the ruler and announced that he tore off the arm of the idol to learn about the power of pagan deities. For this the Holy Martyr Sozon was subjected to terrible tortures, and cast into the furnace and died amidst the torture in about the year 304.

Kontakion, tone 2

**Let us gather and sing out together to Sozon,
The holy and true martyr, expert fighter for the faith,
The mystical seer of divine grace, the generous provider of healing: //
For he is our intercessor before God**

(Text: Holy Myrrhbearing Women Monastery)

Epistle: Ephesians 6:10-17; sel. 233. **Gospel:** John 15:17-27; 16:1-2; sel. 52.

Our Father Among the Saints John, Archbishop of Novgorod, Wonderworker

St. John was born in Novgorod from the noble and rich parents (Nicholas and Christina) and was brought up together with his brother Gabriel by them in true piety. First he was the priest of the St. Blaise Church in Novgorod. Having accepted monasticism, with the name Elijah, he led a strict life of asceticism, abiding "in God pleasing fasting and prayers and in all the monastic ascetical efforts and works". His life was an example of piety and brought fame and deep respect to him, so that he was elected Archbishop of Novgorod (in 1165). During his time the city of Novgorod was saved through the intercession of the Mother of

God from the invasion of the Suzdals in 1170. The Holy Archbishop was wonderfully distinguished by generosity, charity to the poor, deep humility and meekness. He loved to converse with hegumens (abbots) and priests about sincere salvation, talked with them about the lives of the great saints and in each case taught the people of the parish not to overlook eternity. The Domestik Kirik, contemporary of St. John, gathered up to 30 rules for the training of bishops for the clergy. The last years of his life the hierarch kept a strict fast and vigilant care of his flock during a time of unceasingly unsettled civil troubles due to the frequent change of princes and mayors (possadniks). He built two monasteries (see the Archangelsk Diocese), built some temples in Novgorod and cared much for their decoration. "Having known of his departure to God", and "already being in deep old age, he was tonsured a schema monk (he was named by his original name John in the schema and reposed in peace to the Lord", in 1186. With great honor, during the common lamentation of the people, he was buried in the vestibule (in the Chapel of the Forerunner) of the St. Sophia Cathedral. His relics were discovered in 1439 and today repose in the Novgorod St. Sophia cathedral. Since St. John remained whole, the mantle and staff of the hierarch was kept in the St. Sophia's sacristy.

Troparion, tone 8

**Today the great New City brightly displays its most glorious one,
Having your relics, O Hierarch John, as if emitting the sun's rays,
And granting healing to the faithful running to the monument of your relics:
Pray to Christ God to deliver this city safely
From the barbarian curse, and civil wars, and flaming fires,
O most wise Hierarch and wonderworking heavenly man and earthly angel:
Let your memory descend with love
On those who brightly celebrate, rejoicing in hymns and songs,
And those who glorify Christ,
Thanking you for the grace of healing, //
and for the intercession and strengthening of the great New City.**

Kontakion, tone 4

**The honorable church of Christ clearly makes glad,
In memory today of the ever spoken Hierarch John,
Shining out of the great New City,
And whose wonder working are glorified throughout the country,
And who is adorned by all good deeds:
For after his repose his pure body was revealed to be incorrupt,
And the source of great wonders:**

Therefore we call out to you: //

O All Blessed One, Pray unceasingly to Christ God for us all.

His cathedral where his relics lay and where his temple is located is completed.

Martyr Eupychius

Born in Caesarea, Cappadocia he was tortured and put into prison for confessing of Christ during the reign of Emperor Adrian. Healed from the wounds by a touch of an angel, he was set free from the prison. Then he gave his property to the poor not forgetting to share with his accuser. During the time of a new ruler he was again tortured and finally beheaded.

Holy Apostle Evodus, of the Seventy

He was the first successor of the Holy Apostle Peter in Antioch. He ruled as Hierarch for 27 years and died as a martyr during the reign of Nero in the year 66.

Holy Apostle Onesiphorus, of the Seventy, Bishop in Colophon (near Ephesus).

Venerable Luke

He was the hegumen, after the Venerable Ignatius (see September 27) of the Monastery of the Savior, called Deep River, and lived in the Tenth century. This monastery was near Constantinople in the Gulf of Cius.

Suffering of the Venerable Martyr Macarius of Kanev

Born in Ovruch, Volhynia Province, from his youth he loved to pray and to work, frequently attended church and quite often was determined in his service to clergymen to learn from them a spiritual way of life and to keep the Orthodox faith, for in that time the followers of the Pope strongly oppressed the Orthodox. Having accepted monasticism, he with special diligence made a spiritual effort in prayer and the study of the works of the Holy Fathers. For his high Christian life and unconditional obedience he soon became a hieromonk, and then soon was elected rector of the Ovruch Monastery, where there much trouble from the Catholics, who some times attacked the monastery and finally completely ruined it. Then he became the rector of the Kanev Monastery, where he was known for his

foresight and wonderworking. He died a martyr in 1678 by the Tatars, who attacked the Kanev Monastery. After various tortures he was beaten with a cane about the face and chest, and broke his arms and feet with iron instruments; then they hung him between two columns, tore off him his hair shirt and beheaded him. His relics were discovered in 1688 and now are in the Ascension Cathedral in the city of Pereiaslav (Poltava Province).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp (Kharkov, 1900), pp 317-319
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