

The Confessor's Tongue for January 4, 2009

Sunday Before Theophany: Synaxis of the 70 Apostles

In honor of St. Maximus the Confessor, whose tongue and right hand were cut off in an attempt by compromising authorities to silence his uncompromising confession of Christ's full humanity & divinity.

January 4: Synaxis of the 70 Apostles

Besides the 12 Apostles the Lord Jesus Christ during His life had the good will to select 70 more and sent them among the cities to preach the Kingdom of God in all of them (Luke 10:1). These 70 Apostles, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, preached Christ in different countries; one independently, the others were associates of the Twelve Apostles. Celebrating many of the seventy from the choir of the apostles separately, the Orthodox Church, for the purpose of honoring each of the seventy equally and for the protection of believers from disagreement in honoring them, today glorifies all of them together, calling this day "the Synaxis of the Holy Seventy Apostles". In the church hymns they are glorified, as "all wise" and "all praised" "disciples of Christ", "pillars of the unshakeable Church, the foundation of piety", "the candlesticks of divine visions", enlightened "all the world with the radiance of piety" and dispersed "the darkness of atheism", "O wise Apostles, leaders of the way for the stray", caught "by words" and lifted up "out of the depths of atheism by many diversified languages, signs and wonders" confirmed "their wisdom".

The names of the 70 Apostles according to the Menology: **James**, the brother of the Lord (Oct. 23), **Mark** the Evangelist (Apr. 25), **Luke** the Evangelist (Oct. 18), **Cleophas**, the brother of Joseph the Betrothed, **Simeon**, the son of Cleophas (Apr. 27), **Barnabas** (June 11), **Joses** or **Joseph** nicknamed **Barsabas** or **Justus** (Oct. 30), **Thaddeus** (Aug. 21), **Ananias** (Oct. 1), **Stephen** the Archdeacon (Dec. 27), **Philip** of the seven deacons (Oct. 11), **Prochorus** of the seven deacons (July 28), **Nicanorus** of the seven deacons (July 28 and Dec. 28), **Timon** of the seven deacons (July 28 and Dec. 30), **Parmenas** of the seven deacons (June 28), **Timothy** (Jan. 22), **Titus** (Aug. 25), **Philemon** (Nov. 22 and Feb. 19), **Onesimus** (Feb. 15), **Epaphras**, **Archippus** (Nov. 22 and Feb. 19), **Silas**, **Silvanus**, **Crescens** or **Crispus** (July 30), **Crispus**, **Epenetus** (July 30), **Andronicus** (May 17 and July 30), **Stachys**, **Amplius**, **Urban**, **Narcissus**, **Apelles** or **Apel** (Oct. 31), **Aristobulus** (Oct. 31 and Mar. 16), **Agabus**, **Rufus**, **Asyncritus**, **Phlegon** (Apr. 8), **Hermes** (Nov. 5 and May 31), **Patrobus** (Nov. 5), **Hermas** (Apr. 8), **Linus**, **Gaius**, **Philologus** (Nov. 5), **Lucius** (Sept. 10), **Jason** (Apr. 28), **Sosipater** (Apr. 28 and Nov. 10), **Olympas** (Nov. 10), **Tertius** (Oct. 30 and Nov. 10), **Erastus**, **Quartus** or **Quart** (Nov. 10), **Euodius** (Sept. 7), **Onesiphorus** (Sept. 7 and Dec. 8), **Clement** (Nov. 25), **Sosthenes** (Dec. 8), **Apollos** (Sept. 10 and Dec. 8), **Tychicus**, **Epaphroditus** (Dec. 8), **Carpus** (May 26), **Quadratus** (Sept. 21), **Mark**, called **John**, **Zenas** (Sept. 7), **Aristarchus** (Apr. 15 and Sept. 27), **Pudens**, **Trophimus** (Apr. 15), **Mark**, the nephew of **Barnabas**, **Artemas** (Oct. 30), **Aquila** (July 14),

Fortunatus, and **Achaicus**. For making up 721 1) add to these: **Dionysius** the Areopagite (Oct. 3), **Simeon**, nicknamed **Niger** (Acts 13, 1).

January 6: Holy Theophany of Our Lord

The feast of the Baptism of our Lord is also called the *Theophany* or *Epiphany* (*Manifestation of God, Manifestation from above*), because at the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Trinity was present and manifested: the Son of God received baptism in the Jordan River; God the Father testified to His Son by a voice from Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, appearing in the form of a dove, confirmed the words of God the Father. In ancient times, the catechumens used to receive the Sacrament of Baptism on the vigil of this day, whence it also received the name of "Feast of Illumination."

The services on this day are the same as on the day of the Nativity of Christ. The vigil is a day of fasting, as strict as that of the eve of Nativity; and on the day following (January 7) the faithful congregate to celebrate "the worshipful and glorious Prophet and Forerunner, John the Baptizer of Christ."

The special feature of the service on the day of the Epiphany is "the consecration of the waters." In all churches it takes place on the eve of the feast, after the Liturgy or Vespers. In some churches, it is repeated on the day of the Feast after Liturgy, on rivers and lakes, whither the clergy go in procession, with cross and banners. The first consecration is retained as a reminder of the baptism which catechumens used to receive on this day, and of the vows which we ourselves took at our own baptism. The second consecration takes place in memory of the Baptism of Our Lord; hence the procession is called "going to Jordan."

Theophany is indeed a great feast. Liturgically it renews the joy of Christmas, shows us the incarnate God in a new light, and deepens our appreciation of the Incarnation itself. It is, in fact, so much like another Christmas that even the services are similar. As Christmas is the manifestation of the boundless love of God for man, so Theophany is the great revelation of the divinity of our Lord. The two feasts thus supplement one another. Theophany proclaims that the little Child of Bethlehem is really God, pointing from earth to heaven. Christmas, on the other hand, tells us that God became for us a little Child, tracing His descent from heaven to earth. Where at Christmas only shepherds saw that the Word was made flesh, at Theophany the voice of God the Father summons the whole world to adore Jesus.

The origin of Theophany can be traced to apostolic times. The Apostolic Constitutions mention it: "Let us celebrate the fast of Theophany, because on this day the divinity of Christ was revealed." In the third century, St. Hippolytus and Gregory the Neocaesarean take note of it. In the

fourth century, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. John Chrysostom, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustine preached sermons on this day, calling it a great fast. St. Andrew of Crete in the seventh century and St. John of Damascus in the eighth composed beautiful hymns for it, which are used to the day in the services.

We celebrate Theophany through its leavetaking on January 14. We use the troparion and kontakion of the Feast in our daily prayers and at meals in place of the usual "Our Father" and "We give thanks..."

Theophany, Troparion, tone 1

When Thou, O Lord wast baptized in the Jordan / the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. / For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, / naming Thee His beloved Son. / And the Spirit, in the form of dove, / confirmed the certainty of that word. / O Christ our God, who hast manifested Thyself and enlightened the world // glory to Thee.

Theophany, Kontakion, tone 4

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe / and Thy Light, O Lord, hath shone on us, / who with understanding praise Thee: / Thou hast come and revealed Thyself, // O Light unapproachable!

Blessing of Homes

Homes are customarily blessed after the Great Blessing of Waters at Theophany. This is a brief service in the home of prayer and sanctifying the house through the sprinkling of holy water. A longer order of blessing is often used for the first blessing and cleansing of a new home.

With the house cleaned and ready, we dress as we would for a church service. When the priest arrives, we turn off the television, radio, stereo, etc. Pets that may interfere are placed out of the way. A small table may be set up before the Icon Corner, upon which a wide-mouthed but small bowl full of newly blessed water is placed. A lit candle, censer (if you have one), and icon are placed on the table. These things should be arranged before the priest arrives.

Family members and any guests gather and stand before the small table. The first names of those residing in the home are printed on a piece of paper and placed on the table. Proper baptismal names should be used.

One family member may carry the lit candle, going before the priest and leading him through the house, turning on lights, opening doors, etc. The other family members may accompany the priest or may stay at the table (children, though, usually want to see their rooms blessed).

After the service, some of the faithful will make an offering to the church or give a gift to the priest. There is no obligation to do this, but if done, it is done following the service. Take advantage of having the priest in your home for the house blessing to ask questions or to voice any concerns you may have. Some parishioners desire a more extended visit or to have a meal with the priest.

This should be arranged beforehand.

On Obedience to the Church

St. Nicholas of Zicha

Why must one obey the Church and not some man whose thinking is opposed to the Church, eminent or intellectually gifted though that man may be? Because the Church was founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and is guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. Also because "the Church" signifies the community of the saints, an orchard of choice, fruit-bearing trees. If a man remains opposed to the community of the saints, that means that he is unholy. Why, therefore, listen to him? "The Church is an enclosure," says the wise Chrysostom. "If you are within, the wolf cannot enter, but if you stray outside, the wild beasts will seize you. Do not wander from the Church; there is nothing mightier than the Church. She is your hope and your salvation. She is higher than the heavens, firmer than rock, wider than the world; she never grows old, but is forever renewing her youth."

January Namedays

- 1 Fr. Basil Biberdorf (St. Basil the Great)
Basil Geoff Stevenson
- 10 Richard Gregory Joines (St. Gregory of Nyssa)
- 12 Tatiana Garner; Tatiana Tabet (Martyr Tatiana)
- 14 Nina Johnston (St. Nina of Georgia)
- 17 Subdn Anthony Stokes (St. Anthony the Great)

January Birthdays

- 3 Ben Lyda (30!)
- 4 Sandra Pascale
- 20 Dianna Rivas
- 21 Katherine Frederick (2002)
- 24 Erica Helen Marie Rivas
- 24 Christopher Jones
- 27 Nicholas Gluschenko

Pray ye without ceasing in behalf of other men. For there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God. See, then, that they be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be ye meek in response to their wrath, humble in opposition to their boasting: to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error, be ye steadfast in the faith; and for their cruelty, manifest your gentleness. While we take care not to imitate their conduct, let us be found their brethren in all true kindness; and let us seek to be followers of the Lord, that so no plant of the devil may be found in you, but ye may remain in all holiness and sobriety in Jesus Christ, both with respect to the flesh and spirit.

St Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Ephesians 10

Upcoming Events 2008

21 January Feast of St. Maximus, Parish Patronal Feast

GLORY BE TO GOD IN ALL THINGS!