

Sunday, January 2 Sunday before the Theophany of our Lord

Tropar, tone 7: By Your cross You destroyed death; * You opened Paradise to the thief; * You changed the lamentation of the myrrh-bearers to joy, * and charged the apostles to proclaim* that You are risen, O Christ, our God, * offering great mercy to the world.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen!

Kondak, tone 7: No longer shall the dominion of death be able to hold humanity, * for Christ went down shattering and destroying its powers. * Hades is bound. * The prophets exult with one voice. * The Savior has come for those with faith, saying: * "Come forth, O faithful, to the resurrection!"

Prokimen, tone 6: Save Your people, O Lord, and bless Your inheritance.

Verse: Unto You I will cry, O Lord my God, lest You turn from me in silence.

Epistle: 2nd Timothy 4: 5-8

Timothy my son! Be steady and self-possessed; put up with hardship, perform your work as an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. I for my part am already being poured out like a libation. The time of my dissolution is near. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. From now on a merited crown awaits me, on that Day the Lord, just judge that he is, will award it to me -- and not only to me, but to all who have looked for his appearing with eager longing.

Alleluia Verses: May God have pity on us and bless us.

May he let his face shine upon us.

Gospel: Mark 1: 1-8

Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Isaiah the prophet it is written: "I send my messenger before you to prepare your way; a herald's voice in the desert, crying, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, clear him a straight path.'" Thus, it was that John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance which led to the forgiveness of sins. All the Judean countryside and the people of Jerusalem went out to him in great numbers. They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist. His food was grasshoppers and wild honey. The theme of his preaching was: "One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. I have baptized you in water; he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

Communion Hymn: Praise the Lord from the heavens, Praise Him in the highest. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!