

The 5th Day of January

The Forefeast of the Theophany; Holy Martyrs Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and Theónas; the Venerable Syncretica of Alexandria.

Vespers

Note: If this day falls on the **Sunday Before the Theophany**, 4 stichera of the Resurrection are first sung, then 3 of the Forefeast in Tone 6, taken from the Vespers Aposticha: “O earth and things upon the earth... *(without their verses)*, followed by 3 stichera of the Martyrs.

Note: The service to St. Syncretica is set aside **on the Sunday Before** and transferred to Compline on Friday night. Otherwise:

At “Lord, I call...,” 6 stichera:

3 stichera of the Martyrs, in Tone 6: *To the melody, “As one valiant among the martyrs....”*

Let us praise the wise Theónas and Theopemptus /
For they confessed the dogmas of Christ, /
And laid low the worship of darkness with the light of truth; /
Serving sacredly, honorably and hoping in God, /
They confessed the Only God and Lord before their tormentors, ///
And received their crowns from heaven.

Leaving behind as vain and useless, /
The tempting things and pleasures of life /
As well as its passing glory, /
You cleaved unto Christ, O all-praised ones /
Being inspired by His comely beauty; /
And being brought to Him as sweet-smelling roses, /
You were adorned in a saintly manner ///
With the crowns of the eternal kingdom.

Having disdained the things of this world, /
You revealed yourselves as being not of this world /
And were united to the Church of the first-born angels; /
And standing now together with them /
You sing eternal hymns of praise to God; /
For having rejected the filthy flattery of the idols ///

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You shamed the mindless insanity of the tormentors with your martyrdom.

And 3 stichera of St. Syncletica, in Tone 1: *To the melody, "Joy of the ranks of heaven...."*

Having truly desired the glory of the Father /
Thou didst come to love the glory that is incorruptible: /
Therefore, having renounced all things of pleasure /
Thou didst give thy body over to every affliction. /
Now, having received the recompense for all thy sufferings ///
Thou reignest together with Christ.

It was permitted to give thy body over to the evil one /
For he had desired to tempt thee with gold as he had tempted Job /
But thou didst shame the tempter with the endurance of thine afflictions, ///
And didst receive the crown of victory.

Having desired the beautiful comeliness of Christ the Bridegroom /
And to be betrothed to Him, /
Thou didst seek only after good things /
Adorning thyself with the hardships of abstinence ///
Therefore thou reignest together with Him in His Bridal chamber.

Glory..., now and ever..., of the Forefeast, in Tone 6:

Make ready, O river Jordan, /
For behold, Christ our God draws near to be baptized by John, /
That He may crush with His divinity the invisible heads of the dragons in thy
waters. /
Rejoice, O wilderness of Jordan; /
Dance with gladness, O ye mountains. /
For the eternal Life has come to call back Adam. /
O, thou voice that criest in the wilderness, /
John the Forerunner, cry aloud: /
"Prepare ye the ways of the Lord, /
Make straight His paths before Him!"

Note: If it be the **Sunday Before**, then,

Glory..., of the Forefeast (see above): Make ready, O river Jordan..., **Now and ever..., the Dogmatic Theotokion, in the Tone of the Week, the Entrance and the Prokeimenon of the day. At the Litya, the stikhera of the church or monastery.**

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Otherwise:

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the Forefeast, in Tone 6: *To the melody, “On the third day....” (Except on the **Sunday Before** — see below)*

O earth and things upon the earth /
Dance and rejoice exceedingly. /
For the River of Joy is Himself baptized in the stream: ///
He dries up the fount of evil and pours forth divine remission.

Verse: Therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan and of the
Hermonites.

Being Himself the Bestower of light /
Jesus needs not to be baptized, /
But in the flesh He descends into the stream of Jordan /
Wishing to give light to those in darkness. ///
Let us go eagerly to meet Him.

Verse: The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid.

Wearing the form of a servant, O Christ. /
Thou comest forth to be baptized /
By a servant in the streams of Jordan, /
Granting deliverance from the servitude of the ancient sin, ///
And sanctifying and enlightening us.

Glory..., now and ever..., of the Forefeast in the same Tone:

Let the desert of Jordan rejoice exceedingly, /
And blossom like the lily, /
For the voice of one who cries hath been heard in it: /
“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” /
For He who weighed the mountains in scales /
And the wooded valleys in a balance /
Who filleth all things as God, /
Is baptized by a servant. /
He who bestows rich gifts hath now become poor. /
Eve was once told, “In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children,” /
But now the Virgin hears: /
“Rejoice, thou who art full of grace ///

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The Lord who hath great mercy is with thee.”

Note: On the **Sunday Before**, the **Apostikha** is from the Octoechos, then

Glory..., now and ever..., of the Forefeast (Tone 6—see above): Let the desert of Jordan rejoice exceedingly....

The Troparion of the Forefeast (from the Eve), in Tone 4:

The river Jordan once turned back the mantle of Elisha /
After Elijah had been taken up into heaven, /
And the waters were divided on this side and on that: /
The stream became a dry path before him, /
Forming a true figure of the baptism whereby we pass over the changeful course of
life. /
Christ has appeared in the Jordan ///
To sanctify the waters.

At Compline

We sing this Canon of the Forefeast, repeating the Irmos and the Troparia for a total of 6 Troparia (*transferred to Compline on Friday night*).

Canon of the Forefeast, in Tone 6,

having the acrostic: “Today I sing the praise of Holy Saturday”

Ode 1

Irmos: *The One who in ancient times covered the persecuting tyrant with the waves of the sea is now cloaked and hidden in the stream of Jordan, and as a man, He is cleansed that I may be made clean, for He has been greatly glorified.*

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O Lord my God, we sing these sacred melodies and the hymns of the forefeast unto Thee, who by Thy divine epiphany hath mystically restored us and lead us up to Thy divine radiance.

Those who are in the heavens as well as those upon the earth are filled with awe, O Savior, beholding Thee, the pre-eternal God, manifesting Thyself here on earth, and we praise Thy condescension which surpasses all human understanding.

In Thy humility, Thou didst assume the form of a servant that all things might be filled with Thy glory; and now, as a servant, Thou bowest Thy head beneath the hand of a servant, purifying our physical nature in Thy loving-kindness

Ode 3

Irmos: When creation beheld Thee in the flesh covered by the streams, who didst suspend the whole earth immovably upon the waters, it quaked with great surprise and cried aloud: There is none holy save Thee, O Lord.

In ancient times, Thou didst show images of Thy Theophany through the visions of Thy prophets, and now Thou hast spoken of hidden things through Thy very actions, revealing mysteries to mankind today, and granting them a new regeneration.

With trembling, Jordan doth spread its waters like shoulders to receive the Creator Who is baptized in the flesh thus sanctifying all things, and it cries aloud to Him: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Through baptism, Christ doth bestow great provision for salvation to those who perceive His divine glory, and who cry out with joy: None is holy save Thee, O Lord Who lovest mankind!

Ode 4

Irmos: When Habakkuk foresaw Thy coming to baptism, he cried in amazement: Thou hast ridden through the sea upon Thy steeds, O Savior, troubling many waters.

When Thou didst appear in the flesh, O Word, the earth was hallowed, the waters were blessed, and heaven was enlightened, and the human race was delivered from the bitter tyranny of the enemy.

As the words of God are being uttered, the Forerunner cometh from the desert unto the Jordan, saying: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!", summoning all to partake of the glory of God.

He, who of old transformed the sea into dry land and caused springs of water to gush forth from an unquarried rock, now washes away the transgressions of mankind in the streams of the Jordan, through the fire of the Spirit.

Ode 5

Irmos: When Isaiah beheld the Light that knows no evening, the light of Thy divine appearance coming to us graciously, he cried aloud: "O ye who are enlightened, come ye and wash yourselves, make yourselves clean in soul and body through the divine water and the Spirit.

Through the fire of the Spirit and by water Thou dost refashion us mortals anew; and as the Creator and the new Adam, Thou dost accomplish a mystical regeneration and

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a wondrous restoration, making the original clay of our nature new through the cleansing of divine baptism.

Thou renewest the souls of mortals through the Spirit, and by water dost sanctify their bodies, which comprise the nature and life of all mankind; for in Thy providence and wisdom, as the Physician of souls and bodies, hast Thou applied the remedy for our regeneration

O Thou, who wast begotten of the Father before all ages and wast born of the pure Virgin, Thou camest to John who was born of the barren woman, asking for baptism as a man; and out of water and through the Spirit Thou didst mystically make the Church to be fruitful, which before was barren and childless.

Ode 6

Irmos: The divine Baptist was afraid but not held fast by fear, for, thou grass shrinks back at the face of fire, yet when he heard Christ's words, "Suffer it to be so now," he came forth, obediently fulfilling the command as a servant; and he heard from on-high the voice of the Father bearing witness to the pre-eternal Son.

While submitting to the decrees of Cæsar thou didst not become his slave; yet by granting us release from bondage to the enemy, Thou didst voluntarily submit and pay Cæsar's tax. Thou hast set us free who once before were slaves under the law of sin, making us worthy of Thy adoption as Thine heirs.

As King of all creation, Thou dost reign, yet not as a man on earth; for even though Thou wast born in the flesh of the tribe of David, O Savior, and hast inherited the throne of his kingdom, yet Thou dost possess Thine own dominion of kingship with the Father, from before time had ever began, and dost reign forever, together with the Spirit.

Of old the prince of this world was also called king of those in the waters; yet he is drowned by Thy cleansing and is now cast down, as once was the demonic Legion in the lake, O Savior; and by Thy mighty hand hast Thou vouchsafed freedom to us, the work of Thy hands, who once were enslaved by him.

Ode 7

Irmos: O, wonder beyond speech! He who saved the holy three children from the fire of the furnace now bows His head and begs baptism from His servant, cleansing those who cry aloud: Blessèd art Thou, O God, our Redeemer!

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Once, the streams of the Jordan were parted by the mantle of Elijah, prefiguring Thy baptism, whereby the cloak of the passions hath been torn in two and a robe of incorruption hath been fashioned for those who cry out to God: Blessèd art Thou, O God, our Redeemer!

Rich are the streams of the Jordan, for, having received the Creator as He is baptized, they have been shown to be the spring of living waters, for the salvation of us who sing: Blessèd art Thou, O God, our Redeemer!

Signifying the mortal nature assumed by God, we stand with Christ in the threefold immersion in the waters of baptism, sharing in His resurrection on the third day, and crying out to Christ: Blessèd art Thou throughout all ages!

United in One is the grace of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, perfecting those who with faith desire divine baptism, and have thus received the authority of divine adoption, that they might cry aloud: Blessèd art Thou, O God, our Redeemer!

Ode 8

***Irmos:** Be amazed and afraid, O heaven, and let the foundations of the earth be shaken, for lo, He who once made the sacrifice of His righteous prophet burn most wondrously in the water, now wraps Himself in the waters of the Jordan. You children bless Him; you priests, sing praises; you people, exalt Him throughout all ages!*

Christ cometh to grant deliverance to all the faithful through baptism; for by this, He doth clean Adam, raise up the fallen, put the fallen tyrant to shame, open the heavens, draw down the divine Spirit and doth grant to us a share in incorruption.

The deceit of the enemy hath come to an end, for the voice of one crying in the wilderness doth cry aloud: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord!”, and commanding us to: “Make straight His paths!” For the valley, the nature of mortals, which is humbled is now exalted, and the formidable mountains and fortress hills of our enemies, have been cast down.

O, the most glorious of gifts! O, the divine grace and ineffable love! Behold! The sinless Master and Creator doth cleanse me with water, enlighten me with fire, and doth make me perfect through the divine Spirit, clothing Himself in my human nature now in the Jordan.

Ode 9

***Irmos:** Do not lament, O ye mortal men choked by the bonds of despair and weighed down with guilt, but let us approach with compunction, Him who*

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cleanses all mankind; for He alone is clean and through baptism, grants forgiveness to us all.

Having just beheld Thy most wondrous and glorious nativity from the Virgin, O Word of God, we now witness this new and great mystery of Thine appearance in the fountains of the Jordan, through which its streams have become fruitful through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The earth was sanctified, O Word, by Thy holy nativity, and the heavens with a star proclaimed Thy glory. Now the nature of water is sanctified as Thou art baptized in the flesh, and all mankind hath been restored to its original nobility.

Let all the earth rejoice! Let heaven be glad! Let the world leap for joy! Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the springs, the lakes and the depths of the sea rejoice together! For Christ cometh to cleanse and save Adam by divine baptism!

Katavasia: Do not lament, O ye mortal men (prostration)

Matins

At “God is the Lord...” the Troparion of the Forefeast, in Tone 4:

The river Jordan once turned back the mantle of Elisha /
After Elijah had been taken up into heaven, /
And the waters were divided on this side and on that: /
The stream became a dry path before him, /
Forming a true figure of the baptism whereby we pass over the changeful course of
life. /
Christ has appeared in the Jordan ///
To sanctify the waters. (*thrice*).

After the 1st Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 1: To the melody, “The choir of angels....”

Make glad, O river Jordan, /
For the Maker of all draweth near, /
Desiring in His compassion to receive baptism in thy streams from a servant. /
O Adam and Eve, the mother of mankind, rejoice and be of good cheer. /
For the Redeemer of all has come, ///
God, who is supreme in goodness.

Glory..., now and ever..., in the same Tone:

The River of Joy, the Master, cometh forth to be baptized in the waters of the river, /

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Wishing to give me drink from the spring of incorruption. /

Seeing Him, John cried aloud: /

“How shall I stretch out my hand and touch Thy head, ///

Before which all things tremble.”

After the 2nd Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 3:¹ *To the melody, “The beauty of virginity....”*

O compassionate Savior, /

Putting on the nakedness of Adam as a garment of glory, /

Thou makest ready to stand naked in the flesh in the river Jordan. /

O marvelous wonder! /

How shall the waters receive thee, O Master and Lord, /

Who, as it is written, hast covered the roof of heaven with waters? /

O Jesus our Benefactor, ///

We all sing the praises of Thine Epiphany.

Glory..., now and ever..., in the same Tone: *To the melody, “The faith divine....”*

The great Sun, Christ our God, /

Who hast risen from the Virgin as from a cloud, /

Hast come to shine forth in the Jordan, /

Driving out the darkness of sin and enlightening the ends of the world. /

In piety let us pray to receive His brightness ///

And to be granted great mercy.

Psalm 50 (51), as usual.

The Canon

Three Canons: that of the Forefeast, with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos; that of the Martyrs, with 4 Troparia; and that of Saint Syncletica, also with 4 troparia. The Katavasia is the Irmos of the 1st Canon of Theophany.

Note: If it be the **Sunday Before**, four Canons: that of the Resurrection, with 3 Troparia; that of the Theotokos, with 2 Troparia; that of the Forefeast, with 4 Troparia; and that of the Martyrs, with 4 Troparia. **After the 3rd Ode**, Kontakion and Ikos of the Forefeast, “When the Lord descended today...”; another Kontakion of the Forefeast, “O Christ, who in Thy

¹ Text differs in the Greek Menaion.

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compassion..." (see below); Sessional Hymns of the Martyrs; Glory ..., now and ever..., Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast. **After the 6th Ode, Kontakion and Ikos of the Resurrection from the Octoechos.** The Katavasia is from the 1st Canon of Theophany.

Ode 1

Canon of the Forefeast, in Tone 1

Irmos: *Having been delivered from their bitter bondage, Israel passed over the impassable sea as thou on dry land; and beholding the enemy drowned in the waters, they cried unto God their Redeemer, who worketh wonders with His upraised arm, for gloriously hath He been glorified!*

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

Christ doth come to be baptized! Christ doth arrive at the Jordan! Christ doth now bury our sins in the waters, in that He is good! Let us sing to Him with gladness, for He hath been glorified.

Let the clouds rejoice and sprinkle all with great joy! For, Jesus Christ hath come to drown the torrents of mankind's sin in the waters of the Jordan, and grant enlightenment to all.

Behold, the Light is revealed! Behold, purification is shown forth! Behold, the Savior standeth forth to shine rays of His divine splendor upon those in darkness! Let us purify our thoughts and joyfully embrace Him!

Canon of the Martyrs, in Tone 7

Irmos: *Let us sing a song of victory unto the Lord who drowned all the power of Pharaoh in the sea, for gloriously hath He been glorified!*

Refrain: Holy martyrs of Christ, pray to God for us.

Come, O ye faithful, and together let us celebrate, on this forefeast of the Lord, the memory of the holy martyrs, and glorify Him with spiritual hymns.

The passion-bearers of Christ and steadfast champions of the Faith, have mightily armed themselves against ungodliness, and have vanquished the enemy,

The ungodly and impious tyrant, a true enemy to the faith of Christ, raged against the passion-bearer martyrs, but hath himself been destroyed by their faith.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: **O** Theotokos, deliver from every necessity and save the flock which

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thou hast acquired, through thine entreaties to our God and Savior.

Canon of the Venerable St. Syncletica, in Tone 2

Irmos: O come, ye people, let us sing a song to Christ our God who parted the sea and through it led his people whom He had brought out of the bondage of Egypt: for He hath been glorified!

Refrain: Venerable mother Syncletica, pray to God for us.

I who am without any sense and wholly impure, am come to adorn thy memory with hymns with hymns of praise, and setting my hope on thee, I pray: By thy supplications, grant me words of wisdom and understanding, that I may worthily honor thee.

Thou didst prepare thyself to endure the torments that were to befall thee by lifting up thy mind to the heights of heaven, and coming to the knowledge of good things and the goodness of delight.

Desiring to attain great glory, thou gavest wings to thy mind, and soared aloft to God Most High, and through abstinence and struggles, thou didst lighten thy body, which had drawn thee down toward the earth.

Theotokion: **H**e who took flesh within thy womb, O Theotokos, remained what He was before and bestowed upon us who were created from dust, that which we were in the beginning, and delivered us from our transgressions.

Ode 3

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Let no mortal glory in his wealth or wisdom, but rather in his faith in the Lord, crying out to Christ our God in an Orthodox manner: Establish me, O Master, upon the rock of Thy commandments!

Christ, who doth sit together with the Father and the Spirit from before all ages, and who became incarnate of the Virgin in these latter times, cometh now to be baptized, so that He may, in His providence, grant immortality to all through the divine springs of the Jordan.

Desiring, in His tender compassion, to bury our sins in the waters and the streams of the Jordan, Christ our God now cometh forth to restore, by holy baptism, us from corruption.

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Covering the shameful nakedness of our first father Adam, Thou hast voluntarily stripped Thyself naked, O Christ, and hast covered Thyself in the streams of the Jordan, O Thou who once covered the firmament of the earth with water and alone art greatly merciful.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: My heart is strengthened in the Lord, and my horn is lifted up unto my God; my mouth is opened against mine enemies, and I rejoice in Thy salvation.

Let us praise the holy martyrs Theopemptus and the glorious Theonas, the exemplars of piety and faith.

Having shown yourselves to be true models and examples of faith, O great and holy martyrs of Christ, ye became guides to witnessing the Lord for all the saints.

Zealously affirming their virtuous lives, the martyrs who stood together with Theopemptus and Theonas at the trial, cried out together in one voice: “Yes, we are all Christians!”

Theotokion: **T**hou wast ineffably born of the Virgin, O Christ who alone lovest mankind, and in Thy good pleasure, Thou hast revealed Thyself to us, for the restoration of the world, O Lord.

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: Establish us in Thee, O Lord, who by the wood of the Cross didst put sin to death, and didst implant the fear of Thee in our hearts as we sing praises to Thee.

Thou didst not spare thy flesh the great struggles, nor the agony of the travails of abstinence, through which thou didst expel the tormentor from thy life.

Thou didst choose the narrow path leading to the blessed life of incorruption, turning away from the wide path leading to that place which is truly abysmal for the mind to contemplate.

Thou didst escape the burning and passionate flower of youth by the restraints and toils of ascetic labor, and with the gushing of thy tears didst extinguish the burning images of temptations from before thine eyes.

Theotokion: **T**he Word who became incarnate of thee, O all-pure Lady, desiring to wash away the defilement of the flesh, amazed the flowing water with the manner of His baptismal cleansing.

Katavasia.

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The Kontakion of the Forefeast, in Tone 2: *(From the Saturday before) to the melody, "Seeking the highest...."*

O Christ, who in Thy compassion and infinite mercy /
Takest away the multitude of all our transgressions, /
Thou comest as a man to be baptized /
In the waters of the Jordan, /
Clothing me in the raiment of the ancient glory ///
Of which I was cruelly stripped bare.

The Sessional Hymn for the Martyrs, in Tone 1: *To the melody, "Thy tomb, O Savior...."*

Theopemptus, a true and holy hierarch here on earth, /
Together with the steadfast Theonas, his fellow spiritual companion, /
Were sorely wounded, and cried out with joy to their tormentors /
Who became unable to bear the sight of their martyrdom: /
"We honor Thee who alone hast buried the transgressions of mortal men ///
In the streams of the Jordan!"

Glory..., the Sessional Hymn, for the Venerable One, in Tone 5:

Having transcended the hardships of thine ascetic labors /
Thou dost now enjoy the pleasures of heaven /
Where all is filled with a transcending radiance. /
For courageously didst thou tread a most difficult path, /
Overcoming the temptations of the earthly life /
And making thyself like unto one of the angels, ///
With whom thou dost now share eternal glory.

Now and ever..., the Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast, in Tone 1: *To the melody, "Thy tomb, O Savior...."*

Christ, who is the mighty Rain /
Cometh forth in the flesh to the streams of the river, /
Desiring baptism. /
Filled with amazement, the divine Forerunner did say to Him: /
"How shall I baptize Thee, who has no stain at all? /
How shall I stretch out my right hand upon Thy head, ///
Before which all things tremble?"

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Ode 4

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **H**abákkuk once heard wondrous report of Thee O Christ, and cried aloud in fear: “God shall come forth from Teman, the Holy One from the mountain covered in shadow, to save His anointed ones!” Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Draw ye forth the water of life! For, Behold! The River of peace, who is Christ, truly cometh to dry up the turbulent waters of unbelief and to pour forth enlightenment upon those who sing to Him: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Be glad, O human nature, thou desert which before was arid with thirst! The Fountain of joy hath now appeared, freeing us all from the burning heat of sin with the cleansing waters of the Jordan. To Him do we sing with faith: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

The voice of the Forerunner prophetically crying thundered upon the barren minds, saying: “Make straight ways for Christ who cometh, that He might through baptism purify us who have grown old, releasing us from our ancient condemnation!”

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: **I** have heard the report of Thee and am afraid; O Lord, I have considered Thy works and am amazed.

You watered the whole world with your divine words, O great martyrs of Christ, and set all falsehoods at naught.

The holy martyrs truly obtained riches which cannot be taken away as they rejected all earthly glory, wealth, and the fame.

Having armed themselves with the armor of Christ, the holy passion-bearers cast down all the cruelty of their tormentors.

Theotokion: **O** pure Mother, blessèd and holy Virgin Mary, deliver from every evil circumstance those who hymn and praise thee.

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: **T**hou hast come from a virgin not as a minister nor an angel, but as the Lord Himself incarnate; to me, a human, Thou hath brought salvation; so I cry to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Excelling in the beauty of thy body, O martyr Syncletica, thou wast adored by many who did not obtain their heart’s desire. But thou, laying to waste the loveliness of thy body, didst partake of divine beauty.

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Like Job, thou didst endure the afflictions of thy body and didst not protest the sentence imposed upon thee; and, transcending both time and nature, thou didst receive thy divine abode in the habitations of heaven.

Thou didst withdraw from thy kinfolk, parents and estates, seeking Christ alone, and the inexhaustible riches which cannot be taken away; and thou art now shown to be a partaker with Him of the glory on high.

Theotokion: **T**hine Offspring hath delivered Adam from corruption, having become a man in the flesh, except for its corruption; for thy conceiving transcended the nature of mankind. Therefore, O Maiden, deliver me from corruption and every evil thing.

Ode 5
Canon of the Forefast

Irmos: **S**hine down Thy never-waning light upon those who hymn Thee with faith, O Christ, and grant us Thy peace beyond all understanding, that we may flee the night of ignorance and come into the light of day, to glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind!

As the King of peace, Thou hast broken down the middle-wall of enmity, appearing to those on earth in the garment of our flesh. Therefore, beholding Thine arrival, John marveled in fear when he was commanded to place his hand upon Thy head.

Hastening, Christ cometh now to crush the heads of the serpents in the waters, and crieth out to the trembling Baptist: “Stretch forth thy hand, and touch my head, and shake off thine wariness, and do that which thou art commanded!”

The prophet once uttered the grace of baptism in the divine Spirit, striking the streams of the Jordan with his mantle; and they have parted, making for us a path to the divine regeneration of Christ Who hath appeared in its waters.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: **R**ising early from the night to praise and glorify Thee, O Word, we ceaselessly hymn the image of Thy Cross, which Thou hast bestowed upon us as a weapon of peace.

The wise martyrs and spiritual witnesses, warriors of the Faith, have valiantly defeated the torments of the wicked enemy, and have together received their crowns.

Neither lies, nor temptations, nor the promises of earthly glory were able to entice you to end your struggles for the Faith, O holy martyrs. Therefore, you rejoice!

Standing before the throne of the glory of the Lord; make your ceaseless supplication before the Lord that He may grant the cleansing of all transgressions to those who with faith sing your praises.

Theotokion: **O** all-holy Virgin who art full of joy, and who, in an ineffable manner hast given birth to the Word in time; entreat Him now that He may save our souls.

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: *O Lord, the Giver of light and Creator of the ages, guide us in the light of Thy commandments, for we know no other God save Thee.*

Thou wast a temple of the Word who dwelleth among the pure spirits, O Syncletica most wise, for thou hast illumined the beauty of thy soul through the manifold trials of abstinence, O most glorious one.

Thou didst mortify thy flesh, which was robed in purple, with natural grace through thy many travails, and didst make the image of thy soul to shine even brighter with the light of the virtues.

Having set thy flesh afire with thy soul's desire for Christ, thou dost now truly rejoice immaterially with the bodiless angels, gazing upon thy Lord and God.

Theotokion: **T**he Lord and Master of the pious, who without seed was truly born of thy precious womb, O all-pure Lady, hath now crushed the heads of the serpents who made their lair in the waters.

Ode 6

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: *I have been caught by the evil sea monster and am held fast by my boundless passions; but do Thou raise me up from corruption O God, as once Thou didst Jonah, and grant me dispassion, that in faith I may offer a noetic sacrifice of praise and deliverance to Thee.*

Showing forth the loving-kindness of His compassion, the immutable Christ cometh to a servant in the form of a servant, asking for baptism, and rescuing mankind from its bondage to the enemy! Marveling at His coming, the forerunner stood in awe, held fast by fear.

How can the river's streams receive Thee, the unbearable Fire, who now cometh forth? How can the angels of heaven look upon Thy nakedness? How can the hand

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of John stretch forth to touch Thee, O pre-eternal Word of God, who hath created him upon the earth?

The sea parted and fled, disclosing a divine path for the new people, which He, who once poured water from a rock, hath made in the midst of the river, having come there in the flesh. Let us glorify as God Him, who hath renewed us from our former desolation.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Jonah cried out from the belly of the whale: "Raise up my life from corruption!", and we cry aloud to Thee: have mercy on us, O almighty Savior!

The

Let

Having

Theotokion: O Virgin

Contending in the tribunal, the martyrs abolished the delusion of idolatry and rooted out all ungodliness from the earth by their martyrdom.

O glorious martyrs, the enemy and persecutor of the Faith set his minions to slay thee cruelly with swords, like lambs.

When the choir of the saints beheld the torments armed with swords, they manfully cried aloud: "We are soldiers of Christ, O tyrant!"

Theotokion: Cease thou never in thy supplications to our God, to Whom thou didst ineffably give birth, O Theotokos, that He deliver from misfortunes us who hymn thee, O pure Ever-virgin.

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: An abyss of sins has encompassed me, and I appeal to Thine infinite compassion: raise up my life up from corruption, O God!

He

Thr

Thou

5 JANUARY

Theotokion: **M**any

Illumined with the radiance of the Spirit, thou didst reject all the delight of the flesh as a thing of the night; for thou wast crowned with the desire for good things.

Today thy luminous memorial hath shone forth from afar, enlightening the darkness of men's souls, O adornment of struggling monks.

Thou didst preserve the purity of thy virginity, honoring the incorrupt bridal chamber; for thou wast aflame with desire for Christ, thine awesome Bridegroom.

Theotokion: That we might be filled with glory, the Lord of glory hath come to inglorious humanity; and, washed like a man, thy Son hath glorified men.

Another Kontakion of the Forefeast, in Tone 4: *To the melody, "Thou hast appeared today...."*

When the Lord descended today /
Into the waters of the Jordan, /
He cried aloud to John, /
"Be not afraid to baptize Me, ///
For I am come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Ikos (by St. Roman, the Melodist): "I do not ask thee, O Forerunner, to pass the bounds of propriety: I tell thee not, 'Say to Me what thou dost say to the transgressors, the counsel that thou givest to sinners.' Only baptize Me in silence and the expectation of all that shall come from this My baptism. For this cause shalt thou have such honor as belongs not to the angels, and I shall make thee greater than all the prophets. Not one of them saw Me openly, but only in figures and shades and dreams, while thou hast seen Me standing of Mine own will before thee. For I am come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Ode 7

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **H**aving passed unharmed through the unbearable flames in the fiery furnace as though it were a bridal chamber, the three holy youths with one voice sang the hymn: *Blessèd art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers!*

As

Why

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SYNCLETICA

Seeking

Christ hath revealed Himself as our salvation, granting us enlightenment. Let heaven rejoice, and let the clouds truly drop down righteousness upon those who cry: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The fleece which Gideon foresaw, the full cup of water drawn forth therefrom, manifestly foretold Thy baptism, O Christ, which, having undergone it, Thou givest to those who chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Elisha, in healing the barren and brackish waters, prefigured the fruitfulness of the precious font which would mystically come upon those who chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Thou didst bedew the burning furnace and save the three children who sang aloud: Blessed art Thou unto all ages, O Lord, God of our fathers!

The

Let

Having

Theotokion: O Virgin

Together ye accepted martyrdom, slain by the sword with your wives and children, crying out to Christ: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

The saints rejoiced, beholding themselves slain by the sword, and with faith they cried aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

The savagery of the ungodly hath been abated from the earth, the false gods have fallen headlong and been broken asunder by the confession of the martyrs, who have received crowns.

Theotokion: Save thy flock from every evil circumstance, O most holy and pure one, for thou alone art the intercessor of our race, O all-hymned and blessed Theotokos

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: The profane command of the lawless tyrant made the flames to rise exceedingly, but Christ sent the dew of the Spirit to the godly youths; blessed is He and most glorious!

He

Thr

Thou

Theotokion: **M**any

The adversary, plotting wickedly, strove to weaken the strength of thy soul by infirmities; but he who tried the patience of Job was driven away by thy wisdom and pangs, wounded by thy patience, O wise one.

Rich in beauty, thy soul hath now left the threefold billows of life for the right tranquil haven in the divine habitations, O wise one, where a place of rest hath been prepared for thee because of thy great endurance of sufferings.

Thou didst wisely teach, saying: "One must never change one's place of residence in the coenobitic life, for endurance winneth great rewards." And thou wast truly not slow to employ words and actions to benefit monastics.

Theotokion: The nature of water cleanseth me of sin through the wisdom of thy supra-natural Offspring, O Virgin Bride of God; for the cleansing of God, the Creator of life, cleanseth me who have defiled myself with many sins.

Ode 8 **Canon of the Forefeast**

***Irmos:** The furnace moist with dew was the image of a wonder beyond nature, for it burned not the children whom it had received, just as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb when it entered there. So let us raise the song, let the whole creation bless the Lord and exalt Him above all forever!*

As

Why

Seeking

With a loud voice let us send up praise to the Master. He hath arrived! He hath appeared! He Who clotheth the sky with clouds cometh up to the waters and doth strip Himself naked. And He is baptized, cleansing us who chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Come ye, and let us noetically go to the Jordan; and let us behold therein a great sight: for Jesus our enlightenment cometh and boweth His head beneath the hand of a servant, who crieth out with trembling: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

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Burning in the waters of the Jordan, the glowing Ember which Isaiah foresaw, hath consumed all the tinder of sin and granted restoration to the ruined. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: The unoriginate King of glory, before whom the hosts of heaven tremble, Him, do ye praise, O priests; and Him, do ye people exalt throughout all ages!

The

Let

Having

Theotokion: O Virgin

The wise spiritual athletes, confessing the only compassionate King of glory, received crowns of honor, crying out with goodly boldness: Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

The athletes of Christ steadfastly opposed the tormenters, suffering valiantly, and they vanquished the delusion of idolatry, crying out with goodly boldness: Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Triumphing over the threats and tortures of the tyrants, like adamants the valiant warriors joyously cried out: Hymn the Lord, ye priests! Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Theotokion: The one compassionate and pre-eternal Word, Who was born of the Virgin in the latter days and hath saved the human race, do ye hymn, O priests! Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: God came down upon the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace and changed the flames into dew. Praise the Lord, O ye works of the Lord, and highly exalt Him throughout all ages.

He

Thr

Thou

*Theotokion: M*any

Katavasia.

While living on earth, thou didst truly desire to reach the land of the blessed, where the ranks of the angels, the venerable, the fasters and virgins, dwelling eternally, hymn Christ throughout all ages.

As one higher than many in natural comeliness, thou didst care for thy soul, wisely preserving thy spiritual beauty; wherefore, having caused the beauty of thy body to wither, thou didst set thy soul afire With abstinence.

Having acquired a mind vigilant for God through spiritual fervor, thou didst set the wiles of the lying deviser of evils utterly at naught, O glorious one; and now, having fallen asleep, thou livest forever.

Theotokion: Desiring to restore mortals, O pure one, thy Son hasteneth to the Jordan as a man in His extreme love; for there He hath broken Him Who brought ruin upon all, renewing the world by thy supplications.

Ode 9

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Ineffable is the mystery of the Virgin: for she is truly the heaven and the throne of the cherubīm, and she is the light-filled chamber of Christ God Almighty. Therefore, we piously magnify her as the Mother of God.

As

Why

Seeking

An awesome and most glorious mystery do I behold! Jesus cometh of His own will to the River Jordan, crying out to John: “Grant Me the loan of thy right hand, My friend, that it may perform awesome works for the preservation of My people.”

Let the desert of the Jordan put forth flowers! O ye who lie in darkness, a great Light hath revealed Itself to you! Beholding it, leap ye up! Coming from Galilee, Christ desireth to be baptized in the flesh by a servant!

Be glad now and dance, O Jordan! Leap ye up, O John! Rejoice, all the world! Lo! Christ hath appeared: He strippeth Himself naked and is baptized, clothing mankind in the raiment of incorruption!

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Come, O ye faithful, and with hymns let us magnify the Theotokos, who in a manner transcending nature became a mother, yet by nature remained a Virgin! She alone is

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blessèd amongst women

The

Let

Having

Theotokion: **O** Virgin

The passion-bearers of Christ, having trampled all the rites of idolatry underfoot by their faith and piously reached the divine end of their contest, have been made steadfast through faith.

Having spurned all earthly things through faith and together suffered zealously, the passion-bearers of Christ received healing from God.

The passion-bearers, having manfully armed themselves with faith, cast down the hordes of the enemy by the Cross of the Lord, and have received crowns.

Theotokion: Having conceived in thy womb the unapproachable Word and given birth to Him for us without seed, pray thou earnestly, that our souls be saved.

Canon of the Venerable Saint

Irmos: *The Son of the eternal Father, God the Lord incarnate of the Virgin, hath appeared to us to give light to those in darkness and to gather those who had gone astray; so we magnify thee, O Theotokos.*

He

Thr

Thou

Theotokion: **Many**

Katavasia.

Resplendent in the beauties of virginity, O glorious one, thou didst adorn thyself with the crown of the ascetic life; wherefore, thine awesome Bridegroom, by love of Whom thou wast wounded, hath crowned thee with a twofold crown.

Thy trust in things to come, which: thou didst have in thy heart, did not disappoint thee, O most honored one; for thou hast now received from the Savior, the reward of thy pangs, for having passed through every form of ascetic endeavor.

Clothing thyself in the might and compassion of Christ, O honored one, thou didst bring down to the ground the pride of him who didst speak falsehood against the Most High. Wherefore, Jesus, the Bestower of victory, hath adorned thee with the crown of victory.

Theotokion: In thee hath might been imparted to our fallen first father, who lacked the strength to go further; for through the baptism of thy Son all malice hath now been drowned. Wherefore, we proclaim thee the cause of purification.

The Exapostilaria of the Forefeast: *To the melody, “By the Spirit in the sanctuary....”*

Seeing Thee stripped naked, Jordan said with fear to him who had been born of a barren womb: “Suffer the Lord, who cleanses the whole creation by fire and Spirit, to be baptized, O John. For behold, for this cause He has come to sanctify the elements of earth and water.

Glory..., now and ever...,

Thou who in Bethlehem hast shone forth in the flesh from the Virgin, dost now hasten towards Jordan to wash clean the filth of those born on earth, through holy baptism leading those in darkness to the light.

Note: If, however, it be the *Sunday Before*, the **Exapostilarion** is that of the Resurrection; Glory..., now and ever..., that of the Forefeast.

The Praises, 4 stichera of the Forefeast,² in Tone 6: *To the melody, “Go on before, ye angelic powers....”*

Note: If, however, it be the *Sunday Before*, see below.

“**W**hy dost thou doubt, O Baptist, /
Concerning the dispensation /
That I fulfill for the salvation of all? /
Set now aside the old and think of the new. /
Believe in God who has come down to the earth, /
And drawing near, obey Me ///
For I have come as God, to cleanse in My compassion fallen Adam.

“**T**aking our sins upon Thy shoulders, /
Thou art come, O Jesus, to the streams of Jordan; /
And I am afraid at Thy dread coming. /

² Taken from the Festal Menaion by Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware. Slav text slightly differ.

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How then, dost Thou bid me to baptize Thee? /
Thou Thyself hast come to cleanse me /
And how dost Thou, who cleanses all ///
Seek baptism of me?"

"My nature is beyond all understanding, /
But clothed in the form a servant have I come forth to Jordan. /
Doubt not at all concerning Me. /
Place thy right hand upon My head and cry aloud: ///
Blessèd art Thou, our God made manifest! Glory to Thee!"

Byond all thought and without measure /
Is Thy poverty, O Word of God! /
I know that, for my sake who am fallen, /
Thou hast from pity clothed Thyself in Adam, /
And all the posterity of Adam Thou makest new again. /
Obeying Thy command I cry to Thee in faith: ///
Blessèd art Thou, our God made manifest, glory to Thee!"

Glory..., in the same Tone: (and melody)

O John, who dost minister in trembling to the Master, /
Be joyful in soul and cry out with gladness: /
Rejoice with me, O all ye generations of the Forefathers. /
For our expectation has come; /
Christ has drawn nigh to Jordan /
To cleanse all from the sin of Adam, ///
For He is full of lovingkindness.

Now and ever..., in the same Tone: (and melody)

O ye people, /
Let us sing to Him who was born of a Virgin, /
And baptized in the river Jordan, /
And let us cry to Him ; /
O King of all creation, /
Grant us uncondemned, with a clear conscience to attain in faith ///
Thy holy Resurrection from the dead on the Third day.

Note: If, however, it be the **Sunday Before**, we sing 8 stichera: 4 stichera of

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the Resurrection, and 4 from the Forefeast: “Why dost thou doubt, O Baptist...” (*adding the verses of the Aposticha*).

“**W**hy dost thou doubt, O Baptist, /
Concerning the dispensation /
That I fulfill for the salvation of all? /
Set now aside the old and think of the new. /
Believe in God who has come down to the earth, /
And drawing near, obey Me ///
For I have come as God, to cleanse in My compassion fallen Adam.

“**T**aking our sins upon Thy shoulders, /
Thou art come, O Jesus, to the streams of Jordan; /
And I am afraid at Thy dread coming. /
How then, dost Thou bid me to baptize Thee? /
Thou Thyself hast come to cleanse me /
And how dost Thou, who cleansest all ///
Seek baptism of me?”

Verse: Therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites.

“**M**y nature is beyond all understanding, /
But clothed in the form a servant have I come forth to Jordan. /
Doubt not at all concerning Me. /
Place thy right hand upon My head and cry aloud: ///
Blessèd art Thou, our God made manifest! Glory to Thee!”

Verse: The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid.

Beyond all thought and without measure /
Is Thy poverty, O Word of God! /
I know that, for my sake who am fallen, /
Thou hast from pity clothed Thyself in Adam, /
And all the posterity of Adam Thou makest new again. /
Obeying Thy command I cry to Thee in faith: ///
Blessèd art Thou, our God made manifest, glory to Thee!”

Note: And on the **Sunday Before**, we continue: Glory..., the appointed Gospel **sticheron**; Now and ever..., “Thou art most-blessèd, O Theotokos...,” **Great**

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Doxology, usual Troparion, litanies and Dismissal. Otherwise:

The Aposticha, of the Forefeast, in Tone 2: *To the melody, “O house of Ephratha....”*

Behold, the **King**! /

The hope of Israel hath come. ///

Rejoice, O nations, for the Light is approaching.

Verse: Therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites.

The divine Light hath been manifest, /

In the flesh to those on earth;

He hath appeared to those in darkness, ///

And grace hath shone forth for all.

Verse: The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid.

Serve, O prophet, thou lamp for the Light /

Thou dawn of the Sun, thou friend of the Bridegroom ///

Serve, O forerunner of the Word.

Glory..., now and ever..., in Tone 8: *(the composition of Anatolius)*

O John the Baptist, who didst know Me, the Lamb, in the womb, /

Serve Me in the river with the angels. /

Stretch forth thy hand and touch My most-pure head. /

And when thou seest the mountains tremble and the Jordan turn back, /

Then shout with them saying: /

O Thou, who wast incarnate of the Virgin for our salvation, ///

O Lord, glory to Thee.

After “It is good...,” the Trisagion prayers. After “Our Father...,” the Troparion of the Forefeast, “The river Jordan once turned back the mantle of Elisha..., followed by the usual litanies and the Dismissal.

Note: The Royal Hours and Typica are provided separately following this service.

Note: If this day be a **Monday through Friday**, Vespers is served on the evening of the 4th, and Matins is served according to the usual order for a double

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service during a Forefeast. The First Hour is not read at the conclusion of Matins. Royal Hours are served on this day and the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is served together with Vespers.

Note: If this day be a **Saturday**, Vespers is served on the evening of Friday the 4th, and Matins is served according to the usual order for a simple service during a Forefeast. At Vespers, the Dogmatic Theotokion of the Tone is not sung. The Royal Hours are served on Friday the 4th, and no Liturgy is served on that day. On Saturday, the 5th, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is served in the morning, at the usual time.

At the Hours, the Troparion and Kontakion are of the Forefeast.

Liturgy

At the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from the Third Ode and 4 from the Sixth Ode of the Canon of the Forefeast.

1-2. Christ, who doth sit together with the Father and the Spirit from before all ages, and who became incarnate of the Virgin in these latter times, cometh now to be baptized, so that He may, in His providence, grant immortality to all through the divine springs of the Jordan. *(twice)*

3. Desiring, in His tender compassion, to bury our sins in the waters and the streams of the Jordan, Christ our God now cometh forth to restore, by holy baptism, us from corruption.

4. Covering the shameful nakedness of our first father Adam, Thou hast voluntarily stripped Thyself naked, O Christ, and hast covered Thyself in the streams of the Jordan, O Thou who once covered the firmament of the earth with water and alone art greatly merciful.

5-6. Showing forth the loving-kindness of His compassion, the immutable Christ cometh to a servant in the form of a servant, asking for baptism, and rescuing mankind from its bondage to the enemy! Marveling at His coming, the forerunner stood in awe, held fast by fear. *(twice)*

7. How can the river's streams receive Thee, the unbearable Fire, who now cometh forth? How can the angels of heaven look upon Thy nakedness? How can the hand of John stretch forth to touch Thee, O pre-eternal Word of God, who hath created him upon the earth?

8. The sea parted and fled, disclosing a divine path for the new people, which He,

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who once poured water from a rock, hath made in the midst of the river, having come there in the flesh. Let us glorify as God Him, who hath renewed us from our former desolation.

The Troparion of the Forefeast (*from the Eve*), in Tone 4:

The river Jordan once turned back the mantle of Elisha /
After Elijah had been taken up into heaven, /
And the waters were divided on this side and on that: /
The stream became a dry path before him, /
Forming a true figure of the baptism whereby we pass over the changeful course of
life. /
Christ has appeared in the Jordan ///
To sanctify the waters.

Glory...,

**The Kontakion of the Forefeast, in Tone 2: (*From the Saturday before*) to the
melody, “*Seeking the highest....*”**

O Christ, who in Thy compassion and infinite mercy /
Takest away the multitude of all our transgressions, /
Thou comest as a man to be baptized /
In the waters of the Jordan, /
Clothing me in the raiment of the ancient glory ///
Of which I was cruelly stripped bare.

Now and ever...,

**The Second Kontakion of the Forefeast, in Tone 4: To the melody, “*Thou hast
appeared today....*”**

When the Lord descended today /
Into the waters of the Jordan, /
He cried aloud to John, /
“Be not afraid to baptize Me, ///
For I am come to save Adam, the first-formed man.”

The Prokeimenon, Alleluia and Communion are for the Day; and the Epistle and Gospel lections are for the Saturday Before and for the Day.

In contemporary practice Vespers with 13 Readings, is served alone (*without Liturgy*)

immediately following the Liturgy on Saturday, followed by the first Great Blessing of the Waters.

Liturgy when the Saturday Before Theophany

The Prokeimenon, Alleluia and Communion Hymn are for the Day; the Epistle and Gospel readings are for the Saturday Before and for the Day.

Liturgy when the Sunday Before Theophany

At the Hours, Troparia: **Resurrection**; Glory..., **Forefeast**. Kontakia: **Resurrection**.

At the Beatitudes, 10 Troparia: 6 of the Resurrection; and 4 from the Third Ode of the Canon for the Forefeast.

1-6. Of the Resurrection from the Octoechos.

7 -8. Christ, who doth sit together with the Father and the Spirit from before all ages, and who became incarnate of the Virgin in these latter times, cometh now to be baptized, so that He may, in His providence, grant immortality to all through the divine springs of the Jordan. *(twice)*

9. Desiring, in His tender compassion, to bury our sins in the waters and the streams of the Jordan, Christ our God now cometh forth to restore, by holy baptism, us from corruption.

10. Covering the shameful nakedness of our first father Adam, Thou hast voluntarily stripped Thyself naked, O Christ, and hast covered Thyself in the streams of the Jordan, O Thou who once covered the firmament of the earth with water and alone art greatly merciful.

The Troparia of the Resurrection, and the Forefeast: “The river Jordan once turned back the mantle of Elisha....”

The Kontakion of the Resurrection; Glory..., the Kontakion of the Forefeast: “O Christ, who in Thy compassion and infinite mercy...,” **Now and ever..., the Second Kontakion of the Forefeast:** “When the Lord descended today....”

Prokeimenon (Sunday Before), in Tone 6: O Lord save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. *Verse:* To Thee, O Lord will I Call. O my God be not silent to me.

The Epistle (Sunday Before): (298) 2 Tim. 4:5-8.

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The Alleluia (Sunday Before), in Tone 8: O God, be bountiful to us and bless us, show the light of Thy countenance upon us, and have mercy on us. *Verse:* That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all nations.

The Gospel (Sunday Before): (1) Mark 1:1-8.

Communion Hymn: “Praise the Lord from the heavens....”

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