



**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018**

**THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER  
THEOPHANY; HOLY MARTYRS JULIAN AND VASILISSA;  
VENERABLE GEORGE CHOZEBITE;  
SAINT GREGORY OF OCHRID**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE EIGHT:**

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings! O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: Glory to Thee!

**THEOPHANY TROPARION - TONE ONE:**

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, and called Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, who has revealed Thyself and has enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

**TROPARION TO VENERABLE GEORGE CHOZEBITE – TONE FIVE:**

God-bearing Father George, you cultivated the word of grace and gathered the splendid fruits of righteousness, having chosen the way of godliness. Therefore, you partook of the glory of Christ; intercede with Him unceasingly that He may have mercy on our souls.

**RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION – TONE EIGHT:**

By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead and resurrected Adam. Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

**KONTAKION TO VENERABLE GEORGE CHOZEBITE – TONE FOUR:**

You have appeared as a brilliant light and have illumined with divine rays those who cry to you, O George. Pray for us to Christ the Master, who appeared in the waters to illumine those born on earth.

**THEOPHANY KONTAKION - TONE FOUR:**

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

**INSTEAD OF “IT IS TRULY MEET...”:**

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Mother of God, more honorable than the heavenly hosts! No tongue is capable of praising you worthily; the angelic mind is overawed in exalting you, O Mother of God! But accept our faith, since you are gracious and know our divine love. You are the protectress of Christians, and we praise you!

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## **EPISTLE READINGS**

### **THE PROKEIMENON IN TONE EIGHT:**

Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God.

### **SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY: EPHESIANS 4: 7-13**

Brethren, to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." Now this, "He ascended" - what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things. And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

### **SUNDAY BEFORE THE TRIODION: 1 TIMOTHY 4: 9-15**

My son Timothy, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach. Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

### **THE ALLELUIA VERSES:**

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms!

## **GOSPEL READINGS**

### **SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY: MATTHEW 4: 12-17**

At that time when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

### **SUNDAY BEFORE THE TRIODION: LUKE 19: 1-10**

At that time, Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him,

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“Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.” Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

### **FROM THE PROLOGUE:**

**JANUARY 8/21, BY SAINT NIKOLAI VELIMIROVIC:**

#### **The Holy Martyrs Julian and Basilissa**

Julian and Basilissa were of noble and wealthy parents. United in marriage, they vowed to live chastely as brother and sister. They distributed all of their property to the poor and both were tonsured. Julian founded a monastery and Basilissa founded a convent. Julian had about ten thousand monks and Basilissa about a thousand nuns. When a terrible persecution began under Diocletian, Basilissa implored God that none of her nuns would become frightened of the tortures and fall away from the Orthodox Faith. The Lord heard the prayers of His worthy handmaiden and, in the course of six months, received unto Himself all the nuns, one by one, and finally their abbess, Basilissa. Before her death, Basilissa had a vision of her nuns from the other world. All of them appeared to her radiant and joyful like angels of God, and beckoned their spiritual mother to come to them as soon as possible. Unlike Basilissa’s convent, Julian’s monastery was set ablaze by the persecutors, and Julian was inhumanly tortured and reposed amidst the most difficult sufferings. During his tortures, the Lord watched over him and strengthened him, so that he heroically endured, preserved his Faith, and glorified the name of Christ. Beheaded with Julian were Celsus and Maronilla, the son and the wife of the tormentor Marcian, who—witnessing Julian’s heroism in suffering and torture—were themselves converted to the Christian Faith. Also beheaded were twenty Roman soldiers, seven brothers from that town, the presbyter Anthony, and a certain Anastasius, whom Julian, at the time of his torture, resurrected from the dead by prayer. All suffered honorably for Christ and became citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom in about the year 313.

#### **The Venerable George the Chozibite**

George lived an ascetic life in the seventh century in the Choziba Monastery in Jericho on the road from Jerusalem, the monastery where the Venerable John the Chozibite first led an ascetic life.

#### **Saint Domnica**

During the reign of Emperor Theodosius, Domnica, unbaptized, came from Carthage to Constantinople with four other pagan maidens. Patriarch Macarius baptized them and gave his blessing to them to live as nuns. With great zeal, St. Domnica gave herself up to a life of asceticism and did not waver in that zeal until her death in extreme old age. She reposed in the Lord in about 474. She was so enlightened by the Holy Spirit that she was able to discern events in the future and work miracles through prayer.

#### **Saint Gregory, Bishop of Ohrid**

Gregory was a devout teacher and shepherd of Christ’s flock. He reposed in the year 1012. In one of the inscriptions in the Church of St. Sophia in Ohrid, he is referred to as “Gregory the all-wise.”

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### **HYMN OF PRAISE: Saints Julian and Basilissa**

Bound together by marriage, but bound more closely to Christ

In spiritual union, a union more lasting.

In the Book of the Living the Spirit wrote their names:

“Brother Julian and Sister Basilissa.”

They forsook all and followed after Christ,

And when the hour struck, they gave up their lives

For the love of God, for the love of the Triune Sun.

They despised glory—all earthly glory;

They glorified themselves by their love for God,

And they left us a wonderful example.

A treasure of the Church, an adornment and honor,

Is the miracle-working blood of these wondrous martyrs.

### **REFLECTION**

On one of the stones in the Church of St. Sophia, the following words were engraved:

“Wash your sins, not just your face.” Whoever entered this glorious church read this inscription and remembered that the Christian Faith requires of him moral purity: purity of the soul, purity of the heart and purity of the mind. Inasmuch as the complete spiritual man is concentrated in the heart of man, the Lord also said: Blessed are the pure in heart (Matthew 5:8). Total external cleanliness does not help at all in gaining the Kingdom of Heaven. Oh, if only we would invest as much effort in washing ourselves from sins as we invest daily in washing our faces, then God would truly be seen in our hearts as though in a mirror!

### **HOMILY**

**on the need of caution for those who think that they are secure**

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (I Corinthians 10:12).

The Apostle who gives such advice knew human nature and all its weakness perfectly. Day after day, this experience is confirmed: as soon as a man straightens up from the mud of sin, he sways and falls again. As soon as he is cured of the sin of avarice, he falls into the vice of vainglory. Or, as soon as he extends his hand to help a poor man, pride topples him to the other side. Or, as soon as he becomes accustomed to prayer, he opens wide his mouth to degrade those who are not yet accustomed to prayer. Or, as soon as he feels that the Spirit of God is directing him to the path of salvation, he immediately sets himself up as a teacher to the entire world until, unfortunately, through this he completely drives the Spirit from himself.

When the Lord foretold to His disciples that they would all deny Him and flee, then Peter, confident in his stability, cried out: Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended (Matthew 26:33). Discerning his very heart and seeing him already fallen into self-conceit and pride, the Lord responded to him: This night, before the cockcrow, thou shalt deny me thrice (Matthew 26:34). And when such a fall happened to the apostle in the immediate proximity of the Lord, why would it not happen to us? This is why, brethren, when we rise and turn from a certain sin and stand erect, we should ascribe this to the power and mercy of God and not to ourselves, and we should be very vigilant to protect ourselves and implore God that we do not fall again, be it to one side or the other, but walk on the upright path of the Lord.

O All-seeing Lord, help us to stand straight before Thee by the Spirit, and when we become upright, uphold us that we do not fall again.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

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