



**January 17, 2010**  
**SUNDAY BEFORE THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST:**  
**PRE-FEAST OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST**

**RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION - TONE SEVEN:**

By Your Cross, You did destroy death! To the thief, You did open Paradise! For the myrrh bearers, You did change weeping into joy! And You did command Your disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that You are risen, granting the world great mercy!

**PRE-FEAST OF THEOPHANY TROPARION - TONE FOUR:**

Prepare, O Zebulon, and adorn yourself, O Naphtali; River Jordan, cease flowing and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized. Adam, rejoice with our First Mother, and do not hide yourself as you did of old in Paradise; for having seen you naked, He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment. Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

**RESURRECTIONAL KONTAKION - TONE SEVEN:**

The dominion of death can no longer hold man captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers! Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: The Savior has come to those in faith! Enter you faithful into the Resurrection.

**PRE-FEAST OF THEOPHANY KONTAKION - TONE FOUR:**

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John: "Do not be afraid to baptize me. For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man!"



## EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

### **THE PROKIMENON IN THE 6<sup>TH</sup> TONE: [PSALM 27: 9]**

*O Lord save Your people and bless Your inheritance!*

### **II TIMOTHY 4: 5-8**

My son Timothy, you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

### **ALLELUIA VERSES**

*God be gracious unto us and bless us.*

*Show the light of Your countenance upon and have mercy on us.*

### **COMMENTARY**

St. Paul's message here is twofold: First of all, those whose race is just beginning are encouraged to step up, and fulfill his/her ministry! It is not enough to say that one love's Christ. This must be shown in good works. Secondly, those who have fought the good fight must also recognize when they are being poured out as a drink offering (i.e. when their sacrifice is over!). Many times we build ourselves up as irreplaceable, thinking that we are more important than the Church; that the Church just could not go on without us. Our pride makes **us** into an **idol** that we place before God. Yet, if we do step aside, and allow Christ to work in the others around us, we see the reward: a crown of righteousness awaits! May God grant us the purpose to fight the good fight, the strength of character to show our faith in good works, and the humility to know when our race is complete.

## GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

### **MARK 1: 1-8**

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'" John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying: "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## COMMENTARY

The confession of sins is essential to baptism under both the Old Covenant and the New. St. John's baptism, however, was a sign of repentance and forgiveness of sins only. It did not confer the power of total regeneration nor adoption as a child of God as does Christian baptism in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The fact that St. John admits his unworthiness to even unloose a sandal strap further explicates the differentiation between the prophet and the Messiah. Slaves carried a King's sandals. St. John makes himself lower than a slave with this statement. May we all be blessed with the humility and discernment of St. John, allowing us to recognize Christ in those we encounter in this world!

## SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

**From *The Prologue for Jan. 4/Jan. 17* by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:**

### **The Synaxis of the Seventy Holy Apostles**

Besides the Twelve Great Apostles, the Lord chose seventy lesser apostles and sent them to preach the Gospel: *Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves* (Luke 10:3). But just as Judas, one of the Twelve, fell away from the Lord, so some among the Seventy abandoned the Lord—not with the intention of betrayal, but because of human weakness and faintheartedness (John 6:66). As Judas's place was filled by another apostle, so also were the places of these lesser apostles filled by others that were chosen. These seventy lesser apostles labored at the same work as did the Twelve Great Apostles; they were co-workers with the Twelve in spreading and establishing the Church of God in the world. They endured many sufferings and malevolent acts from men and demons, but their strong faith and fervent love for the resurrected Lord made them victors over the world and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

### **Jevstatije, Archbishop of Serbia**

Jevstatije [Eustathius] was born in the district of Budim, of God-fearing parents. As a young man he was tonsured a monk in Zeta; then he entered a higher form of asceticism in Hilandar Monastery [on Mount Athos]. In time, Jevstatije became the Abbot of Hilandar. As abbot, he was elected Bishop of Zeta and, after a certain period of time, was elected Archbishop of Serbia. Jevstatije was a man of great charity, who governed Christ's flock with zeal and love. He reposed peacefully at a great age in the year 1279, crying out before his death: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my soul." His relics are interred under the floor of the church at the Patriarchate of Pec'.



## **The Eunuch of Queen Candace**

The Apostle Philip baptized this Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–40). Following his baptism, he returned to his home and began to preach Christ. This eunuch was the first apostle of the Faith among the Ethiopians. He died a martyr and was found worthy of the Kingdom of God.

## **The Venerable Martyr Onuphrius of Hilandar**

In his youth, Onuphrius became angry with his parents and declared before the Turks that he was going to convert to Islam. Immediately afterward, he repented of these words and went to Hilandar Monastery, where he was tonsured a monk. Tormented by his conscience, Onuphrius resolved upon martyrdom. Because of his determination, and with the blessing of his spiritual father, he departed for Trnovo, Bulgaria, where he reported to the Turks, proclaimed himself a Christian, and ridiculed Mohammed. Because of that, Onuphrius was beheaded on January 4, 1818, in his thirty-second year. The body of this spiritual knight is not preserved, for the Turks threw it into the sea.

## **HYMN OF PRAISE**

The Seventy Holy Apostles  
O knights of the Cross, sons of light,  
You have not yet passed away, O children of the future;  
You are not dead, just as Christ is not dead,  
But live with a Life that never decays.  
The Lord, the Wreath-Giver, beautifully crowned you,  
Because you loudly proclaimed His holy name  
Before emperors and princes, before terrible executioners.  
You served God, but the world repaid you with torments.  
You walked after Christ, O bees of Christ!  
You filled the world with honey, you filled the vessels!  
You calmed souls, you mortified passions;  
With evangelical sweetness you sweetened life;  
With the fragrance of Christ you censed the earth;  
You were salt, light and incense to the world.  
Seventy Companions, all with the same love:  
As branches to a tree, you were united to Christ.  
Seventy Stars around the Sun—Christ—  
Where the angels are, and the All-pure Virgin;  
Where there is unutterable delight and unprecedented joy.  
Glorious victors of this transitory time,  
Holy Apostles, glory and praise be to you.  
From your blood, truth blossomed.

## **REFLECTION**

God hears the prayers of the just. This is clearly seen from the lives of Moses, Elias, and the other Old Testament righteous ones and prophets, as well as from the lives of the apostles and saints. While St. Genevieve lived a life of asceticism as a nun in Paris, it so happened that Attila with his savage Huns surrounded Paris. Fear and terror overcame the entire population, who awaited at any moment the capture of the city by the enemy. Then St. Genevieve called upon the people to fast and pray to God that the calamity might be averted.

Many men and women responded to the call of this saint and began to fast and pray to God. Genevieve herself fasted more strictly than all, and prayed most ardently to God. After a short while, the enemy turned away from Paris without any visible reason and departed for another place. That which the sword of many sinners cannot do, the prayer of the righteous person can.

## **IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

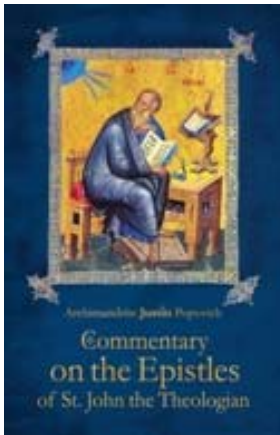
### **ANNUAL DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY - January 28-30, 2010**

*Mark Your Calendars*

Saint Simeon Serbian Orthodox Church, Las Vegas, Nevada will host the Annual Diocesan Assembly on January 28-30, 2010.

For **Continual Education in Liturgy and Theology**, we recommend the following article: [http://www.westsrbdio.org/pdf/Archm.Justin\\_on\\_Saint\\_Issak.pdf](http://www.westsrbdio.org/pdf/Archm.Justin_on_Saint_Issak.pdf)

## **FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:**



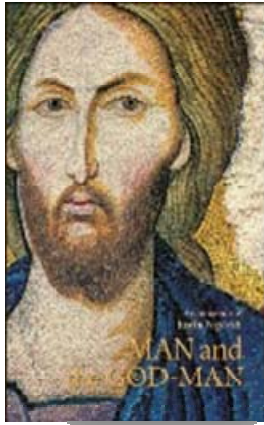
### **Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian**

By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

*Retail price: \$7.*

This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian - published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) - was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ's Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles.

The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian by Radomir M. Plavsic. Published by Sebastian Press, Western American Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Contemporary Christian Thought Series, number 5, First Edition



### **MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic**

One of our newest publications of Sebastian Press Publishing House is available for purchase online at: [http://www.westsrbdio.org/ads/man\\_and\\_the\\_godman.html](http://www.westsrbdio.org/ads/man_and_the_godman.html)

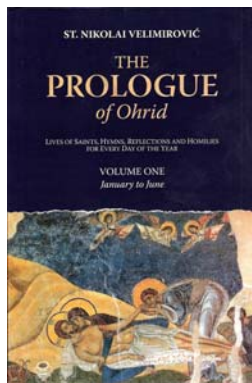
*Retail Price: \$15.00*



### **2010 POCKET DIOCESAN CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE**

Be sure to watch for your order in the mail. If you have not already received them, you will shortly! Contact the Diocesan office if you have any questions.

*Retail Price: \$5.00*



### **THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID**

St Nikolai of Zica (Velimirovic) (1880-1956) has been called the "Serbian Chrysostom" for his theological depth and golden-tongued eloquence. Now for the first time, a complete and unabridged English translation of St. Nikolai's Prologue of Ohrid has been made available. St. Nikolai's Prologue has become a much-loved spiritual classic for Orthodox Christians worldwide. An inspirational source-book of the Orthodox Faith, it contains within its pages a summation of the Church's wisdom and Her experience of sanctity through the Grace of Jesus Christ. Lives

of Saints, Hymns, Reflections and Homilies are presented for every day of the year. St. Nikolai's beautiful Hymns have never before appeared in English. – *Retail \$120 per set*