

So Christ saves us and cleanses us in our whole life, so long as we want it. Today the Prophet calls us in essence to give our sins to Christ. To offer Him our heart truly. Let us trust Him with all our souls, so that He will show us the path of our salvation, which begins with His Church, the Mysteries, and mainly the Divine Liturgy, where we really meet the Lamb.

Archim. E. L

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024.** *Synaxis of John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner, Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Cedd, Bishop of Scotland, Fursey, Abbot of Lagny.*

**EPISTLE READING :** *Acts of the Apostles 19:1-8*

**GOSPEL READING :** *John 1:29- 34*

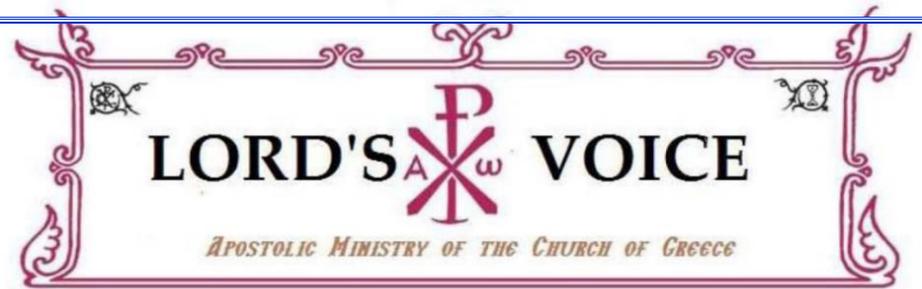
**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Plagal Second Tone*

**ETHINON :** *Nineth Eothinon*

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024.** *Leavetaking of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ The Holy Fathers slain at Sinai and Raitho Plato the Hieromartyr, Bishop of Tallini and all Estonia, and the Priest Martyrs Michael and Nicholas, Agnes the Virgin-martyr, Sabbas (Sava), Archbishop of Serbia, Nina of Georgia.*

**EPISTLE READING :** *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13*

**GOSPEL READING :** *Matthew 4:12-17*



72<sup>ST</sup> YEAR JANUARY 7 2024 PAMPHLET #01 (3684)

## THE LAMB OF GOD

Today's Gospel passage is dedicated to the holy person of Saint John, the Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of our Christ. He was called "Forerunner", because he prepared and pointed out to people the coming of the Messiah as a redeemer and liberator of man from sin. He was called "Baptist", because he was granted to baptize Christ in the River Jordan, pointing out to the people; "behold, the lamb of God who carries the sin of the world". But he was also called "Prophet", as the last of the Righteous and Saints of the Old Testament who spoke of the coming of Christ, who was now a reality and they saw Him in the Jordan.

### Christ as a lamb

John calling Christ "Lamb" reminds Jews at this time of the prophecies of their fathers, who for centuries were speaking of the present time when they were living seeing Christ.

## GOSPEL READING : JOHN 1:29- 34

At that time, John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

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In the Book of Exodus, in the Old Testament, it is mentioned that when God decided to free His people from the captivity to the Egyptians, He gave orders to every family, to slaughter a whole male sheep, one year old, to be eaten at night and to paint the upper part of the door with its blood. The angel of the Lord, seeing this mark on the door, would not harm the first-born children, as he would do to those of the Egyptians.

This blood of the lamb, which saved the children of the Jews, but also marked the time of the exit to freedom, acquired a spiritual significance. It was identified with the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and man's freedom from sin and death. Christ was

sacrificed, as the lambs were sacrificed in Egypt. However, John was also well aware of Isaiah's prophecy, who spoke of the "Lamb of God" and his sacrifice; "like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, not wanting to defend himself". That is precisely what Christ did on the Cross.

### **The "Lamb of God" takes away the sin of the people**

Just as the prophets saw Christ as a paschal and saving lamb, thus the Church also lives and experiences Christ daily in worship. She experiences Him as a true lamb, which symbolizes not only guilelessness, innocence, and calmness, but mainly His sacrifice, and through this, our salvation.

Let us keep from the great Prophet his word also about Christ. When he says "who carries", let's pay attention to the time. It does not say that Christ carried our sins when he was crucified, or he will carry them at some time. The carrying of the sin of each one of us by Christ is a continuous and timeless work, as long as each of us is living. As Saint John Chrysostom teaches us, "...Christ did not take our sins only then, but from then until today, He carries our sins, not by being continually crucified, but continually cleansing man from sin, thanks to His crucifixion".