

GENERAL VIGIL SERVICE TO ST. JOHN, THE FORERUNNER, PROPHET AND BAPTIST OF THE LORD.

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” the Stichera, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

O blessed John the Forerunner, * sincere friend of the Lord, * who in the waters of the Jordan * touched with thy hand His most pure head, * by thy sacred intercessions * do thou always with love raise my humble soul to the Lord, * extinguishing the fire of my passions, * and leading me to the faithful fulfillment of the divine commands, ** cleansing the senses of my heart, * that I may glorify thee.

O thou, offspring of barrenness * and the Lord’s garden of purity, * ornament of all mankind, * Baptizer of the Lord, * all-praised John the Forerunner, * divine guardian of my humble soul, * grant me God’s grace by thine intercessions, * and deliver me from the serpent, ** and his malicious wiles and assaults.

Thou art the most purest joy of all, * full of the sweetness of divine grace, * O ever-glorious Prophet, * making glad all those who come unto thee with faith, * sweetening the senses of both soul and body, * vanquishing the bitterness * of infirmities and afflictions, * and subduing the assaults of the evil one, ** and of all the soul destroying passions.

Glory ..., in Tone IV:

Today hath appeared the great Forerunner, * who came forth from the barren womb of Elizabeth, * the greatest of all the Prophets, * for there was no greater before, nor hath one arisen since. * The lamp that preceded the most resplendent Light, * that followed after the voice the Word, * the Bridegroom’s harbinger. * He prepared multitudes of people for the Lord, * cleansing them with water in preparation for the cleansing of the Spirit; * Zacharia’s offspring and a good pupil of wilderness living, * the preacher of repentance and the cleansing of transgressions, * announcing to those in Hades ** the resurrection from the dead, and ever interceding for our souls.

If the Celebration does not coincide with a Resurrection Service, chant the following Dogmatic of Tone IV (If the service is a Resurrection service chant the Dogmatic of the Tone for that service):

Both now ..., in Tone IV:

Prophet David, the ancestor of God, * spoke of thee in psalmody unto Him Who hath accomplished great things in thee. * For God was well pleased without father to become a man from thee, * the Queen who standeth at His right hand, * and He - the source of life - showed thee to be His mother, * that He might renew His own image, corrupted by the passions. * Having found the lost sheep wandering on the mountain * He hath laid it upon his shoulders, * that He may bring it to his Father; * and in accordance with His own will * unite it to the heavenly Powers * and thus, O Theotokos, save the world, ** Christ, Who is richly and abundantly merciful.

The Entrance. The Prokeimenon of the day. The Three Lessons

THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

Thus saith the Lord: Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith the God. Speak ye, priests, unto the heart of Jerusalem, cry unto her that her humiliation is at an end, since her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths for our God. Get thee up into the high mountain, O Zion, that bringest good tidings; lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift it up, be not afraid: I am the Lord God, I will hear the poor of Israel and will not forsake them, but will cause rivers to flow in high places and fountains in the midst of the fields. I will turn the wilderness into meadow and the dry land into water-springs. Let heaven above rejoice and let clouds sprinkle down righteousness; let the earth shine and let mercy shoot forth and let righteousness spring up together. With a voice of singing declare ye, and let it be heard, utter it even to the end of the earth, say ye: The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob, and if they thirst in the wilderness, He will cause water to flow out of the rock for them. Sing, O barren one, thou that didst not bear, break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife.

THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI

Thus saith the Lord Almighty: Behold I will send My messenger before Thy countenance, and he shall prepare the way before Thee. And the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, but who may abide the day of His coming? for He shall come like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap, and He shall purify by consuming and purging as gold and silver. And He shall come unto you for judgment, and will be a swift witness against the evil ones, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that deprive the hireling of his wages, and against those that oppress the widows and push away the Fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Him, with the Lord Almighty, for I am the Lord your God and I will not change. And ye the sons of Jacob are gone away from the law and have not kept it. Wherefore return unto Me and I will return unto you, saith the Lord Almighty, and all nations shall call you blessed. Learn ye that I am the Lord that doth discern between the righteous and the wicked, in that day wherein I shall affectionately meet those that love Me. Learn then and remember ye the law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the Tishbite before the coming of the great and illustrious day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the Father to his son and the heart of man unto his neighbor, lest I come and smite the earth swiftly, saith the Lord Almighty, the Holy God of Israel.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The righteous man if he happen to die early shall be at rest, and the dying righteous man shall bring judgment unto the wicked living, for they will see the end of the righteous one and will not understand what is destined for him. And the Lord will hurl the wicked down voiceless and will remove them from their foundations, and they shall pass away unto the last in sorrow and their memory shall vanish, for they shall come in dread unto the realization of their sins, and their transgressions shall convict them to their faces. Then the righteous man will stand up in great boldness before those who offended him and despised his works. At the sight of him they will be agitated with great fear and will feel astonished at his glorious salvation; for, repenting and sighing from the oppression of the spirit, they shall speak within themselves, saying: this is he whom we laughed at and held in scorn; we were so foolish as to account his life as madness and his end dishonorable; how, then, is he now numbered unto the sons of God and his lot is cast among the holy? We have therefore wandered away from the right path, and the light of truth hath not illumined us, and the sun hath not shone unto us; we were full of the wicked ways and perdition, and walked in the unpassable paths, but did not comprehend God's ways.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone II:

O preacher and Baptist of Christ, * angel, apostle, and martyr, * prophet, forerunner, lamp, and nearest friend, * seal of the prophets, * supremely honored among those born of men, * mediator between the old and the new covenants, * joyful voice of the Word, * by thy sacred intercessions ** be thou a prayerful advocate for us before the tenderly compassionate God.

Verse: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. * He hath visited and wrought deliverance unto His people.

O blessed Forerunner, * upon seeing Christ walking upon the earth * thou didst cry out aloud * "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world"; * Him do thou entreat that those who honor thee * be granted the remission of their sins * for thou, O Baptist, dost truly possess great boldness ** as the mediator of the law and grace.

Verse: And thou, O child, * shalt be called a Prophet of the Most High.

I beseech thee O glorious Prophet of the Lord, * make haste and deliver me from temptations, * for in vain the bitter demons array themselves against me, * warring and seeking to seize the soul of thy servant like a helpless hatchling, * forsake me not even unto the end, * but rather make them understand, O all-blessed one, ** that thou art my refuge.

Glory ..., in Tone I:

O godly illustrious voice, * lamp of the Light, * Forerunner of the Lord, * testified to by Christ, * the first among the prophets! * While interceding with thy supplications on behalf of the world, ** remember also thy flock and preserve it unharmed.

Both now ..., Theotokion of the Resurrection, in Tone I:

Behold, the prophecy of Isaiah hath been fulfilled, * for a Virgin hath given birth, * and after giving birth hath remained a Virgin as before. * For it was God who was born from her; * therefore He began nature anew. * O Mother of God, disdain not the supplications of thy servants, * which are offered unto thee in thy temple; * since thou didst bear the Compassionate one in thine embrace, ** have pity on thy servants, and beseech Him that our souls be saved.

THE TROPARIA:

The General Troparion (Also for the Beheading), in Tone II:

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise * but the Lord's testimony is enough for thee, O Forerunner, * for thou wast shown to be more wonderful than the Prophets * since thou wast granted to baptize in the running waters * Him Whom thou didst proclaim. * Then having endured great suffering for the Truth, * Thou didst rejoice to bring, even to those in hell * the good tidings that God Who had appeared in the flesh * takes away the sin of the world * and grants us the great mercy..

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension, * O Theotokos; * for, thy purity sealed and thy virginity intact, * thou art known to be a true Mother, having given birth unto God. ** Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Troparion of the Conception of the Forerunner in Tone IV:

Sing, O barren one that didst not bear, * for thou hast conceived the lamp of the Sun * Who is to enlighten the whole world suffering from blindness. * O Zacharias rejoice and shout: * "The Prophet of the Most High is to be born."

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages * and unknown to the ranks of Angels, * hath been revealed to those on earth through thee, O Theotokos: * God incarnate in an uncommingled union, * Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake, * and through it hath raised up the first-formed man, ** and saved our souls from death.

Troparion of the Synaxis of the Forerunner: in Tone II:

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, * but the Lord's testimony is enough for thee, O Forerunner * for thou wast shown to be more wonderful than the Prophets * since thou wast granted to baptize in the running waters * Him whom thou didst proclaim. * Then having endured great suffering for the Truth, * thou didst rejoice to bring, even to those in hell, * the good tidings that God Who had appeared in the flesh * takes away the sin of the world and grants us the great mercy.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension ...,

Troparion for the Birth of the Forerunner: in Tone IV:

O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, * we honor thee lovingly but cannot extol thee worthily; * for by thy birth * thy mother's barrenness and thy Father's dumbness were unfettered; * and the Incarnation of the Son of God is proclaimed to the world.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages ...,

Troparion for the 1st & 2nd Finding: in Tone IV:

The head of the Forerunner has risen from the earth * and sends forth healing rays of incorruption to all the faithful. * In heaven it is mustering a host of Angels, * and on earth it is assembling mankind * to ascribe glory to our God.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages ...

Troparion for the 3rd Finding: in Tone IV:

Christ has revealed thy head to us, O Prophet and Forerunner * as a divine treasure hidden in the earth. * We come with hymns to honor its discovery, * and praise the Savior Who saves us from corruption, * through Thine intercessions.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages ...

The Dismissal:

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the Feast (Twice).

Glory ..., Both now ..., the Theotokion.

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Joseph marveled ...”:

Today the off-spring of Zachariah hath sprouted forth, * bringing joy to the faithful, * the adornment of the desert and foundation of the prophets, * wherefore he hath been manifest as the Forerunner of Christ * a true witness of His coming; * let us therefore with one voice cry aloud * unto the Baptist in spiritual hymns: ** O prophet and proclaimer of the Truth, beseech Him that we be saved. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

We hymn thee, O Bride of God, Mother of Christ God, glorifying thine unapproachable Offspring, by Whom we have been delivered from the deceit of the devil and from all misfortune, O Sovereign Lady Theotokos; and we faithfully cry out: Have mercy on thy flock, O thou who alone art all-hymned!

After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “As Thou art merciful ...”:

O Good One, through Thy compassionate mercy * thou hast descended from on high to save Thy creation, * in Thy descent bowing down the heavens, * wherefore hymning Thine awesome dispensation, * we cry aloud to Thee, * By the intercessions of Thy Forerunner O Christ, * grant us cleansing of our sins, ** as Thou alone art tenderly compassionate. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

O Theotokos, * thou art a fervent defender of Orthodox Christians, * ever entreat Thy Son, * that we be rescued from every affliction * and evil deed of the persecutor, * and that by thy prayers He grant us the remission of our sins * for the sake of His abundant and rich mercies, ** O Mother and Virgin.

After Praise ye the name of the Lord, the following Megalynarions:

For the Nativity of the Forerunner: We magnify thee, * John the Forerunner of the Savior, * and honor thy most glorious birth * from the barren one.

Verse: Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

For the Conception: The same as above

For the Beheading: We magnify thee, * John the Forerunner of the Savior, * and all honor the beheading of thy venerable head.

Verse: O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man that hopeth in Thee:

For the Findings: We magnify thee, * John the Forerunner of the Savior, * and all honor the finding of thy venerable head.

Verse: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight:

For the Synaxis: We magnify thee, * John the Forerunner of the Savior, * and all honor thine all-venerable synaxis.

Verse: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight:

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: “The co-beginningless Word ...”:

Let us loudly praise in hymns * him who from the womb hath been revealed to be a Prophet of God * and a lamp unto the world, * who came forth from a barren mother, * the Baptist of Christ and the victorious sufferer and Forerunner John, * for he doth ever entreat God ** that our souls be saved. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone V:

The Bride who knew not wedlock, the Birthgiver of God, * who turned Eve’s grief to joy, * do we the faithful hymn and worship, * for thou hast redeemed us from the ancient curse. * And now, O All-hymned Most holy one, ** cease not to make intercession for the salvation of our souls.

If not a Resurrection Service, chant the following:

The Song of Ascents: The first antiphon, in Tone IV:

From my youth * do many passions war against me; * but do Thou Thyself defend ** and save me, O my Savior.

Ye haters of Zion * shall be shamed by the Lord; * for like grass, by the fire ** shall ye be withered.

Glory ..., Both now ...,

In the Holy Spirit, * every soul is quickened, * and, through cleansing, is exalted ** and made radiant by the Triple Unity in a hidden sacred manner.

The Prokeimenon, in Tone IV:

The Prokeimenon: And thou, O child, * shalt be called Prophet of the Most High.

Verse: Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.

Let every breath ...,

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW: (11, 2-15.)

At that time: John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, our do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is (he), whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A Prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a Prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

After the 50th Psalm:

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Through the prayers of the Forerunner and Baptist John, * O Merciful One, ** blot out the multitude of our transgressions.

Both now ...,

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, * O Merciful One, ** blot out the multitude of our transgressions.

Have mercy on me, O God, * according to Thy great mercy; * and according to the multitude of Thy compassions, ** blot out my transgressions.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone I:

O John the Prophet and Forerunner, * thou art the Proclaimer of the Word, the Lamb of God, * thou who beforehand foretold the future * and declared it unto the nations saying: * “Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world ** and granteth unto all peace and great mercy.”

The Canon of the Theotokos (The Paraklisis) in 6, and that of the Forerunner in 8.

The Canon, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: **O** Thou who wast born of the Virgin, * drown I implore Thee, in the depth of dispassion * the triune nature of my soul, * as Thou didst the mighty strongholds of the warriors, * that in the mortality of my flesh * as on a timbrel * I may chant unto Thee, a hymn of victory.

Refrain: Holy great Prophet, Forerunner and Baptizer of the Lord, John, pray to God for us.

As a great star of the living Sun, O Forerunner thou hast illumined the earth with thy radiance; wherefore I cry unto thee; enlighten also my heart O Baptist, blinded with the dark gloom of my numberless transgressions.

O blessed one, as once thou loosed by thy birth the bonds of barrenness; I now beseech thee; by thine intercessions, make my soul, made desolate through the fruitlessness of passions, appear fruitful, and bring forth the offspring of the virtues.

O ever-glorious Baptist, thou who hast prepared the way for the Redeemer, going before Him in the power of Elijah; do thou also lead Him to behold the state of my soul, that by thine intercessions I may be delivered from every temptation and the flame of passions.

Theotokion: **O** cloud of light, dispel through thy bright mediations, the multitude of benighting clouds that cover my soul, that I may see the dawn of Him Who shone forth from thee, and that I may through light receive the never-setting Light.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**he bow of the mighty hath been rendered impotent * and the infirm are now girded with strength; * wherefore my heart is established in the Lord.

Thou hast manifested every virtue, and every evil deed hast thou fervently loathed, revealing to mankind the blessed path of penitence, O blessed one.

Thou didst appear unto all as the great Forerunner of the incarnate Word; wherefore I beseech thee to free me from the irrational influence of passions, and lead me to dispassion.

While still living in the flesh, O Forerunner, thou didst manifestly live the life of the bodiless ones, and now that thou, with them, approachest the Divinity, O god-bearing one, strengthen us by thine intercessions.

Theotokion: **T**hrough transgression the world became of no value, but was granted mercy because of thee, O Mother and Virgin; wherefore it blesses thee in songs and hymns as is meet.

The Sessional Hymn, in Tone I:

Thou didst dwell in the wilderness, * O Forerunner of Christ, * as did Elijah; * wherefore, O most blessed one, ** make firm my heart. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone I:

David proclaimed thee to be the Queen and pure Virgin, * O most pure one; * wherefore I entreat thee; * make me an heir of the heavenly Kingdom, ** that I also may bless thee.

ODE IV

Irmos: **F**or the sake of love for Thine image, * O compassionate One, * Thou didst ascend the cross * and the nations melted away. * For Thou, O Lover of mankind, * art my strength and my praise.

Like a dove that foretelleth the coming of spring, thou hast truly announced the coming of Christ, wherefore we bless thee, O ever-glorious Forerunner.

Being utterly devastated by the temptations of the deceitful one, do thou as the mediator of the old and the new covenant, wholly renew me who doth hymn thee, O Forerunner.

O Thou who didst depart into the wilderness to lead a life of irreproachable virtue, O Forerunner, by thy divine intercessions call back my mind, made desolate with many and varied transgressions.

Theotokion: **T**hy Son, O Virgin hath granted us to know remission and redemption; Him do thou entreat that the souls of those who with love praise thee, be saved.

ODE V

Irmos: **D**o Thou O Lord send down upon us * Thine enlightenment, and free us * from the gloom of transgression, O Good One, * granting us Thy peace.

O child of the wilderness, bedew me who am assaulted in the spiritual wilderness and inflamed with the burning coals of the passions, and by thine intercessions preserve me from the effects of their flames.

O all-blessed one, under thy holy right hand, the Father's divine Son was baptized, He who by thy holy intercessions hath saved us from the hand of the deceiver.

O Forerunner, the whole world possesseth in thee a refuge, a mighty shelter, and a great wall; do thou by thine intercessions deliver us from every oppression.

Theotokion: **I**n thee O Virgin Maiden, hath God beheld and loved the good qualities of Jacob, and through thee, hath adorned all who were darkened by original sin.

ODE VI

Irmos: **I** have reached the depths of the sea * and the tempest of my many sins hath engulfed me; * but do Thou raise up my life from the abyss * O Greatly-merciful One.

In the rapids thou didst stand baptizing the Lord, Who taketh away the sins of all mankind; cease not therefore, O Forerunner, to entreat Him to have mercy on our souls.

Thou wast revealed as a preacher of repentance O Forerunner; do thou heal my heart, polluted with pernicious sins.

O all-blessed one, thou hast proclaimed unto those in the impassable wilderness the Word Who came down to thee from above; wherefore every Church with never-silent voices blesses thee.

Theotokion: The mysteries of the law were explained by thine awesome birth-giving, O Bride of God, and contemplating their fulfillment we honor thee, O Lady, as is meet.

THE KONTAKIA:

The Beheading of St John the Baptist, in Tone V:

The beheading of the glorious Forerunner * was a divine dispensation * that the coming of the Savior might be preached to those in hell. * Lament then, Herodias, * that thou didst demand a murder * despising the law of God and eternal life.

The Conception of St John the Baptist, in Tone I:

Great Zacharias radiantly rejoices * together with Elizabeth: * she worthily conceived John the Forerunner whom the Angel announced with great gladness * and whom we honor as an initiate of grace.

The Synaxis of St John the Baptist, in Tone VI:

Jordan turned back in fear at the sight of Thy bodily presence. * And having fulfilled his prophetic ministry, John drew back trembling. * The Angelic orders were amazed * to see Thee in the flesh baptized in the waters. * And all in darkness were illumined and praised Thee * Who had appeared and enlightened all creation.

The Birth of St John the Baptist, in Tone III:

The formerly barren one today gives birth to the Forerunner of Christ * Who is the fulfillment of prophecy. * For the Prophet, Herald and Forerunner of the Word * submitted to Him Whom the Prophets foretold * by laying his hand on Him in the Jordan.

1st & 2nd Finding of the Glorious head of St. John the Baptist, in Tone II:

O Prophet of God and Forerunner of Grace, * having obtained thy head from the earth as a most sacred rose, * we ever receive healings; * for still as of old in the world * thou preachest repentance.

3rd Finding of the Glorious head of St. John the Baptist, in Tone VI:

The shining pillar on earth, the Forerunner, lamp of the spiritual Sun, * has revealed his radiant, holy head to the world. * He sanctifies those who venerate it and who faithfully cry: * O wise Baptist of Christ, save us all.

Ikos: **B**eginning an ODE unto thee, O God-hymned blessed John, I am full of joy and yet also full of dread, for I fear that I shall not find words, O Forerunner to worthily praise thee, but do thou thyself strengthen me and grant that I may worthily speak of thee saying: **R**ejoice, thou by whom gladness came; **R**ejoice, thou by whom the curse was destroyed; **R**ejoice, teacher of the ends of the world; **R**ejoice, proclaimer of Christ's wonders; **R**ejoice, height of conscience that reacheth unto the heavens; **R**ejoice, breadth of purity that cleanseth all the earth; **R**ejoice, since thou hast seen the Holy Trinity; **R**ejoice, thou who despised the deceit of fallen nature; **R**ejoice, star that revealeth the Sun; **R**ejoice, luminary that illuminates all that are under the heavens; **R**ejoice, thou by whom Christ hath been proclaimed; **R**ejoice, thou by whom Satan was rejected; **R**ejoice, O proclaimer of grace.

ODE VII

Irmos: **I**n the Persian furnace the youths and descendants of Abraham, * burning with a love of piety * rather than by a flame of fire, * cried aloud saying: * **B**lessed art **T**hou in the temple of **T**hy glory, **O** Lord.

Thou wast manifest as one greater than all those born of men, O prophet; by thy lofty intercessions, deliver me who hath sinned greatly against God, from the flames of Gehenna, and eternal darkness.

Like the barren fig-tree I am in fear of being cut down; By thine intercessions, O Forerunner of the Savior, establish me and make me fruitful, that I may bless thee.

O Forerunner John, by thy watchful supplications unto the Redeemer of all subdue every tempest of the adversary, raised against those who in faith have recourse to thee.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, do thou deliver thy servants, who ever glorify thee with their minds and tongues, from all attacks of the deceiver, from wickedness, and from enslavement to the noetic enemies.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **O** almighty Redeemer of all, * having descended and bedewed the children * in the midst of the flame, * **T**hou didst teach them to sing: * **A**ll ye works bless and hymn the Lord.

Held captive by the slumber of despair and darkened by the mist of malice, O Forerunner, renew me by thy radiant intercessions, and grant that I may walk worthily in the daylight of the virtues.

The winter of temptations holdeth me fast, and the storm of passions doth trouble me, but O Forerunner, reach hither with thy hand, and by thine intercessions lead the vessel of my soul into the safe haven of penitence.

Thou who hast baptized in the waters of the Jordan, Christ Who taketh away the sins of the world; do thou by the streams of thine intercessions make dry, O blessed John the Forerunner, the abyss of my evil deeds.

Having beheld the Holy Spirit, thou didst hear the voice of the Begetter testifying of Jesus Whom thou wast ineffably baptizing, O Forerunner; Him do thou entreat that our souls be saved.

Theotokion: **O** Theotokos and all-immaculate Virgin, the Source of our atonement, do thou entirely renew me who hath been weakened by the attacks of the evil one, that with faith and love I may bless thee.

ODE IX

Irmos: **E**ve dwelt under the curse of sin * because of the infirmity of disobedience; * but thou, O Virgin Theotokos, * hast through the Offspring of thy pregnancy * blossomed forth blessing upon the world. * Wherefore, we all magnify thee.

My strength and my song is Christ the Lord; do thou, O blessed Forerunner, entreat Him to strengthen me against the passions and all attacks of the noetic adversaries, and grant me to fulfill the divine will, that with love I may ever bless thee.

O divine Forerunner, thou hast appeared as a beautiful turtle-dove, and a sweetly-spoken swallow, announcing Christ the divine Spring; I beseech thee to entreat Him to deliver me from the soul-destroying wintry tempest of sin.

Having leaped for joy in thy mother's womb, thou hast announced Him Who shone forth from the Virgin; entreat Him to vanquish the destructive passions of my flesh, and to fill my heart with joy, that I may ever hymn thee, O divine Forerunner.

Theotokion: **O** tender-loving Theotokos, thou who hast given birth to the tender-loving God, entreat Him to deliver me from every evil and incline my heart to turn away from the pleasures of the flesh, that I may magnify thee with hymns as is meet.

Exapostilarion, in Tone III:

O blessed Forerunner, like the morning star * before the Sun of Glory * thou has shone forth in a god-pleasing manner * from the aged and barren one and an elderly priest, * announcing the Lord's birth from the Virgin * for the redemption of mankind; * wherefore O Baptist with love we hymn and adore, * thy most honored (name of the event.)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone III:

The prophets preached, the apostles taught, * the martyrs confessed, and we believe, * that thou art truly the Theotokos; ** wherefore, we glorify thine ineffable birthgiving.

On the Praises, these Stichera, in Tone IV:

Possessing boldness before God * and being the greatest of all men, * O Forerunner, ever entreat Him * on behalf of those who with faith call upon thee, * to grant us our petition for repentance ** that being saved we may ever hymn thee. (Twice)

O Forerunner, thou wast called a Prophet from thy mother's womb, * a preacher and Apostle from the bosom; * whereas I am given over to the demons * and am a slave to sin, * do thou as a powerful warrior, * deliver me from both, ** that I may proclaim thy speedy intercession.

Like a fan of the Divine Spirit, * blow away the chaff of passionate inclinations from my heart, * and like wheat gathered into the granary of God * gather the harvest of divine works from me * that I may become acceptable unto the Lord, O blessed one, ** enriched by thine intercession, O Baptist of Christ.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Unto John the Baptist it is befitting * to offer the sweet fragrance of incense and beautiful hymns, * for when he leapt in his mother's womb * he announced the commencement of our salvation, * and crying in the wilderness "Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" * he was revealed to be the Sovereign's warrior, * the Forerunner of grace who hath declared the Lamb ** and entreateth the Savior on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., Theotokion in Tone VIII:

O Sovereign Lady, Accept the supplications of thy servants, * and deliver us ** from all want and grief.

The Great Doxology, after which, if not a Resurrection service, we sing The Troparion for the feast (from above) or else:

The General Troparion (Also for the Beheading), in Tone II:

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise * but the Lord's testimony is enough for thee, O Forerunner, * for thou wast shown to be more wonderful than the Prophets * since thou wast granted to baptize in the running waters * Him Whom thou didst proclaim. * Then having endured great suffering for the Truth, * Thou didst rejoice to bring, even to those in hell * the good tidings that God Who had appeared in the flesh * takes away the sin of the world * and grants us the great mercy.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion.

The Dismissal:

AT LITURGY

Typika and Beatitudes.

Thou hast manifested every virtue, and every evil deed hast thou fervently loathed, revealing to mankind the blessed path of penitence, O most blessed one.
(Twice)

Thou didst appear unto all as the great Forerunner of the incarnate Word; wherefore I beseech thee to free me from the irrational influence of passions, and lead me to dispassion.

While still living in the flesh, O Forerunner, thou didst manifestly live the life of the bodiless ones, and now that thou, with them, approachest the Divinity, O god-bearing one, strengthen us by thine intercessions.

In the rapids thou didst stand baptizing the Lord, Who taketh away the sins of all mankind; cease not therefore, O Forerunner, to entreat Him to have mercy on our souls.

Thou wast revealed as a preacher of repentance O Forerunner; do thou heal my heart, polluted with pernicious sins.

O most blessed one, thou hast proclaimed unto those in the impassable wilderness the Word that came down to thee from above; wherefore every Church with never-silent voices blesses thee.

Theotokion: **T**he mysteries of the law were explained by thine awesome birth-giving, O Bride of God, and contemplating their fulfillment we honor thee, O Sovereign-Lady as is meet.

TROPARIA:

The General Troparion (Also for the Beheading), in Tone II:

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise * but the Lord's testimony is enough for thee, O Forerunner, * for thou wast shown to be more wonderful than the Prophets * since thou wast granted to baptize in the running waters * Him Whom thou didst proclaim. * Then having endured great suffering for the Truth, * Thou didst rejoice to bring, even to those in hell * the good tidings that God Who had appeared in the flesh * takes away the sin of the world * and grants us the great mercy.

Troparion of the Conception of the Forerunner in Tone IV:

Sing, O barren one that didst not bear, * for thou hast conceived the lamp of the Sun * Who is to enlighten the whole world suffering from blindness. * O Zacharias rejoice and shout: * "The Prophet of the Most High is to be born."

Troparion of the Synaxis of the Forerunner: in Tone II:

The memory of the just is celebrated ...,

Troparion for the Birth of the Forerunner: in Tone IV:

O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, * we honor thee lovingly but cannot extol thee worthily; * for by thy birth * thy mother's barrenness and thy Father's dumbness were unfettered; * and the Incarnation of the Son of God is proclaimed to the world.

Troparion for the 1st & 2nd Finding: in Tone IV:

The head of the Forerunner has risen from the earth * and sends forth healing rays of incorruption to all the faithful. * In heaven it is mustering a host of Angels, * and on earth it is assembling mankind * to ascribe glory to our God.

Troparion for the 3rd Finding: in Tone IV:

Christ has revealed thy head to us, O Prophet and Forerunner * as a divine treasure hidden in the earth. * We come with hymns to honor its discovery, * and praise the Savior Who saves us from corruption, * through Thine intercessions.

KONTAKIA:

The Kontakion for the Beheading of St John the Baptist, in Tone V:

The beheading of the glorious Forerunner * was a divine dispensation * that the coming of the Savior might be preached to those in hell. * Lament then, Herodias, * that thou didst demand a murder * despising the law of God and eternal life.

The Kontakion for the Conception of St John the Baptist, in Tone I:

Great Zacharias radiantly rejoices * together with Elizabeth: * she worthily conceived John the Forerunner whom the Angel announced with great gladness * and whom we honor as an initiate of grace.

The Kontakion for the Synaxis of St John the Baptist, in Tone VI:

Jordan turned back in fear at the sight of Thy bodily presence. * And having fulfilled his prophetic ministry, John drew back trembling. * The Angelic orders were amazed * to see Thee in the flesh baptized in the waters. * And all in darkness were illumined and praised Thee * Who had appeared and enlightened all creation.

The Kontakion for the Birth of St John the Baptist, in Tone III:

The formerly barren one today gives birth to the Forerunner of Christ * Who is the fulfillment of prophecy. * For the Prophet, Herald and Forerunner of the Word * submitted to Him Whom the Prophets foretold * by laying his hand on Him in the Jordan.

Kontakion for the 1st & 2nd Finding of the Glorious head of St. John the Baptist, in Tone II:

O Prophet of God and Forerunner of Grace, * having obtained thy head from the earth as a most sacred rose, * we ever receive healings; * for still as of old in the world * thou preachest repentance.

**The Kontakion for 3rd Finding of the Glorious head of
St. John the Baptist, in Tone VI:**

The shining pillar on earth, the Forerunner, lamp of the spiritual Sun, * has revealed his radiant, holy head to the world. * He sanctifies those who venerate it and who faithfully cry: * O wise Baptist of Christ, save us all.

But if there be no Kontakion, sing the following:

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

I the unworthy one, sin more than all mankind * nevertheless I bring unto thee a hymn, * O John the Forerunner who art truly greater of all the saints, * and since thou hath boldness before the Lord, * I implore thee to free me from all misfortunes that can be, * that I may sing unto thee: * Rejoice thou the proclaimer of grace.

Prokeimenon in Tone I: Thou art a priest forever, * after the order of Melchisedech.

Verse: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (13: 25-32)

Brethren: as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

Alleluia: Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name.

Verse: The Lord preserveth the souls of His saints, from the hand of the sinner shall He deliver them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (11:2-15)

At that time: John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Communion Verse: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.