

The 29th Day of August

⊕ The Beheading of the Forerunner and Baptist, John.

Small Vespers

—incomplete as of 8/2014

Great Vespers

After the Introductory Psalm, “Blessèd is the man...,” the first Kathisma.

At “Lord, I call...,” 8 stichera in Tone 6: *(the composition of John the monk)*

While celebrating the birthday of Herod the shameless, /
The oath he swore to the hateful dancer was fulfilled. /
And the severed head of the Forerunner /
Was borne, like food, upon a platter to them upon the couches. /
Oh, the dreadful feast! Oh, evil deed! Oh, murder! /
So we rightly honor and bless the Baptist ///
As the greatest one born of a woman. *(twice)*

For her dance, the disciple of the wicked devil /
Took thy head, O Forerunner, as her reward. /
Oh, the evil and bloody feast!
O Herod, thou spawn of lies, it would have been better to not have sworn, /
If by swearing thine oath had been turned to evil; /
It would have been better if thou had lied /
Rather than keeping thine oath
And severing the head of the Forerunner. /
So we rightly honor and bless the Baptist ///
As the greatest one born of a woman. *(twice)*

It was not fitting for thee, O Herod, /
For the sake of a satanic love and the burning fire of lust /
To condemn to death the man who accused thee of fornication. /
It was not fitting for thee to give that most precious head /
To that foul woman as her wage for dancing. /
How hast thou dared to commit such murder? /
How hast that hateful dancer bearing his head on a platter in the midst of the feast /
Not been consumed by fire?
So we rightly honor and bless the Baptist ///
As the greatest one born of a woman. *(twice)*

At times Herodias is mad with rage, /
 At times she is troubled. /
 Oh, the wicked dancing and the feast full of deceit! /
 The head of the Baptist is severed yet Herod is displeased! ///
 But through the prayers of the Forerunner, grant peace to our souls, O Lord. *(twice)*

Glory..., in the same Tone: *(repeating the first sticheron)*

While celebrating the birthday of Herod the shameless, /
 The oath he swore to the hateful dancer was fulfilled. /
 And the severed head of the Forerunner /
 Was borne, like food, upon a platter to them upon the couches. /
 Oh, the dreadful feast! Oh, evil deed! Oh, murder! /
 So we rightly honor and bless the Baptist ///
 As the greatest one born of a woman.

Now and ever..., Dogmatic Theotokion, in the same Tone:

Who will not bless thee, O Most Holy Virgin? /
 Who will not sing of thy most pure childbearing? /
 The Only-begotten Son shone timelessly from the Father /
 But from thee He was ineffably incarnate: /
 God by nature, yet man for our sake; /
 Not two persons, but One in two natures. /
 Entreat Him, O pure and all-blessèd Lady ///
 To have mercy on our souls.

Or the Dogmatic Theotokion in the Tone of the Week if a Resurrection service.

The Entrance and the Prokeimenon of the Day.

Three Readings:

The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah: (Composite 8, Chapters 40, 41, 45, 48, 54)

^{40:1}Thus saith the Lord: “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, ²“Speak, ye priests, to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation is accomplished, her iniquity is put away, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double that of her sins.” ³The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare

ye the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God. ⁹O thou that bringest glad tidings to Zion, get thee up upon the high mountain; lift up thy voice with strength, thou that bringest glad tidings to Jerusalem; lift it up, be not afraid! ^{41:17}I, the Lord God, the God of Israel, will hear and will not forsake

them. ¹⁸But I will open rivers on the mountains and fountains in the midst of plains; I will make the wilderness pools of water and watercourses of a thirsty land. ^{45:8}Let the heavens rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain righteousness; let the earth bring forth and bloom mercy and likewise bring forth righteousness. ^{48:20}Declare this with a voice of joy and let this be made

known, proclaim it to the ends of the earth; say, 'The Lord hath delivered His servant Jacob.' ²¹And if they thirst He shall lead them through the desert; He shall bring forth water out of the rock to them. ^{54:1}Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not, for more are the children of the desolate than of her that hath a husband."

The Reading from Prophecy of Malachi: (Composite 9, Chapters 3, 4)

^{3:1}**T**hus saith the Lord Almighty: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into His temple, ²but who shall with-stand at His appearing? For He cometh in as the fire of a furnace and as the herb of fullers. ³He shall sit to melt and purify as it were silver and as it were gold. ⁵And He will draw near to you in judgment, and He will be a swift witness against the witches and against the adulteresses and against them that swear falsely by My name and against them that keep back the hireling's wages and them that oppress the widow and afflict the fatherless and that wrest the judgment of the stranger and fear not Me," saith the Lord Almighty. ⁶"For I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed, ⁷but ye the sons of Jacob have not refrained from the iniquities

of your fathers. Ye have perverted My statutes and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you," saith the Lord Almighty ¹²...and all nations shall call you blessed. And they shall understand that I am the Lord, Who ¹⁸discerneth between the righteous and the wicked on that day, in which I shall act to spare those who love Me. ^{4:6}"Remember ye the law of My servant Moses accordingly as I charged him in Horeb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances. ^{4:4}And behold, I will send you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and glorious day of the Lord cometh, ⁵who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come and smite the earth grievously," *saith the Lord Almighty, God, the Holy One of Israel.*

The Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon: (Composite 3, Chapters 4, 5)

The righteous man, though he die early yet shall he be at rest. ¹⁶Thus the righteous that is dead shall condemn the ungodly which are living, ¹⁷for they shall see the end of the wise, and shall not

understand what God in His counsel hath decreed for him, ¹⁹For He shall rend them, and cast them down headlong, that they shall be speechless; and He shall shake them from the foundations,

and they shall be utterly laid waste and be in sorrow, and their memorial shall perish. ²⁰And when they cast up the account of their sins they shall come with fear, and their own iniquities shall convict them to their face. ^{5:1-7} Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors. ²When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. ³And they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit shall say within themselves, "This was he, whom

we held at one time in derision, and a proverb of reproach; ⁴we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honor: ⁵how he is numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! ⁶Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. ⁷We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction: yea, we have gone through deserts, where there lay no way; but the way of the Lord, we have not known.

At the Litya, these stichera, in Tone 1: To the usual melody, (the composition of Patriarch Germanus)

What shall we call thee, O Prophet? /

An angel, an apostle, or a martyr? /

Angel, for thy life was lived as one of the bodiless ones; /

Apostle, for thou hast taught the nations; /

Martyr, for thou wast beheaded for the sake of Christ. ///

Pray Him that our souls may be granted great mercy.

We celebrate today the memory of the severing of thy head, O Forerunnner. /

Once it poured thy blood upon the platter ///

Now it pours forth healing upon the ends of the earth.

Today the iniquitous mother of murder /

Moved her wanton daughter to do evil /

Against the divinely-chosen and greatest of all the prophets. /

For while the hateful Herod was feasting on the day of his birth /

She contrived, by the oath given her daughter as she was dancing, /

To demand the honorable and precious head of the herald of God /

And mad with lust, he fulfilled his promise to reward her shamelessness. /

Yet the initiate of the mysteries of Christ did not cease to denounce their union, /

And after death, he continued to reprove them loudly, saying: /

It becomes thee not to commit adultery with the wife of Philip, thy brother. /

Oh, birthday, the occasion for the slaying of a prophet! /

Oh, thou banquet full of blood! /
But let us, with reverent minds and keeping our hearts whiter than snow /
Rejoice and keep festival today, /
And let us ask the Forerunner to entreat the Trinity ///
That we be delivered from the disgrace of passions and that our souls may be saved.

And 3 stichera, in Tone 4: *(not translated at this time)*

Glory..., in Tone 5: *(The composition of John the monk)*

Intending to escape the reproaches for his sinful acts /
Herod gave thy head to the lawless woman, O Forerunner of Christ. /
For the wretch knew not that in carrying it about upon the platter /
He was only rebuking himself. /
But do thou, as the teacher of purity and redeeming guide to repentance, O Baptist, ///
Intercede with Christ that we be delivered from the disgrace of passions.

Now and ever..., Theotokion in the same Tone:

In the Red Sea of old, /
A type of the Virgin Bride was prefigured; /
There Moses divided the waters, /
Here Gabriel assisted in the miracle; /
There Israel crossed the sea without getting wet, /
Here the Virgin gave birth to Christ without seed. /
After Israel's passage, the sea remained impassable; /
After Emmanuel's birth, the Virgin remained a virgin. /
O ever-existing God, who appeared as man; ///
O Lord, have mercy on us!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone 2: *To the usual melody.*

O John the Baptist, thou preacher of repentance, /
When thy head was severed it hallowed the earth /
Because thou didst make the Law of God plain to the faithful /
And didst destroy iniquity. /
As thou standest before the heavenly throne of Christ the King, ///
Entreat Him to have mercy on our souls.

Verse: The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

O most holy John, /
Thou wast beheaded for the sake of the law: /

With the boldness of the pure didst thou expose the evil doings of the king. /
Therefore, the angelic hosts marvel and the choirs of apostles and martyrs
glorify thee. /

And we, the faithful also honor thy memory on this day every year ///
Glorifying the Holy Trinity that has crowned thee, O blessed Forerunner!

Verse: The righteous one shall rejoice in the Lord and shall set his hope on Him.

O thou prophet among the prophets! /
Thou, who art greater than all the prophets, /
Dedicated from thy mother's womb to the service of the Lord, /
Today art thou beheaded by the wicked king, /
And openly accusing, both before after the severing of thy head /
The shameless girl and her sinful dancing /
Thou didst put to shame the legions of sin. /
Therefore, we cry aloud: O John the Baptist /
Since thou hast the boldness so to do, ///
Fervently pray on behalf of our souls.

Glory..., in Tone 8:

O Forerunner of the Savior, /
Thou didst reprove the king /
Commanding him not to do evil. /
And enticed by the dancing of the wicked girl /
Herod was moved to behead thee. /
For this, thy name is praised from the rising of the sun to its setting.
And since thou hast the boldness so to do, ///
Fervently pray on behalf of our souls.

Now and ever..., Theotokion, in the same Tone.

O Virgin unwedded, O Mother of God on high /
Thou hast ineffably conceived God in the flesh /
And being beyond reproach, thou hast granted us all purification of our transgressions. /
Accept the supplications of thy servants /
And do thou, who now receives our entreaties ///
Pray for us all to be saved.

The Blessing of the Loaves and,

The Troparion of the Forerunner, in Tone 2:

The memory of the just is celebrated with hymns of praise, /

BEHEADING OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

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 Him whom thou didst proclaim. /
Then having endured great suffering for the Truth, /
Thou didst rejoice to bring even to those in Hades the good tidings: /
That God who hath appeared in the flesh takes away the sin of the world, ///
And grants us great mercy. (twice)

Glory..., now and ever..., Theotokion, “Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos....”

Matins

— incomplete as of 8/2014

At “God is the Lord...,” the Troparion of the Forerunner (twice), Glory..., now and ever, Resurrectional Theotokion, Tone 2:

Beyond all thought and exceedingly glorious /
Are thy mysteries, O Mother of God; /
Sealed in purity and preserved in virginity /
Thou art truly acknowledged as the Mother who gave birth to the true God ///
Supplicate Him to save our souls.

Polyeley and Magnification:

We magnify thee, // O John, Baptist of the Savior, / and we venerate thine hon'able beheading.

Selected Psalm verses:

Blessèd is the man who fears the Lord.
Who greatly delights in his commandments.
The righteous one shall rejoice in the Lord and shall set his hope on Him.

After the Sixth Ode, The Kontakion of the Forerunner, in Tone 5:

The beheading of the glorious Forerunner /
Was by divine providence; /
That the coming of the Savior might be proclaimed to those in hell. /
Let Herodias, therefore, mourn — who sought unlawful murder, /
For she has not affected the Law of God, /
Nor has she sought eternal life, ///
Preferring instead the worldly one.

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