

The 24th Day of February

✠ The First and Second Finding of the Precious Head of the Forerunner and Baptist, John.

Vespers

Note: If this be outside of the Great Fast, then in the evening we sing: “Blessèd is the man...,” the first Kathisma. During the Great Fast, we sing the usual Kathisma and the service to the Forerunner with the Triodion.

At “Lord, I call...,” 6 stichera, in Tone 5: *To the melody, “Rejoice....”*

Rejoice, O sacred and light-bearing head /
Venerated by the angels, /
Which of old was severed by the sword; /
Which cut down the shame of impurity with sharp reproofs. /
Wellspring of miracles quenching the thirst of the faithful; /
Which proclaimed the salvific coming of the Savior. /
And of old, perceived the coming of the Spirit /
Which took up His abode in thee; /
Who now advocates the grace of the covenants, both Old and New; ///
Implore Christ that He grants our souls great mercy. *(twice)*

The head of the Forerunner /
Which was once concealed in an earthen vessel /
Hath clearly appeared, from the bosom of the earth /
Pouring forth streams of miracles: /
For He whose head was washed in the waters /
Now covers the chambers of the firmament with wáters /
And rains dówn divine remission upon mankind; /
Wherefore, let us bless it as being truly glorious /
And joyfully celebrate its uncovering ///
Entreating Christ that He grant our souls great mercy. *(twice)*

The head which proclaimed that the Lamb of God /
Was coming to us in the flesh; /
And proclaimed to all in divine words the saving paths of repentance; /
And once denounced the transgression of Herod, /
For which cause it was severed from the body /
And for a time endured concealment in the earth, /
Hath shone forth upon us like the radiant sun, crying out:

Repent, ye now and submit yourselves with a contrite spirit ///
To Christ who grants the world great mercy. (twice)

Glory..., in Tone 6:

Thy divinely preserved head, O Forerunner, /
Which hath shone forth from the bosom of the earth; /
Is a treasury of divine gifts; /
For we who accept and venerate it with faith, /
Are enriched with the most wondrous miracles, /
And the forgiveness of our transgressions, ///
O Baptist of Christ our Savior.

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)

IS. 40:1 **T**hus 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)

MAL.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 withstand 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 Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone 2: To the melody, “When from the tree...”

O come all ye faithful /
 And let us honor today /
 The precious head of the Baptist, /
 Which was severed from the body, /
 In days of old by the adulterer Herod, /
 And the plotting and deceitful Herodias. /
 Let us honor it with faith and love, /
 And let us celebrate its uncovering with song ///
 For from it flow streams of grace and healing.

Verse: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Like gold from mine, so from the earth /
 Hath the head of the Forerunner shone forth to us; /
 Though it was found in an earthen vessel /
 It shines forth brightly exposing Herod’s adultery and murder; /
 And it brightly enlightens and illuminates our minds. /
 And venerating it, O ye faithful, /
 Let us honor it today with song ///
 For through this our prayers are heard by the Lord.

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

Today the head of the Forerunner /
 Which was buried in an earthen vessel, /

Like a divine treasure is uncovered for the benefit of all the world, /
Pouring forth streams of healing, curing sicknesses and enlightening souls; ///
Let us reverently sing praises as we receive its grace and consolation.

Glory..., in Tone 2:

As a divine shrine of divine reasoning /
Hast thy head shone forth, O all-praised John; /
Thou didst appear from the secret places of the earth as from thy mother's womb /
Clearly foreseeing the mystery of the ineffable Trinity /
And perfuming the world with the myrrh of sanctification /
Mystically preaching the way of repentance ///
Entreating the Savior on behalf of all our souls.

Now and ever..., Theotokion, in Tone 6:

Christ, the Maker, Redeemer, and Lord proceeded from thy womb /
O all-pure Virgin, /
And putting on my nature, set man free from the ancestral curse. /
So we sing to thee without ceasing, O all-pure Virgin, as Mother of God /
With the angelic salutation: /
Rejoice, O Sovereign Lady ///
Protection, refuge, and salvation of our souls.

The Troparion of the Forerunner, in Tone 4:

The head of the Forerunner, /
Having risen from the earth, /
Sends forth rays of incorruption /
Which heal the faithful; /
On high it gathers a multitude of angels /
And below it invites the race of men ///
To send up glory with one voice to Christ God.

Matins

— incomplete as of 2/2013

At “God is the Lord...,” the Troparion of the Forerunner (*twice*), Glory..., now and ever... Theotokion in the Tone of the Week.

The Kontakion of the Forerunner, in Tone 2: *To the melody, “Seeking the highest...”*

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○ Prophet of God and Forerunner of Grace, /
Within the earth we have discovered thy head /
A rose of great holiness /
From which healing always comes to us /
As thou hast done in times of old ///
So now also dost thou preach repentance to the world.

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