

## The 24<sup>th</sup> Day of June

### ⊕ The Nativity of the Forerunner and Baptist, John.

#### Small Vespers

**At “Lord, I call...,” 4 stichera in Tone 4: *To the melody, “Called from on high....”***

**B**orn from the womb of a barren woman /  
Is he who loosed the barrenness of our hearts. /  
The glorious forerunner of the coming of Christ /  
Hath given our barren souls the word in truth and faith. /  
The clear Voice of the Word, the loud-sounding herald of repentance, /  
Whose birth we celebrate with love and joy ///  
Is plainly acknowledged to be the divine mediator between the covenants, Old and  
New. *(twice)*

**N**ow the fatted calf of abstinence /  
Is born from barren parents, /  
Showing us the young Lamb born of a Virgin /  
And who taketh away the sin of the world: /  
The dove, the lover of the wilderness, has clearly appeared, /  
And making known the divine spring whereby the cruel winter of ungodliness hath  
ceased; /  
And John, the joyful friend of the Bridegroom, has come, ///  
Interceding with Him that our souls may be saved.

**O** thou, who wast born in accordance to the promise /  
Made when thy father was praying in the temple /  
And the great Archangel of God, announced thy nativity, /  
Then, as it is written, /  
Gabriel brought upon him, for his unbelief, the sentence of mute silence /  
Which would last until thy birth; /  
And when thou wast born thou didst free the silent tongue of thy father ///  
While interceding with Christ that our souls may be saved.

**Glory..., in Tone 8: *To the usual melody***

**T**he sweetest aroma and fragrance is fitting for John, /  
Also fitting for the Baptist are beautiful songs of praise, /  
For both as the soldier of the King and the forerunner of grace /  
He proclaimed the beginning of our salvation when he leapt in his mother's womb /  
And proclaimed “Repent!” in the wilderness /

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Thus, he foretold the Lamb and Savior ///  
Ever interceding with Him that our souls may be saved.

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

Accept, O Sovereign Lady /  
The prayers of us, thy servants, ///  
And deliver us from every danger and necessity.

**At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone 2: *To the melody, "O House of Ephratha...."***

**M**ake bright thy tongue, O Zachariah, and say: ///  
The child is a prophet of the Most High and the Forerunner of God the Word!

*Verse:* Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people.

**T**hou wast sanctified, O John, from thy mother's womb, ///  
For no one greater than thee hath ever arisen among mortal men.

*Verse:* And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High.

**T**hou hast loosed the tongue of thy father, O blessed one /  
As thou hast loosed the barrenness of thy mother's womb, ///  
By being born of divine grace.

**Glory..., now and ever..., in Tone 8:**

**B**ehold, Elizabeth speaks to the Virgin Mary: /  
"Why is the Mother of my Lord come to me? /  
Thou dost carry the King and I, the soldier; /  
Thou the Law-giver, and I, the enactor of the Law; ///  
Thou, the Word, and I, His Voice proclaiming the kingdom of heaven!"

**The Troparion of the Forerunner, in Tone 4:**

**O** Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, /  
Although we cannot praise thee worthily /  
We honor thee in love at thy nativity, /  
For by it thou didst end the silence and break the barrenness ///  
Preaching to the world the incarnation of the Son of God.

**Glory..., now and ever..., Theotokion, in the same Tone:**

**T**he mystery of all eternity /  
Unknown even by angels /

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Through thee is revealed on earth, O Mother of God, /  
God incarnate by union without confusion. /  
For our sake He voluntarily endured the Cross, /  
By it He resurrected the first-created Adam ///  
And saved our souls from death.

### Great Vespers

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

**At “Lord, I call...,” 8 stichera in Tone 4:** *To the usual melody, (by John, the monk of Damascus)*

**W**hen John was born, he loosed the silence of his father, /  
For it was not fitting for Zachariah to stay silent when the Voice had come; /  
But as his tongue was bound because he would not believe, /  
So, when the Baptist appeared he freed his father /  
And revealing himself he preached the good tidings to men. /  
Born was the Voice of the Word and the Forerunnner of Light ///  
Who intercedes for our souls. *(twice)*

**T**oday as the Voice of the Word releases the voice of his father, /  
Which was restrained because of his unbelief /  
And reveals the blessed prosperity of the Church /  
By loosing his mother’s bonds of barrenness. /  
The Candlestick of the Light goes forth before the Sun of Righteousness /  
Announcing the splendor of His coming ///  
For the renewal of all and the salvation of our souls.

*By Anatolius:*

**W**hen the Word of God was to be born of the Virgin /  
His messenger and the foremost of the prophets, /  
The greatest man to be ever born, /  
Sprang forth from the barren loins of an agèd woman, /  
Heralding the Word, the all-Glorious Beginning of things divine, /  
The Offspring beyond all time conceived without seed. ///  
O Thou who workest wonders for our solvation, glory to Thee!

*(The composition of Andrew of Crete:)*

**T**oday the great forerunner and the greatest of all the prophets /  
Appears from the fruitless womb of Elizabeth. /  
None is like unto him, nor ever shall be, /

For the exceedingly bright Light followed the lamp of the Forerunner; /  
 The Word followed the Voice, the Bridegroom followed the attendant of the bride /  
 Who made the multitude ready for the Lord /  
 Cleansing them beforehand through water in the presence of the Spirit. /  
 He is the son of Zachariah, he is the great dweller of the wilderness /  
 He is the preacher of repentance and the cleanser of sins. /  
 He it is who announced to those in Hades the good news of the Resurrection from  
 dead, ///  
 And he intercedes for our souls.

**T**hou, O John, wast revealed as a prophet /  
 And the Forerunner of Christ from thy mother's womb /  
 Leaping up, rejoicing, when thou didst behold the Queen /  
 Bearing the Timeless One, begotten without mother of the Father  
 Come to her handmaiden who conceived thee in a barren womb, /  
 According to the promise made to the elder Zachariah. ///  
 Let us entreat John that he may intercede for our souls.

**O** all-glorious wonder! /  
 Zachariah, who was not persuaded by the word of the angel /  
 When told that Elizabeth should conceive and bear a child, did ask: /  
 “How shall she give birth, for she is barren and I have grown old?” /  
 And for this unbelief, he was condemned to silence. /  
 Yet today he beholds the promised birth; /  
 He is loosed from his silence, he rejoices and he cries aloud: /  
 Blessèd is the Lord God of Israel, who visited and redeemed His people, ///  
 Granting the world great mercy!

**O** John worthy of all praise, /  
 Thou art the apostle to the whole world, announced by Gabriel, /  
 Thou art the offspring of a barren woman, O fair child of the wilderness, /  
 And the true friend of Christ the Bridegroom. ///  
 Entreat Him that He may have mercy on our souls.

**Glory..., in Tone 6: (*The composition of Byzantius*)**

**T**oday is John, the candlestick of the Light, /  
 Like a shining star, /  
 Preparing the way for the coming of God the Word. /  
 Today Zachariah's tongue, silenced by the angel, is loosed; /  
 For it was fitting that the father of the Voice /  
 Should be silent when John was born of a barren womb ///  
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To announce with great boldness the good tidings of the redemption of all the world!

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

**E**lizabeth conceives the forerunner of grace /  
And the Virgin conceives the Lord of Glory , /  
Both mothers embrace each other with a kiss, /  
And the babe John leaps up within his mother's womb. /  
For the servant praises his Master. /  
And the mother of the Forerunner, marveling, cries aloud: /  
“Why is this granted to me, that the Mother of the Lord should come to me?” ///  
That He might save the despairing people, in that He hath great mercy.

*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 Genesis: (Composite 10: Gen. 17:15-17, 19; 18:11-14; 21:1-8)**

<sup>17:15</sup>**A**nd God said unto Abraham, “As for Sarai thy wife, her name shall not be called Sarai: Sarah shall her name be. <sup>16</sup>And I will bless her, and give thee a son of her; yea, I will bless him, and he shall become nations, and kings of nations shall be of him.” <sup>17</sup>And Abraham fell upon his face and laughed and spoke in his heart, saying, “Shall there be a son unto him that is a hundred years old, and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old bear?” <sup>19</sup>And God said unto Abraham, “Yea, behold, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to him and to his seed after him. <sup>18:11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well stricken in days, and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. <sup>12</sup>And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, “It is not yet come to pass with me until

now, and my Lord is old.” <sup>13</sup>And the Lord said unto Abraham, “Wherefore is it that Sarah did laugh in herself, saying, ‘Shall I then surely bear? But I am grown old.’ <sup>14</sup>Shall anything be impossible with God? At this time to the hour will I return unto thee, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>21:1</sup>And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did unto Sarah as He had spoken. <sup>2</sup>And she conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the set time according as the Lord had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him. <sup>6</sup>And Sarah said, “The Lord hath made laughter for me, for whosoever shall hear will rejoice with

me.” <sup>7</sup>And she said, “Who shall say unto Abraham that Sarah giveth a child suck? For I have borne a son in mine old age.”

<sup>8</sup>And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that Isaac his son was weaned.

### **The Reading from Judges: (Composite 11, Judges 13:2-8, 13-14, 17-18, 21)**

<sup>13:2</sup> **I**n those days there was a man of the tribe of Dan, and his name was Manoah. And his wife was barren and bore not. <sup>3</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman and said unto her, “Behold, thou art barren and hast not borne, yet thou shalt conceive a son. <sup>4</sup>Now therefore beware, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing, <sup>5</sup>for lo, thou art with child and shalt bring forth a son. And no razor shall come on his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite unto God from the womb, and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” <sup>6</sup>And the woman went in and spoke unto her husband, saying, “A man of God came unto me, and his appearance was as of an angel of God, very terrible. And I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name, <sup>7</sup>and he said unto me, ‘Behold, thou art with child and shalt bring forth a son. And now drink no wine nor strong drink neither eat any unclean

thing, for the child shall be holy to God from the womb to the day of his death.” <sup>8</sup>And Manoah prayed unto the Lord and said, “I pray Thee, O Lord Adonai, the man of God which thou didst send, let him come now once more unto us and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.” <sup>13</sup>And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, “Of all things concerning which I spoke unto the woman she shall beware. <sup>14</sup>She shall eat of nothing that cometh of the vine that yieldeth wine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink nor eat anything unclean; all things that I have commanded her she shall observe.” <sup>17</sup>And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, “What is thy name, that when thy word cometh to pass we may glorify thee?” <sup>18</sup>And the angel of the Lord said unto him, “Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?” <sup>21</sup>And the angel appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife.

### **The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah: (Comp. 8, Chapters 40, 41, 45, 48, 54)**

<sup>40:1</sup> **T**hus saith the Lord: “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, <sup>2</sup>“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.” <sup>3</sup>The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare ye

the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God. <sup>9</sup>O thou that bringest glad tidings to Sion, 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! <sup>41:17</sup>I, the Lord God, the God of Israel, will hear and will not forsake them. <sup>18</sup>But I will open rivers on the

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mountains and fountains in the midst of plains; I will make the wilderness pools of water and watercourses of a thirsty land. <sup>45:8</sup>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. <sup>48:20</sup>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.' <sup>21</sup>And if they thirst He shall lead them through the desert; He shall bring forth water out of the rock to them. <sup>54:1</sup>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."

### **At the Litya, these stichera, in Tone 1: *To the usual melody***

**L**et the mountains put forth their sweetness and let them dance with joy: /  
For the Forerunner of the Lord wishing to dwelt with us /  
Has loosed the muteness of his father and is born of Elizabeth /  
And, we cry aloud to him: ///  
Intercede with the Lord, O Baptist of Christ, that He may save our souls.

**O** Voice, announcing divine tidings, /  
O candlestick of the Light, /  
O Forerunner of the Lord and foremost among the prophets /  
Bearing witness to Christ the Lord, /  
In thy supplications for the world ///  
Be thou ever mindful of thy flock so that we may be saved!

**O** thou Prophet and Forerunner John, /  
Thou herald of the Word and Lamb of God; /  
Thou didst prophecy of things to come /  
And hast proclaimed to the ends of the earth: ///  
Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world and grants us all great mercy!

### **Glory..., in Tone 5: *(The composition of Andrew of Crete)***

**T**oday Elizabeth gives birth to the last of the prophets /  
And the first of the apostles. /  
The earthly angel and the heavenly man, /  
The Voice of the Word, the soldier and Forerunner of Christ, /  
Who leapt in the womb and pre-announced the advent of the Sun of Righteousness. /  
And she rejoices, and Zachariah, in his old age, is filled with wonder /  
Casting aside the bond of silence laid upon him, /  
And as the father of the Voice, he most clearly prophesies: /  
"Thou, my child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High /



And shalt go before Him to prepare His ways.” /  
 Therefore, O Angel, Prophet, Apostle, Soldier, Forerunner, and Baptizer, /  
 Preacher, and Teacher of repentance, who serves as Voice of the Light and  
 the Word, ///  
 Intercede without ceasing for us who celebrate thy memory with faith.

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

**O** most precious Virgin, /  
 Thou art the temple and the gate, /  
 The palace and the throne of the King. /  
 Christ the Lord, who is my Redeemer, /  
 Appeared through thee to those asleep in darkness /  
 Since He, the Sun of Righteousness, wished to give light to the work of His hands, /  
 Fashioned in His own image. /  
 As thou hast the boldness of a mother towards thy Son, /  
 We entreat thee, O all-praised Lady, ///  
 Beseech Him to save our souls.

**Or, this Theotokion in the same Tone: (Greek usage)**

**We** bless, thee, O Virgin, Mother of God, /  
 And worthily we glorify thee, /  
 O city that cannot be shaken and unassailable wall, ///  
 Invincible protectress and refuge for our souls.

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

**L**et us praise John the Glorious with psalms and spiritual songs /  
 As the greatest prophet among all the prophets and the dweller in the wilderness, /  
 Who sprang from barrenness and is greater than any man born of a woman, /  
 And to him let us cry aloud: /  
 O baptizer and forerunner of the Word, /  
 As thou hast great boldness before Him because of thine hon'orable nativity, ///  
 Entreat Christ that He may grant the world peace and great mercy to our souls.

**Verse:** Blessèd be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people.

**B**ehold, the Voice of the grace of Christ is come; /  
 The herald of the Sun, the Forerunner John. /  
 He is born from a barren and childless womb according to the promise, /  
 Rejoice, O ye people! For he is come to prepare the way of salvation for us! /  
 Leaping with joy in his mother's womb /



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He worshipped the Lamb that takest away the sin of the world ///  
And grants us His great mercy.

*Verse:* And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High.

**H**e who was sanctified from his mother's womb /  
And was the fulfilment of the prophecy, /  
Is born today of a barren woman /  
Clearly proclaiming the coming of the Lord: ///  
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

**Glory..., in Tone 8:** (*The composition of Cassia, the nun*)

**T**oday by the birth of John, the greatest of the prophets, /  
The saying of Isaiah the prophet is fulfilled: /  
“For, behold,” he said, “I shall send mine angel before Thy face to prepare Thy way!” /  
Then running before, the soldier of the heavenly King made straight the paths of our  
God. /  
Truly he was a man by nature and an angel by his life /  
For having embraced absolute purity and chastity, /  
He surpassed his nature by his passion for the virtues. ///  
Emulating him, let us entreat him to intercede before Christ that our souls may be  
saved.

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

**B**ehold, Elizabeth speaks to the Virgin Mary: /  
“Why is the Mother of my Lord come to me? /  
Thou dost carry the King and I, the soldier; /  
Thou the Law-giver, and I, the enactor of the Law; ///  
Thou, the Word, and I, the His Voice proclaiming the kingdom of heaven!”

**The Blessing of the Loaves and the Troparion of the Forerunner, in Tone 4:**

**O** prophet and forerunner of the coming of Christ, /  
Although we cannot praise thee worthily /  
We honor thee in love at thy nativity, /  
For by it thou didst end the silence and break the barrenness ///  
Preaching to the world the incarnation of the Son of God. (*twice*)

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

## Matins

**At “God is the Lord...,” the Troparion of the Forerunner (*twice*), Glory..., now**

and ever, **Theotokion, Tone 4:**

**T**he mystery of all eternity /  
 Unknown even by angels /  
 Through thee is revealed on earth, O Mother of God, /  
 God incarnate by union without confusion. /  
 For our sake He voluntarily endured the Cross, /  
 By it He resurrected the first-created Adam ///  
 And saved our souls from death.

**After the 1<sup>st</sup> Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 4: *To the melody, "Joseph was amazed...."***

**N**ow the fruit of Zachariah, /  
 The adornment of the desert, /  
 And the achievement of the prophets /  
 Hath blossomed forth, /  
 Bringing spiritual joy to the hearts of the faithful! /  
 He is the Forerunner of Christ, the true witness of His coming. /  
 Therefore, let us sing to the Baptist with one accord, this spiritual song: ///  
 O Prophet and Herald of the Truth, intercede with the Lord that we may be saved. *(twice)*

**Glory..., now and ever..., Theotokion:**

**J**oseph was amazed, O Theotokos, /  
 When he beheld thy seedless conception /  
 Which, like the rain upon the fleece, the rod of Aaron that budded forth /  
 And the burning bush that was not consumed, /  
 Was beyond all natural understanding. /  
 And thy betrothed protector witnessed and cried ot to the priests: ///  
 The Virgin gives birth and after childbirth remains a virgin!

**After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 8: *To the melody, "Of Wisdom...."***

**O** John, the all-praised and most glorious of all the prophets, /  
 Thou art most wondrously born today /  
 As the true herald of the coming of Christ. /  
 And, as the Voice of the Word, thou dost bid us all to "repent, /  
 For the kingdom of Christ is at hand." /  
 Therefore, thou makest ready the way of the Lord /  
 And art revealed to the ends of the earth as the forerunner of Grace. /  
 O Baptist and Apostle of Christ God, ///  
 Intercede, that He may grant the remission of sins to those who lovingly celebrate thy

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holy memory! *(twice)*

### **Glory..., now and ever... Theotokion:**

**O** All-holy Virgin, Mother of Christ God, /  
Heal thou the cruel passions of my soul, /  
And grant me the forgiveness of my sins /  
Which I have so foolishly committed, wretched as I am, /  
Wounding both my body and my soul, /  
Woe is me! What shall I do? /  
In the hour when the angels part my soul from my mis'rable flesh? /  
Be then, O Lady, my firm helper and most fervent intercessor, ///  
For I, thy servant, have placed my hope in thee.

### **Polyeley and Magnification:**

**We** magnify thee, // O Forerunner of the Savior, John, // and we honor thy most-glorious nativity from barrenness.

### *Selected Psalm verses:*

**B**lessèd be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people.  
**A**nd hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.

### **After the Polyeley, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 8: *To the melody "That which was commanded...."***

**R**ejoice, O father Zachariah! /  
And mother Elizabeth, be glad, /  
For today thou givest birth to a prophet, /  
The Forerunner summoned according to a promise by God. /  
The barren mother gives milk to the Baptist /  
And Zachariah rejoices and says to him: /  
My tongue is loosed by thy coming into the world, ///  
O candlestick of light, thou truly strange and glorious wonder! *(twice)*

### **Glory..., now and ever... Theotokion:**

**We** thank thee, O pure Theotokos, full of grace /  
And bowing down, we magnify thee, /  
And ceaselessly we praise thy birthgiving, /  
Crying: Save us in thy goodness, O merciful Lady, /  
And rescue us from the dread demons awaiting our trial, ///  
That we, thy servants, may not be put to shame.

**1<sup>st</sup> Antiphon of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tone (The Song of Ascents), “From my Youth....”**

**Prokeimenon, in Tone 4:** And thou, child, / shall be called the prophet of the Most High. *Verse:* Blessèd be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people.

**Let every breath praise the Lord! ...**

**Gospel: (3) Luke 1:24-25, 57-69, 76, 80**

**After Psalm 50 (51), in Tone 6:**

**Glory...,**

**Through the prayers of the Forerunner, / O merciful Lord, / cleanse me from the multitude of my transgressions..., etc.**

**Then, the Post-Gospel sticheron, of the Forerunner, Tone 2: (from the Aposticha)**

**He who was sanctified from his mother’s womb /  
And was the fulfilment of the prophecy, /  
Is born today of a barren woman /  
Clearly proclaiming the coming of the Lord: /  
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”**

## **Two Canons**

**The First Canon of the Saint, with 8 Troparia including the Irmos, in Tone 4,**  
*the composition of John, the monk of Damascus.*

### **Ode 1**

***Irmos:** O Thou who wast born of the Virgin, I pray Thee, drown in the depths of dispassion the three parts of my soul; that with the mortification of my body, as with a timbrel, I may sing a song of victory.*

***Refrain:** Holy great John, forerunner of the Lord, pray to God for us!*

**As** a magnificent dawn precedes the rising sun, so the offspring of barren parents clearly proclaims the Virgin’s giving birth and makes the light of piety and grace shine to the ends of the earth.

**Truly** thou shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Christ, ‘Thou shalt go to prepare the way for the Creator,’ said Zachariah, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to thee, his son, O all-praised John!

**Hearing** the divine message of Gabriel, Zachariah did not believe and was sentenced to

silence. But he is suddenly loosed from his muteness, for John, the Forerunner and Voice of the Word was born.

*Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos, save us!*

*Theotokion: O* most pure Theotokos, thou city of the King of all, pure and divine habitation well pleasing to God, and precious treasure: preserve thine inheritance, which ever praises thee and honors thy childbirth with faith.

**The Second Canon of the Saint<sup>1</sup>, with 6 Troparia including the Irmos, in Tone 4,**  
*the composition of Andrew,*

*Irmos: Let us sing to our Deliverer and our God, who of old guided Israel and fed them in the wilderness as they fled the slavery of Pharaoh and fed them in the wilderness, for He hath been glorified.*

**T**he silence of the father is a symbol of the mysteries of the Scripture of the Law; for when grace arrived Moses fell silent, for it was fitting that all fall silent in the presence of the treasure of wisdom which was revealed.

**W**hile the priest was censuring in the temple an angel stood high before him and cried out: “I am come to give thee news of a wondrous birth, O elder! For from thy barren wife thou shalt receive a son, the baptizer of Christ.

**W**hy art thou amazed, O elder? Why standest thou believing not the things he tells thee? For he is an angel even though he is in the form of a man. Be thou therefore mute until the time of the birth of the Voice of the Word!

**H**e who made the silence of Zachariah a symbol of the written law hath revealed me to be the preacher of repentance as I cry: It is right that the Voice preaching in the wilderness be the son of a barren woman!

**G**lory...,

**O** the glorious words of the Forerunner of Christ! He who even before being wrapped in his own swaddling clothes, recognized Him who has loosed our bonds and sanctified the nations, is born today of Elizabeth and loosens the tongue of his father.

**N**ow and ever...,

*Theotokion: T*hou art the habitation of God and the noetic ladder by which God descended to the earth and, taking form, led our nature up to heaven. Therefore, we praise thee as the mediatrix of our salvation!

*Katavasia: I shall open my mouth....*

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<sup>1</sup> Greek text differs throughout.

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### Ode 3

#### First Canon of the Saint

*Irmos:* We do not glory in wisdom nor strength and riches, but in Thee, O Christ, Thou Wisdom in Person of God the Father; for none is holy save Thee, who lovest mankind.

The birth of the Master is brought to pass from the Virgin, while His beloved servant comes from an aged and barren womb; yet, wonder of wonders, rightly he goeth before Him.

The elderly and barren woman kisses the Virgin, truly recognizing her birthgiving, for the bond of her barrenness hath been loosed by the Will of God.

*Theotokion:* O thou who hast brought forth God incarnate; strengthen me who is assailed by the passions, for I have none other helper than thee, O all-pure Lady!

#### Second Canon of the Saint

*Irmos:* O Lord who didst establish the thunder and the wind, make me steadfast that I may worthily praise Thee, for none is as holy as Thee, O Lord!

Elizabeth, who before was barren, prefigured Thy Church of the Gentiles, O Christ, for by wondrously giving birth, she showed that which once was dry and barren now to be fertile and bountiful.

Making straight the ways of the Lord and preparing His path, O prophet and herald of Christ, thou didst show mankind the fruits of repentance and teach them the Way of life.

Elizabeth holds thee in her aged arms as she dances, O Forerunner, and she cries aloud to God in praise: None is as holy as Thee, O Lord!

O All-Holy Mother of God, thou didst loose the grief of our first parents, giving birth to the Creator of life and Deliverer for us. Earnestly entreat thou Him, that we, thy flock may be saved!

*Katavasia.*

**After the Third Ode, the Sessional Hymn, Tone 8:** *To the melody "That which was commanded...."*

The Forerunner and the Voice of the Word /  
Loosed the voice of Zachariah by his birth /  
Revealing to all the barrenness of the Law. /  
And he cried: Repent, ye who are on the earth, for lo! Jesus is come /  
Desiring to deliver mankind from the ancient curse /

And illumine them with baptism. ///  
Truly, this is an all-glorious wonder! <sup>2</sup>

**Glory..., in Tone 4: *To the melody, “Joseph was amazed....”***

**T**he son of Zachariah hath arisen like the sun /  
Shining forth from the womb of Elizabeth /  
Loosing the muteness of his father’s voice, /  
Boldly crying out to all the people: /  
“Make straight ye, the way of the Lord! /  
For He sets free and saves all those who turn to Him.” /  
O John, entreat thou Christ whom thou didst proclaim, ///  
That He may save our souls.

**Now and ever... Theotokion<sup>3</sup>, in the same Tone:**

**T**hrough thy divine birthgiving, O pure one, /  
Thou didst renew the mortal nature of mankind /  
That was corrupted by the passions; /  
Thou didst raise us up from death to the life of incorruption. ///  
Therefore, we rightly bless thee, as thou didst foretell, O most-glorious Virgin.

#### Ode 4

##### First Canon of the Saint

***Irmos:** He who sits in glory upon the throne of Divinity, Jesus truly divine, came on a light cloud, and saved with an incorrupt hand those who cry aloud: Glory to Thy power, O Christ.*

**A** mystery precedes Thine ineffable mysteries, O Christ, which proclaims the release from sickness by the new disposition of nature — its restoration and deification.

**I**saiah of old prophesied that when the Son would become Incarnate, the Father would proclaim: ‘Behold, I send before Thy face a mortal messenger, equal to the angels, who shall cry aloud: Glory to Thy Power, O Christ!’

**I** was born to serve the Master as a servant; for lo! For this reason have I come, to announce His coming, and that a barren and elderly woman who put forth flower in her old age might confirm the birthgiving of the Virgin.

***Theotokion:** T*he transcendent Word of the Father wast pleased to dwell in thee, O holy Theotokos, as in a sweet-smelling abode, whose womb was incorrupt and suffered no travail, for she bore Emmanuel, both God and man.

<sup>2</sup> In Slav Menaion only. The Greek Sessional hymn is “The son of Zachariah hath arisen like the sun....”

<sup>3</sup> Greek text differs.



### Second Canon of the Saint

*Irmos:* I have heard of Thy glorious dispensation, O Christ our God: how Thou wast born of the Virgin, that Thou mightest deliver from error those who cry aloud to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

The doors of repentance were opened for us through thy nativity, O herald and forerunner, for thou alone didst preach and cry aloud: Repent ye all, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

Virginity is confirmed, and chastity doth triumph; the desert rejoices, and the world celebrates the feast of thy nativity, O Forerunner John!

Elizabeth rejoices and Zachariah hath regained his speech. Both therefore, have become renewed in their old age and are made bright through John, the Voice of the Word.

*Theotokion:* Moses, the Lawgiver of old beheld thee as the bush unconsumed by fire, and Daniel beheld thee as a holy mountain, O Lady, who alone art both Mother and Virgin.

### Ode 5

#### First Canon of the Saint

*Irmos:* Now shall I arise, now shall I be glorified, now shall I be exalted, saith the Lord through the prophet; Now shall I elevate the fallen nature of humanity, which I received from the Virgin, to the noetic light of My divinity!

The earth hath raised up a true preacher, the Voice which proclaims to all with the tongue of the Spirit the Son of the Virgin — Righteousness come down to us from heaven, incarnate.

The Lord hath set thee as the true candlestick of Christ enlightening all, but clothing all His enemies in shame as with a garment, and proclaiming openly the Word and Son of God.

The whole creation rejoices at thy divine nativity, O Forerunner, for thou hast come forth as an earthly angel and a heavenly man, proclaiming the God of heaven who became incarnate for us.

*Theotokion:*<sup>4</sup> He who is begotten of the Father is born of thee, O Theotokos! The ever-existing and indivisible Word of God, the Only-begotten Son, in these latter days, is born incarnate of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit.

### Second Canon of the Saint

*Irmos:* Shine down upon me the light of Thy precepts, O Lord, I pray, for my spirit rises early and cries out to Thee: Thou art our God, and unto Thee do I flee, O King of peace!

O Sun of righteousness, Thou hast prepared a luminous star, Thy baptizer John, who is born today according to Thy promise, loosening the muteness of his father.

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<sup>4</sup> Greek text differs.

## NATIVITY OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

**U**tter not a word of protest, O holy elder, for Gabriel, the foremost among the archangels, tells thee of the mysteries of God, recounting His descent to be among us.

**B**e not unbelieving, O elder, for God doth promise that thou shalt father a son in thine old age in whose birth many shall rejoice, for he shall come forth with the power of Elijah!

**O** prophet, herald and forerunner of the Lord, offspring of a barren woman, preacher of repentance, lamb of the wilderness and candlestick of the Light, pray for us all who honor thee with faith.

**We** praise thee, O Lady, Mother of the Creator of all, as the impassable gate, the bush unconsumed, and the unquarried mountain from which was cut the Cornerstone, who is He made incarnate of thee.

### Ode 6

#### First Canon of the Saint

*Irmos: I have gone down into the depths of the sea, and the abyss of sin hath encompassed me; but, as God, lead my life up from corruption, since Thou alone lovest mankind.*

**While** yet in thy mother's womb, O prophet, thou didst recognize the Word of God, and with the voice of Elisabeth thou didst confess Him, the unapproachable Light, from the darkness of that chamber.

**As** the voice of one ceaselessly crying in the wilderness, O Baptist, cease not ever to entreat the Deliverer of the world, that He may loose the spiritual barrenness of those who praise thy birth.

*Theotokion: Thy* womb, O pure Theotokos, is the dwelling-place of the unapproachable Godhead, upon which the hosts of heaven are unable to gaze without fear.

#### Second Canon of the Saint

*Irmos: I am caught in the tempest of my many thoughts, dragging me down into the abyss of my countless sins; but go on before me and guide me, O good Helmsman, and save me as Thou didst save the prophet.*

**Today** is born John, the citizen of the desert, the preacher of repentance, the true witness of grace, the Forerunner of the Word, the star which shines forth before the Light.

**Today** through thy nativity, the axe which has been forged for the hewing of barren souls, plants the fruit of the virtues and comes forth, O Forerunner, John.

**Jordan** greatly rejoices and leaps for joy learning that John is born of the barren womb, and the sea dances together with the leaping waters.

**A**t his coming, the candlestick of the Light preached the coming of the Savior, the Lamb of God who has shone forth unto the world as the Sacrifice for all creation.

*Theotokion:* **O** most immaculate Mother of God who gavest birth to the Source of mercy thus drowning the abyss of my passions in the depths of thy compassion, grant that a torrent of tears may flow forth from my soul.

*Katavasia.*

**After the Sixth Ode, The Kontakion of the Forerunner in Tone 3: To the melody: "Today the Virgin...."**

**T**oday she who once before was barren /  
Now giveth birth to the Forerunner of Christ. /  
He is the fulfillment of every prophecy, /  
For as the prophets proclaimed, once he laid his hands upon Him in the Jordan ///  
He would be revealed as the prophet, herald and forerunner of the Word of God.

*Ikos:* **L**et us now praise the Forerunner of the Lord, whom Elizabeth has borne to the priest from a barren womb, but not without seed. For Christ alone passed through an impassable dwelling-place without seed. A barren woman gave birth to John, yet was he not born without the help of a man. And a pure Virgin whom the Father and the Spirit of God overshadowed, bore Jesus. But he who came from a barren woman has shown forth as prophet, herald, and also the Forerunner of Him born of a Virgin without seed.

### **Ode 7**

#### **First Canon of the Saint**

*Irmos:* *The three children in Babylon put to mockery the tyrant's command and cried out amid the flames: Blessèd art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!*

**B**efore, all human nature lay in darkness, O forerunner; but thou hast appeared like the dawn, crying aloud: Blessèd art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

**T**hy nativity from a barrenness, O Forerunner, has fully healed the sickness of nature, for it learned to sing: Blessèd art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

**T**hou wast born of a barren woman, O Forerunner, and into the barrenness of the law, grace has truly come to sing: Blessèd art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

*Theotokion:* **O** blessèd Virgin, pray for us who beseech thee, for we have placed all our hope in thee, and to thee we cry aloud: O Lady, disdain us not, thy servants!

#### **Second Canon of the Saint**

*Irmos:* *In Babylon of old, the children of Abraham trampled upon the flames of the furnace as they sang aloud: Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers!*

**F**alling mute for a time, Zachariah made plain his silence by writing, and, provided with speech again through thy nativity, O forerunner, he loudly proclaims the grace of the Spirit.

**T**he honored Elizabeth who once was barren and childless is like unto the Church, that before was darkened by the bloody ritual of sacrifice, but now boasts in the beauty of birthgiving.

**T**oday, the spiritual axe that hews down the swelling of the passions, is sharpened by the nativity of the forerunner, and the mystical fruits of repentance begin to flourish.

**We** honor thee, O John, as the mediator between the Old and New Covenants, as the forerunner who maketh straight the paths of Christ who cleanses the threshing-floor of transgressions with the winnowing fan of the Spirit.

**We** all praise in song the glorious John who issued forth from the barren woman; the forerunner and preacher of repentance who hastened before the Sun, Christ our God, like a star.

*Theotokion:* **O** Virgin Mother of God, cease thou never to pray on behalf of us all unto Him who, without seed, made His abode within thy womb, who, in His ineffable and utter humility made Himself poor for our sake.

## Ode 8

### First Canon of the Saint

*Irmos:* **O** Christ, the almighty Deliverer of all, Thou didst descend into the midst of the flames, and sprinkled the pious children with dew teaching them to sing with joy: Blessèd art Thou and praised above all, O Lord God of our fathers!

**M**oses was a servant of the Law, but Jesus is the God of the New Covenant; and now, the forerunner, as the mediator of them both, sings aloud: Bless the Lord, O all ye works of the Lord.

**A** dove hath issued forth from the barren womb and the forerunner of Christ hath brought the Church a divinely-planted branch, as he sings: Bless the Lord, O all ye works of the Lord.

**O** ye God-bearing people and holy nation, imitate the dove of Christ and living together in chastity may you sweetly sing: Bless the Lord, O all ye works of the Lord.

*Refrain:* Most holy Trinity, Our God, glory to Thee!

*To the Trinity:* **B**eing illumined by the Thrice-radiant Light, let us ceaselessly worship as Orthodox the One Uncreated Godhead and sing: Bless the Lord, O all ye

works of the Lord.

### **Second Canon of the Saint**

***Irmos:** Thou hast formed all things in Thy wisdom, O Master; Thou hast established the foundations of the earth, and in accordance with Thy knowledge, Thou hast planted it firmly on the boundless waters! Therefore, we all cry out to Thee: Bless the Lord, O all ye works of the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all forever.*

**B**efore thy birth and before thy swaddling clothes, didst thou, O Forerunner, recognize Christ the Giver of life whom thou didst worship when leaping in thy mother's womb, and whom thou didst name thy Lord when borrowing thy mother's tongue to sing to Christ our God.

**T**he ends of the earth celebrate a great Forefeast on this day: the angels and the souls of all the righteous rejoice; and the quick and all the dead are gladdened by the birth of John, receiving through him the news of the coming of the Savior and Lord of all.

**T**oday the River Jordan likens itself to John as its waters leap for joy at the words of the angelic man, born of a barren woman, come to make straight the ways and paths of the Lord and to baptize the world.

**T**oday Zachariah notes on a slate the name of the prophet and forerunner which was designated by God; and in his silence, he cries out: Let him be called John who is born to me in my old age, for this wondrous name truly befits him who was begotten according to the gracious promise of God.

***Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord, now and ever...,***

***Theotokion:** Thy people, O Virgin, truly have thee as their mighty consolation, unashamed hope, unassailable bastion, and their divine intercession; and through thee being saved, we cry out: Bless the Lord unceasingly, O all ye works of the Lord.*

***We praise, bless and worship the Lord singing and exalting Him throughout all ages!***

***Katavasia.***

***The Magnificat is sung.***

### **Ode 9**

#### **First Canon of the Saint**

***Irmos:** In thee, O All-pure Virgin, is the hidden and ineffable mystery of God made perfect and manifest; for in His loving-kindness God took flesh of thee. Therefore, we magnify thee as Theotokos.*

**B**ehold, the voice of the Forerunner as it sings to the barren and desolate hearts:

“Prepare ye now the way of Christ, for He cometh is glory!” Hearing this, we submit to the Lord and we glorify Him!

**A**s of old, O forerunner, when thou didst through the all-Holy Spirit proclaim the Son and Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, entreat Him now, that thy flock be delivered from their sins.

*To the Trinity:* **L**et us all glorify, O ye Orthodox faithful, the threefold Unity of the consubstantial Trinity, who illumines us by divine operation and fills our souls with the radiance of the never-setting Light.

*Theotokion:* **O** Lady who hast dominion over all creatures, grant thy people victory and submit the enemy of the Church under their feet, who truly magnify thee as Theotokos.

### **Second Canon of the Saint**

*Irmos:* *For the mighty One hath done great things to me, and holy is His name; and His mercy is upon them that fear Him, from generation to generation.*

**B**ehold, O priest Zachariah! God has wrought in thee a great and all-glorious sign: for thou hast begotten a son, the Forerunner, in thine old age and in the mortality of thy flesh.

**L**et all barren woman hear this and sing: Behold! Elizabeth cries out: I give birth to a son, the Forerunner, in mine old age and in the mortality of thy flesh.

**B**e glad now and rejoice in God, O Zachariah, for Behold! Elizabeth now nourishes the son of her old age at her breast, for in the mortality of her flesh she has given birth to the Forerunner of Christ!

**G**lory to Him who hath given fruit to the barren woman in her old age and hath bestowed upon the aged prophet a son, the divine forerunner to prepare the people for the coming of Christ.

*Theotokion:* **H**e who was begotten in the bosom of the Father without passion and corruption, and hath made His abode within thee, O Lady, hath in His loving-kindness led us to the Father and the Divine Spirit.

*Katavasia.*

**Exapostilarion:** *To the melody: “Hearken, ye women....”*<sup>5</sup>

**T**oday the joyous nativity of the Forerunner loosed the sadness of his father’s mute silence and the barrenness of the mother who bore him, and manifestly proclaims the

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<sup>5</sup> In contemporary practice, the Exapostilarion is read, not sung.

proclaims the gladsome coming of the Lord. Let all creation then join in celebrating this joyful feast! *(twice)*

**Glory..., now and ever..., Theotokion:**

The prophets preached, the apostles taught, and with godly wisdom the martyrs openly confessed thy Son to be the God of all, O pure Lady. With them we glorify thee, having been delivered through thee from the ancient curse.

**On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone 8: *To the melody, "O most glorious wonder...."***

O most glorious wonder! /  
 Today John, the holy prophet and herald of God, /  
 Hastens forth from an aged womb, /  
 And through his nativity, /  
 He frees a fettered tongue to speak. /  
 O Thine ineffable dispensation, O Master! ///  
 Through which, save our souls, O Christ, as Thou alone art merciful.

O most glorious wonder! /  
 The greatest of all prophets born of a woman /  
 Loosed the barrenness of his mother's womb, /  
 And comes with the spirit and the strength of Elijah /  
 To make straight the way of the Lord. /  
 How great are Thy works, O Master! ///  
 Through them, save our souls, O Christ, as Thou alone art merciful.

O most glorious wonder! /  
 He who announces to mankind the condescension of Christ /  
 With his voice he reveals Him who transcends all things; /  
 He puts to an end the barrenness of his mother by the power of God, /  
 And restores his father's voice. /  
 How great are Thy wonders, O Master! ///  
 Through them, save our souls, O Christ, as Thou alone art merciful.

O most glorious wonder! /  
 The prophet and forerunner of Christ /  
 Is revealed as the greatest prophet among those born of a woman, /  
 John, the herald of the coming of Christ /  
 Who leapt with joy in his mother's womb. /  
 How great are Thy gifts, O Lover of mankind! ///  
 Through them, save our souls, O Christ, as Thou alone art merciful.



**Glory..., in Tone 6: (*The composition of Anatolius*)**

Today the star of stars, /  
The Forerunner John, beloved of God, /  
Is born on earth from a barren womb /  
And he reveals the radiance of Christ, the Dayspring rising from on high ///  
For the straight passage of the faithful!

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

O Theotokos, thou art the true vine /  
Who didst bud forth for us the Fruit of Life: /  
We pray thee, O Lady, intercede together with the Forerunner, John, ///  
That mercy may be granted to our souls.

**The Great Doxology and the Dismissal.**

**Liturgy**

**At the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from Third Ode of the First Canon, and 4 from the Sixth Ode of Second Canon.**

**1-2.** The birth of the Master is brought to pass from the Virgin, while His beloved servant comes from an aged and barren womb; yet, wonder of wonders, rightly he goeth before Him. (*twice*)

**3-4.** The elderly and barren woman kisses the Virgin, truly recognizing her birthgiving, for the bond of her barrenness hath been loosed by the Will of God. (*twice*)

**5.** Today is born John, the citizen of the desert, the preacher of repentance, the true witness of grace, the Forerunner of the Word, the star which shines forth before the Light.

**6.** Today through thy nativity, the axe which has been forged for the hewing of barren souls, plants the fruit of the virtues and comes forth, O Forerunner, John.

**7.** Jordan greatly rejoices and leaps for joy learning that John is born of the barren womb, and the sea dances together with the leaping waters.

**8.** At his coming, the candlestick of the Light preached the coming of the Savior, the Lamb of God who has shone forth unto the world as the Sacrifice for all creation.

**The Troparion of the Forerunner, in Tone 4:**

O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, /  
Although we cannot praise thee worthily /  
We honor thee in love at thy nativity, /  
For by it thou didst end the silence and break the barrenness ///

Preaching to the world the incarnation of the Son of God.

**The Kontakion of the Forerunner, in Tone 3:** *To the melody: “Today the Virgin....”*

Today she who once before was barren /  
Now giveth birth to the Forerunner of Christ. /  
He is the fulfillment of every prophecy, /  
For as the prophets proclaimed, once he laid his hands upon Him in the Jordan ///  
He would be revealed as the prophet, herald and forerunner of the Word of God.

**The Prokeimenon, in Tone 7:** The righteous one shall rejoice in the Lord / and shall set his hope on Him. *Verse:* Hear my voice, O God, when I pray unto Thee!

**The Epistle:** (112) Romans 13:11-14:4

**The Alleluia, in Tone 1:** Blessèd be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people. *Verse:* And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Most High.

**The Gospel:** (1) Luke 1:5-25, 57-68, 76, 80

**Communion Hymn:** The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. Alleluia....

**Note:** We transfer the Epistle and Gospel readings of the daily cycle to the preceding Day. When the feast of the Nativity of the Forerunner coincides with a Sunday, the hymns of the Resurrection precede those of the Saint.