

AUGUST 29 - Beheading of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

LORD I CALL - TONE 6

*Lord, I call upon You, hear me!
Hear me, O Lord!
Lord, I call upon You, hear me!
Receive the voice of my prayer,
when I call upon You!
Hear me, O Lord!*

*Let my prayer arise
in Your sight as incense,
and let the lifting up of my hands
be an evening sacrifice!
Hear me, O Lord!*

VERSE: OUT OF THE DEPTHS I CRY TO YOU, O LORD. LORD, HEAR MY VOICE!

TONE 6 (by John the Monk) IDIOMELON

*During the celebration of shameless Herod's birthday,
the terms of the oath to the wanton dancer were fulfilled,
for the Baptist's head was cut off and carried like food on a platter
and offered to those reclining at the loathsome banquet.
Truly they feasted on wickedness and murder.
But let us bless the Forerunner, as is his due, //
and honor him as the greatest born of women!*

VERSE: LET YOUR EARS BE ATTENTIVE TO THE VOICE OF MY
SUPPLICATIONS! IF YOU, O LORD, SHOULD MARK INIQUITIES, LORD,
WHO COULD STAND? BUT THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH YOU.

*The dance of the devil's disciple
was rewarded with your head, O Forerunner.
Oh, banquet of blood!
Would that you had never sworn, deceitful Herod!
Better for you to lie, than shed righteous blood!
But let us bless the Baptist, as is his due, //
and honor him as the greatest born of women!*

VERSE: FOR YOUR NAME'S SAKE I HAVE WAITED FOR YOU, O LORD, MY SOUL
HAS WAITED FOR YOUR WORD; MY SOUL HAS HOPED ON THE LORD.
FROM THE MORNING WATCH UNTIL NIGHT, FROM THE MORNING
WATCH LET ISRAEL HOPE ON THE LORD!

*In demonic love and fiery passion, O Herod,
you condemned him who reproved your adultery.
For the sake of an oath to a dancing girl,
you delivered his holy head to that Jezebel.
Woe to you! How did you dare such murder?
Why was the wanton dancer not consumed by fire?
But let us bless the Baptist, as is his due, //
and honor him as the greatest born of women!*

VERSE: FOR WITH THE LORD THERE IS MERCY AND WITH HIM IS PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION, AND HE WILL DELIVER ISRAEL FROM ALL HIS INIQUITIES. PRAISE THE LORD, ALL NATIONS! PRAISE HIM, ALL PEOPLES! FOR HIS MERCY IS ABUNDANT TOWARDS US; AND THE TRUTH OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.

*Again Herodias raves with raging lust.
Oh, dance of deceit and feast of murder!
The Baptist is beheaded, and Herod is troubled. //
Through the prayers of Your Forerunner, O Lord, grant peace to our souls!*

VERSE: GLORY TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT;

TONE 6

*During the celebration of shameless Herod's birthday,
the terms of the oath to the wanton dancer were fulfilled,
for the Baptist's head was cut off and carried like food on a platter
and offered to those reclining at the loathsome banquet.
Truly they feasted on wickedness and murder.
But let us bless the Forerunner, as is his due, //
and honor him as the greatest born of women!*

VERSE: NOW AND EVER, AND UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN.

TONE 6 (Theotokion – Dogmatikon)

*Who will not bless you, O Most Holy Vir-gin?
Who will not sing of your most pure Child-bearing?
The Only Begotten Son shown timelessly from the Fa-ther
Who from you was ineffably in-car-nate,
God by nature, yet man for our sakes,
Not two persons, but one, known in two na-tures.
Entreat Him, O pure and all blessed La-dy, //
To have mer-cy on our souls.*

Vespers Old Testament Readings – August 29th, Feast of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner

PRIEST: *Wisdom!*

READER: *The first reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.*

DEACON: *Let us attend!*

READER: *{Isaiah 40:1-3, 9; 41:17-18; 45:8; 48:20-21; 54:1}*

1 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. 2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 9 O Zion, you that bring good tidings, get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, you that bring good tidings, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" 17 "The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, their tongues fail for thirst. I, the Lord, will hear them; I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. 18 I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 8 "Rain down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together. I, the Lord, have created it. 20 Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth; say, "The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob!" 21 And they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out. 1 "Sing, O barren, you that have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you that have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman," says the Lord.

PRIEST: *Wisdom!*

READER: *The second reading is from the Prophecy of Malachi.*

DEACON: *Let us attend!*

READER: *{Malachi 3:1-3, 5-7, 12, 18; 4:4-6}*

1 "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the Lord of hosts. 2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. 5 And I

will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien-- because they do not fear Me," Says the Lord of hosts. 6 "For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. 7 Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the Lord of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?'
12 "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," Says the Lord of hosts. 18 Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him. 4 "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 6 And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

PRIEST: *Wisdom!*

READER: *The third reading is from the Book of Wisdom.*

DEACON: *Let us attend!*

READER: *{Wisdom 4:7, 16-17, 19-20; 5:1-7}*

7 But the just man, though he die early, shall be at rest. 16 Yes, the just man dead condemns the sinful who live, and youth swiftly completed condemns the many years of the wicked man grown old. 17 For they see the death of the wise man and do not understand what the LORD intended for him, or why he made him secure. 19 And they shall afterward become dishonored corpses and an unceasing mockery among the dead. For he shall strike them down speechless and prostrate and rock them to their foundations; they shall be utterly laid waste and shall be in grief and their memory shall perish. 20 Fearful shall they come, at the counting up of their sins, and their lawless deeds shall convict them to their face. 1 Then shall the just one with great assurance confront his oppressors who set at naught his labors. 2 Seeing this, they shall be shaken with dreadful fear, and amazed at the unlooked-for salvation. 3 They shall say among themselves, rueful and groaning through anguish of spirit: "This is he whom once we held as a laughingstock and as a type for mockery, 4 fools that we were! His life we accounted madness, and his death dishonored. 5 See how he is accounted among the sons of God; how his lot is with the saints! 6 We, then, have strayed from the way of truth, and the light of justice did not shine for us, and the sun did not rise for us. 7 We had our fill of the ways of mischief and of ruin; we journeyed through impassable deserts, but the way of the LORD we knew not."

LITYA (If the rector desires the Litya, these stichera are sung.

If no Litya, go to Aposticha, Page 7

For Vesperal Liturgy, go to Troparion, Page 8

TONE 1 (by Patriarch Germanos)

What shall we call you, O Prophet?

Angel, Apostle, Martyr?

Angel, for you have spent your life like those who have no body.

Apostle, for you have taught the nations,

and Martyr, for your head has been cut off for the sake of Christ.//

Pray to Him then that our souls may be granted great mercy!

Let us celebrate the memorial of the beheading of the Forerunner;

at that time you gushed forth blood upon the platter,//

and now you pour forth healing to the ends of the earth!

Today the mother of murder,

acting with more wickedness than has ever been seen,

has roused her utterly wanton daughter to evil

against the divinely-chosen and greatest of all the Prophets.

For while hateful Herod was celebrating his ungodly birthday,

she contrived according to the oath he had given her for her dancing,

to beg for the precious head of the herald of God

that gushed forth miracles.

And he, quite mad, fulfilled his promise

and gave it to her as reward for her brazen dancing.

But the initiate of the coming of Christ

ceased not after death to rebuke them for their repulsive union,

but reproved them loudly, saying:

“It does not become you to commit adultery with the wife of your brother Philip.”

Oh, birthday, killer of prophets!

Oh, banquet full of blood!

Let us, arrayed in white, piously celebrate the Beheading of the Forerunner,

and rejoice on this day as on a great feast!

And let us ask the Forerunner to beseech the Trinity for us,//

that we be delivered from dishonorable passions, and that our souls be saved!

TONE 4

Herod's birthday celebration was a lawless and shameful feast,

for, spellbound by feminine licentiousness and stricken with madness by a woman's wantonness,

he cut off the head of the Forerunner;

but he did not cut out the Prophet's tongue, which had denounced his foolishness.

Spilling innocent blood, he wished to conceal a lawless sin;

but he could not stop the voice of one who called all to repentance.

*He joined in taking delight in murder,
but let us join in celebrating with love the blessed slaying of John the Baptist;
for he was in Hades in anticipation
to proclaim to those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death
the Life, the Dayspring from on high,//
Christ our God, Who alone is rich in mercy.*

*Come, O people,
let us praise the Prophet and Martyr and Baptist of the Savior!
For being an Angel in the flesh, he thoroughly reprovved Herod
by condemning his act of unlawful adultery;
and through the impious dance, he endured the cutting off of his precious head,
that he might proclaim to those in Hades
the good news of the Resurrection from the dead;//
and he earnestly intercedes with the Lord, that our souls may be saved.*

*Come, O faithful,
Let us praise the Prophet, and Martyr, and Baptist of the Savior!
Living in exile, he dwelt in the wilderness,
eating wild honey and locusts;
and he reprovved the king who transgressed the Law.
But he comforted our faintheartedness, saying://
“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!”*

VERSE: GLORY TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT;

TONE 5 (by John the Monk)

*Herod, intending to escape reproaches for his sinful doings,
gave your head, O Forerunner, to a lawless woman.
For the wretched man did not understand that by offering it on a platter he was condemning
himself.
But as teacher of purity and guide to redeeming repentance, O Baptist,//
intercede with Christ to deliver us from the disgrace of passions!*

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Sing, O people!
Sing the praises of the Mother of our God;
for today she delivers her soul, full of light,
into the immaculate hands of Him Who was made incarnate of her without seed.
And she entreats Him without ceasing//
to grant the earth peace and great mercy.*

APOSTICHA - TONE 2

*O Baptist John, preacher of repentance,
when your head was cut off, you sanctified the earth;
for you made clear God's Law to the faithful and destroyed lawlessness.
As you stand before the throne of the heavenly King, //
entreat Him to have mercy on our souls!*

VERSE: THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH LIKE THE PALM TREE, AND GROW
LIKE A CEDAR IN LEBANON. (PS 91/92:12)

*O most holy John,
you were beheaded for the sake of the Law of the Lord.
Filled with the boldness of speech, you rebuked the evil king for his transgression of the Law.
The host of Angels marvel at your strength;
the choir of Apostles and Martyrs praise you.
We also celebrate your yearly commemoration, //
glorifying the Holy Trinity Who crowned you, O most blessed Forerunner.*

VERSE: THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL REJOICE IN THE LORD AND SHALL HOPE IN
HIM! (PS 63/64:10)

*The Prophet from among the Prophets,
and greater than all the Prophets,
sanctified from his mother's womb to the Lord's service,
today has been beheaded by a lawless king;
and openly rebuking the woman who danced immodestly,
both before and after his beheading,
he put shame upon that sinful gathering.
Thus, we cry out: "O Baptist John, //
as you have boldness to speak, intercede on behalf of our souls!"*

VERSE: GLORY TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT;

TONE 8

*O Forerunner of the Savior,
you rebuked kings so that they would not work iniquity;
but the frolicking of a lawless woman persuaded Herod to cut off your head.
Therefore we bless your name from the rising to the setting of the sun.
Since you stand with boldness before the Lord, //
earnestly entreat Him to save our souls!*

VERSE: NOW AND EVER, AND UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN.

TONE 8 (Theotokion)

*Unwedded Virgin,
you ineffably conceived God in the flesh!
O Mother of God most high,
accept the cries of your servants, O blameless one!
Grant cleansing of transgressions to all!//
Receive our prayers and pray to save our souls!*

TONE 2 Troparion

*The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for you, O Forerunner.
You were shown in truth to be the most honorable of the Prophets,
for you were deemed worthy to baptize in the steams of the Jordan Him
Whom they foretold.
Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy,
you proclaimed to those in hell God Who appeared in the flesh,//
Who takes away the sin of the world and grants us great mercy.*

VERSE: GLORY TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT,
NOW AND EVER, AND UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN.

TONE 5 Kontakion

*The glorious beheading of the Forerunner
became an act of divine dispensation,
for he preached to those in hell the coming of the Savior.
Let Herodias lament, for she entreated lawless murder,
loving not the Law of God, nor eternal life,//
but that which is false and temporal.*

Epistle Reading – August 29th, Feast of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner

DEACON: *Wisdom!*

READER: *The Prokeimenon in the fifth tone:
The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord and shall hope in Him.*

CHOIR: *The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord and shall hope in Him.*

READER: *Hear my voice, O God, when I pray to You!*

CHOIR: *The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord and shall hope in Him.*

READER: *The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord*

CHOIR: *and shall hope in Him.*

DEACON: *Wisdom!*

READER: *The reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.*

DEACON: *Let us attend!*

READER: *{Acts 13:25-32} And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.' Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings--that promise which was made to the fathers.*

PRIEST: *Peace be to you, reader.*

READER: *And to your spirit.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

CHOIR: *Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

READER: *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (Ps 91/92:12)*

CHOIR: *Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

READER: *They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. (Ps 91/92:13).*

CHOIR: *Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!*

Gospel Reading – August 29th, Feast of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner

{Mark 6:14-30} 14 At that time... King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." 15 Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets." 16 But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" 17 For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. 18 For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21 Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. 22 And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." 23 He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom." 24 So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" 25 Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26 And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, 28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. 30 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

COMMUNION HYMN

CHOIR: The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! (*Ps 111/112:6*)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!