

## 24 FEBRUARY

+ **First and Second Discovery of the Forerunner's Head C5**  
*Service before the Fast*

## VESPERS

## Lord I have cried

Tone 5

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;  
O Lord, listen to me.  
O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;  
Note the voice of my plea when I cry to you.  
O Lord, listen to me.

<sup>2</sup> Let my prayer be directed before you like incense,  
the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice.  
O Lord, listen to me.

S6: O Lord, if you mark offences, who will stand?  
But there is forgiveness with you.

S5: O Lord, I have waited for you for your name's sake;  
my soul has waited for your word,  
my soul has hoped in the Lord.

Hail, holy and light-bearing head which is venerated by the angels!  
In time past you were cut off by the sword, for you had cut through  
the shame of impurity with incisive rebukes. Like a fountain which  
refreshes the faithful with wonders, you declared the saving coming  
of the Saviour. You perceived the coming of the Spirit who made  
his home in you as you stood between the grace of the Old and New  
Covenants. Implore Christ our God to grant our souls great mercy.  
X2

S4: Let Israel hope in the Lord  
from morning watch until night,  
from morning watch.

S3: For there is mercy with the Lord  
and abundant redemption with *him*.  
He will redeem Israel from all his offences.

The head of the Forerunner is revealed. Once it was concealed in an  
earthen vessel; now it is openly delivered from the depths of the  
earth and pours out streams of healing. For he washed in the waters  
the head of the *Lord*, who even now covers the chambers of the  
firmament with water, and showers divine forgiveness on men. So  
let us bless this truly praiseworthy head and joyfully celebrate its  
finding, as we implore Christ to grant our souls great mercy. X2

S2: Every nation, praise the Lord;  
every people, acclaim him!

S1: For his mercy is strengthened over us  
and the truth of the Lord remains for ever.

The head which proclaimed the Lamb of God who had appeared in  
the flesh, declared to everyone the ways of saving repentance with  
divine precepts, before it denounced the sin of Herod and was  
therefore severed from its body. It was concealed for a time and has  
risen on us like a shining sun. It cries out, "Repent and with  
contrition of soul submit to the Lord who grants the world great  
mercy." X2

Glory: Tone 6

O Forerunner, your head is a treasury of divine gifts guarded by  
God and has risen from the depths of the earth. O glorious *prophet*,  
O Baptist of Christ, while we faithfully receive it and venerate it, we  
are made rich through you with marvellous wonders and the  
remission of sins.

Both now:

Most holy Virgin, who will not bless you? Who will not sing about  
your most pure childbearing? O pure *Lady*, the uniquely-fathered  
Son shone timelessly from the Father, but was ineffably incarnate  
from you. He was God by nature, but became man for our sake. He

was not divided into two persons, but known as one in two natures.  
O honoured and all-blessed Lady, plead with him to have mercy on  
our souls.

## Entrance

## Phos Ilarón

P/D: Wisdom! Stand upright!  
O Jesus Christ, joyful light of the holy glory  
of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father,  
when we come to the setting of the sun  
and see the light of evening,  
we praise God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For it is right at all times to worship you  
with voices of praise,  
O Son of God *and* Giver of life.  
Therefore the world glorifies you.

Prokeímenon  
*Of the Day*

## Prophecy 1

From the Prophecy of Isaiah (Chapters 40 - 54 Composite)  
Comfort, comfort, O my people, says God. <sup>2</sup> Speak, O priests, to the  
heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation is  
accomplished, her sin is put away, for she has received from the  
Lord's hand double the amount of her sins. <sup>3</sup> The voice of one  
crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight  
the paths of our God. <sup>9</sup> O you who bring joyful news to Zion, go up  
on the high mountain; O you who bring joyful news to Jerusalem,  
lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, do not fear not; say to the  
cities of Judah: See your God! <sup>17</sup> The poor and the needy will  
rejoice, for when they seek water, and there is none, and their  
tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord God, I the God of Israel  
will hear, and will not forsake them, <sup>18</sup> but I will open rivers on the  
mountains, and fountains in the midst of plains. I will make the  
desert pools of water and a thirsty land into watercourses. <sup>8</sup> Let the  
heaven rejoice from above and let the clouds rain justice. Let the  
earth produce, bloom with mercy and yield justice in the same way.  
I am the Lord who created you. <sup>20</sup> Go out from Babylon, O you who  
flee from the Chaldeans; utter aloud a voice of joy, and let this be  
made known. Proclaim it to the end of the earth; say: The Lord has  
delivered his servant Jacob. <sup>21</sup> And if they thirst, he will lead them  
through the desert; he shall bring out water to them from the rock.  
The rock will be split, the water will flow out, and my people will  
drink. <sup>1</sup> Rejoice, O infertile one who does not give birth; break out  
and cry, O you who do not travail, for the children from the desolate  
exceed those from the one who has a husband, for the Lord has said  
this.

## Prophecy 2

From the Prophecy of Malachi (3:1-3, 5-7, 12, 18, 4:4-6)  
See, I send my messenger and he will survey the way before me,  
and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple,  
even the angel of the covenant, in whom you take pleasure. See, he  
is coming, says the Lord Almighty. <sup>2</sup> And who will endure the day  
of his coming? Or who will stand at his appearing? For he is coming  
like the fire of a furnace and like the herb of fullers. <sup>3</sup> He will sit to  
melt and purify as though it were silver, and as though it were gold.  
He will purify the sons of Levi, refine them like gold and silver, and  
they will offer the Lord an offering in justice. <sup>5</sup> And I will draw near  
to you in judgment; I will be a swift witness against the witches,  
against the adulteresses, against those who swear falsely by my  
name, against those who keep back the labourer's wages, against  
those who oppress the widow, against those who afflict orphans,  
against those who pervert the judgment of the stranger, and against  
those who do not fear me, says the Lord Almighty. <sup>6</sup> For I am the  
Lord your God, and I have not changed, <sup>7</sup> but you, O sons of Jacob,  
have not refrained from the lawless deeds of your fathers. You have

perverted my statutes and not kept them. Return to me and I will return to you, says the Lord Almighty. But you said: How can we return? <sup>12</sup> And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a desirable land, says the Lord Almighty. <sup>18</sup> Then you will return and discern between the just and the wicked, and between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve him. <sup>5</sup> And, see, I will send to you Elias the Tishbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. <sup>6</sup> He will turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, in case I come and strike the earth grievously. Remember the law of my servant Moses, in accordance with what I charged him at Horeb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances.

### Prophecy 3

From the Wisdom of Solomon (4:7, 16-17, 19-20; 5:1-7)  
Although the just may be cut short with death, yet he will be at rest. <sup>16</sup> Thus the just who is dead will condemn the ungodly who are living; and youth who is quickly perfected *will condemn* the many years and old age of the unjust. <sup>17</sup> For they will see the end of the wise, and will not understand what God in his counsel has decreed for him, and to what end the Lord has set him in safety. <sup>19</sup> For he will tear them, and cast them down headlong, so that they will be speechless. He will shake them from the foundation, and they will be utterly laid waste and be in sorrow; their memorial will perish. <sup>20</sup> And when they throw up the accounts of their sins, they will come with fear, and their own lawless deeds will convince them to their face. <sup>1</sup> Then the just man will stand in great boldness before the face of those who have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. <sup>2</sup> When they see it, they will be troubled with terrible fear, and will be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. <sup>3</sup> As they repent and groan in anguish of spirit they will say within themselves: This was the one whom we held sometimes in derision, and a byword of reproach. <sup>4</sup> We fools counted his life as madness, and his end to be without honour. <sup>5</sup> How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot among the saints! <sup>6</sup> Therefore we have strayed from the way of truth, and the light of justice has not shone over us, and the sun of justice did not rise over us. <sup>7</sup> We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction; truly, we have gone through deserts, where there was no way, but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it.

### Ektení

#### Prayer

O Lord, allow us this night to be guarded from sin. Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers! Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. O Lord, let your mercy be on us, for we have hoped in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your statutes. Blessed are you, O Holy *One*; enlighten me with your statutes. O Lord, your mercy lasts for ever; do not overlook the work of your hands. To you belongs worship, to you belongs praise, to you belongs glory, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

### Plirotiká

#### Prayer

P: Peace be with you all. R: And with your spirit  
D: Bow down your heads to the Lord. R: To you, O Lord.

P: For blessed and glorified is the power of your Kingdom, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

### Apósticha

Tone 2

O faithful, come and let us venerate the head which was cut off by a sword, the precious head of the Forerunner, as we remember its discovery today. Let us go out to meet it with hymns and greatly

honour it as a spring which pours the grace of healing over us. This is the head which was once cut off by the foolish Herod when he was provoked by Herodias who bore a grudge.

S1: The death of his saints is precious in the sight of the Lord. <sup>Ps 115</sup>  
The head of the Forerunner comes out of the earth just as gold is taken from the mine; it is radiant in its reliquary. He still speaks as he accuses the adulterous murderer Herod and illuminates our souls with light. We, the faithful, venerate the Forerunner in our hymns today, for he prays for us before God.

S2: The just will flourish like a palm tree  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. <sup>Ps 91</sup>

For a long time the head of the Baptist lay hidden underground like treasure in a chest. Today it is revealed to the whole earth. It pours out copious streams of healing, makes illness cease and sheds light on our souls. We rejoice in its divine consolation as we sing the praises of the Forerunner.

Glory:

O renowned John, the honourable repository of divine thoughts, your head, which had clearly prophesied the mystery of the ineffable *Lord*, came from the caves of the earth as though from a mother's womb. It perfumes the whole world with the myrrh of holiness as you preach the way of repentance and pray for our souls before the Saviour of all.

Both now:

Hail, O hope, O pure Theotokos, for you received the greeting of the angel! Hail, for you gave birth to Christ who is the image of the Father! Hail, O holy and blessed Virgin, for you are totally worthy to receive our hymns! The whole creation glorifies you as the mother of the Light.

W/F

O Virgin, when you saw, as he hung on the cross, the rich Cluster of Grapes, which you had produced without cultivation, you cried with tears, "O my Son, O God of compassion and divine Benefactor, when I intercede as a mother with you, pour out the sweet nectar which takes away the intoxication of passions."

### Song of Simeon

B/P: O Master, now let your servant depart in peace  
according to your word,  
<sup>2</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared before all peoples,  
<sup>3</sup> a light of revelation for *the* nations  
and *the* glory of your people Israel.

### Triságion Prayers

#### Apolytikia

Tone 4

The head of the Forerunner rose from the earth like a star; *it was* brilliant with rays of healing and immortality. It gathers the choirs of angels in heaven and assembles the human race on earth to sing with one voice about the glory of Christ our God.

Tone 4

O Theotokos, the mystery hidden from eternity and unknown to the angels, is revealed to those on earth through you. God was incarnate from you in a union without confusion and freely endured the cross for us by his own will. He raised the first-formed man and has saved our souls from death.

### Dismissal

#### ORTHROS

God is the Lord Ps 117

R: God is the Lord and has appeared to us.

Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. *Ps 117*

S1: Thank the Lord, for he is good,  
for his mercy lasts for ever.

S2: All the nations surrounded me,  
but I opposed them in the Lord's name.

S3: This *is* the Lord's doing  
and it is wonderful in our eyes.

### Apolytikia

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### Small Litany

P: For yours is the might, and yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

### Kathisma 1

Tone 4

O prophet and Forerunner, Christ has revealed to us your head which was hidden in the ground as a divine treasure. On the day of this discovery we assemble to sing inspired hymns of praise to the Saviour; he has rescued us all from corruption through your intercession.

Glory: Both now:

O Christ our God, hurry to us before we become slaves to those who blaspheme against you and threaten our lives. With your cross blot out those who make war against us. Only you are the Lover of the human race, so let them understand the power of the Orthodox Faith at the prayers of the Theotokos.

### Kathisma 2

Tone 4

O Baptist of Christ, just as mines yield gold, so your holy head came from the depths of the earth to enrich all those who approach you. On this day of its discovery they glorify the Saviour and Creator with hymns. He grants remission of sins and great mercy through you.

Glory: Both now:

O Theotokos, we are your servants and continually sing about your love with sincere hymns of gratitude while we say to you, "All-holy Virgin, hurry to save us from our invisible enemies and from every threat of evil, for you are our shelter and protection.

*Polyeleos*

### Kathisma 3

Tone 4

O Forerunner, Herod, who had offended against the Law, was prompted by a furious woman to have your precious head cut off with a sword. Those of us who are faithful sincerely venerate it.

Glory: Both now:

O pure Virgin, Moses saw you in the burning bush, for you carried the Fire which lightens our souls without burning them. You also received abundance of grace like dew.

### Small Litany

P: For yours is the might, and yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

### Anaváthmi Ps 128 Tone 4

1: Many passions have fought against me from my youth,  
but help me and save me, O my Saviour. *X2*

2: Those who hate Zion will be shamed by the Lord;  
they will be withered like grass by the fire. *X2*

Glory:

3: Every soul lives through the Holy Spirit, is exalted in purity  
and illuminated by the Triune Unity in a sacred mystery.

Both now:

4: The streams of grace pour out through the Holy Spirit;  
they water all creation and produce life.

### Prokeímenon Ps 131 Tone 4

R: I will make a horn grow there for David  
and have prepared a lamp for my anointed.

S: O Lord, remember David and all his humility.

### Gospel Dialogue

P/D: Let us pray to the Lord. *Lord have mercy*

P: For you, O God, are holy *and* rest in the Holy Place. We send up glory to you, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*.

R: Let everything with breath praise the Lord. *X3*

Praise God in his saints;

praise him in the firmament of his power. *Ps 50*

P/D: And that we may be counted worthy to listen to the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord our God. *Lord have mercy X3*

P/D: Wisdom. Stand up. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

P: Peace be with you all. *And with your spirit*

P: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

P/D: Let us attend

R: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

### Gospel

From the Holy Gospel according to Luke (7:17-30)

At that time this report concerning Jesus spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country. <sup>18</sup> The disciples of John told him of all these things. <sup>19</sup> And John, calling to him two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>20</sup> And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" <sup>21</sup> In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. <sup>22</sup> And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is he who takes no offence at me." <sup>24</sup> When the messengers of John had gone, he began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>25</sup> What then did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are gorgeously apparelled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. <sup>26</sup> What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>27</sup> This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.' <sup>28</sup> I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." <sup>29</sup> (When they heard this all the people and the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John; <sup>30</sup> but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

R: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

**Psalm 50**

O God, have mercy on me in your abundant mercy  
and wipe out my offence through your great compassion.  
<sup>4</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my lawless act  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
<sup>5</sup> For I know my lawlessness  
and my sin is always before me.  
<sup>6</sup> I have sinned against you alone  
and done this evil before you  
<sup>6b</sup> so that you might be justified in your words  
and overcome when you are judged.  
<sup>7</sup> For see, I was conceived in lawlessness  
and my mother gave birth to me in sin.  
<sup>8</sup> For see, you have loved truth  
and revealed to me the hidden and secret *things* of your wisdom.  
<sup>9</sup> You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be clean;  
you will wash me and I will become whiter than snow.  
<sup>10</sup> You will make me hear about joy and gladness;  
the humbled bones will rejoice.  
<sup>11</sup> Turn your face from my sins  
and wipe out all my lawlessness.  
<sup>12</sup> O God, create a pure heart within me  
and renew an upright spirit within me.  
<sup>13</sup> Do not banish me from your presence  
or remove your Holy Spirit from me.  
<sup>14</sup> Restore the joy of your salvation to me  
and make me firm with your directing Spirit.  
<sup>15</sup> I will teach the lawless your ways  
and the ungodly will return to you.  
<sup>16</sup> O God, set me free from the guilt of blood;  
O God of my salvation,  
my tongue will rejoice in your justice.  
<sup>17</sup> O Lord, you will open my lips  
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.  
<sup>18</sup> For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it;  
you will not be pleased with burnt offerings.  
<sup>19</sup> Sacrifice for God is a broken spirit;  
God will not despise a broken and humbled heart.  
<sup>20</sup> O Lord, be good to Zion in your pleasure  
and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.  
<sup>21</sup> Then you will be pleased with a sacrifice of justice,  
with an offering and burnt sacrifices;  
then they will offer calves on your altar.

Glory: Tone 2

O merciful *Lord*, blot out the abundance of our offences through the prayers of the Forerunner.

Both now:

O merciful *Lord*, blot out the abundance of our offences through the prayers of the Theotokos.

Have mercy: Tone 6

The honoured head of the Baptist of Christ preached repentance to all the faithful, even on a plate, and could rebuke Herod for his ungodly crime. It has been retrieved from the caves of the earth and brought into the light. All those who see it approach with faith, touch it with reverence and bow before it with love, for it brings forgiveness of sins, acceptance of prayer and great mercy.

**Intercession**

P/D: O God, save your people and bless your inheritance. Visit your world with mercy and compassion; exalt the horn of Orthodox Christians and send down on them your rich mercy, through the prayers of our all-pure Lady, Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, by the power of the honourable and life-giving cross, through the protection of the honourable bodiless powers of heaven, through the prayers of the honourable, glorious, prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, of the holy, glorious, all-praised apostles, of the holy, all-praised and victorious martyrs, of our holy and God-bearing

fathers, of the holy and just forebears of God, Ioachim and Anna, and of all the saints. We ask you, only merciful Lord, "Listen to us sinners as we pray to you, and have mercy on us."

*Lord have mercy. XI2*

Through the mercy, compassion and love for the human race of your uniquely-fathered Son, with whom you are blessed, together with the all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen.*

**Kontákion**

Tone 3

O prophet of God and Forerunner of grace, your head has bloomed from the earth as a sacred rose. We are always being healed, because, as in the past, you now preach repentance to the world.

**Íkos**

O holy John, you are the greatest among men according to the testimony of the Lord. Therefore I am hesitant about offering you the praises of my poor words. Yet, because I am encouraged by the strength of my love for you, I dare to commence this hymn. Therefore do not refuse to help me so that I may worthily crown your sacred head, because, as in the past, you now preach repentance to the world.

**Synaxáριον**

Today we celebrate the first and second discoveries of the head of the renowned Forerunner in the Fifth and Seventh Centuries. O Forerunner, you once fell beneath the executioner's sword. On the Twenty Fourth you revealed your head.

Together with him we also remember:

Monk Erasmus of the Kiev Caves C12

Relics of Prince Romanos of Uglich C15

O God, have mercy on us through their holy prayers. Amen.

**Katavasías**

1: I will open my mouth and be filled with the spirit. I will sing a song to the Queen and Mother. I will come, rejoice in the feast and praise all her glory.

3: O Theotokos, living and inexhaustible fountain, in your divine glory spiritually establish your choir which is assembled in chorus. Make them worthy *to receive* crowns of glory in your mercy.

4: The counsel of God cannot be scrutinised. The Most High was incarnate from a Virgin. The prophet Habakkuk foresaw this and cried, "Glory to your power, O God!"

5: O Virgin, all creation was fearful at your divine glory, for you knew no man, yet bore the God of all. You held in your womb the Eternal Son who grants peace to those who praise you in song.

6: O believers, let us clap our hands in festivity and fulfil the most precious feast. Since we know God through the Theotokos, let us glorify the one who was born from her.

7: The godly youths worshipped the Creator rather than the creature. They courageously trampled on the flames and joyfully sang, "Blessed are you, most praised Lord, the God of our fathers."

8: Let us praise, bless and worship the Lord.

The *Lord* who was born from the Theotokos saved the holy children in the furnace. The one who was then prefigured has now been born on earth and gathers all creation to sing, "All you works of the Lord, bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

**Ode 9**

**R:** *You are* more honourable than the Cherubim

and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim.  
You gave birth to God the Word without defilement;  
O true Theotokos, we glorify you.

**M**y soul glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. **R**  
<sup>2</sup>For he has regarded his servant's humility;  
see, from now all generations will call me blessed. **R**  
<sup>3</sup>For the Almighty has accomplished great *things* for me  
and his name is holy.  
His mercy is from generation to generation  
on those who fear him. **R**  
<sup>4</sup>He has accomplished strength with his arm  
and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. **R**  
<sup>5</sup>He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones  
and exalted the humble.  
He has satisfied the hungry with good *things*  
and dismissed the rich with nothing. **R**  
<sup>6</sup>He has helped his servant Israel  
in remembering his mercy,  
as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his seed for ever. **R**

9: Let every earthborn mortal be radiant and spiritually leap for joy.  
Let the ranks of angelic powers celebrate as they honour the holy  
feast of the Theotokos and cry, "Hail, O pure and blessed Ever-  
virgin who gave birth to God!"

#### Small Litany

P: For blessed is your name, and glorified is your kingdom, of the  
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen*

#### Exaposteilária

Tone 2

O Forerunner John, your precious and light-bearing head has shone  
out from the damp bosom of the earth as a lamp of the immaterial  
Light. All-praised Baptist of the Saviour, as we celebrate its finding  
with love, we beg you that we may obtain remission for our sinful  
deeds, so that we may complete successfully the time of the fast  
through your prayers.

O Virgin, the assembly of believers finds its consolation and joy in  
serving you and correctly acknowledging you as the Theotokos.  
Allow us reverently to complete the time of the Fast. Let us arrive  
to adore the cross and saving passion of your Son and our God.

#### Praises

Tone 4

Let everything with breath  
praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights.  
To you, O God, is due a song.

Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his powers.  
To you, O God, is due a song.

S4: Praise him with cymbal and dance;  
praise him with strings and flute.

O Forerunner John, your precious and light-bearing head has shone  
out from the damp bosom of the earth as a lamp of the immaterial  
Light. All-praised Baptist of the Saviour, as we celebrate its finding  
with love, we beg you that we may obtain remission for our sinful  
deeds, so that we may complete successfully the time of the fast  
through your prayers.

S3: Praise him with tuneful cymbals;  
praise him with joyful cymbals.  
Let everything with breath praise the Lord.

O Forerunner, the forecourts of the fast are opened by your  
honourable head; it offers God's graces as a pleasant food for all.  
When we receive it, the severity and austerity of the Fast are  
sweetened for us all. As we praise you, we sing to Christ our God,  
"All-powerful Jesus, you are the Saviour of our souls."

S2: The death of his saints is precious in the sight of the Lord. Ps 115  
The head of the Forerunner pours out myrrh in perpetual streams as  
it is placed on a mystic and divine table today. It releases a spiritual  
fragrance, banishes the smell of affliction and brings joy to all those  
who cry aloud with love, "O all-powerful Jesus, you are the Saviour  
of our souls."

S1: The just will flourish like a palm tree  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Ps 91  
Your head has severed the heads of the unjust enemies like a double-  
edged sword and caused a great river of divine grace flow over all  
the just. Therefore, O holy John, we praise you as a friend of the  
Creator and his Forerunner. We sing to him, "All-powerful Jesus,  
you are the Saviour of our souls."

Glory: Tone 6

O Lord, today the all-precious head of your Forerunner was  
revealed from the earth. O Lover of the human race, we pray you to  
raise your servants from sin, as we receive it with faith, in prayer  
and with voices of praise, so that on the Day of Judgment we may  
receive cleansing and great mercy from you for his sake.

Both now:

O God our Saviour, you love the good, so save your servants from  
every deadly danger through the prayers of your Forerunner and all  
the saints, and through the intercessions of your mother.

#### Great Doxology

Glory to you who have shown us the light!  
glory to God in the highest!  
Peace on earth and goodwill to men!  
<sup>2</sup>We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,  
we glorify you, we thank you for your great glory,  
<sup>3</sup>O Lord King, heavenly God, almighty Father,  
O Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
and you, O Holy Spirit!  
<sup>4</sup>O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us,  
*for* you take away the sin of the world.  
<sup>5</sup>Receive our prayer,  
*for* you sit on the right of the Father,  
and have mercy on us.  
<sup>6</sup>For only you are holy, only you are Lord,  
O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*  
<sup>7</sup>I will bless you every day  
and always praise your name for ever and ever. Ps 144  
<sup>8</sup>O Lord, allow us this day  
to be guarded from sin.  
<sup>9</sup>Blessed are you, O Lord God of our fathers!  
Praised and glorified be your name for ever. *Amen.* Daniel 3  
<sup>10</sup>O Lord, let your mercy *be* on us,  
for we have hoped in you. Ps 32.  
<sup>16</sup>Blessed are you, O Lord!  
Teach me your statutes. X3 Ps 118  
<sup>12</sup>O Lord, you have been our refuge  
from generation to generation. Ps 89  
I said, "O Lord, have mercy on me;  
heal my soul, for I have sinned against you." Ps 40  
<sup>14</sup>O Lord, I have fled to you;  
teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Ps 142  
<sup>15</sup>For with you is the source of life  
and in your light we will see light. Ps 35  
<sup>16</sup>Stretch out your mercy

to those who know you. <sup>Ps 35</sup>

### Triságion

#### Apolytikion

Tone 4

The head of the Forerunner rose from the earth like a star; *it was* brilliant with rays of healing and immortality. It gathers the choirs of angels in heaven and assembles the human race on earth to sing with one voice about the glory of Christ our God.

### LITURGY

#### Antiphon 1 Ps 91 Tone 5

S1: It is good to thank the Lord  
and make melody to your name, O Most High.

R: At the prayers of the Theotokos, Saviour, save us!

S2: To announce your mercy in the morning  
and your truth by night,

S3: For the Lord our God is upright  
and there is no injustice in him.

S4: Glory: Both now:

#### Antiphon 2 Ps 94 Tone 2

S1: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord,  
and shout with joy to God our Saviour.

R: Save us, O Son of God. You are wonderful in your saints.  
We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

S2: Let us enter his presence with gratitude  
and shout with gladness to him in psalms.

For the Lord is a great God  
and an exalted king over all the earth.

S3: For the ends of the earth are in his hand  
and the summits of the mountains are his.

For the sea is his and he made it;  
his hands have formed the dry land.

*Monogenes*

#### Antiphon 3 Ps 91 & 63 Tone 2

S1: The just will flourish like a palm tree  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. <sup>Ps 91</sup>

Tone 2

R: The head of the Forerunner rose from the earth like a star; *it was* brilliant with rays of healing and immortality. It gathers the choirs of angels in heaven and assembles the human race on earth to sing with one voice about the glory of Christ our God.

S2: The just will rejoice and hope in the Lord;  
all the upright in heart will be praised. <sup>Ps 63</sup>

### Entrance

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Save us, O Son of God.

You are wonderful in your saints.

We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

### Apolytikia

Tone 4

The head of the Forerunner rose from the earth like a star; *it was* brilliant with rays of healing and immortality. It gathers the choirs of angels in heaven and assembles the human race on earth to sing with one voice about the glory of Christ our God.

*Of the Church*

### Kontkion

O unfailing protection of Christians and unchanging mediator before the Creator, do not despise the prayers of us sinners, but in your goodness extend your help to those of us who faithfully cry to you, "O Theotokos, you always protect those who honour you, so hurry to intercede for us and hasten to plead for us."

### Triságion

#### Prokeímenon Ps 63 Tone 7

R: The just will rejoice and hope in the Lord.

S: O God, listen to my voice.

### Apóstolos

From the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians (4:6-15)  
Brothers, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthenware vessels to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. <sup>8</sup> We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our bodies. <sup>11</sup> For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh. <sup>12</sup> So death is at work in us, but life in you. <sup>13</sup> Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believe, and so we speak. <sup>14</sup> We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup> For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

#### Alleluia Ps 91 Tone 4

S1: The just *person* will flourish like a palm tree  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

S2: Those who are planted in the house of the Lord  
will blossom in the courts of our God.

### Gospel

From the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (11:2-15)  
At that time when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is he who takes no offense at me." <sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses. <sup>9</sup> Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is he of whom it is written, 'Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.' <sup>11</sup> Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. <sup>12</sup> From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force. <sup>13</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; <sup>14</sup> and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. <sup>15</sup> He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

#### Communion Ps 111

The just will be in everlasting remembrance. Alleluia!