

THE 24th DAY OF THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST AND SECOND FINDINGS
OF THE GLORIOUS HEAD OF THE FORERUNNER
AT VESPERS

If it be not the Fast, we chant “Blessed is the man ...,” the first antiphon; and On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 6 Stichera. But if it be the Fast, we chant the usual Kathisma, and sing the service to the Forerunner combined with that from the Triodion.

Six Stichera of the finding, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: “Rejoice ...”;

Rejoice, O sacred and light-bearing head, venerated by the angels, which of old was severed by a sword and which cut down the shame of impurity with sharp reproofs, a wellspring of miracles giving drink unto the faithful, and which proclaimed the saving advent of the Savior, and of old perceived the coming of the Spirit which took up His abode in thee who stood between the grace of the Old and New Covenants. Entreat Christ God to grant our souls great mercy! (Twice)

The head of the Forerunner, which was once concealed in an earthen vessel, hath appeared, yielded from the bosom of the earth and pouring forth streams of healing; for in the waters he washed the head of Him who covereth the chambers of the firmament with waters and raineth down divine forgiveness upon mankind. Wherefore, let us bless it as truly most glorious, and in its discovery let us joyously keep festival, entreating Christ to grant our souls great mercy. (Twice)

The head which proclaimed the Lamb of God Who hath appeared in the flesh, which with divine commands hath declared to all the ways of saving repentance, which of old denounced the transgression of Herod and was therefore severed from its body, enduring concealment for a time, hath shone forth upon us like a radiant sun, crying out: Repent ye, and in compunction of soul submit now to Christ Who granteth the world great mercy! (Twice)

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Thy divinely preserved head, the treasury of divine gifts, O Forerunner, hath shone forth from the bosom of the earth; and we, faithfully receiving and bowing down before it, O glorious one, are enriched by thee with most glorious miracles and the forgiveness of our sins, O Baptist of Christ!

Both now ..., Theotokion:

Who doth not call thee blessed, O most holy Virgin? * Who will not hymn thy most pure birthgiving? * For the only-begotten Son Who hath shone forth timelessly from the Father, * came forth, ineffably incarnate, from thee, O pure one; * By nature he is God, by nature for our sakes, he hath become a man * not divided into two Hypostases, * but known in two natures without commingling. * Him do thou beseech, O pure and most blessed one, ** that our souls find mercy!

Entrance. Prokeimenon of the day. Three Lessons:

THE READING IS FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

Thus saith the Lord: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it. Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, 'The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob. And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

THE READING IS FROM THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI

Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I

make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse, saith the Lord Almighty, the Holy one of Israel.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds: that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect unto His chosen.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera of the finding, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “When from the Tree ...”:

Come, ye faithful, * and let us honor today * the precious head of the Baptist which was severed, * greeting it with hymns on the day of its uncovering, * honoring it with love, * for it poureth forth the grace of healings upon us. * Of old Herod the adulterer cut it off, * having been adorned ** by the savagery of Herodias.

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

Like gold from a mine, * so hath the head of the Forerunner shone forth * from the earth, * having appeared in an earthen vessel * it plainly speaketh forth, * rebuking the adulterous and murderous Herodias, * radiantly illumining our thoughts. * And venerating it, O ye faithful, let us honor it today with hymns, ** for it doth entreat God on our behalf.

Verse: The righteous man shall flourish like a palm tree, * and like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied.

The head of the forerunner, * which of old was hidden in a vessel in the ground * like a divine treasure, * is today disclosed to the ends of the earth, * pouring forth an abundance of streams of healing, * curing sicknesses and enlightening souls. * Wherefore, receiving the grace of consolation, * let us hymn it reverently ** with songs.

Glory ..., in Tone II:

Like a most precious shrine of divine thoughts, thy head O all-praised John, hath shone forth today from the secret places of the earth, as from thy mother's womb, clearly foreseeing the mystery of the ineffable Being, it hath rendered the whole earth fragrant, emitting the myrrh of sanctification, noetically preaching the way of repentance and entreating the Savior of all on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

O new wonder greater than all the wonders of old! * For who hath ever known a mother to give birth without having known a man, * and to bear on her arm Him Who sustaineth all creation? * Yet it was the will of God to be born. * O most pure one, who carried Him as an infant in Thine embrace * and before Whom thou hast a mother's boldness: * cease not to pray on behalf of those who honor thee, ** that He have compassion and save our souls.

Troparion of the finding, in Tone IV:

The head of the Forerunner, which hath shone forth from the earth, * sheddeth rays of incorruption and healing upon the faithful. * Assembling a multitude of angels on High, * it calleth upon the human race below ** to send up glory with one voice to Christ God.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages * and unknown to the ranks of Angels, * hath been revealed to those on earth through thee, O Theotokos: * God incarnate in an uncommingled union, * Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake, * and through it hath raised up the first-formed man, ** and saved our souls from death.

AT MATINS:

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the finding, in Tone IV:

The head of the Forerunner, which hath shone forth from the earth, * sheddeth rays of incorruption and healing upon the faithful. * Assembling a multitude of angels on High, * it calleth upon the human race below ** to send up glory with one voice to Christ God.

Glory ..., Both now ..., the Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages * and unknown to the ranks of Angels, * hath been revealed to those on earth through thee, O Theotokos: * God incarnate in an uncommingled union, * Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake, * and through it hath raised up the first-formed man, ** and saved our souls from death.

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Go thou quickly before ...”:

As a divine treasure hidden in the earth, Christ hath revealed thy head unto us, O prophet and Forerunner; wherefore, assembling on the feast of its discovery, with divinely eloquent songs we all hymn the Savior Who hath saved our life by thine intercession. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

We hymn thee, O Bride of God, Mother of Christ God, glorifying thine unapproachable Offspring, by Whom we have been delivered from the deceit of the devil and from all misfortune, O Lady Theotokos; and we faithfully cry out: Have mercy on thy flock, O thou who alone art all-hymned!

After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Having been lifted up ...”:

Freed from the impassable bosom of the earth like gold from a mine, thy sacred head hath most gloriously enriched all the thoughts of the faithful with knowledge divine, crying out: Repent! as is its wont. And bowing down before it, O Forerunner, we faithfully glorify Christ with loud voices. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

O Virgin Mother of God, * Sovereign Lady * we thy servants with gratitude fervently hymn thee, * ever entreating thee for mercy, * and crying unto thee: * ‘O most holy Virgin, * deliver us from enemies visible and invisible * and from every threat of the adversary, ** for thou art our protection’.

After the Polyeleos

The Megalynarion: We magnify thee, * John the Forerunner of the Savior, * and all honor the finding of thy venerable head.

Selected Verse: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “That which was mystically commanded ...”:

Like a pearl was the head of the Baptist concealed in the damp earth, and, adorned like a divinely radiant lamp, it illumineth the whole world, working wonders. For like the dawn hath the Forerunner put forth the sun most splendidly, preaching to us again with unwaning light, crying out: Behold, the Lamb of God! (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

We ever thank and magnify thee, O most pure Theotokos, * and bowing down, we hymn thy birthgiving and unceasingly cry aloud, * O thou who art full of grace: do thou Save us, * O all-merciful Virgin, * in that thou art good, do thou snatch us from the demons * at the hour of trial, and the dread sentence, ** that we, thy servants, may not be put to shame.

Song of Ascents, the first Antiphon of Tone IV:

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: There will I make to spring forth a horn for David, *
I have prepared a lamp for my Christ.

Verse: Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness.

Let every breath praise the Lord!

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, §31 (7:17-30)

At that time: A rumor concerning Jesus went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously appareled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

After Psalm 50, this Sticheron, in Tone VI:

The precious head of the Baptist of Christ, which of old preached repentance to all the faithful, denounced the impurity of the iniquitous Herod, and lay upon a charger, hath appeared out of the hidden places of the earth and lieth before those who have recourse unto it with faith, who touch it with fear and bow down before it with spiritual love. Granting forgiveness of transgressions, and with forgiveness it bestoweth that which is needful and great mercy.

Canon to the Theotokos (the Paraklisis), with 6 Troparia, including its Irmos; and that to the Forerunner, with 8 Troparia, in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: When Israel walked on foot in the sea as on dry land, * on seeing their pursuer Pharaoh drowned, * they cried: * Let us sing to God * a song of victory.

Come, ye faithful, and with spiritual odes let us glorify the Forerunner, the voice of the Word, weaving hymns with a right laudable tongue and an almighty spirit, though our lips be impure.

With peaceful tranquility the Church of Christ hath been calmed, and with countless multitudes it is prosperously tended, chanting its yearly hymns unto thee, O Forerunner.

Assembling, O ye faithful, let us all honor with hymns, as is meet, the God-bearing head of the Forerunner which hath been given unto us by God as an inviolate treasure.

Theotokion: O pure one, who received the Creator, as He Himself desired, beyond understanding assuming flesh seedlessly from thy womb, thou hast truly been shown to be the Sovereign Lady of creation.

Katavasia: As appointed by the Typicon.

ODE III

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thou, * O Lord my God, * who hast exalted the horn of Thy faithful O good One, * and strengthened us upon the rock * of Thy confession.

A barren womb put thee forth as a divine off-shoot, a glorious attendant to the Bride which is the Church of the nations, betrothing Her to Christ, the true God and Bridegroom.

O Forerunner John, the wretched adulteress could not stop thy divinely eloquent voice with the sword, for from the earth thou hast revealed thy divine head to us.

The city of Jerusalem, desiring thee and radiantly celebrating, keepeth festival, having found thy head as a hidden treasure and an inexhaustible wellspring of healings, O Forerunner.

Theotokion: The wonder of thy divine birthgiving surpasseth the order of nature; for in a manner transcending nature thou didst conceive God in thy womb and, having given birth, dost ever remain a Virgin.

Sessional Hymn of the finding, Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “That which was mystically commanded ...”:

Like a treasure laid up in a hiding place was the head of the Forerunner preserved, the voice of the Word was hidden in a cistern; but like a grain of wheat planted in the depths of the earth it blossomed forth, yielding the fruit of divine life. The discovery thereof we all honor, glorifying Christ Who hath given it the grace to pour forth healings. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion:

Secretly pondering in his mind that which was commanded, * the incorporeal one presented himself without delay * in the house of Joseph, * and said unto her who knew not wedlock: * “He Who bowed the heavens down by His descent * shall be immutably contained wholly within thy womb! * And beholding Him assuming the guise of a servant in thy womb, * I am afraid to cry to thee: ** Rejoice, thou Bride unwedded!”

ODE IV

Irmos: Christ is my power, * my God and my Lord, * the holy Church divinely singeth, * crying with a pure mind, * keeping festival in the Lord.

Clearly thou wast the seal of the Old Covenant and the prophets, O spiritually rich Baptist, and preaching unto the ends of the earth, thou hast been revealed as the adorer of the bridal chamber of the New Covenant, O Forerunner.

O Forerunner rejoicing, thou didst endure the covering of thy precious and glorious head with coarse rags, as with a garment of royal purple.

By thy divine instructions, O John, a poor man, and a homeless wanderer, hath revealed thy divine head to be an abundant treasure.

O Forerunner, ever pray that the city of Jerusalem which honoreth thee be illumined with the radiance of the divine Spirit, and that it rejoice with the incorporeal ones in thy divine memory.

Theotokion: Eating hath shown me to be a dead plant, O most pure one, but the Tree of Life Who revealed Himself through thee, hath raised me up and made me an heir to the nourishment of paradise.

ODE V

Irmos: Illumine with Thy divine light, I pray, O Good One, * the souls of those who with love rise early to pray to Thee, * that they may know Thee, O Word of God, * as the true God, * Who recalleth us from the darkness of sin.

O Baptist, thou wast not a reed shaken by the trying winds of enmity, but an unshakable pillar for the people of God; for thou didst manifest thyself by the power of Elijah and the Spirit.

He that rejected the Godhead and belittled the glory of Christ, Who was baptized of thee, concealing thy divine grace, is rightly kept from the fold of God.

Thou hast opened up the portal of a bountiful and divine wellspring which poureth forth the waters of divine grace upon those who with love hymn thee, O glorious Forerunner, gladdening all with the streams of healing.

Theotokion: **B**earing the noetic beauty of thy soul thou didst become the Bride of God, sealed in thy virginity, O pure one, enlightening the world with the radiance of purity.

ODE VI

Irmos: **B**eholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, * I run to Thy calm haven, and cry to Thee: * Raise up my life from corruption, * O greatly Merciful One.

Christ called thee a true prophet, and the most exalted of the prophets, the Baptist and Forerunner of Life; for thou didst behold Him Whom the Law and the prophets foretold.

The fountain of miracles, the treasury of grace, thy sacred head, O Baptist, Prophet and Forerunner, could not bear to be concealed, and, having revealed itself, it poured forth springs of healing.

The Christ-loving and right glorious city hath set before itself thy precious and divine head, O Forerunner, as richly praiseworthy, and a radiantly adorned shield of salvation.

Theotokion: **M**oses, great among the prophets, prefigured thee in the ark, the table, the candlestick and the jar, signifying the incarnation of the Most High which took place through thee, O Virgin Mother.

Kontakion of the finding, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “Seeking the Highest ...”:

O prophet of God and Forerunner of grace, * having obtained thy head from the earth like a most sacred rose, * we ever receive healings, * for now, as of old, ** thou dost preach repentance in the world

Ikos: **T**hou wast exalted above all mankind, O John, as the Lord Himself bore witness. Hence, I fear to offer thee hymns of praise; yet, inspired by love, I have made bold to begin a hymn. Wherefore, deem me not to be an unworthy helper, that I may crown thy holy head, O thrice blessed one; for thou hast preached repentance to the world.

ODE VII

Irmos: An Angel made the furnace bedew the holy Children. * But the command of God consumed the Chaldeans * and prevailed upon the tyrant to cry: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

The Offspring of the Virgin called thee the greatest among those born of women, for thou didst live for Him on earth like an incorporeal one, an equal to the angels, crying out: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

From within the barren womb of thy mother, thou didst recognize Him Who had taken up His abode within the Virgin's womb, O Forerunner; and, with the voice of thy mother, leaping up, thou didst cry out to Him: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Out of the wilderness thou didst appear like a radiant dawn, an angel of light, taught by the most holy Spirit, teaching us to cry out: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Having acquired thee as a treasure, O ever-memorable one, this city is now truly blessed among all cities, O Forerunner of Christ. Wherefore, keeping festival it crieth aloud: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Through thee, O Virgin Mother, a radiant Light hath shone forth upon the whole world, for thou didst give birth unto God, the Creator of all. Him do thou beseech, O most pure one, that He send down great mercy upon us, the faithful.

ODE VIII

Irmos: Thou didst make flame bedew the holy children, * and didst burn the sacrifice of a righteous man with water. * For Thou alone, O Christ, dost do all as Thou willest, * Thee do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

The Forerunner was sent as the voice of the Son of God, crying out to barren hearts, making steadfast the pious faith in Him Who is God, Whom we supremely exalt throughout all ages!

Even now the Forerunner saith: Prepare ye the way of the Lord! For, having come for the sake of our sanctification, He maketh His abode in our hearts with the Father and the Spirit, throughout all ages.

When the voice of the Father was heard, and the divine Spirit was seen by the eyes of man, John the Forerunner, laying his hand upon Thee, O Christ, became a God-bearer in every way.

Thou wast sanctified from the womb by the Spirit of God, and shown to be a prophet while yet carried in the womb; and now, thou hast been shown to be the delight of the city that seeketh thee in the bosom of the earth, O prophet.

Theotokion: The golden candlestick prefigured thee who hast ineffably received the unapproachable Light which illumineth mankind with the knowledge of Himself. Him do we supremely exalt throughout all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: It is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

Being clearly one who kept the Ten Commandments, O Forerunner, thou wast rightly honored by Christ with ten-fold gifts. Wherefore, knowing thee to be a friend of the Word, we bless thee as an initiate of the mysteries of the Spirit.

Thou wast revealed to be a prophet of Christ and an apostle, an angel and forerunner, the Baptizer of God Incarnate, a priest and faithful martyr, a preacher to those bound in Hades, a rule for virgins, and an offspring of the desert.

The unbelieving soul of the priest hath been reproved by the miracle of the withered hand; for when his faith blossomed anew after thy head appeared, O blessed one, his outstretched hand was renewed.

The ranks of angels have truly proclaimed thy prophetic appearance to him who beheld thee, emulating the divine announcement of Gabriel which the sacred Zacharias received before thy birth.

Theotokion: Let us draw forth the healing of our passions, making haste to the glorious temple of the Forerunner; for choirs of angels, the souls of all the righteous, the Sovereign Lady and John the Baptist enter therein, bestowing healings.

Exapostilarion, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “To the disciples ...”:

Thy precious and luminous head hath shone forth from the impassable bosom of the earth, O Forerunner John, beacon of the immaterial light; and, celebrating the discovery thereof with love, we beseech thee to obtain the forgiveness of our grievous deeds, that we may complete the period of abstinence well, by thy prayers, O all-praised Baptist of the Savior. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

The divinely wise assembly of the faithful, which doth minister and faithfully hymn thee as truly the Theotokos, is comforted, O all-pure one. Wherefore, grant that by thy prayers we may properly finish the course of the fast, and bow down before the precious Cross and the saving sufferings of thy Son and God.

On the Praises, 4 Stichera of the finding, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast given a sign ...”:

Thy most precious head * hath opened the outer gates of abstinence, * O all-praised one, * setting before all the sweetest of divine gifts, * and with faith partaking of them, * we sweeten the bitterness of fasting, * praising thee with faith, and crying out to Christ God: * O Jesus Almighty, ** Thou art the Savior of our souls! (Twice)

The head of the Forerunner * which putteth forth myrrh * like an ever-flowing stream of water, * hath today been set upon a mystical and divine table, * noetically perfuming and dispelling * the bitterness of sorrows, * and filling with gladness all who cry out with love: * O Jesus Almighty, ** Thou art the Savior of our souls!

Like a most sharp sword * thy head hath severed the heads of the iniquitous foe, * pouring forth healings and divine gifts * upon all who reverence the Law. * Wherefore, we faithfully praise thee, * the friend and Forerunner of the Creator, O John, * and earnestly cry out to Him: * O Jesus Almighty, ** Thou art the Savior of our souls!

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Faithfully receiving with a voice of praise the most precious head of Thy Baptist, O Lord, which today was revealed taken from the earth, we Thy sinful servants, led to prayer, pray that on the day of Judgment we may for his sake, obtain cleansing and great mercy from Thee.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VI:

O right loving God and Savior, from all evil circumstances save Thou Thy servants, by the prayers of Thy Forerunner, and of all the saints, and through the entreaties of Thy Mother.

Great Doxology and Dismissal.

AT LITURGY:

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: four from ODE III, and 4 from ODE VI of the canon to the Forerunner.

A barren womb put thee forth as a divine off-shoot, a glorious attendant to the Bride which is the Church of the nations, betrothing Her to Christ, the true God and Bridegroom. (Twice)

O Forerunner John, the wretched adulteress could not stop thy divinely eloquent voice with the sword, for from the earth thou hast revealed thy divine head to us.

The city of Jerusalem, desiring thee and radiantly celebrating, keepeth festival, having found thy head as a hidden treasure and an inexhaustible wellspring of healings, O Forerunner.

Christ called thee a true prophet, and the most exalted of the prophets, the Baptist and Forerunner of Life; for thou didst behold Him Whom the Law and the prophets foretold.

The fountain of miracles, the treasury of grace, thy sacred head, O Baptist, Prophet and Forerunner, could not bear to be concealed, and, having revealed itself, it poured forth springs of healing.

The Christ-loving and right glorious city hath set before itself thy precious and divine head, O Forerunner, as richly praiseworthy, and a radiantly adorned shield of salvation.

Theotokion: Moses, great among the prophets, prefigured thee in the ark, the table, the candlestick and the jar, signifying the incarnation of the Most High which took place through thee, O Virgin Mother.

Troparion of the finding, in Tone IV:

The head of the Forerunner, which hath shone forth from the earth, * sheddeth rays of incorruption and healing upon the faithful. * Assembling a multitude of angels on High, * it calleth upon the human race below ** to send up glory with one voice to Christ God.

Kontakion of the finding, in Tone II:

O prophet of God and Forerunner of grace, * having obtained thy head from the earth like a most sacred rose, * we ever receive healings, * for now, as of old, ** thou dost preach repentance in the world

Prokeimenon, in Tone VI: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, * and shall hope in Him.

Verse: Harken, O God, unto my prayer, when I make supplication unto Thee.

EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, §176 (I Cor. 4:6-12).

Brethren: God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous man shall flourish like a palm tree and like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied.

Verse: Truth is sprung up out of the earth, and righteousness hath looked down from Heaven.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, §40 (11:2-15)

At that time: John having heard in the prison the works of Christ, sent two of his disciples, And they said unto Jesus, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Communion Verse: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.