

THE 25th DAY OF THE MONTH OF MAY
COMMEMORATION OF THE THIRD FINDING
OF THE PRECIOUS HEAD OF THE HOLY & GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER
AND BAPTIST JOHN
AT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant “Blessed is the man ...,” the first antiphon.

On “Lord, I have cried ...”: If this day falleth within the period of the Pentecostarion, we appoint 8 Stichera: 3 from the Pentecostarion, and 5 for the forerunner. But if it falleth within the Apostles’ Fast, we appoint 6 Stichera of the forerunner, repeating as necessary, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

O blessed forerunner John, * shedding rays brighter than those of the sun * thy head hath shone forth from the ground * and illumined the faithful. * Possessing it as a divine treasure, * we draw forth rich grace therefrom, * hallowing our souls, * bodies and thoughts; ** and celebrating, we call thee blessed.

Pouring forth abundant grace, * O blessed forerunner, * thy sacred head * was shown to the divinely wise priest * all unaware; * and he, hastening with faith and grace, * manifestly accomplished its arrival, * sanctified with the emperor and the divinely wise people, ** who fervently maintain the Orthodox Faith.

We celebrate the third revelation * of thy precious head, * which, when it was severed, O glorious one, * was crowned by the Trinity * because of thy godly zeal. * The ranks of the angels, * the company of martyrs, the divine apostles and all the prophets * rejoice in its discovery. ** With them be thou ever mindful of us, O thou forerunner of the Lord!

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

The divinely preserved head, a 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 ..., If this day fall within the period of Pentecost, we chant the Doxasticon from the Pentecostarion; but if it fall within the Apostles’ Fast, we chant the Dogmaticon in Tone VI:

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:

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

Thus saith the Lord: Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith the Lord. Speak, ye priests, to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation is accomplished, her sin is put away: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double the amount of her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. O thou who bringest glad tidings to Sion, go up on the high mountain; lift up thy voice with strength, thou that bringest glad tidings to Jerusalem; lift it up, fear not. I, the Lord God, I will hear the poor of Israel and will not forsake them: 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, courses of water. Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain righteousness: let the earth bring forth, and blossom with mercy, and bring forth righteousness likewise. Utter aloud a voice of gladness, and let this be made known, proclaim it to the ends of the earth. Say ye: The Lord hath delivered His servant Jacob. And if they shall thirst, He shall lead them through the desert; He shall bring forth water to them out of the rock. Rejoice, thou barren woman who bearest not; break forth and cry, thou who dost not travail: for more are the children of the desolate than of her who hath a husband.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF MALACHI

Thus saith the Lord Almighty: Behold, I send forth My messenger, and he shall survey the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into His temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom ye take pleasure in. Who will abide the day of his coming, or who will withstand at his appearing? For he is coming in as the fire of a furnace and as the herb of those who wash. He shall sit to melt and purify as it were silver, and as it were gold. And he will come to you as a Judge, and will be a swift witness against the wicked, and against the adulteresses, and against those who swear falsely by My name, and against those who keep back the hirelings' wages, and those who oppress the widow, and orphans, and wrest the judgment of the stranger, and fear not Me, saith the Lord Almighty. For I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed. But ye, the sons of Jacob, have perverted My statutes, and have not kept them. Wherefore, return to Me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord Almighty. And all nations shall call you blessed. Understand ye that I am the Lord Who discerneth between the righteous man and the iniquitous on the day whereon I shall preserve those who love Me. Be ye therefore aware and remember the law of Moses My servant, accordingly as I charged him with it in Horeb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances. And, behold, I will send to you Elijah the Tishbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord cometh, who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come and smite the earth grievously, saith the Lord Almighty, the holy God of Israel.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. Thus the righteous who is dead shall condemn the ungodly who are living. For they shall see the end of the wise, and shall not understand what God in His counsel hath decreed

of him. For the Lord shall cast the ungodly down headlong, that they shall be speechless, and He shall shake them from the foundation; and they shall be utterly laid waste, and be in sorrow; and their memorial shall perish. And when they cast up the account of their sins, they shall come with fear: and their own iniquities shall convict them to their face. Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation. And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves: "This was he whom we held betimes in derision, and as a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honor. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot among the saints? Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. We have been full of the ways of the iniquitous and destruction, and have trodden trackless paths, but the ways of the Lord have we not known."

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

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Come ye, and with splendor let us celebrate the divine feast; * for the baptizer of the Lord, * the lampstand of the Light, * the voice of the Word, the friend of the Bridegroom, * the great beacon of the Truth, hath appeared, ** showing us his holy head.

Verse: There will I make to spring forth a horn for David, * I have prepared a lamp for My Christ.

Because of Herod's commission of the abomination of incest * and his adulterous impurity, * thou didst denounce the iniquitous one, in that thou art a preacher of purity, O forerunner, * and thy head was cut off, * which, through the grace of thy miraculous deeds ** hath now been revealed to the faithful.

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

O ye who love the feasts of the Church, let us joyfully utter praise, * receiving the head of the forerunner * which hath been revealed by God, * as a treasury of gifts pouring forth miracles * like a divinely-flowing well-spring of grace ** arising from the bosom of the earth.

Glory ..., in Tone II:

Like a most precious abode 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, for it clearly foresaw the mystery of the ineffable Being; and it hath rendered the whole earth fragrant, emitting the myrrh of sanctification, noetically proclaiming the way of repentance and entreating the Savior of all on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., If this day fall within the period of Pentecost, the Doxasticon from the Pentecostarion; but if it fall within the Apostles' Fast;

The 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:

Like a divine treasure hidden in the earth * Christ hath revealed thy head to us, O prophet and forerunner; * wherefore, assembling for the feast of its discovery, * let us all chant divinely sounding hymns to the Savior ** Who saveth us from corruption by his supplications.

Glory ..., Both now ..., If this day falleth within the period of Pentecost, we chant the Troparion from the Pentecostarion; but if it falleth within the Apostles' Fast, we chant the Theotokion, in the same tone:

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 ...”: If this day falleth within the period of Pentecost, we chant the Troparion from the Pentecostarion, (Twice);

Glory ..., that of the finding, in Tone IV:

Like a divine treasure hidden in the earth * Christ hath revealed thy head to us, O prophet and forerunner; * wherefore, assembling for the feast of its discovery, * let us all chant divinely sounding hymns to the Savior ** Who saveth us from corruption by his supplications.

Both now ..., that from the Pentecostarion.

But if it fall within the Apostles’ Fast, we chant the Troparion of the finding, (Twice);

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

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 ...”:

The head of the forerunner, shining forth from the earth, doth shed rays of incorruption and healing upon the faithful. On high it assembleth a multitude of angels, and below it calleth upon the human race with one voice to send up glory to Christ God. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Sessional Hymn from the Pentecostarion; or this Theotokion, in the same melody:

O all-immaculate Virgin * who hast given birth to the transcendent God: * do thou unceasingly entreat Him with the forerunner, * that He grant forgiveness of transgressions * and correction of life before the end, * to us who, as is meet, hymn thee with faith and love, ** 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 ...”:

Most strangely yielded up like gold from veins of ore taken from the impenetrable bosom of the earth, thy sacred head hath now enriched the thoughts of all the faithful with divine understanding, crying aloud “Repent!”, as was thy wont. Venerating it, O forerunner, with faith we glorify Christ aloud. (Twice)

Both now ..., Sessional Hymn from the Pentecostarion; or this Theotokion, in Tone IV:

He that sitteth upon the throne of the cherubim * and abideth in the bosom of the Father * doth sit in thy womb as upon a throne, O Lady; * for, being truly God incarnate, * He reigneth over all nations, * and with understanding we now chant to Him. * Him do thou also entreat, ** that thy servants be saved.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify thee, O John, thou baptizer of Christ, and we all honor the discovery of thy precious head.

Selected Psalm verse:

A: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord. In His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Alleluia ..., Glory to Thee, O God. (Thrice)

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

Committing iniquity, the accursed Herod vilely had thy precious head cut off with the sword, but we, the faithful, kiss it with love.

Glory ..., another Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "That which was 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, the forerunner hath shone forth most splendidly like the sun, preaching to us again the unwaning light, crying out: Behold, the Lamb of God!

Both now ..., Theotokion in Tone VIII:

O thou who hast given birth to the immutable God, * by thy maternal supplications * make steadfast my heart which is ever changing due to sin, * slothfulness and the attacks of the deceiver; * that in thanksgiving I also may glorify thee O good one. * O all-immaculate Mary, Birthgiver of God, * have mercy on the flock ** which thou hast acquired.

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 LUKE, §31 (LK. 7: 17-30)

At that time, the rumor of Jesus went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. And the disciples of John showed 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 of the finding, in Tone VI:

The precious head of the baptizer 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 forgiveness, it bestoweth that which is needful and great mercy.

If this day falleth within the period of Pentecost, we chant first the canon from the Pentecostarion, with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos, and that of the forerunner, with 8 Troparia. But if this day falleth within the Apostles' Fast, we chant first the canon of supplication to the Theotokos (the Paraklisis) with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos, followed by that of the forerunner, with 8 Troparia.

Canon of the forerunner, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: **The wonderworking staff of Moses, * striking and dividing the sea in the figure of a cross, * once drowned Pharaoh the pursuing charioteer, * while it saved the fleeing people of Israel * as they fled on foot, * chanting a hymn unto God.**

As the voice of the Word, O blessed forerunner, thou heavenly man, thou hast loosed my muteness, as of old thou didst loose that of thy father, that with a voice of joy I may praise thee on the present feast of the discovery of thy head.

O forerunner who placed thy hand upon the head of Christ, thou showest forth this third revelation to the Church of God: thy precious head which recognized the Trinity and doth most manifestly sanctify the assemblies of the Orthodox.

Unable to endure burial any longer, O forerunner of the Lord, thou hast arranged to reveal thyself today, not enclosed in a jar, but resting in a silver vessel in a sacred place known to a priest.

The Imperial City hath now manifestly received a sacred gift, O forerunner who of old was deprived of thy head; and, adorned now in the entry thereof, it rejoiceth and calleth thee blessed, as is meet.

Theotokion: **T**hou didst spring forth from the womb of a barren woman, O all-praised one, preparing with thy discourse the ways of thy Master, Who shone forth ineffably from the most holy Virgin, wherefore, acknowledging her to be the Theotokos, all of us, the generations of men, call her blessed.

Katavasia: If this day falls within the period of Pentecost, we chant the Katavasia from the Pentecostarion, but if it falls within the Apostles' Fast, we chant the Irmoi: "I will open my mouth ..."

ODE III

Irmos: **O** Lord, Creator of the vault of Heaven * and Builder of the Church, * do Thou strengthen me in Thy love, O Summit of desire, * O Support of the faithful, * O only Lover of mankind.

Given to the wanton woman because of her voluptuous dancing, thy sacred head was carried in her hands; but now it is borne chastely and with reverence into the holy church in the hands of a priest.

The concourse of the faithful, the emperor and the priest, greet thee reverently, O glorious forerunner, chanting with joy, they go before thee with love, sanctified by thine arrival.

Thy most sacred head, shining forth like the radiant sun out of the sacred precincts, hath illumined the whole world with divine splendors, O prophet and forerunner of Christ.

Theotokion: **F**rom the womb of a barren woman didst thou radiantly shine forth as the star of the Sun of glory, O Baptist, going forth before Him Who shone forth from the cloud of the Virgin, dispelling the night of polytheism.

Kontakion & Ikos from the Pentecostarion.

Sessional Hymn of the finding, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up ...":

Most strangely yielded forth like gold from veins of ore out of the impenetrable bosom of the earth, O baptizer of Christ, thy sacred head hath enriched all who have recourse thereon on the feast of its discovery, magnifying with hymns the Savior and Creator Who granteth us great mercy for thy sake. **(Twice)**

**Glory ..., Both now ..., Sessional Hymn from the Pentecostarion;
or this Theotokion in Tone IV:**

As one who loveth sin, I beseech thee who hast given birth to the sinless God Who taketh away the sins of the world: O most pure one, have compassion on my greatly sinful soul and cleanse me of my many sins; for thou art the cleansing, salvation and aid of the faithful.

ODE IV

Irmos: **O** Lord, I have heard the mystery of Thy dispensation; * I have considered Thy works, * and I have glorified Thy Divinity.

As one more exalted than the prophets, thou wast deemed worthy to behold Him Whom they prophesied, going before Him with the power of Elijah, O blessed Forerunner.

For the third time thou hast revealed thy most glorious head, which poureth forth the myrrh of healings, and dispelleth the fetid passions.

Not interred in a jar of clay as before, but in a vessel of silver, thy head hath been revealed in a holy place, O right wondrous one.

Assembling, draw forth ye all inexhaustible healings from the precious head of the forerunner of Christ, the well-spring which hath been given to us.

Theotokion: O most pure one who hast given birth to Him Who hath raised up our lowly nature, save me who, having lived in arrogance of mind, have been exceedingly humbled.

ODE V

Irmos: O Light never-waning, * why hast Thou turned Thy face from me * and why hath the alien darkness surrounded me, * wretched though I be? * But do Thou guide my steps I implore Thee * and turn me back towards the light of Thy commandments.

As the sacred mediator between the Old and the New Covenants, O blessed forerunner, by thy mediations and the newly revealed finding of thy head, renew us who are grown old and who celebrate its restoration.

Bringing the grace of healings from Comana to the Imperial City, O forerunner, thy head calleth all cities to its arrival today, and the multitudes of the faithful gather, filled with light incorruptible.

The emperor rejoiceth at the entry of thy head more than in his robe of royal purple, O forerunner, and the godly priest, the namesake of the God-bearer, blesseth all, holding it in his hands, sending forth a benediction upon the fullness of the faithful.

Theotokion: Having given birth to the Master, thou wast shown to surpass the heavenly hosts, O all-immaculate Maiden, and thou hast deified the nature of mortals. Wherefore, with soul and tongue, O Virgin, we glorify thee as the true Theotokos.

ODE VI

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, * for many are mine iniquities; * lead me up from the abyss of evils I pray Thee, * for unto Thee have I cried, * and Thou hast hearkened unto me, * O God of my salvation.

In truth, the head of him who baptized Thee, O Christ, shining forth from the earth, hath dispelled the bitter winter of heresy and illumined the world. Draw ye forth enlightenment, divine grace and mercy, and sanctify your heads and souls, touching the head of the forerunner of grace, who touched the head of God in the waters of the Jordan.

Pray thou, O forerunner, that the heads of our enemies be crushed beneath the feet of all Orthodox Christians who lovingly honor thy precious head which denounced Herod.

Theotokion: Thou didst proclaim to those in Hades the light of Him Who came forth from the Virgin's womb and clothed Himself in flesh, becoming a man for the benefit of mankind, O blessed forerunner.

Kontakion of the finding, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Having fulfilled the dispensation concerning us ...":

A splendid and divine pillar in the world, * the luminary of the Sun, the forerunner, * showing forth his radiant and divine head unto the ends of the earth, * doth thereby sanctify those who bow down before it with faith crying aloud: ** O most wise baptizer of Christ, save us all!

Ikos: The God-loving head of the forerunner, like a well-spring of paradise springing forth from the earth, sendeth forth streams of grace, granting torrents of miracles to all in need. Wherefore, let us all approach it and earnestly draw forth from it divine streams of healings, for with endless gifts it giveth drink to men's souls, drowning the pains of the body, and in good time taking away every ailment. Let us therefore hymn it with love and venerate it with faith, kissing it with honor. With hymns, as with wreaths, let us, the faithful, crown it; let us cleanse ourselves beforehand of spiritual defilement, let us adorn our souls with divine virtues, and let us cry out unceasingly: O most wise baptizer of Christ, save us all!

ODE VII

Irmos: The Children of Judaea, * who of old came to dwell in Babylon, * trampled underfoot the flame of the furnace * through their faith in the Trinity, * as they sang: 'O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.'

Thou wast the most radiant luminary of the Sun of glory, O forerunner, dispelling the darkness of deception and illumining those who cry out with faith: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The honorable Church doth splendidly celebrate this feast of supplication, O forerunner, honoring thy head and crying out repeatedly: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thou didst announce beforehand the awesome advent of the Word by thy divine leaps, O prophet, and with a true voice didst proclaim the discovery of thy head to the priestly pastor who fervently desired thee.

Theotokion: Virginité and birthgiving flowed together within thee in a manner beyond nature and understanding, O Theotokos, for thou didst ineffably give birth to God incarnate, to Whom we chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: In his wrath the Chaldean Tyrant made the furnace blaze, * with heat fanned sevenfold for the servants of God; * but when he perceived that they had been saved by a greater power * he cried aloud to the Creator and Redeemer; * ‘ye children bless, ye priests praise, * ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages’.

The baptist and forerunner, the earthly angel, the renowned one who upbraided iniquity, who before beheld the manifestation of the Trinity, revealeth his head for a third time to all who chant with love: Ye priests, bless; ye people, supremely exalt Christ throughout all ages!

The most meek emperor and the Christ-loving people greet thee earnestly, O all-praised one; and the archpastor stretcheth forth his hand to thee and, clasping it to his breast, danceth with gladness and crieth out in thanksgiving: Ye people, supremely exalt Christ throughout all ages!

Thy head, deposited in silver vessels, shining forth with greater luster than that of gold as a precious treasure, O forerunner, is given to the Imperial City, and it, enriched with its divine gifts, doth chant earnestly: Ye priests, bless; ye people, supremely exalt Christ throughout all ages!

Theotokion: While borne in thy mother’s womb, O blessed John, rejoicing, thou didst worship Him Who beareth all things, O most praised one who art concealed in a womb not made of flesh. And, preaching the Lamb of God Who was born of the holy Virgin, thou didst piously cry: Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: Every ear is awestruck at hearing of God’s ineffable condescension, * for the Most High voluntarily descended and assumed flesh, * becoming man in the Virgin’s womb; * wherefore we the faithful magnify the most pure Theotokos.

With sacred hymns let us praise the venerable fruit of the barren woman, the greatest among those born of women, the warrior of Christ the King, the great forerunner who proclaimed the Lamb Who taketh away the transgressions of the world.

Having filled a cup to overflowing, with exalted preaching thou dost call together the Church of Christ for the discovery of thy head, O forerunner, crying out: “Come ye, and take your fill of the beautiful things which I have prepared, and magnify Him Who is given to men!”

Rejoicing, the emperor, the namesake of the archangel, doth piously receive thee in His kingdom, O angel of God, and with him the goodly archpastor and the God-bearing and divinely wise priest, manifestly adorned with grace and his calling.

Thou didst cause divine enlightenment to shine forth with the entry of thy head, O glorious one, illumining the hearts of the faithful who cry out to thee: O never-waning luminary of the Sun, all-holy forerunner, deliver us, thy people, and all our city from the darkness of the passions!

Theotokion: O Savior Who wast born and preserved her who gave Thee birth incorrupt even after birthgiving, have pity on me when Thou wilt sit to judge me according to my works, and overlook mine iniquities and sins, in that Thou art a sinless and merciful God and the Lover of mankind.

Exapostilarion of the finding:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast illumined us ...”:

As the voice of one crying aloud, thou couldst not bear that thy head be covered by the earth any longer, O forerunner John, and announced its discovery in a certain manner, which we honor today.

Glory ..., another Exapostilarion:

Spec. Mel.: “With the disciples ...”:

Thy precious and luminous head hath shone forth from the impassable bosom of the earth, O forerunner John, beacon of immaterial light; and, lovingly celebrating its discovery, we entreat thee to obtain the forgiveness of our grievous deeds, that we may complete the period of abstinence well, through thy supplications, O all-praised baptizer of the Savior.

Both now ..., Theotokion:

We who are crucified with Christ place our trust in thee and God Who issued forth from thee, O most pure one. By thine entreaties to Him keep us unharmed until the end.

On the Praises, 4 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, * thou wellspring of miracles which giveth drink unto the faithful, * and which hath proclaimed the saving advent of the Savior, * and which of old perceived the coming of the Spirit * and which made His abode in thee, * who didst bridge the grace of the Old and New Covenants. ** Entreat Christ God that our souls be granted great mercy! **(Twice)**

The head of the Forerunner, * which once was concealed in an earthen vessel, * hath appeared, manifestly given up from the bosom of the earth * and pouring forth streams of healing; * for in the waters did he wash the head of Him that even now * covereth the chambers of the firmament with waters * and raineth down divine remission 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.

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

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Faithfully receiving with a voice of praise the most precious head of Thy Baptist, O Lord, which today was revealed 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 ..., from the Pentecostarion, or this 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. After the Trisagion, the Troparion of the finding, in Tone IV:

Like a divine treasure hidden in the earth hath Christ revealed thy head to us, O prophet and forerunner; wherefore, assembling for the feast of its discovery, let us all chant divinely sounding hymns to the Savior Who saveth us from corruption by his supplications.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Troparion from the Pentecostarion, or the Theotokion:

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.

Litanies. Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: from Odes III & VI of the canon of the forerunner.

Given to the wanton woman because of her voluptuous dancing, thy sacred head was carried in her hands; but now it is borne chastely and with reverence into the holy church in the hands of a priest. (Twice)

The concourse of the faithful, the emperor and the priest, greet thee piously, O glorious forerunner, chanting with joy, and they go before thee with love, sanctified by thy coming.

Thy most sacred head, shining forth like the radiant sun out of the sacred precincts, hath illumined the whole world with divine splendors, O prophet and forerunner of Christ.

Truth, the head of him who baptized Thee, O Christ, shining forth from the earth, hath dispelled the bitter winter of heresy and illumined the world. Draw ye forth enlightenment, divine grace and mercy.

And sanctify your heads and souls, touching the head of the forerunner of grace, who touched the head of God in the waters of the Jordan.

Pray thou, O forerunner, that the heads of our enemies be crushed beneath the feet of all Orthodox Christians who lovingly honor thy precious head which denounced Herod.

Theotokion: **T**hou didst proclaim to those in hell the light of Him Who came forth from the Virgin's womb and clothed Himself in flesh, becoming a man for the benefit of men, O blessed forerunner.

Troparion of the finding, in Tone IV:

Like a divine treasure hidden in the earth * Christ hath revealed thy head to us, O prophet and forerunner; * wherefore, assembling for the feast of its discovery, * let us all chant divinely sounding hymns to the Savior ** Who saveth us from corruption by his supplications.

Kontakion of the finding, in Tone VI:

A splendid and divine pillar in the world, * the luminary of the Sun, the forerunner, * showing forth his radiant and divine head unto the ends of the earth, * doth thereby sanctify those who bow down before it with faith crying aloud: ** O most wise baptizer of Christ, save us all!

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

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

EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, §176 (II COR. 4: 6-15)

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. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

Alleluia, in Tone V: A light hath dawned for the righteous man, and gladness for the upright of heart.

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, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, 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.