

Saturday, August 29, 2023
Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John

Troparion:

O Prophet and Forerunner of the coming of Christ, in spite of our honor and devotion we are unable to give you worthy praise, through your glorious and noble birth your mother's childlessness was ended, your father's tongue was freed, and the incarnation of the Son of God was proclaimed to the world.

Praise goes well with every just man's memory, but for you only Christ's praises will do. Of all the prophets, you are indeed the greatest, for you, alone, were chosen to announce Him. You, alone, were chosen to baptize Him in the Jordan! Truth has cost you much, O John the Baptist, but joy has also filled your heart, for even those long dead were graced to hear your words: God has taken flesh to save the world from sin, and grant us His great Mercy!

Kontakion:

The awesome beheading of the precursor was a sign of the eventual descent of Christ into hell. Cry your eyes out you murder-loving Herodias! You loved neither the law of God nor Life Everlasting, but only the temporary and perishable age!

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator, despise not the entreating cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always ever protect those who honor you!

Prokeimenon in the 7th Tone:

The righteous one shall rejoice in the Lord and shall set his hope on Him.
(Vs.) Hear my voice, O God, when I pray unto Thee!

Epistle:

The reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (Acts 13:25-33)

In those days, as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' 'Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize Him nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. Though they could charge Him with nothing deserving death, yet they asked Pilate to have Him killed. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this He has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, 'Thou art my Son, today I have begotten Thee.'

Alleluia Verses:

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon
(Vs.) They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Gospel:

The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark. (Chapter 6:14-30)

At that time king Herod heard of Jesus, for His name had become well known; and He kept saying, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are working through Him." But others were saying, "It is Elijah." Yet others were saying, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets." But when Herod heard of this, he said, "It is John whom I beheaded; he has risen from the dead." For Herod himself had had John arrested and bound in prison, because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife whom he had married. For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." But Herodias laid snares for him, and would have liked to put him to death, but she could not. For Herod feared John, knowing he was a just and holy man, and protected him; and when he heard him talk, he did many things, and he liked to hear him. And a favorable day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet to the officials, tribunes and leaders of Galilee. And Herodias' own daughter having come in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." And he swore to her, "Whatever you ask, I will give you, be it even half of my kingdom." And she went out and said to her mother, "What am I to ask?" And she answered, "The head of John the Baptist." And she came in at once with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you right away to give me on a dish the head of John the Baptist." And grieved as he was, the king, because of his oaths and his guests, was unwilling to displease her. But immediately sending an executioner, he commanded that his head be brought. Then he beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a dish and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. And his disciples, hearing of it, came and took away his body, and laid it in a tomb. And the apostles gathered together to meet Jesus and reported to Him all they had done and taught. (Mark 6:14-30)