

THE 30th DAY OF THE MONTH OF AUGUST
AFTERFEAST OF THE BEHEADING OF THE FORERUNNER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR HOLY FATHERS ALEXANDER, JOHN AND PAUL THE
NEW, PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPLE
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 for the Forerunner, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

O thou who art the divine mediator between the old and the new testaments, * the prophet and forerunner, * an angel in the flesh, * the denouncer of lawlessness, * the offspring of the womb of a barren woman, * a fire-breathing mouth: * thou didst upbraid Herod, who committed iniquity. * And, unable to endure thy denunciation, * he commanded that thy head be cut off; * and it was brought in on a platter * like food of abstinence, * divine delight, * continually denouncing the adulterer.

Incited by her iniquitous mother, * the iniquitous daughter * asked for thine all-glorious head * which is cherished by the angels; * for she was unable to endure thy denunciation. * Wherefore, bearing it on a platter, * and dancing as she carried it, * she turned the joy of those at the banquet into lamentation. * Yet thou dost continually denounce * the abomination of fornication, O blessed one. * Entreat Christ, * that our souls be saved.

Rendered foolish by drunkenness, * Herod was carried away * by adultery and voices entwined in song, * and in fulfillment of his unrighteous oath * he caused the murder * of thee, the righteous prophet, O glorious one. * But thy death manifestly announced immortality * to those who had died before; * for thou becamest for those in Hades a preacher and herald, * proclaiming the saving advent * of Christ our God. * Him do thou entreat, * that He save and enlighten our souls.

And 3 stichera of the holy hierarchs, in Tone I:
Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

O most blessed Alexander, * thou wast a shepherd of the Church * and a champion of Orthodoxy, * having wisely cast down the heresy of Arius, * and thou didst pray with supplications, * O all-wise and glorious one, * that his soul be cast, in its wickedness, * into vile places. * Wherefore, we honor thee together.

O honorable John, * thou didst disdain the corruption of the flesh, * and in thine abstinence and faith, * thy vigilance and confession, * thou wast found to be an earthly angel * and a heavenly man. * Entreat Christ, * that He grant unto our souls * great mercy.

O wise one, thou didst truly submit * to the divine teachings of Paul, * and didst hasten to the heights of the virtues * as to the third heaven, O glorious one, * and didst hear the ineffable and divine words * of the Spirit. * O blessed Paul, * thou immovable foundation of the Orthodox, * by thy supplications render the Savior merciful to us.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Again doth Herodias rage insanely, again is she vexed. O what deceitful dancing, what a feast of deception! The Baptist is beheaded, and Herod is troubled. Through the supplications of Thy forerunner, O Lord, grant peace to our souls.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ..."-

Seeing Thee crucified, O Christ, * she who gave Thee birth * cried aloud: * "What is this strange mystery which I behold, O my Son? * How is it that Thou diest, suspended in the flesh on the Tree, * O Bestower of life?"

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos; and Glory ..., in Tone IV:

Herod celebrated an unseemly birthday and an utterly shameless feast; for captivated by lust for a woman and excited by a woman's wantonness, he had the head of the forerunner cut off; but he did not cut out the tongue of the prophet, who denounced his foolishness. Shedding innocent blood, he wished to conceal his iniquitous sin; but he could in no wise stop the voice which calleth all to repentance. And though he made merry amid murder, we lovingly celebrate the blessed slaying of John the Baptist; for he preceded Life into hades, to proclaim Christ our God, the Orient from on high, the only greatly Merciful One, unto those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

When she beheld Thee, * the Lamb and Shepherd, on the Tree, * the ewe-lamb who gave Thee birth lamented * and exclaimed to Thee maternally: * "O my Son most desired, * how is it that Thou art suspended * upon the tree of a Cross, O Long-suffering One? * How is it, O Word, that Thy feet and hands * have been transfixed with nails by the iniquitous, * and Thou hast poured forth Thy blood, O Master?"

Troparion of the forerunner, in Tone II:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's witness is sufficient for thee, O forerunner. Thou wast truly shown to be more honorable than the prophets, in that thou wast counted worthy to baptize in the streams Him Whom thou didst proclaim. Wherefore, having suffered, rejoicing, for the truth, even unto those in Hades thou didst proclaim God, Who had manifested Himself in the flesh, Who taketh away the sin of the world and granteth us great mercy.

Glory ..., Troparion of the holy hierarchs, in Tone IV:

O God of our fathers, deal with us ever according to Thy meekness; take not Thy mercy away from us, but through the supplications of these saints direct our life in peace.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion or Stavrotheotokion.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the forerunner, in Tone II:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's witness is sufficient for thee, O forerunner. Thou wast truly shown to be more honorable than the prophets, in that thou wast counted worthy to baptize in the streams Him Whom thou didst proclaim. Wherefore, having suffered, rejoicing, for the truth, even unto those in Hades thou didst proclaim God, Who had manifested Himself in the flesh, Who taketh away the sin of the world and granteth us great mercy. (Twice)

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

O God of our fathers, deal with us ever according to Thy meekness; take not Thy mercy away from us, but through the supplications of these saints direct our life in peace.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or Stavrotheotokion.

One canon from the Oktoechos, with 6 troparia, including the Irmos; and two canons for the saints, with 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the Forerunner, the composition of John the Monk, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: Having traversed the water as though it were dry land and escaped the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried aloud: Let us sing to our Deliverer and God!

Let us hymn the sacred forerunner, the prophet who appeared from the womb of a barren woman unto Him Who ineffably is borne in the Virgin's womb.

Having transcended the boundaries of nature, thou didst preserve the laws of righteousness, denouncing an iniquitous union, undaunted by the king's cruelty.

Nurtured by the law as with milk, thou didst oppose the vile adultery, sealing the legislation of lawful union like a seal of the law.

Theotokion: The ranks of angels and men praise thee unceasingly, O Mother unwedded; for thou didst bear the Creator in thine arms as a babe.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs, in Tone VIII

Irmos: Let us chant unto the Lord Who led His people across the Red Sea, for He alone hath gloriously been glorified.

Today the thrice radiant splendor of the fathers hath shone forth in their most glorious memory. Delighting therein with faith, let us join chorus.

O holy hierarch Alexander, with the boldness of piety thou didst destroy the assertions of the heretics, preaching the Trinity.

Using thy tongue as a pen for divine writing, O father John, the grace of the Spirit hath explained the Faith.

Theotokion: Let us chant unto the Lord Who was well-pleased to take flesh of the Virgin without seed, for our salvation and deliverance.

ODE III

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: O Lord, Fashioner of the vault of heaven and Creator of the Church, establish me in the love of Thee, Thou summit of desire, confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind.

As mediator standing between the old and the new covenant of the Gospel preaching, thou didst denounce the iniquitous union of the tyrant, and, rejoicing, didst accept a glorious death.

Instructed beforehand by her iniquitous mother, the girl said unto Herod, who was befuddled with drunkenness: "Give me the head of John on a platter, that I may present to my mother the gift she desireth!"

The shameless tyrant, unable to endure the reproof of thy God-bearing tongue, O glorious prophet, gave thy precious martyr's head to the girl as a reward for her dancing.

Theotokion: Having made thy bodily abode within the Virgin, O Lord, Thou didst appear unto men, in that it was fitting that they behold Thee. Her didst Thou show to be the true Theotokos and the help of the faithful, O thou Who alone lovest mankind.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

Irmos: Thou art the confirmation of those who have recourse to Thee, O Lord, Thou art the Light of the benighted; and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

With excellence thou didst shepherd the flock of thy Master, O Alexander; wherefore, He glorifieth thee eternally as a holy hierarch.

With thy tongue thou didst pour forth the waters of salvation and doctrines of piety for thy flock, O blessed John.

O most blessed Paul, thou wast manifestly the radiant vessel of the election of Christ and His image in calling and life.

Theotokion: All of us Christians have thee as our refuge and bulwark, and we glorify thee without ceasing, O thou who knewest not wedlock.

Kontakion of the hierarchs, in Tone VIII:

Crucified by the love of Christ and having taken His yoke upon you as a yoke, ye showed yourselves to be emulators of His life and became partakers of His divine glory, O divinely wise Alexander, wondrous John and glorious Paul. Wherefore, standing before His throne, ye earnestly make supplication for our souls.

Sedalion of the forerunner, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Having shone forth by the judgment of God from a barren woman, and loosed the bonds on the tongue of thy father, thou didst show forth the Sun Who illumineth thee as the morning-star, and to the people in the wilderness didst proclaim the Creator, the Lamb Who taketh away the sins of the world. Wherefore, thou didst denounce the king with zeal, O ever-memorable and most lauded John, and thine all-glorious head was cut off. Pray thou to Christ God, that He grant remission of offenses unto those who with love celebrate thy holy memory.

Glory ..., Sedalion of the hierarchs, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

The thrice-radiant lamp of our fathers, Alexander, John and the glorious Paul, hath shone forth for divine understanding, ever illumining the congregations of the faithful and destroying all the impiety of the ungodly and putting them to shame by their teaching of wisdom.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O most immaculate Virgin who gavest birth to the transcendent God: with the incorporeal ones unceasingly entreat Him, that, before the end, he grant remission of transgressions and amendment of life unto us who hymn thee with faith and love as is meet, O thou who alone art most hymned.

Stavrotheotokion: **O** all-immaculate Virgin Mother of Christ God, a sword passed through thine all-holy soul when thou didst behold thy Son and God crucified of His own will. Cease thou never to entreat Him, O blessed one, that He grant us forgiveness of transgressions.

ODE IV

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: **T**hou art my strength, O Lord, Thou art my power; Thou art my God, Thou art my joy, Who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, hast visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the Prophet Habbakuk I cry to Thee: **G**lory to Thy power, O Thou Who lovest mankind!

He who was unable to endure the censure of boldness and the forthrightness of piety, who incurred the retribution of the law, who was depraved by vile pleasures, having bound him who is enrolled immaterially in the heavenly choirs before the end, placed him under guard.

The wretched voluptuary, sick with spiritually harmful drunkenness and the burning of fornication, having been bound by the dancing of a girl's feet, becometh the murderer of the prophet; for he conceived drunkenness, the mother of fornication, and begat grievous iniquity.

Of a truth, in thee the divine voice did not prove false; for thou art the greatest among the prophets, in that thou wast vouchsafed to prophesy from thy mother's womb, as a fetus not fully formed, and seeing God the Word Whom thou hadst prophesied, thou didst baptize Him in the body.

Theotokion: **T**hou art the boast of the faithful, O thou who knewest not wedlock; thou art the intercessor and refuge of Christians, their bulwark and haven: For thou bearest entreaties to thy Son, O most immaculate one, and savest from misfortunes those who with faith and love know thee to be the pure Theotokos.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

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

With the torrent of thy tongue thou didst hurl the betrayer of Christ, like Judas, into a place of fetor, O blessed Alexander.

Like a fruitful olive-tree standing in the house of God, O John, thou therein didst bring forth those who believe on Him, like ripe fruit.

With wings of humility thou didst elude the snares of the enemy; wherefore, exalted, O venerable Paul, thou art become a citizen of heaven.

Theotokion: **L**et us hymn the Virgin who remained virgin after giving birth, in that she gave birth to Christ God, Who hath delivered the world from deception.

ODE V

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: **W**herefore hast Thou thrust me from before Thy face, **O** Light never-waning? **A**nd why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? **B**ut turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

Inspired by the enmity of her mother, the yet more savage offspring of a savage lioness demanded as the price of her foul demonic dancing the head of the forerunner and herald, which the wild beasts themselves revered in the wilderness.

O Thine ineffable and unapproachable judgments, O Thou Who lovest mankind! For the vile girl won with her dancing him who, while yet in his mother's womb, was a receptacle of the Holy Spirit, and grew in chastity and purity.

When he who with love and ardor preferred his intercourse with iniquity, he permitted the murder of the prophet to be added to his birthday drinking and with love of pleasure mingled a cup full of the holy blood of the prophet.

Theotokion: Possessing maternal boldness before thy Son, O all-pure one, disdain not thought of kinship with us, we pray, for thee alone do Christians set before the Master as a merciful cleansing.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

Irmos: Rising at dawn, we cry to Thee: O Lord, save us! For Thou art our God, and we know none other than Thee.

Adorning the cathedra of Metrophanes, O Alexander, even before thine elevation thou didst shine forth in hierarchal teaching.

Though thou didst live in humility, O father, thou didst show thyself to be wondrous in Nicaea by thy divinely eloquent teachings.

The grace of thy words maketh firm the Church, which hath acknowledged thee to be a pillar of Orthodoxy, O John.

Theotokion: O Theotokos, we hymn thee who wast a virgin even after giving birth; for thou gavest birth for the world unto God the Word in the flesh.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forerunner

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

Bringing tribulation upon thyself for the commandments of the law, O blessed one, with reproofs thou didst chastise the one who was committing iniquity; for thou wast not a reed shaken by the winds of the enemy.

Thy head, dripping with the blood of thy slaughter, was offered as a prize for a lustful display, but continued to denounce Herod as one who committed incest, even after thine end.

Clad in camels' hair while in the wilderness, thou didst live as splendidly as a king therein; and bearing royal adornment therein, thou didst gain dominion over the passions.

Theotokion: **M**ay we be delivered from grievous transgressions through thy supplications, O pure Theotokos, and may we receive divine radiance from the Son of God Who was ineffably incarnate of thee, O all-pure one.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

Irmos: **G**rant me a robe of light, O Thou Who clothest Thyself in light as in a garment, greatly merciful Christ our God.

Manfully defending the Church of Christ, O glorious father, with the arrows of thy prayers thou didst shoot down Arius, the betrayer of Christ.

As a branch of the vine of life, O glorious and most blessed John, thou didst cause fruit to grow forth for thy Master.

Piously thou didst cause to flee from the imperial city him who iniquitously cast out the veneration of icons, O most honored Paul.

Theotokion: **O** thou who alone gavest birth in the flesh to God the Word, deliver our souls from the snares of the enemy, we pray.

Kontakion of the forerunner, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

Working iniquity, Herod gave thy precious head to a woman, O forerunner. We, venerating it, are filled with gladness; but Herodias weepeth and lamenteth, with Herod and the dancer.

Ikos: **L**et us prepare ourselves, O brethren, for a divine banquet; for, lo! the God-bearing head of the forerunner is set before us in church like pure food, pouring forth blood, emitting surpassing healings, and using fasting as a remedy to cure those sick with the drunkenness of sin. Let no one, then, confine himself to corruptible food and thus be deprived now of the divine food of the forerunner. The world is filled with gladness, but Herodias weepeth and lamenteth, with Herod and the dancer.

ODE VII

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the fire stood in awe of the condescension of God; wherefore, the youths, dancing in the furnace with joyous step, as though in a meadow, sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Armed with lustful desire and grievous drunkenness, striking against the Baptizer of Christ, the immovable tower of abstinence and indestructible city of chastity, the iniquitous Herod was shattered.

Her mind beguiled by the persuasions of her mother, she who was the pupil of the devil was neither afraid nor ashamed, nor anything loath to bear thy precious head shamelessly on a platter.

Sent forth like an angel, thou didst shine forth like a beacon; as a prophet thou didst preach Christ Who appeared as the Lamb of God; and as a martyr thou wast beheaded, proclaiming Him to the dead in Hades.

Theotokion: **D**elivered from the ancient fall and condemnation by thy birthgiving, O Virgin Mother, we ever glorify thee as the manifest cause of our liberation, with thy Son Who gaveth Himself as deliverance for us.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the children who went down from Judea trampled the flame of the furnace underfoot by their faith in the Trinity, chanting: **O** God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thou wast truly shown to be an initiate of the all-divine Trinity, O Alexander who art most rich, and didst worship the incorrupt One with purity of heart, chanting: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Christ hath shown thee to be a treasury of doctrines, O John, and a well-spring of miracles, pouring forth a wealth of divine knowledge upon those who cry out: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thine angelic life, like that of the divine Paul whose namesake thou wast, hath glorified thee throughout all the earth, O divinely wise one, in the breadth of the outpouring of the wisdom of thy heart and in thine ineffable understanding.

Theotokion: **O** Thou Who becamest incarnate of the Virgin's womb, Thou hast appeared for our salvation. Wherefore, acknowledging Thy Mother as the Theotokos, we cry out in thanksgiving: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: **M**adly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones, but seeing them saved by a higher Power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: **Y**e children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Going before Thy nativity and divine suffering, in the nethermost parts of the earth John, as the voice of the Word, becometh, through the sword, the prophet and herald of Thy coming there, crying: Exalt Christ supremely for all ages, ye dead, as Life-bestower, ye blind, as Giver of light, ye captives, as your Deliverer!

He who from a barren woman preceded the Offspring of the Virgin hath now, through the cutting off of his head, become the precursor of the voluntary crucifixion of the Creator of all, crying to those in Hades: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

When thy body was deprived of thy head, O forerunner, thy masterly soul was parted from thy flesh; but the divinity of Emmanuel was never separated from his flesh, and not a bone of God the Master was broken. Wherefore, we exalt Him supremely for all ages.

Theotokion: O all-pure Virgin, bearer of the Lord, by thy merciful entreaty cleanse thou the wounds and sores of my soul, and raise me up who am fallen. Save, O save me, the prodigal, O most immaculate one! For thou art mine intercessor and help, who alone art pure and blessed for all ages.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

Irmos: Hymn ye the Lord, Who was glorified on the holy mountain, and with fire revealed to Moses the mystery of the Ever-virgin in the bush; and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Slaying the wicked Arius by thine earnest supplications, O divinely wise Alexander, thou didst banish him to a vile place, like another Judas, since he had apostatized in like manner.

The mindless Arius, the enemy of God, who as a traitor rent asunder the robe of Christ, fell headlong, and now, like another Judas, lieth in torment in hell, O thrice-blessed Alexander.

Through abstinence and unsurpassed vigils thou wast shown to be as one of the incorporeal beings, and in thy constant teachings thou becamest a rich well-spring of paradise for all ages, O John.

Theotokion: How can a human choir hymn thine awesome birth giving, O Theotokos? For thou remainest a virgin, even though thou truly gavest birth in manner past recounting, and thy mysteries transcend cause, O Theotokos.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: Every ear is in awe to hear of the ineffable condescension of God, how the Most High willingly came down, even unto the flesh, becoming man through the Virgin's womb. Wherefore, O ye faithful, let us magnify the all-pure Theotokos.

The evil horde and the devil, its commander, were afraid of thy divinely eloquent tongue which proclaimed Christ, O prophet, and through the agency of a wanton girl prevailed upon Herod to cut off thy head; but we magnify thee as the baptizer of Christ.

The valley of humble nature hath been exalted, and the hill of deadly pride hath been laid low; for the voice of the Light crying in the wilderness hath cried out in the dwellings of Hades: "Lift up, ye gates, for the King of all shall enter!"

Human passions tremble, and the demons flee in fear from the overshadowing of the grace given thee by God. But deliver thy flock, which ever magnifieth thee with faith, O forerunner of the Lord, from temptation by both.

Theotokion: Draw Thy bow, and prosper and reign, O Son of the Mother of God, subduing the Moslems who wage war against us and granting victory to our Orthodox hierarchs over all heresies, through the entreaties of her who gaveth birth to Thee, O Word of God.

Canon of the Holy Hierarchs

Irmos: With never-ceasing glorifications we magnify thee, the Mother of God Most High, who knewest not wedlock, who, in manner past understanding, didst truly give birth to God at the word of the archangel, and art more highly exalted than the all-pure hosts.

O Metrophanes, as thy holy and lawful disciple and a hierarch meek and chaste, Alexander submitted to thy life-bearing words and is now fittingly called blessed.

O divinely blessed father John who art most rich, thou wast an excellent initiate of ineffable mysteries, and wast made a teacher of ineffable things. Wherefore, O father, thou didst preach the divine Trinity.

O father Paul, as is meet we honor thee as a guileless and holy pastor, blameless, pure and undefiled, chaste and glorious, setting forth the word of truth aright.

O divinely blessed Trinity of wondrous fathers, now deified with immortal divinity in the heavens, cease ye never to pray to Him Whom ye piously served on earth, in behalf of your flock.

Theotokion: O holy, most immaculate vessel of sweet fragrance, entreat Christ to Whom thou gavest birth, that He grant victory to our hierarchs over all heresy and deliverance from the yoke of oppression to thy people; for thee do we unceasingly magnify.

Exapostilarion of the forerunner:

The vile Herod was in nowise able to cut off the reproofs of thy tongue, O baptizer of the Savior, and therefore deceitfully cut off the head of thee, the husbandman of purity.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having destroyed the curse on the world by thy divine birth giving, O pure Maiden, through thy supplications deliver from all misfortunes the flock which entreateth thee with faith.

At the Aposticha, stichera from the Oktoechos; and Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

O forerunner of the Savior, thou didst reprove the king, that he not commit iniquity. But the disporting of an iniquitous woman caused Herod to cut off thy head. Wherefore, from the rising of the sun, even unto the west, thy name is praised. As thou hast boldness before the Lord, earnestly entreat Him, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

When she saw the Lamb * stretched out upon the Tree of the Cross of His own will, * the ewe-lamb cried out maternally, * in pain and lamentation: * "O my Son, what is this strange sight? * How is it that Thou Who, as Lord, givest life unto all * dost die, O Long-suffering One? * I glorify Thy great condescension, O my God!"