Reader’s Great Vespers on Thursday September 10th, 2020

Beheading of the Holy and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John (August 29th/September 11th)

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory to Thee O God, glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Good One!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. ***(Thrice)***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. ***(Thrice)***

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Lord have mercy. ***Twelve Times***

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever.  The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand.  At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid.  The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them.  Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth.  He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run.  They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst.  Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice.  He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.  He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man.  To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart.  The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted.  There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them.  The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.  He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.  Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad.  Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled.  Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return.  Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.  Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works.  Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being.  May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord.  O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night.  How magnified are Thy works, O Lord!  In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.  Glory to Thee, O God. ***Thrice****.*

Lord, have mercy. ***Forty Times***

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in Him with trembling. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Arise O Lord, save me, O my God! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Salvation belongs to the Lord: Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory to Thee, O God. ***Three Times***

Lord, have mercy ***Three Times***

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

In the 6th Tone: Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me.

Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord. \* Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me; \* attend to the voice of my supplication, \* when I cry unto Thee. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be set forth \* as incense before Thee, \* the lifting up of my hands \* as an evening sacrifice. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips.

Incline not my heart unto words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins.

With men that work iniquity; and I will not join with their chosen.

The righteous man will chasten me with mercy and reprove me; as for the oil of the sinner, let it not anoint my head.

For yet more is my prayer in the presence of their pleasures; swallowed up near by the rock have their judges been.

They shall hear my words, for they be sweetened; as a clod of earth is broken upon the earth, so have their bones been scattered nigh unto hades.

For unto Thee, O Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes, in Thee have I hoped; take not my soul away.

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity.

The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone until I pass by.

With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication.

I will pour out before Him my supplication, mine affliction before Him will I declare.

When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths.

In this way wherein I have walked they hid for me a snare.

I looked upon my right hand, and beheld, and there was none that did know me.

Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul.

I have cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion art Thou in the land of the living.

Attend unto my supplication, for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from them that persecute me, for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison:  that I may confess Thy name.

The righteous shall wait patiently for me until Thou shalt reward me.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

For Thy name’s sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord.

During the celebration of shameless Herod’s birthday,

the terms of the oath to the wanton dancer were fulfilled,

for the Baptist’s head was cut off and carried like food on a platter

and offered to those reclining at the loathsome banquet.

Truly they feasted on wickedness and murder,

but let us bless the Fòrerunner, as is his due, //

and honor him as the greatest born of women!

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

The dance of the devil’s disciple

was rewarded with your head, O Fòrerunner.

O banquet of blood!

Would that you had never sworn, deceitful Herod!

Better for you to lie, than shed righteous blood!

But let us bless the Baptist, as is his due, //

and honor him as the greatest born of women!

O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye peoples.

In demonic love and fiery passion, O Herod,

you condemned him who reproved your adultery.

For the sake of an oath to a dancing girl,

you delivered his holy head to that Jezebel.

Woe to you! How did you dare such murder?

Why was the wanton dancer not consumed by fire?

But let us bless the Baptist, as is his due, //

and honor him as the greatest born of women!

For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

Again Herodias raves with raging lust.

O dance of deceit and feast of murder!

The Baptist is beheaded, and Herod is troubled. //

Through the prayers of your Fòrerunner, O Lord, grant peace to our souls.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

During the celebration of shameless Herod’s birthday,

the terms of the oath to the wanton dancer were fulfilled,

for the Baptist’s head was cut off and carried like food on a platter

and offered to those reclining at the loathsome banquet.

Truly they feasted on wickedness and murder,

but let us bless the Fòrerunner, as is his due, //

and honor him as the greatest born of women!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen:

Who will not bless you, O most Holy Virgin?

Who will not sing of your most pure childbearing?

The Only-begotten Son shone timelessly from the Father,

but from you he was ineffably incarnate:

God by nature, yet man for our sake,

not two persons, but one, known in two natures!

Entreat him, O pure and all-blessèd Lady, //

to have mercy on our souls!

O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father, O Jesus Christ: Having come to the setting of the sun, having beheld the evening light, we praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: God.  Meet it is for Thee at all times to be praised with reverent voices, O Son of God, Giver of life.  Wherefore, the world doth glorify Thee.

The Prokeimenon in the 6th Tone:

My help comes from the Lord, Who made Heaven and Earth.

Verse: I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where my help will come.

My help comes from the Lord,/ Who made Heaven and Earth.

**The reading from the prophecy of Isaiah!**

*Thus says the Lord:* “Comfort, comfort My people,” says God. “Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, you Priests, comfort her, for her humiliation is increased, her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord’s hand double for her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God.’

“Go up to a high mountain, you who are proclaiming glad tidings to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up, fear not! I the Lord God, I have heard the poor of Israel and will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the deserts pools of water, and the thirsty landsprings of water.

Let the heavens rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness; let the earth bring forth, and let it sprout forth mercy and cause righteousness to shine forth also.

“Declare this with a shout of joy, and let this be known, proclaim it to the end of the earth. Say, ‘The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob!’ And if they thirst, he shall lead them through the desert, He shall bring forth water for them out of the rock.

Rejoice, O barren one who did not bear; break forth into singingand cry loud, you who have not been in travail! For more are the children of the desolate one than of her who has a husband.”

**The reading from the prophecy of Malachi!**

*Thus says the Lord:* “Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before thee, and the Lord whom you seek, shall come into His temple. But who can endure the day of His coming? For he is coming like fire of a furnace and like the fuller’s herb; and he shall cleanse, refining and purifying, as it were, silver and gold.

And he comes to you with judgment, and will be a swift witness against the evil ones and against adulterers, and against those who swear falsely by My name, against those who withhold the hireling’s wages, against those who oppress widows and beat orphans, against those who avoid judgment in favor of strangers, and against those who do not fear him,” says the Lord Almighty. “For I am the Lord your God, and I change not; and you, the sons of Jacob, have turned aside from the law and have not kept it. Return to Me, therefore, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“And all nations shall call you blessed, and they shall understand that I am the Lord, who distinguishes between the righteous and between the transgressors on that day, in which I shall act to spare those who love me.

“Know, therefore, and remember the Law of Moses, My servant, as I commanded you at Horeb, the statues and ordinances for all Israel. And behold, I will send to you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes, who shall turn the heart of a father to his son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come quickly and smite the earth,” says the Lord Almighty, God, the One of Israel.

**The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon!**

The righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. The righteous man who has died will judge the ungodly who are living. For they will see the end of the righteous, and will not understand what was said about him; for the Lord will cast down the ungodly speechless to the ground and shake them from the foundations; they shall become desolate to the end; they will be in sorrows, and their memory will perish. For they will come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them.

Then the righteous man will stand with great boldness before those who have afflicted him, and those who have made of no account his labors. Having seen it, they shall be troubled with much fear and they will be amazed at his most glorious salvation. They will say within themselves in repentance, in anguish of spirit they will groan and say: “This was he whom we had sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach - we fools! We accounted his life as madness, and his end to be without honor. How is he numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the Saints? “Therefore, we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not illumine us, nor did the sun shine on us. We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we walked impassible pathways, but the way of the Lord we have not known.”

Lord have mercy. ***Forty times***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin.  Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.  Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee.  Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.  Blessed art Thou, O Master, give me understanding of Thy statutes.  Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes.

O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the work of Thy hands.  To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.  Amen.

Lord, have mercy. ***Twelve Times***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

In the 2nd Tone:

O Baptist John, the preacher of repentance,

when your head was cut off you sanctified the earth;

for you made clear God’s Law to the faithful and destroyed lawlessness.

As you stand before the throne of the heavenly King, //

entreat him to have mercy on our souls.

Verse: The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; like a cedar of Lebanon he shall increase.

O most holy John,

you were beheaded for the sake of the Law of the Lord.

Filled with the boldness of speech, you rebuked the evil king for his

transgression of the Law.

The host of Angels marvel at your strength;

the choir of apostles and martyrs praise you.

We also celebrate your yearly commemoration, //

glorifying the holy Trinity who crowned you O most-blessèd Fòrerunner!

Verse: The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall hope in him.

The Prophet from among the prophets,

and greater than all the prophets,

sanctified from his mother’s womb to the Lord’s service,

today has been beheaded by a lawless king;

and openly rebuking the woman who danced immodestly,

both before and after his beheading,

he put shame upon that regiment of sin.

Thus, we cry out: “O Baptist John, //

as you have boldness to speak, intercede on behalf of our souls!”

In the 8th Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

O Fòrerunner of the Savior,

you rebuked kings so that they would not work iniquity;

but the frolicking of a lawless woman persuaded Herod to cut off your

head.

Therefore we bless your name from the rising to the setting of the sun.

Since you stand with boldness before the Lord, //

earnestly entreat him to save our souls.

#### Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O unwedded Virgin,

who ineffably conceived God in the flesh!

O Mother of God most high,

accept the cries of your servants, O blameless one!

Grant cleansing of transgressions to all! //

Receive our prayers and pray to save our souls!

Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. ***(Thrice)***

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. ***(Thrice)***

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.

Tone 2:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,

but the Lord’s testimony is sufficient for you, O Fòrerunner.

You were shown in truth to be the most hon’rable of the prophets,

for you were deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan

him whom you foretold.

Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy,

you proclaimed to those in hell God who appeared in the flesh,

who takes away the sin of the world, //

and grants us great mercy.

Glory….now and ever….:

Beyond all thought and exceedingly glorious

are your mysteries, O Theotokos,

sealed in purity and preserved in virginity:

you were revealed as truly the Mother who bore the true God! //

Beseech him to save our souls!

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim; who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless!

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, of the Holy and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John, and of all the saints, O Lord, Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.