

THE 7th DAY OF THE MONTH OF JANUARY
SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY, GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER JOHN THE BAPTIST
AT VESPERS

Except on Saturday, there is no chanting of the Psalter because of the vigil which has been held the night before.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 Stichera: 3 for the feast, in Tone II:

The forerunner, beholding our Enlightener, Who illumineth every man, coming to be baptized, rejoiceth in soul and trembleth. He pointeth to Him with his hand and saith to the people: "This is He Who delivereth Israel, Who freeth us from corruption! O sinless Christ our God, glory be to Thee!"

When our Redeemer was baptized by His servant and borne witness to by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the angelic armies, looking on, were stricken with awe; and a voice was borne down from the Father in heaven: "He Whom the forerunner baptized with his hand is My beloved Son, in Whom I have been well-pleased!" O Christ our God, glory be to Thee!

The currents of the Jordan received Thee, the Well-spring, and the Comforter descended upon Thee in the form of a dove. Thou Who bowed down the heavens dost bow Thy head, and clay crieth out to the Potter: "What dost Thou command me to do, O Thou Who art greater than I? It is I who must needs be baptized of Thee! O sinless Christ our God, glory be to Thee!"

And 3 Stichera of the forerunner, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel. : "O all-praised martyrs ...":

Beholding Thee coming to him * and requesting baptism, O Christ, * the forerunner cried out with trembling: * "Why dost Thou command me * to do that which is beyond my power? * How can I touch with my hand * Thee Who holdest all things in Thy hand, * O almighty Lord? ** Better would it be that Thou baptize Thy servant!"

I, Who am unapproachable by nature, * have manifested Myself as wholly man, * accessible to thee. * I, Who am rich, have impoverished Myself willingly, * that I may enrich what hath become impoverished * with incorruption and deliverance. * Approach, then, and baptize Me * Who am not subject to corruption, ** but rescue the world therefrom!"

I am constrained on every side! * Whither I shall flee, I know not!" the forerunner said to the Creator; * "As Thou art the torrent of nourishment, O Compassionate One, * how, then, can the river's streams receive Thee * Who hast come, * pouring forth salvation * upon those who honor ** Thy holy epiphany, O Word?"

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O beacon in the flesh, forerunner of the Savior, offspring of a barren woman, friend of Him Who came forth from the Virgin, Whom thou didst worship by leaping up within thy mother's womb and hast baptized in the waters of the Jordan: Him do thou entreat, O prophet, that we may escape the waves of tumult which are to come.

Now & ever ..., of the feast, in the same tone:

God the Word appeared in the flesh unto the human race and stood forth to be baptized in the Jordan. And the forerunner said to Him: "How can I stretch forth my hand and touch the head of Thee Who holdest all things? Even though Thou art Mary's Child, yet do I know Thee to be the pre-eternal God, Who art hymned by the seraphim and goest about on the earth. A servant knoweth not how to baptize his master. O unapproachable Lord, glory be to Thee!"

Entrance:

The Great Prokeimenon, in Tone VII: Our God is in heaven and on earth; * all things whatsoever He hath willed, He hath done.

Verse: When Israel went out of Egypt, and thou house of Jacob from among a barbarous people, Judea became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion.

Verse: The sea beheld and fled, Jordan turned back.

Verse: What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? And thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back?

And again: Our God is in heaven ...

Then, the litany.

At the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

When John the forerunner * beheld Thee coming to him, O Master, * he was filled with awe, * and as a guileless servant he cried out with fear: * "What humility is this, O Savior, * what poverty, wherein Thou hast clothed Thyself, * lifting lowly mankind up in the richness of Thy goodness, * in that Thou art compassionate, ** having clothed Thyself in him?"

Verse: The sea beheld and fled, * Jordan turned back.

"Come to Me * Who am accomplishing the; mystery of salvation!" Thou didst respond to the forerunner; * and he obeyed Thee with fear, * O Savior of all, and was not overcome with awe. * "For, restoring Adam, who was crushed by sin, * I am baptized as a man * in the waters of the Jordan, * to which thou seest that I am come, ** though I am undefiled by nature."

Verse: What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? * And thou, O Jordan, that thou didst turn back?

"Who among mortals * hath seen the Sun cleansed? * John, answering, said, *" Him Who clotheth the sky with clouds stripped utterly naked, * and Him Who createth the springs and rivers entering the waters? * I marvel at Thine ineffable dispensation, O Master! * Burden not Thy servant ** with fearsome commands!"

Glory ..., the composition of the Byzantine, in Tone IV:

As a lover of the Spirit, a swallow who manifestly announced the gracious dispensation of God the King, Who shone forth brightly upon the race of mankind from the pure one, unto the restoration of mortals, O forerunner, thou didst shine forth, utterly lifting the spirits of the downcast, and guiding aright the hearts of those who are baptized in repentance, that they may receive everlasting life, O blessed God-pleaser.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone-

Come ye, let us emulate the wise virgins! Come ye, let us greet the Master Who hath appeared unto us! For He hath come to John like a Bridegroom; the Jordan, seeing Thee, was afraid and halted. And John cried out: "I dare not touch the head of the Immortal One!" The Spirit descended in the form of a dove, to sanctify the water. And a voice was heard from heaven, saying: "This is my Son Who hath come into the world to save the human race!" O Lord, glory be to Thee!

Troparion of the forerunner, in Tone II:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, * but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O forerunner. * Thou wast truly shown to be more honorable than the prophets, * in that thou wast deemed 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 ..., Now & ever ..., Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, * the worship of the Trinity was made manifest: * for the voice of the Father bare witness unto Thee * calling Thee His beloved Son; * and the Spirit in the guise of a dove * confirmed the certainty of His words. * O Christ God, Who hast appeared ** and enlightened the world, glory be to Thee!

AT COMPLINE

After the Trisagion, the Kontakion of the forerunner: "Fearing Thy coming in the flesh ..."

AT NOCTURNES

The usual Kathisma is chanted. After the first Trisagion, instead of "Behold, the Bridegroom will come ...", we chant the Kontakion of the feast; and after the second Trisagion, we chant the Kontakion of the forerunner: "Fearing Thy coming ..."

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...": the Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, * the worship of the Trinity was made manifest: * for the voice of the Father bare witness unto Thee * calling Thee His beloved Son; * and the Spirit in the guise of a dove * confirmed the certainty of His words. * O Christ God, Who hast appeared ** and enlightened the world, glory be to Thee! (Twice)

Glory ..., that of the forerunner, in Tone II:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, * but the Lord's testimony 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.

Now & ever ..., that of the feast, once.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ...":

When Jesus had been born of the Virgin Mary and was baptized by John in the Jordan, the Spirit seen in the guise of a dove, descended upon Him. Wherefore, the prophet said with the angels: "Glory to Thy coming, O Christ! Glory to Thy kingdom! Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

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

Seeing Thee about to be baptized in the streams of the Jordan, O Christ, the great forerunner cried out with gladness: "Thou hast come, Thou hast appeared, the Light unapproachable!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Canon I of the feast, with 6 Troparia (its Irmos x 2, and 4 Troparia); Canon II, with 4 Troparia (its Irmos x 2, and 2 Troparia); And that of the forerunner, with 4 Troparia.

ODE I

Canon I of the Feast, the acrostic whereof is: "Baptism is the cleansing of mortals' sins", the composition of Cosmas the Monk, in Tone II:

Irmos: The Lord mighty in battle * uncovered the foundation of the deep * and led His servants on dry ground; * but He covered their adversaries with the waters, * for He hath been glorified.

The Lord, the King of the ages, restoreth corrupted Adam with the streams of the Jordan and crusheth the heads of the serpents who make their nest therein, for He hath been glorified.

The Lord Who became incarnate of the Virgin, clothing material flesh in the immaterial fire of the Godhead, doth wrap Himself in the water of the Jordan, for He hath been glorified.

He Who washeth away the defilement of mankind, cleanseth Himself for them in the Jordan, desiring to make Himself like unto them, yet remaining as He was before, the Lord Who enlighteneth those in darkness, for He hath been glorified.

Canon II of the Feast (originally written in iambic verse), in Tone II, the composition of St. John of Damascus:

Irmos: Israel traversed the stormy depths of the sea, * which had straightway become as dry land; * but the dark waters engulfed the chief captains of Egypt * in a watery grave, * by the mighty power of the right hand of the Master.

When the Light of the radiant Dawn shone forth upon mortal mankind, coming forth from the wilderness to the waters of the Jordan, Thou, O King of the Sun, didst bow Thy neck before him, that Thou mightest ransom our forefather from the minions of darkness and cleanse creation of all defilement.

O beginningless Word, Thou hast buried mankind with Thyself in the stream, and Thou dost lead forth new again him, who had been corrupted by deception; and the mighty voice of the Father testifieth to Thee ineffably, saying: This is My beloved Son, the Child Who is equal to Me by nature.

Canon of the Forerunner, the acrostic whereof is: "O Baptist of Christ, accept my praise", the composition of Theophanes, in Tone II:

Irmos: Let us sing unto the Lord, * Who by His divine command * dried up the billowing and impassable sea, * and through it led the Israelite people on foot: * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Anticipating me in thy supplications, O forerunner, save me who am drowning amid the tempest of the passions; for thou thyself wast the honored and most pure receptacle of dispassion, appointed from infancy by the Lord from on high.

With salutation the angel of God stood before the honorable Zachariah, thy priestly father, and he announced thee, the peer of the angels, who wouldst become the forerunner and friend of the Lord, O all-blessed one.

Thou wast filled with the all-holy Spirit, even when thou wast borne within thy mother's womb, O most honored prophet, and with thy beautiful leaps thou didst announce the Fruit of the Virgin and worship Him.

Let us praise the godly and divinely wise forerunner of the Lord, who cut through the strange path of life which before was closed to all mankind, and baptized Christ in the Jordan's streams.

Theotokion: **O** pure one, thou most hallowed temple of virginity, who bore God the Word Within thy womb: By thy supplications save those who have recourse to thee and call upon thee, repelling the assault of misfortunes, O all-immaculate one.

Katavasia: The **Irmos** of the first canon of the feast, chanted by the right-hand choir; and that of the second canon of the feast, chanted by the left-hand choir.

ODE III

Canon I of the Feast:

Irmos: **The Lord who granteth strength unto our kings, * and exalteth the horn of His anointed, * is born of a Virgin and cometh unto baptism. * Therefore let us, the faithful, cry aloud: * None is as holy as our God and none is righteous save Thee, O Lord.**

O Church of Christ, who of old wast barren and grievously childless, be glad today; for by water and the Spirit children have been born unto thee, who cry out with faith: There is none is as holy as our God!

In the wilderness the forerunner crieth out with a loud voice: "Prepare ye the ways of Christ and make straight the paths of our God, crying out with faith: There is none as holy as our God!"

Canon II of the Feast

Irmos: **From the ancient snares have we all been set loose, * and the teeth of the lions have been smashed asunder. * Let us then rejoice with great joy * and open wide our mouths, * weaving with words a sweet hymn to the Word, * Who delighteth in bestowing gifts upon us.**

He who once assumed the form of a malignant serpent and planted death in the garden of creation, is now cast into darkness by Christ's coming in the flesh; and by assailing the Master, the Dawn which hath shone forth upon us, he hath crushed his own hateful head.

The Master draweth to Himself the divinely fashioned nature of mankind, which had been overcome by the tyranny of greed; and He restoreth mortals, granting them a new birth, and accomplishing thereby a mighty work; for He is come to cleanse our nature.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: **On the rock of faith hast Thou established me, * and Thou hast emboldened my mouth against mine enemies. * For my spirit rejoiceth when I sing: * There is none as holy as our God * and none more righteous than Thee, O Lord.**

Thou didst loose the reproach of barrenness, and, recognizing the divine Offspring of the Virgin, leapt up, rejoicing, in thy mother's womb, O all-lauded one who dwellest with the angels, most blessed forerunner of the Lord.

Preparing the Lord's ways, thou didst go before His face, O prophet; for thou wast shown to be like a beacon, revealing the Effulgence of the Father's glory, Who appeared in the flesh for our sake, O thou who art most excellent of all.

Thou didst shine forth like the dawn, announcing the Sun of righteousness to those in darkness; for thou wast the preacher and forerunner of the salvation of all, and didst say to all: "Come ye to Christ with faith, and be saved!"

Theotokion: **R**eceiving ineffable joy, O Mother of God, thou didst seedlessly conceive thy Master, Who calleth the whole world. To Him do we cry aloud: There is none holy save Thee, O Lord!

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thou hast appeared today to the whole world, * and Thy light, O Lord, hath been signed upon us * who with understanding hymn Thee. * Thou hast come, Thou hast appeared, ** the Light unapproachable.

Ikos: **U**pon Galilee of the nations, upon the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphthali, as the prophet said, a great Light hath shone, even Christ. A radiant darkness hath dawned upon those who sat in darkness, shining forth from Bethlehem. The Lord born of Mary, the Sun of righteousness, shineth forth with splendor upon the whole world. Come, therefore, all ye naked children of Adam, and let us clothe ourselves in Him, that we may be warmed; for He Who covereth the naked and enlighteneth those in darkness hath come. He hath appeared, the Light unapproachable!

Sedalion of the feast, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

When Thou didst appear in the flesh for baptism, O Invisible One, Jordan ministered to Thee With its streams, and John stretched forth his corruptible hand; yet the one turned back in fear, and the other straightway touched Thee the Incorruptible One, with trembling. Truly Thou art the Lamb of God, the ever-living Fountain Who hath sanctified the springs, the sea and all mankind; for the Trinity shone forth from on high: the Father calleth Thee His Son, and the Holy Spirit descendeth.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

ODE IV

Canon I of the Feast

Irmos: **I** heard, O Lord, Thy voice, * which Thou didst call the voice of one crying in the wilderness, * for Thou didst thunder over the multitude of waters, * bearing witness to Thy Son. * And, wholly filled with the Spirit which had descended, * He cried aloud: * Thou art Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God!

"Who hath ever seen the sun cleansed, which is most bright by nature?" the herald crieth out. "Am I then to wash with water Thee, the effulgence of the glory, the Image of the ever-existent Father? Am I, who am grass, to touch Thy divinity? For Thou art Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God!"

"When he happened upon Thee, Moses showed the divine reverence he felt, for he understood that it was Thee Who spake out of the bush; and he straightway averted his face. How, then, can I gaze directly at Thee? How can I touch Thee with my hand? For Thou art Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God!"

"Wisely doing what is spiritual, and being honored with speech, I am in awe before inanimate things. For if I baptize Thee, the mountain which smoked with fire, the sea which parted in twain and this Jordan which turned back will be mine accusers, for Thou art Christ, the Wisdom and Power of God!"

Canon II of the Feast

Irmos: Purified by the fire of a mystical vision, * the prophet praiseth the restoration of mankind; * and, filled with the inspiration of the Spirit, * he lifteth up his voice to reveal the incarnation of the ineffable Word, * by Whom the dominion of the mighty hath been abolished.

O most radiant Word, Who hast been sent forth by the Father, Thou comest to repel utterly the night of evil darkness and to uproot the sins of mortals, and by Thy baptism to draw forth children of light from the streams of the Jordan, O Good One.

When he saw in very truth the Word Who had been foretold, the herald bare witness of Him to creation, and cried, plainly saying, This is He Who was before me, yet cometh after. Though like us in form, He hath shone forth with divine power to take away our hateful sin!

That He might bring His own back to the life-giving pastures of paradise, the Word of God falleth upon the lairs of the dragons, and destroying their manifold snares, he assaileth him who hath bruised all mankind, and, imprisoning him, delivereth creation.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: I hymn Thee, O Lord, for I have heard report of Thee, * and I was afraid; * for Thou comest to me, seeking me who am lost. * Wherefore, I glorify Thy great condescension towards me, * O greatly Merciful One.

Thou wast sent to cleanse the impure with water, preparing them to receive Christ the Master, Who taketh away their sins and driveth darkness away with the radiance of the knowledge of God, O most honored one.

Entreat Christ to heal me of the serpent's venom, O blessed one who baptized Him in the waters of the Jordan, wherein the Savior crushed the nesting malice of the serpents.

Adorned with the wisdom of God, thou didst come as the herald of Christ; for thou wast the trumpet voice of one crying aloud: "Repent!" As a prophet thou didst foretell Him Who pointeth thee out to us as the greatest of all mankind.

O most excellent one who led a life strange and untrodden by men, thou didst stand before the waters of the Jordan, listening to the voice of the Father and beholding the coming of the Spirit.

Theotokion: The Lord Who created all things doth make Himself like unto us, O all-pure one, taking up His abode within thine all-holy womb; and, clothing Himself in human form, He hath saved His own image.

ODE V

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Jesus, the Prince of Life, * hath come to set loose from condemnation * Adam the first-formed man; * and though as God He needeth no cleansing, * yet for the sake of fallen man He is cleansed in the Jordan. * In its streams He slew the enmity * and bestoweth the peace that passeth all understanding.

When countless people went down to be baptized of John, Thou Thyself didst stand in their midst. And he announced to those present: "Who hath told you, O rebellious ones, to avoid the impending wrath? Bring forth fruits worthy of Christ; for He standeth before you, granting peace."

Standing in their midst, the Creator and Fashioner alone trieth the hearts of all; and taking his winnowing-fan in His hand, He all-wisely doth separate the harvest of the whole world, letting the chaff fall away; and He granteth eternal life to the fruitful.

Canon II of the Feast

Irmos: Washed clean of the poison of the dark and defiled enemy * by the cleansing of the Spirit, * we have set out upon a new path * which leadeth to unapproachable joy, * to which only they whom God hath reconciled with himself * can draw near.

The Creator, beholding him whom He had formed of dust bound by inescapable bonds in the darkness of sin, raised him up, and laid him on His shoulders; and now, in the midst of abundant waters, He washeth him clean from the ancient shame of Adam's sinful inclination.

With piety let us eagerly make haste to the most pure wellsprings of the stream of salvation, and, gazing upon the Word Who is come forth from the incorrupt Virgin, let us drink the pure water which quenqueth our holy thirst, gently healing the infirmity of the world.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: O Christ my Savior, the enlightenment of those lying in the darkness of sin. * I rise early to hymn Thee O King of Peace, * enlighten me with Thy radiance, * for I know no other God than Thee.

Illumined with the splendors of supra-natural virtue, thou didst stand before the waters of the Jordan as an initiation into the mysteries of heaven, baptizing and cleansing with water those who have recourse to thee with faith of soul, O forerunner.

The pure and incorrupt Light, desiring to be baptized, showed thee forth as a most pure vessel, O John; for thou, the most honored of the prophets, wast chosen beforehand by Him as the greatest of all, for thou wast deemed worthy to behold Him Whom thou didst prophesy.

Set forth before the face of the Lord of all, and indicating His paths unto all mankind, the forerunner, trembling, toucheth the head of the Master and baptizeth Him, saying: "I know none other God than Thee.

Who hath ever seen or heard of the Undeiled One Who sustaineth all things bowing His head before one of His creatures? Wherefore, with trembling the Baptist cried aloud: "I know none other God than Thee!"

Theotokion: The Son of God, Who, as God, doth accomplish His works by His will alone, manifestly showed Himself to be thy Son, O Virgin. Wherefore, we all call thee the true Theotokos, for we know none other Mother of God than thee.

ODE VI

Canon I of the Feast

Irmos: The Voice of the Word, the Candlestick of the Light, the Morning Star and Forerunner of the Sun, * cried in the wilderness to all the peoples: * 'Repent and be cleansed beforehand. * For lo, Christ is at hand, * Who delivereth the world from corruption.

Christ, Who was begotten incorruptibly of God the Father, hath become incarnate of the Virgin without defilement. The forerunner teacheth that it is not possible to loose the sandals, the bond between the Word and us, of Him Who delivereth mortals from deception.

Christ shall baptize His enemies, who do not acknowledge Him as God, with the uttermost fire; but He shall restore with the water of grace those who accept His divinity, delivering them from their transgressions.

Canon II of the Feast

Irmos: With a supremely blessed voice * the Father revealed His Beloved One, * Whom He had begotten from the womb. * Verily, saith He, this is the splendid Son, * of the same nature as Myself, * and He hath come forth from the human race. * He is My living Word, * Who by My providence hath become a man.

The prophet, mysteriously swallowed up for the space of three nights in the belly of the sea monster, came forth again, making manifest beforehand to all our regeneration in the last times, and our deliverance from the dragon that slayeth mankind.

When the shining vaults of heaven were opened, he who knew the Scriptures beheld the Spirit, Who proceedeth from the Father and abideth in the most pure Word, descending in an ineffable manner in the form of a dove; and he commanded the multitudes to hasten to the Master.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, * I appeal to the unfathomable abyss of Thy compassion: * Raise me up from corruption, O God.

Thou, the voice of the Word, didst precede Him and didst shine forth like a radiant star, the Sun of righteousness illumining thee, O forerunner.

Thou didst not pay heed to earthly cares, and wast enriched with the expectations of heaven. And thou didst perfect thy life like that of an angel on earth, O all-blessed one.

We know thee to be the seal of the prophets, the mediator between the old and new covenants, and we proclaim thee to be the Baptist and forerunner of Christ the Savior.

Theotokion: All the faithful acknowledge and believe thy conceiving to be truly ineffable and thy birthgiving to be inexpressible and unapproachable, O only Bride of God.

Kontakion of the forerunner, in Tone VI:

Stricken with awe by Thy coming in the flesh, * the Jordan turned back in fear; * and John, fulfilling the prophetic ministry, * shrank back With trembling. * The ranks of the angels were amazed, * beholding Thee baptized in the flesh in the streams, * and all who were in darkness were enlightened, ** hymning Thee Who hast appeared and illumined all things.

Ikos: Though Adam had become blind in Eden, the Sun appeared out of Bethlehem and opened his eyes, washing them with the waters of the Jordan: the ever-burning Light shone forth upon him who was enshrouded in darkness and gloom. For him there is no longer any night, but eternal day. For his sake the Morning hath dawned; for he hid himself until the evening, as it is written, and found the radiance which restoreth him. He who fell at eventide hath turned from the darkness and attained unto the dawning of Him Who hath appeared and illumined all things.

ODE VII

Canon I of the Feast

Irmos: The breath of the wind heavy with dew * and the descent of the angel of God * preserved the Holy Children from all harm, * as they walked in the fiery furnace. * Refreshed with dew in the flames, * they sang in thanksgiving: * 'Blessed art Thou and praised above all, * O Lord God of our fathers.'

As in heaven, with trembling and wonder the angelic hosts stood before Thee in the Jordan, gazing at the extent of God's condescension; for the God of our fathers, Who holdeth the firmament of the waters above, stood, incarnate as a man, in the waters.

The cloud and the sea of old prefigured the wonder of divine baptism, for the ancient people of the law were baptized therein when they fled Egypt. The sea was an image of the water, and the cloud was an image of the Spirit, whereby we are made perfect. And we cry out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, throughout the ages!

O all ye faithful, in Him have we received perfection; and, theologizing continually with the angels let us glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For, lo! the consubstantial Trinity of Hypostases is the One God. To Him do we chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, throughout the ages!

Canon II of the Feast

Irmos: He Who burnt the heads of the dragons in the waters, * cooled the lofty flame * that encircled the pious youths in the furnace; * He it is that doth wash away all the unbearable gloom of sin * by the dew of the Spirit.

The fierce Assyrian flame that prefigured Thee hast Thou quenched, transforming it into dew. And now, O Christ, Thou hast clothed Thyself in water as in flame, burning up the harmful malice hidden in its depths, which calleth mortals to fall with stumbling step.

When the Jordan was parted of old, the people of Israel passed clean over it on dry ground, prefiguring Thee, O most powerful Lord, Who now bearest up creation in the waters without touching it, leading it to a better and imperishable path.

We know that in the beginning Thou didst, in Thy mercy, bring the waters of the flood upon the earth to destroy every living creature that Thou hadst made. And now, O Christ, Who workest wonders strange and most great, Thou hast drowned sin in the waters of Thy compassion, unto the salvation of mortal men.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: The bush which burned with fire on the mountain * and the dew-bearing furnace of the Chaldeans * clearly prefigured thee, O Bride of God; * for, without being consumed, * thou didst receive the divine and immaterial Fire * within thy material womb. * Wherefore, we chant unto Him Who was born of thee: * O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Having accomplished the sacred baptism and performed the mysteries which were manifestly given thee by God, O sacred minister, thou didst offer thyself as a sacrifice, as an innocent lamb. Wherefore, we chant together with thee: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Thou wast a new Elijah, denouncing the iniquitous king with boldness and showing us an immaterial life, as he did, O thrice-blessed forerunner. Wherefore, we chant with thee, O prophet: Bless is the God of our fathers!

Inheriting the divine honor of the apostles of Christ, O forerunner, thou greatest of the prophets, thou wast manifestly shown to be the fulfillment of the law and the beginning of the new grace. Wherefore, we chant with thee, O thrice-blessed one: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **O** ye pious, with chanting let us all hymn, as is meet, the all-pure Lady who was acceptable to God; for she gave birth to God the Only-begotten one, Who hath appeared to mankind. To Him, O ye faithful, let us chant together: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Canon I of the Feast

Irmos: **T**he Babylonian furnace, as it poured forth dew, * foreshadowed a marvelous mystery: * how the Jordan should receive in its streams the immaterial fire, * and should encompass the Creator, * when He was baptized in the flesh. * Him do ye peoples bless and supremely exalt throughout all ages.

"Put aside all fear," the Redeemer said to the forerunner; "Obey Me, in that I am good, and touch Me, for this have I become by nature. Submit to My commands and baptize Me Who am come down." Him do the people bless and supremely exalt throughout all ages.

When the Baptist heard the words of the Master, he stretched forth his hand with trembling, and as he touched the head of his Creator he cried out to Him Who was being baptized: "Sanctify me, for Thou art my God, Whom the people bless and supremely exalt throughout all ages!"

The Trinity was revealed in the Jordan, for the Father, the all-divine Essence Himself, announced: "This One Who is baptized is my beloved Son!" And the Spirit came upon Him Who was like unto Him, Whom the people bless and supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Canon II of the Feast

Irmos: **C**reation hath found itself set free, * and those who previously sat in darkness are now sons of light; * alone the prince of darkness moaneth, * wherefore let His inheritance * which was formerly in misery * now bless Him Who hath accomplished this.

The three godly children, sprinkled with dew in the midst of the fire, plainly prefigured how the transcendent Nature, which is resplendent with the most radiant rays of the threefold holiness, doth, through human nature, mercifully consume all pernicious falsehood with the fire of dew.

Let the whole of earthly creation be clothed in white, for this day it is raised up from its fall to heaven; and, washed and most splendidly cleansed in the flowing waters by the Word, by Whom all things are preserved, it hath escaped its former sins.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: In Babylon, the activity of the fire was once divided, * for, by the command of God it consumed the Chaldeans, * but bedewed the faithful, who chant: * Bless ye the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

With joy do we honor thee, O all-blessed John, who by thy steadfast life on earth showed thyself to be the peer of the angels; and we cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

O prophet, thou didst teach the one essence of the Godhead in Three Hypostases, consubstantial in hypostases; for by the voice of the Father and the coming of the Spirit thou didst recognize Him Whom thou baptized as the ever-existing Word of God.

Thou didst hasten forth from the barren woman, O most honored John, thou noetic dawn proclaiming the Sun Who shone forth from the Virgin and thou didst preach the Lamb Who, in His love for mankind, taketh away the sin of the world.

Watching over us now from on high, O blessed, all-blessed forerunner, by thy supplications preserve those who follow thy divine preaching, who abide in the teachings of thy divine and saving dogmas.

Theotokion: Ineffably thou didst conceive the pre-eternal effulgence of the Father's glory, the beginningless Word Who is known to exist from the beginning, and Who is now become thy First-born, immutably becoming a creature, O all-pure one.

At Ode IX, we do not chant the Magnificat, but chant, rather, the refrains of the feast and of the forerunner:

ODE IX

Canon I of the Feast

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who is more honorable than the armies on high!

Irmos: Every tongue is at a loss to praise thee as is due: * even a spirit from the world above is filled with dizziness, * when it seeketh to sing thy praises, O Theotokos. * But since thou art good, accept our faith: * Thou knowest well our love inspired by God, * for thou art the Protector of Christians and we magnify thee.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who asked baptism of the forerunner!

O David, come thou in spirit to the enlightened and chant, saying: "Approach God now with faith and be illumined! Lowly Adam cried out in his fall, and the Lord heard him, and, coming to the streams of the Jordan, He restored the corrupted one."

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who came to be baptized in the Jordan!

O David, come thou in spirit to the enlightened and chant, saying: "Approach God now with faith and be illumined! Lowly Adam cried out in his fall, and the Lord heard him, and, coming to the streams of the Jordan, He restored the corrupted one."

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, Him to Whom the Father's voice bare witness!

Isaiah saith: "Change your ways and cleanse yourselves; leave off your wickedness in the face of the Lord! Ye who thirst, go to the living Water; for Christ sprinkleth with water those who have recourse to Him with faith, renewing them, and He baptizeth with the Spirit unto life which ageth not."

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the One of the Trinity Who bowed His head and received baptism.

By grace and the seal are we preserved, O ye faithful; for as of old the blood-smear'd lintels permitted the Hebrews to escape the destroyer, so shall the laver of regeneration be for us a divine exodus. And henceforth we shall see the never-waning light of the Trinity.

Canon II of the Feast

Then, the right-hand choir chanteth the refrain of Canon II of the Feast:

Refrain: Today the Master boweth His neck beneath the hand of the forerunner.

Irmos: The wonders of thy birthgiving pass all understanding, * O all-pure Bride, blessed Mother! * Through thee we have received the most perfect salvation, * wherefore we praise our Benefactor as is meet and right, * bearing a hymn of thanksgiving unto Him as a gift.

Then, the left-hand choir chanteth the same refrain & Irmos.

Refrain: Today John doth baptize the Master in the streams of the Jordan.

That which was revealed to Moses in the bush we see here fulfilled in wondrous manner; for as it bare fire, yet was not consumed, so hath the Virgin been preserved, who gaveth birth unto the Benefactor Who bringeth us light, and the streams of the Jordan suffered no harm when they received Him.

Refrain: Today the Master burieth the sin of mankind in the waters.

O beginningless King, through the communion of the Spirit dost Thou anoint and make perfect the nature of mankind, and cleansing it in the pure streams of baptism, putting the arrogant might of darkness to shame, Thou now dost raise it up to eternal life.

Canon of the Forerunner

Irmos: From thy virginal womb God, the light * that was before the sun, hath appeared and assumed flesh * in a manner past understanding, * and came to dwell among us, * wherefore hymn thee O blessed and all-pure Theotokos.

Refrain for each of the Troparia of this canon: Magnify, O my soul, the forerunner who is greatest among the prophets.

From the wilderness the forerunner, the voice of the Word, pointeth to Him Who hath come to us in the flesh; and he prepareth most joyfully to baptize the Preexisting One Who cleanseth our souls from sin for the sake of our faith.

Grace and the law manifestly set thee forth as the mediator between them: for thou didst seal the one and begin the other, art honored by the Word as greatest of all the prophets, and didst live beyond visible things, O most honored one.

Showing forth a life like unto that of the incorporeal ones, he dwelleth with the angelic "choirs, and rejoiceth, standing before the throne of the Master, asking forgiveness and salvation for those who praise him.

Then the first refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who is more honorable than the armies on high!

Theotokion: In His compassion the Redeemer of all hath become a man and accepted to be born in the flesh of thy virginal womb, for He is the Lover of mankind with a love beyond that of mortals, O all-blessed Theotokos.

Then, coming together, both choirs chant together the refrain of the feast, and the Irmoi of Canons I and II, after which they make a prostration.

Exapostilarion of the forerunner:

Spec. Mel.: "By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...":

Thou didst wondrously prepare the ways of the Lord; for thou wast the herald of His coming, the preacher most true and the greatest of the prophets, O blessed John. Thou didst behold the Light, fulfilling His ineffable dispensation.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Exapostilarion of the feast:

The Savior appeared, grace and truth, in the streams of the Jordan, and He illumined those sleeping in darkness and shadow, for He, the immutable Light, hath come and appeared.

On the Praises, 4 Stichera, in Tone IV:

Christ our Savior, the Light of Light, hath shone forth upon the world, manifesting Himself as God. Let us worship Him, O ye people!

How can we who are servants honor the Master as is meet? for He hath restored us all in the waters.

Baptized in the Jordan, touched by Thy servant's hand, O our Savior, Thou didst sanctify the waters, healing the sufferings of the world. Great is the mystery of Thine epiphany! O Lord Who lovest mankind, glory be to Thee!

The true Light hath appeared and giveth enlightenment to all. Christ is baptized with us, Who is above all in purity. He draweth sanctification into the water and becometh the cleansing of our souls, which is at once earthly and transcendeth the

heavens. Salvation is accomplished through the laver, and the Spirit cometh through water. Through immersion is our ascent to God made. Wondrous are Thy works, O Lord! Glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O Baptist, thou didst issue forth, an angel, from a barren womb, and didst sojourn in the desert from thine infancy, and wast shown to be the seal of all the prophets; for Him Whom they beheld in many divers forms and proclaimed in indistinct images thou wast deemed worthy to baptize in the Jordan. And thou didst hear the voice of the Father from heaven bearing witness to His Sonship, and beheldest the Spirit in the guise of a dove descending upon Him Who was baptized. O thou who art greater than all the prophets, cease thou never to pray for us who celebrate thy memory with faith.

Now & ever ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone II:

Today Christ hath come to be baptized in the Jordan! Today John toucheth the head of the Master! The hosts of heaven were in awe, beholding this most glorious mystery; the sea saw and fled, the Jordan, seeing it, turned back. But we, illumined, cry out: Glory to God Who hath appeared, was seen on earth and hath illumined the world!

Great Doxology. After the Trisagion, the Troparion of the forerunner, in Tone II:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, * but the Lord's testimony 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 ..., Now & ever ..., Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, * the worship of the Trinity was made manifest: * for the voice of the Father bare witness unto Thee * calling Thee His beloved Son; * and the Spirit in the guise of a dove * confirmed the certainty of His words. * O Christ God, Who hast appeared ** and enlightened the world, glory be to Thee!

Litanies; dismissal; First Hour.

AT THE FIRST HOUR

The Troparion of the feast; Glory ..., that of the forerunner; Now & ever ..., the Theotokion of the Hour. After the Trisagion, the Kontakion of the feast. Final dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the feast; and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the forerunner.

O Church of Christ, who of old wast barren and grievously childless, be glad today; for by water and the Spirit children have been born unto thee, who cry out with faith: There is none is as holy as our God! (Twice)

In the wilderness the forerunner crieth out with a loud voice: "Prepare ye the ways of Christ and make straight the paths of our God, crying out with faith: There is none as holy as our God!" (Twice)

Thou, the voice of the Word, didst precede Him and didst shine forth like a radiant star, the Sun of righteousness illumining thee, O forerunner.

Thou didst not pay heed to earthly cares, and wast enriched with the expectations of heaven. And thou didst perfect thy life like that of an angel on earth, O all-blessed one.

We know thee to be the seal of the prophets, the mediator between the old and new covenants, and we proclaim thee to be the Baptist and forerunner of Christ the Savior.

Theotokion: All the faithful acknowledge and believe thy conceiving to be truly ineffable and thy birthgiving to be inexpressible and unapproachable, O only Bride of God.

Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

When Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, * the worship of the Trinity was made manifest: * for the voice of the Father bare witness unto Thee * calling Thee His beloved Son; * and the Spirit in the guise of a dove * confirmed the certainty of His words. * O Christ God, Who hast appeared ** and enlightened the world, glory be to Thee!

Troparion of the forerunner, in Tone II:

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, * but the Lord's testimony 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.

Kontakion of the forerunner, in Tone VI:

Glory ..., Stricken with awe by Thy coming in the flesh, * the Jordan turned back in fear; * and John, fulfilling the prophetic ministry, * shrank back With trembling. * The ranks of the angels were amazed, * beholding Thee baptized in the flesh in the streams, * and all who were in darkness were enlightened, ** hymning Thee Who hast appeared and illumined all things.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Now & ever ..., Thou hast appeared today to the whole world, * and Thy light, O Lord, hath been signed upon us * who with understanding hymn Thee. * Thou hast come, Thou hast appeared, ** the Light unapproachable.

At the Entrance:

O Son of God, Who wast baptized in the Jordan, save us who chant unto Thee: Alleluia!

And thus do we chant until the leave-taking of the feast.

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.

READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, § 42 [ACTS 19: 1-8]

In those days: It came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them: Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. And, he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

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

Verse: Be glad in the Lord, O ye righteous, and give thanks for the remembrance of His holiness.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN, §3 [1:29-34]

At that time: John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

Communion Verse I: The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.

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