



**The Nativity of the Venerable and Glorious Prophet,
Forerunner and Baptist John
Which the Holy Church Celebrates on June 24.**

He that was greater than all who are born of women, the Prophet who received God's testimony that he surpassed all the Prophets, was born of the aged and barren Elizabeth (Luke 1:7) and filled all his kinsmen, and those that lived round about, with gladness and wonder. But even more wondrous was that which followed on the eighth day when he was circumcised, that is, on the day when a male child receives his name. Those present called him Zacharias, the name of his father. But the mother said, "Not so, but he shall be called John." Since the child's father was unable to speak, he was asked, by means of a sign, to indicate the child's name. He asked for a tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And immediately Zacharias' mouth was opened, his tongue was loosed from its silence of nine months, and filled with the Holy Spirit, he blessed the God of Israel, Who fulfilled the promises made to their fathers, and had visited them that were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, and had sent to them the light of salvation. Zacharias prophesied concerning the child also, saying that he would be a Prophet of the Most High and forerunner of Jesus Christ. And the child John, who was filled with grace, grew and waxed strong in the Spirit; and he was in the wilderness until the day of his showing to Israel (Luke 1:57-80). His name is a variation of the Hebrew "Johanan," which means "Yah is gracious."

Rest from labour. Fish allowed.

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Dismissal Hymn. Fourth Tone
Be quick to anticipate

O PROPHEET and Forerunner of Christ God's coming to us, * all we who with longing now extol thee are at all loss to honour thee worthily. * For thy mother's barrenness and thy father's long silence, * by thine all-renowned and hallowed birth, were both ended, * and the Incarnation of the Son of God is preached unto all the world.

Kontakion. Third Tone
On this day the Virgin

She that once was barren doth * today bring forth Christ's Forerunner, * John, the culmination and * crown of all the Prophets. * For when he, in River Jordan, * laid his hand on Him * Whom the Prophets preached aforetime, he was revealed as * God the Word's forechosen Prophet, * His mighty preacher, * and His Forerunner in grace.

A SELECTION OF HYMNS FROM
THE MENAION

GREAT VESPERS

After the Proemial Psalm we chant Blessed is the man. *For* Lord, I have cried,
we allow for eight verses and chant the following Stichera, repeating the first two:

Fourth Tone. By John the Monk

BY his birth, John looseth Zacharias' silence; for it was not meet that the father should keep silence when the Voice was coming forth; but even as he formerly bound the tongue that spake unbelief, in like manner, at his manifestation, he doth free his father, by whom also he was proclaimed. And he was born the Voice of the Word and Forerunner of the Light, and he intercedeth for our souls. (*Twice*)

Same Tone

TODAY the Voice of the Word looseth his father's voice which was held fast because of unbelief; and in loosing the bonds of his mother's barrenness, he showeth forth the Church as a mother of many children. The lamp of the Light

cometh forth; the dawn proclaimeth the Sun of Righteousness, for the refashioning of all and the salvation of our souls.

Same Tone. By Anatolius

WHEN the Word of God was about to be born of the Virgin, the messenger came from a barren woman's travail, even he that is the greatest among them that are born of a woman, and more than a prophet; for it was meet that the beginnings of divine things should be marvellous: here, fruitfulness past age; there, conception without seed. O Thou Who workest wonders for our salvation, glory be to thee.

Same Tone. By Andrew of Crete

THE great Forerunner was made manifest today, when he came forth from the barren loins of Elizabeth. He is the Prophet greater than all the Prophets, and like him there is none other, neither shall one arise. For the transcendently brilliant Light followeth after the forerunning lamp. The Word cometh after the Voice, the Bridegroom after the Bridegroom's friend, who prepareth a people for the Lord's own possession, and cleanseth them for the Spirit beforehand with water. He is the scion of Zacharias, the excellent nursling of the wilderness, the preacher of repentance, and the cleansing of sins. Unto those in Hades he proclaimeth the good tidings of the Resurrection from the dead, and he intercedeth in behalf of our souls.

Same Tone

FROM the womb thou wast shown to be the Prophet and Forerunner of Christ, O John, leaping and rejoicing in thy mother's womb upon beholding the Queen coming to the handmaid with Him Who is beyond time, and motherless from the Father, as she brought Him unto thee, who shonest forth from the barren woman and the elder according to the promise. Entreat Him that our souls find mercy.

Same Tone

OSTRANGE wonder! He who would not be persuaded by the Angel which said that Elizabeth would conceive and bear a son; he who said, How shall she give birth? for I am well stricken in years, and her members are dead with age; he who was condemned to silence because of his unbelief, today seeth him born that had been promised; and released from silence, he escorteth gladness in as he crieth: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and wrought redemption for His people, He that granteth the world great mercy.

Same Tone

O ALL-LAUDED John, Apostle to the whole world, thou good tidings of Gabriel and offspring of a barren woman, fairest scion of the wilderness and true friend of Christ the Bridegroom: entreat Him that our souls find mercy.

Glory. *Plagal of Second Tone. By Byzantium*

TODAY, like a shining star, the lamp of the Light prepareth the way for the coming of God the Word. Today Zacharias, who had practised silence at the Angel's command, hath made his tongue to speak plainly. For so did it become the Father of the Voice not to keep silence as the Voice came forth from a barren womb, and openly proclaimed the good tidings of the redemption of the world.

Both now. *Same Tone*

ELIZABETH conceived the Forerunner of Grace, and the Virgin the Lord of Glory. The mothers embraced each other, and the babe leapt. For from within, the servant praised the Master; and in wonder, the mother of the Forerunner began to cry: Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? It is that He might save a despairing people. O Thou that hast great mercy, glory be to Thee.



**SAINT JOHN THE FORERUNNER
FOURTEENTH CENTURY RUSSIAN ICON**

MATINS

OIKOS

LET us now acclaim the Lord's Forerunner, whom Elizabeth bare to the priest from a womb unfruitful but not without seed; for only Christ passed through impassable ground that was never sown. A barren woman gave birth to John, but she bare him not without a husband; as for Jesus, the pure Virgin gave Him birth by the overshadowing of the Divine Spirit. Howbeit, for Him that was from a Virgin, he who was from a barren woman proved to be His prophet, His mighty preacher, and His forerunner in grace.

SYNAXARION

✠ On the twenty-fourth of this month we celebrate the Nativity of the Venerable and glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John.

Verses

Dance now, O Zacharias, together with thy wife;
Though ye bear not many, the one ye do bear is great.

On the twenty-fourth a mother brought forth the Forerunner.

✠ On this day we celebrate the Synaxis of the Righteous Zacharias and Elizabeth.

Verses

Of old their acquaintances, and now, creation,
Rejoice with the begetters of the Forerunner.

By the intercessions of Thy Forerunner, O Christ God, have mercy on us. Amen.

EXAPOSTILARION

Second Tone. Hearken, ye women

TODAY the joy-creating birth * of the divine Forerunner John * dispelleth all of the sadness * caused by his father's long silence * and by his mother's barrenness; * for it revealeth unto all * the joy and gladness yet to come. * Hence, all creation doth keep feast * thereon with joy and resplendence.

Theotokion

THE Prophets long ago proclaimed, * the wise Apostles clearly taught, * and all the Martyrs have plainly * confessed in most godly manner * thy Son to be

the God of all, * O Theotokos; and with them, * we who have been redeemed
through thee * out of the old condemnation * now magnify thee, O pure one.



SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
(HONTOBLOU)
THE LAST PROPHET