

**May 25, 2012**

**Leave Taking of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ**

**Third Finding of the Precious Head of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner  
and Baptizer, John**

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**GREAT VESPERS**

**At Psalm 140**

8.

The Lord ascended into heaven  
to send the Comforter into this world.  
The heavens prepared His throne and the clouds were His ladder;  
the angels marvelled at the sight of a man more exalted than themselves.  
Today, the Father receives again in His bosom  
the One who was in Him from all eternity,  
and the Holy Spirit gives a command to all the angels:  
Lift up your lintels, O you gates!  
O you nations of the earth, clap your hands,  
for Christ ascends to the place  
where He had been from all eternity.

7.

O Lord, the Cherubim were amazed at Your Ascension;  
they were seized with wonder as they beheld You, O God, rising upon the clouds,  
for You are the One who is seated above the clouds.  
We sing a hymn of praise to You:  
Glory to You for Your tender mercy.

6.

O Christ, splendour and glory of the Father,  
when we behold Your Ascension on the holy mountain,  
we sing a hymn of praise to the beauty of Your countenance.  
We bow down to Your Passion,  
we venerate Your holy Resurrection,  
and we glorify Your noble Ascension.  
O Lord, have mercy on us!

*In Tone 8*

5.

Blessed Forerunner John, your head shone from the ground  
with rays brighter than the sun.  
It enlightens the faithful.  
We have it has a divine treasure  
and draw rich grace from it,  
sanctifying our souls, our bodies and thoughts.  
As we celebrate, we call you blessed.

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3.

Your holy head, blessed Forerunner, poured out abundant grace.  
It was shown without his foreknowledge  
to the priest who was wise in God.  
He quickly went with faith and grace  
and openly brought about its sanctified coming  
with the emperor and the divinely wise people  
who fervently maintain the orthodox faith.

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1.

We celebrate the third revelation of your precious head.  
When it was severed, glorious one,  
the Trinity crowned it for your godly zeal.  
The ranks of angels, the company of martyrs,  
the apostles of God and all the prophets rejoice in its discovery.  
Together with them, ever remember us, Forerunner of the Lord!

*In Tone 6, Glory...*

O Forerunner, your head, divinely preserved,  
has risen from the bosom of the earth  
as a treasury of graces of God.  
Having received it, we bow down in reverence, O glorious prophet of Christ.  
Through you, we have been given wondrous miracles  
and have obtained the remission of our sins.

*In Tone 6, Now...*

O loving Jesus, while You lived on earth,  
You were God inseparable from the Father,  
and yet You truly shared our humanity.  
Ascending in glory today from the Mount of Olives,

through Your great love, You lifted up our fallen nature  
and enthroned it with the Father on high.  
Therefore, the bodiless Powers were amazed and filled with awe  
at seeing Your great love for all.  
Together with them, we who live on earth  
glorify your condescension to us  
and Your Ascension away from us.  
Now we implore You, saying:  
Through Your Ascension You have filled Your apostles and Your Mother  
with a joy that surpasses every other joy,  
and through their intercession  
make us worthy of the joy of Your elect,  
for You are rich in mercy.

### **Readings**

Isaiah 40:1-11; Malachi 3:1-18; Wisdom 4:7-15.

### **Aposticha**

*In Tone 2*

Come, O faithful: let us venerate the head which was cut off by a sword:  
the precious head of the Forerunner,  
commemorating its finding on this day.  
Let us go out to meet it with hymns, wholeheartedly honouring it  
as a fountain which pours forth the grace of healing upon us.  
This is the head which was once cut off by the foolish Herod,  
goaded by the grudging of Herodias.

*O precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His faithful.*

As gold is taken from the mines,  
so has the head of the Forerunner come forth from the earth,  
radiant in its reliquary.  
He still speaks, clearly accusing Herod, the adulterous murderer;  
and he illumines our souls with his light.  
In our hymns today, we the faithful venerate the Forerunner  
who intercedes for us before God.

*The just will flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a Lebanon cedar.*

The head of the Baptist lay long hidden underground  
like a treasure in a chest.  
Today it is revealed to the whole world, pouring forth abundant streams of healing,  
stopping illnesses, and shedding light on our souls.  
We rejoice in its divine consolations as we sing the praises of the Forerunner.

*Glory...*

O illustrious John, the venerable reliquary of divine thoughts,  
your head which had clearly foreseen the mystery of the Ineffable One  
came out from the caves of the earth as from a mother's womb.  
It perfumes the whole world with the myrrh of holiness,  
to us you preach the way of repentance, interceding for our souls before the Saviour of all.

*In Tone 6, Now...*

God goes up with shouts of joy,  
the Lord goes up amid trumpet blast,  
in order to raise up the fallen image of Adam  
and to send down upon us the Holy Spirit,  
the Comforter who will sanctify our souls.

### **Troparia**

*In Tone 4*

O prophet and forerunner,\* Christ has revealed to us your head as divine treasure concealed in the earth.\* Assembled for this discovery\* we praise Christ with hymns inspired of God.\* Through your intercessions He saves us from corruption.

*Glory... Now...*

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God,\* giving joy to Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit,\* and assuring them through Your blessing\* that You are the Son of God,\*\* the Redeemer of the world.