

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2020
Afterfeast of the Beheading of the Forerunner
Ss. ALEXANDER, JOHN & PAUL,
PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Saints Alexander, John and Paul, Patriarchs of Constantinople, lived at different times, but each of them happened to clash with the activities of heretics who sought to distort the teachings of the Church. St Alexander (325-340) was a vicar bishop during the time of St Metrophanes (June 4), the first Patriarch of Constantinople.

Because of the patriarch's extreme age, Alexander substituted for him at the First Ecumenical Synod at Nicea (325). Upon his death, St Metrophanes left instructions in his will to elect his vicar to the throne of Constantinople. During these times His Holiness Patriarch Alexander had to contend with the Arians and with pagans. Once, in a dispute with a pagan philosopher the saint said to him, "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ I command you to be quiet!" and the pagan suddenly became mute. When he gestured with signs to acknowledge his errors and affirm the correctness of the Christian teaching, then his speech returned to him and he believed in Christ together with many other pagan philosophers. The faithful rejoiced at this, glorifying God Who had given such power to His saint. The heretic Arius was punished through the prayer of St Alexander. Arius had apparently agreed to enter into communion with the Orthodox. When the Emperor asked him if he believed as the Fathers of Nicea taught, he placed his hand upon his breast (where he had cunningly concealed beneath his clothes a document with his own false creed written upon it) and said, "This is what I believe!" St Constantine (May 21), unaware of the deceitful wickedness of Arius, set a day for receiving him into the Church. All night long St Alexander prayed, imploring the Lord not to permit this heretic to be received into communion with the Church.

In the morning, Arius set out triumphantly for the church, surrounded by imperial counselors and soldiers, but divine judgment overtook him. Stopping to take care of a physical necessity, his bowels burst forth and he perished in his own blood and filth, as did Judas (Acts 1:18). His Holiness Patriarch Alexander, having toiled much, died in the year 340 at the age of 98. St Gregory the Theologian (January 25) mentioned him afterwards in an encomium to the people of Constantinople.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 3, followed by three for the Forerunner and three for the saints

Resurrection, tone 3:

By Your Cross, O Christ our Savior,
death's dominion has been shattered;
the devil's delusion destroyed.
The human race, being saved by faith,/
always offers You a song.

All has been enlightened by Your Resurrection, O Lord.
Paradise has been opened again.
All creation, praising You,/
always offers You a song.

I glorify the power of the Father and the Son.
I praise the authority of the Holy Spirit:
the undivided, uncreated Godhead,/
the consubstantial Trinity which reigns forever.

We bow down in worship before Your precious Cross, O Christ,
and we glorify and praise Your Resurrection,/
for by Your wounds we have all been healed.

Forerunner, tone 4:

You are the divine mediator between the Old and New Testaments,
O Prophet and Forerunner,
an angel in the flesh, the denouncer of lawlessness,
offspring of a barren womb, a mouth breathing fire.
You rebuked Herod who committed iniquity.
Not accepting your rebuke, he commanded that your head be cut off.
And you, being the food of abstinence,
were brought in as a divine delight upon a platter,
ever denouncing the adulterous one.

Incited by her lawless mother,
the depraved daughter asked for your all-glorious head, honored by the angels,
for she was unable to endure your denunciation.
Therefore, bearing it on a platter and dancing as she carried it,
she turned the revelry of those at the banquet into lamentation.
But as you ever expose the abomination of debauchery, O blessed one,/
intercede with Christ that He may save our souls!

Made foolish by drunkenness,
Herod was tricked by the words of a woman who seduced him by dancing.
In fulfillment of his unrighteous oath,
he caused your murder, O righteous and glorious Prophet.
But your death clearly revealed immortality to those who had died before,
for you became a preacher and herald for those in hell,
proclaiming the saving coming of Christ our God!/
Entreat Him that He may save and enlighten our souls!

Saints, tone 1:

O most blessed Alexander,
you were a shepherd of the Church;

a champion of Orthodoxy who wisely cast down the Arian heresy.
You prayed with supplications, O all-wise and glorious one,
that his wickedness be cast out of the Church.//
Therefore, together we honor you.

O honorable John, you disdained the corruption of the flesh,
and in your abstinence and faith, vigilance and confession,
you were found to be an earthly Angel and heavenly man.//
Entreat Christ that He may grant our souls great mercy!

You truly submitted to the divine teachings of the Apostle Paul,
and were carried up to the third heaven
by the height of your virtues, O glorious one,
where you heard the ineffable and divine words of the Spirit.
O blessed Paul, unshakable foundation of the Orthodox,//
by your prayers, may the Savior be merciful to us!

GLORY...Forerunner, tone 6:

Again Herodias raves with raging lust.
Oh, dance of deceit and feast of murder!
The Baptist is beheaded, and Herod is troubled.//
Through the prayers of Your Forerunner, O Lord, grant peace to our souls!

NOW AND EVER...the Dogmatikon in tone 3:

How can we not wonder
at your mystical childbearing, O exalted Mother?
For without receiving the touch of man,
you gave birth to a Son in the flesh, immaculate Virgin.
The Son born of the Father before eternity
was born of you at the fullness of time, O honored Lady.
He underwent no mingling, no change, no division,
but preserved the fullness of each nature.
Entreat Him, O Lady and Virgin, and Mother,
to save the souls of those who, in the Orthodox manner, confess you//
to be the Theotokos.

APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 3:

The sun was darkened by your Passion, O Christ,
but all creation was enlightened by the light of Your Resurrection.//
Accept our evening song, O Lover of mankind!

Your life-bearing Resurrection, O Lord,
enlightened the whole universe, recalling Your creation.
Delivered from Adam's curse, we sing://
“Almighty Lord, glory to You!”

You are the changeless God,
Who, suffering in the flesh, were changed.
Creation could not endure seeing You on the Cross.
It was filled with fear while praising Your patience.
By descending to hell and rising on the third day,/
You have granted to the world life and great mercy.

You endured death, O Christ,
to deliver the human race from death.
You rose from the dead on the third day,
raising with yourself those who knew You as God//
and enlightening the world. Glory to You!

GLORY...Forerunner, tone 4:

Herod's birthday celebration was a lawless and shameful feast,
for, spellbound by feminine licentiousness
and stricken with madness by a woman's wantonness,
he cut off the head of the Forerunner;
but he did not cut out the Prophet's tongue, which had denounced his foolishness.
Spilling innocent blood, he wished to conceal a lawless sin;
but he could not stop the voice of one who called all to repentance.
He joined in taking delight in murder,
but let us join in celebrating with love the blessed slaying of John the Baptist;
for he was in hell in anticipation
to proclaim to those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death
the Life, the Dayspring from on high,/
Christ our God, Who alone is rich in mercy.

NOW AND EVER...Resurrection Theotokion in tone 4:

Look on the entreaties of your servants, O blameless one!
Stop all the terrible attacks against us,
freeing us from every affliction,
for we have only you as our sure and firm anchor!
Lady, do not let us be put to shame,
for we call on you for our intercession!
Hasten to pray for those who call in faith:
“Rejoice, Lady, Help of all://
the Joy and Shelter and Salvation of our souls!”

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Glory... Forerunner, tone 2

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for you, O Forerunner.
You were shown in truth to be the most honorable of the Prophets,
for you were deemed worthy to baptize in the steams of the Jordan Him Whom they 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.

Now & Ever... Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 2
All beyond thought, all most glorious,
are your mysteries, O Theotokos.
Sealed in purity, preserved in virginity,
you were revealed to be the true Mother who gave birth to the True God.//
Entreat Him to save our souls.

THE DIVINE LITURGY

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 3

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Saint John of Damascus

Teacher of Orthodoxy, piety, and purity!
Enlightener of the universe!
And divine inspiration to monastics
by your teachings we are all enlightened,
and by your spiritual music, O all-wise John of Damascus,
pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls!

Forerunner, tone 2

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for you, O Forerunner.
You were shown in truth to be the most honorable of the prophets,
for you were deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan Him whom they 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.

Saints, tone 4:

O God of our Fathers,
always act with kindness towards us;
take not Your mercy from us,
but guide our lives in peace through the prayers of the Patriarchs Alexander, John, and Paul.

KONTAKIA

Resurrection, tone 3

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb,
O merciful One,
Leading us from the gates of death.
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;
With the prophets and patriarchs they unceasingly praise
The divine majesty of Thy power.

Forerunner, tone 5

The glorious beheading of the Forerunner
became an act of divine dispensation,
for he preached to those in hell the coming of the Savior.
Let Herodias lament, for she entreated lawless murder,
loving not the Law of God, nor eternal life,//
but that which is false and temporal.

Steadfast Protectress

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
constant advocate before the creator:
do not despise the cry of us sinners,
but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith.
Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos,
for you always protect those who honor you.

PROKEIMENON, tone 3: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King,
sing praises!

vs. Clap your hands, all ye people, shout to God with loud songs of joy!

EPISTLE: (158) 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached unto you; unless you believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the Apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me, Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach, and so you believed.

Alleluia in the third tone: In Thee, O Lord, have I placed my hope; let me not be put to shame.
vs. Be Thou a God of protection for me, a house of refuge in order to save me.

GOSPEL: (79) 19:16-26 Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

COMMUNION HYMN: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!
Alleluia....