**SEPTEMBER 23**

**Conception of the Honorable Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John**

**"Lord I Call..." Tone 4**

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Hear me, O Lord!

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Receive the voice of my prayer,

when I call upon Thee!//

Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise

in Thy sight as incense,

and let the lifting up of my hands

be an evening sacrifice!//

Hear me, O Lord!

V. (6) *If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.*

**Tone 4** *(from the Menaion, for the Forerunner)* *(Called from on high)*

As the godly Zachariah sacrificed within the holy Temple

and offered up the petitions of the people

to the Benefactor and all-merciful One,

he beheld the holy angel who cried to him:

“Thy prayer and supplication have been heard.

Take courage, O priest, and believe in me,

for thou wilt have a child, the holy Forerunner,

who will be greater than all those born of women!//

Greater than Elijah in power, he will go before Christ.”

V. (5) *For Thy Name’s sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.*

(Repeat: “As the godly Zachariah…”)

V. (4) *From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

“Thou dost appear strange to me in sight and manner,” Zachariah replied;

“strange in words and in report.

For I have come to ask the salvation of the people

and not to acquire a child, as thou dost proclaim.

I find thee opposed to their request

and fear thou dost not tell the truth.

How will what thou sayest be confirmed?//

For Elizabeth is barren and, as thou canst see, I am already an elderly man.”

V. (3) *For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

(Repeat: “Thou dost appear strange to me… “)

V. (2) *Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

“Why dost thou not believe my words, O Zachariah?

Why dost thou say I bear false tidings?

As an Archangel of God I now stand with thee

and tell thee what I have been commanded to say.

But since thou hast doubted and hast not believed, thou wilt be dumb and speechless

until thou beholdest the divine fulfillment of my words.

When Elizabeth has borne the Voice and great Forerunner of the Word,//

thy tongue will be loosened and thou wilt bless the God of Israel.”

V. (1) *For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.*

(Repeat: “Why dost thou not believe my words… “)

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

**Tone 6** *(from the Menaion, for the Forerunner, by Byzantius)*

Today the fruit of prayer buds forth from a barren womb:

John the Forerunner.

O wilderness, give glory!

Dance, all people!

Behold, the herald of repentance begins to take flesh in his mother’s womb!

Come, O lovers of the feast,

let us exult in his glorious conception, crying out:

“Thou art the greatest among those born of women!”

Do not cease to intercede for those

who faithfully honor thy divine conception,//

that we may receive forgiveness of sins and great mercy!”

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 6** *(Theotokion – Dogmatikon)*

Who will not bless thee, O most holy Virgin?

Who will not sing of thy most pure childbearing?

The only-begotten Son shone timelessly from the Father,

but from thee 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-blessed Lady,//

to have mercy on our souls!

**Aposticha**

**Tone 6** *(from the Menaion, for the Forerunner)* *(Having placed all their hope)*

The holy priest and prophet went into the Holy of Holies,

and before him stood the holy angel.

As it is written, he addressed him saying:

“Thy petition has been heard.

Now the barrenness of Elizabeth is brought to an end,

and she will bear thee a son, John the Forerunner:

an ambassador, a Lamp of the Sun and Prophet of the Most High;//

the Voice of the Word and the divine Son Who will come forth from the Virgin!”

V. *Thou, O child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for thou wilt go before the Lord to prepare His ways. (Luke 1:76)*

“Tell me clearly, how will I know this?” answered the blessed elder.

“For as thou seest I am full of days, and Elizabeth is barren.

How dost thou utter words beyond nature?

I am amazed and now suspect, O friend, that thou dost not speak the truth.

Depart, for I ask the salvation of the people

and not to acquire a son.//

Such a thing cannot be believed.”

V. *That we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. (Luke 1:74b-75)*

“I am Gabriel, Archangel of God Almighty,”

the bodiless one said to the elder.

“Now since thou didst not believe my words,

be dumb and practice silence!

And when thy wife has borne thee the Trumpet of the Word,

the Spirit will illumine thy speech and thou wilt cry out clearly:

‘Thou, O child, will be called the Prophet of the Most High,//

to prepare His ways, as He is well pleased!’”

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

**Tone 6** *(from the Menaion, for the Forerunner)*

Thou didst come forth, O Baptist, as an angel from a barren womb.

Thou didst dwell in the desert from thy very swaddling clothes;

thou wast shown forth as the seal of all the Prophets,

for thou wast made worthy to baptize in the Jordan

the One Whom they saw in various ways and foretold in figures.

Thou didst hear the voice of the Father come from heaven

bearing witness to Christ’s Sonship;

thou didst see the Spirit in the form of a dove

draw down the Voice upon the One baptized.

Since thou art greater than all the Prophets,//

do not cease to intercede for us who celebrate thy memory in faith!

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 6** *(Theotokion)*

No one who hastens to thee

goes away from thee empty-handed,

O pure Virgin Theotokos;

but whoever asks for a favor,

receives the gift//

that most favorably fulfills the request.

***(at Vespers)***

**Tone 4** **Troparion** *(Forerunner)*

Rejoice, O barren one, who formerly did not bear a child,

for thou hast conceived the Lamp of the Sun, Who is to illumine the whole universe darkened by blindness!

Rejoice, O Zachariah,

and cry out with boldness://

“The Prophet of the Most High desires to be born!”

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

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 4** **Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion**

The mystery of all eternity,

unknown even by Angels,

through thee, O Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth:

God incarnate by union without confusion.

He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us,

by which He resurrected the first-created man,//

saving our souls from death.

***(at the Divine Liturgy)***

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Rejoice, O Zachariah,

and cry out with boldness://

“The Prophet of the Most High desires to be born!”

**Tone 1** **Kontakion** *(Forerunner)*

Great Zachariah rejoices with his wife, the far-famed Elizabeth,

for she has fittingly conceived John the ^Forerunner,

whom an angel announced in gladness;

and whom we rightly honor//

as an initiate of the grace of God.

**Tone 7** **Prokeimenon** *(Forerunner)*

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord / and shall hope in Him. *(Ps. 63:11a)*

V. *Hear my voice, O God, when I pray to Thee! (Ps. 63:1a)*

**Epistle**

 (212) Galatians 5:11-21

 (210-ctr) Galatians 4:22-31 *(Forerunner)*

**Tone 4**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in*

*Lebanon.* *(Ps. 91:11)*

V. *They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts*

*of our God. (Ps. 91:12)*

 **Gospel**

 (11) Luke 3:23-4:1

 (2) Luke 1:5-25 *(Forerunner)*

**Communion Hymn**

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil

tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*Prepared by the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, Orthodox Church in America.*