

THE BEHEADING OF THE HOLY PROPHET, FORERUNNER, AND BAPTIST JOHN

On the 29th of August, we celebrate a Simple yet major Feast of Saint John the Baptist. The feast of his beheading is both cause for celebration of a great martyr, but also an occasion for fasting, as we are reminded how we are disobedient to the precepts of God. It is highly recommended that we abstain from meat on this day and highly commendable to observe a stricter fast. It is also traditional not to eat from plates on this feast. Of course, we should attend at least one of the liturgical services offered on this occasion.

Because the Baptist had denounced Herod Antipas for putting away his own wife and marrying the wife of his brother Philip, Herod imprisoned Saint John. At a feast in honor of Herod's birthday, his stepdaughter, Salome, danced for him. Herod promised her anything. Her mother, Herodias, told her to ask for the head of John on a plate. This martyrdom is commemorated on this day because a church was dedicated on this day to the Forerunner's beheading by the Emperor Constantine and his mother Helena.

