

# February 24<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Findings of the Head of St. John the Baptist

## At Vespers

*The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah (40:1-3; 41:17-18; 45:8; 48:20-21; 54:1)*

**Y**hus saith the Lord: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith God. Speak, ye priests, to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation is accomplished, her sin is put away: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double the amount of her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. O thou who bringest glad tidings to Sion, go up on the high mountain; lift up thy voice with strength, thou who bringest glad tidings to Jerusalem; lift it up, fear not. I the Lord God, I will hear the poor of Israel, and will not forsake them: but I will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of plains: I will make the desert pools of water, and a thirsty land watercourses. Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain righteousness: let the earth bring forth, and blossom with mercy, and bring forth righteousness likewise. Utter aloud a voice of gladness, and let this be made known, proclaim it to the ends of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath delivered His servant Jacob. And if they shall thirst, He shall lead them through the desert; He shall bring forth water to them out of the rock. Rejoice, thou barren woman who bearest not; break forth and cry, thou who dost not travail: for more are the children of the desolate than of her who hath a husband.

*The Reading is from the Prophecy of Malachi (3:1-3,5-7,12; 2:4; [3:17-18;] 4:4-6)*

**Y**hus saith the Lord Almighty: Behold, I send forth My messenger, and he shall survey the way before Me: and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into His temple, even the Angel of the covenant, Whom ye take pleasure in. Who will abide the day of His coming? or who will withstand at His appearing? for He is coming in as the fire of a furnace and as the herb of those who wash. He shall sit to melt and purify as it were silver, and as it were gold: and He will come to you as a judge; and will be a swift witness against the wicked, and against the adulteress, and against those who swear falsely by My name, and against those who keep back the hireling's wages, and those who oppress the widow, and afflict orphans, and wrest the judgement of the stranger, and fear not Me, saith the Lord Almighty. For I am the Lord your God, and I am not changed: but ye, the sons of Jacob, have perverted My statues and have not kept them. Wherefore, return to Me, and I will return to you, saith the Lord Almighty. And all nations shall call you blessed. Understand ye that I am the Lord, Who discerneth between the righteous man and the iniquitous on the day, whereon I shall perseve those who love Me. Be ye therefore aware, and remember the Law of Moses My servant, accordingly as I charged him with it in Horeb for all Israel, even the commandments and ordinances. And, behold, I will send to you Elijah the Tishbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord cometh; who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and smite the earth grievously, saith the Lord Almighty, the Holy God of Israel.

*The Reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon (4:7, 16-17, 19-20; 5:1-7)*

**W**hough the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. Thus the righteous who is dead shall condemn the ungodly who are living. For they shall see the end of the wise, and shall not understand what God in His counsel hath decreed of him. For [the Lord] shall cast the ungodly down headlong, that they shall be speechless; and He shall shake them from the foundation; and they shall be utterly laid waste, and be in sorrow; and their memorial shall perish. And when they cast up the account of their sins, they shall come with fear: and their own iniquities shall convict them to their face. Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation. And they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit shall say within themselves, "This was he whom we held betimes in derision, and as a proverb of reproach: We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot among the saints? Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. We have been full of the ways the iniquitous, and have trodden trackless paths: but the ways of the Lord have we not known."