

The Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John, commemorated in the Metropolitan Cathedral in the capital of the country



Wednesday, 11 September 2019, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John, the last big holiday in the church year.

Metropolitan Vladimir of Chisinau and Moldova officiated the Divine Liturgy in the Nativity of the Lord Cathedral in Chisinau, commemorating the martyrdom of St. John Baptist.

Concelebrating to the first hierarch of the Orthodox Church of Moldova were Bishop Ioan of Soroca, Vicar of the Metropolis of Moldova, archpriest Vadim Cheibas, the Cathedral Dean and Metropolitan Secretary, and the clergy of the holy place.

Holy Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John is among most venerated saints in the Orthodox world, and the name John, in the multitude of its ethnic forms, is one of the most widely spread names, both male and female.

The event commemorated today in the Orthodox Church is described in the Holy Gospel (Mathew 14: 1-13; Mark 6: 14-30). St. John the Forerunner was beheaded by Herod the tetrarch, son of Herod the Great, during an orgy on Herod's birthday, in the presence of numerous courtesans. St. John incessantly warned king Herod against profligacy and corrupt relations with his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. During a drunk feast, contrary to the tradition of the time and place, Herodias' daughter Salome danced in front of Herod and his guests (historians consider that seductive dances during feasts were performed by slave women), and pleased Herod. The drunk king promised to give her whatever she asked. Advised by her mother, Salome asked the head of St. John, whose sermons were very annoying for both the king and his lover. Bible says that although Herod appeared *exceedingly sorry*, he ordered the execution of John to honour his insane oath.

St. John the Forerunner is venerated in Orthodoxy as a model of sobriety and ascetic living during his mission of calling people to repentance in order to meet the coming Messiah – our Lord Jesus Christ. That is why, the event of his glorious martyrdom is commemorated with fast.

Russian Orthodox Church declared the day of the Beheading of St. John Baptist a day of fighting with alcoholism and special prayer for those suffering of this weakness.

After the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Vladimir congratulated archpriest Andrei Burlescu, cleric of the Cathedral, on the 29th anniversary of priesthood, wishing to the venerable priest long live and strength from God.

- Source: en.mitropolia.md / Synodal Sector of Institutional Communication and Mass-Media Relations