

**SAINT JOHN
THE FORERUNNER**

KILLING THE MESSENGER FAILS TO SILENCE THE MESSAGE!

Every Orthodox Christian is familiar with the tragic details that led to the beheading of St. John the Baptist. Soon after baptizing Christ in the Jordan, John was arrested and imprisoned by Herod Antipas, the son of the infamous ruler of the same name, who reigned at the time of our Lord's birth. His "crime" was speaking out against the King for his marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

Not content with merely seeing the Baptist in captivity, Herodias devised a plan for his untimely demise. When Herod promised her daughter Salome anything she wanted after pleasing the King with her dancing at his birthday celebration, she instructed her to make this gruesome request: "I WANT YOU TO GIVE ME AT ONCE THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST ON A PLATTER."

It is interesting to note that soon after this terrible deed had been carried out, Herod and Herodias were driven into exile by Prince Aretas, whose daughter had been Herod's lawful wife! It is recorded that they lived in great need and poverty for the rest of their lives.

It is equally fitting that Salome's life ended in tragedy as well. While living in Spain with her exiled mother and step-father, Salome fell into the frozen Sikaris River. The ice broke, and Salome found herself in the water up to her throat. After struggling as the ice pierced her neck, she was eventually decapitated. Ironically, her body was washed away, and those who found Salome's head brought it to her mother on a platter, in a manner similar to how she had once received the blessed head of the Baptist!