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## THE FORERUNNER AND HIS PARENTS

### The Forerunner as a prophet and priest

In today's gospel passage we are informed by the evangelist Luke about the events of the birth of the Precious Forerunner. His father was Zechariah the priest. His mother Elizabeth also descended from Aaron. This means that John the Forerunner came from a priestly tribe. So for this reason not only as a prophet but also as a priest – since the priesthood was inherited – he received from the Lord the command to sacredly perform essentially the last sacred work between the Old and the New Testament: the baptism of repentance in the Jordan River. The basic work of this last prophet and priest of the Old Testament was to prepare the people through the baptism of repentance, in order to worthily receive their Savior Jesus Christ.

In the person of the Forerunner the priesthood of the Old Testament cedes its place to the priesthood of the New Testament. With his personality and his work the priest Forerunner shows very triumphantly that the priesthood and the rituals of the Old Testament could not save. They were only training people to accept the awaited Savior. The high priest Christ, who brought the priesthood to the world according to the order of Melkizidech, saves the world with His saving mysteries which He handed down to humanity. So for this reason, even the most un-noteworthy Christian, who is inside the Church, which is the Kingdom of the Heavens-and this shows clearly from the many parables, such as the sower and the tares – is higher than the Forerunner and every righteous person of the Old Testament. The Forerunner proceeded to Hades. The believers in the Church partaking in the saving mysteries, which the priests perform, do not end up in Hades, but they proceed to eternal life.

### Honoring the priesthood

From the above we can understand the great importance of the priesthood in the Church. Through the priests our God gives rebirth, makes us His children and grants us sanctification and

eternal life. If through our fleshly parents we receive the temporal life, through our spiritual fathers, the priests, we receive eternal life. So for this reason much more than the fleshly parents we must respect and be grateful to our priests. And if he who speaks evil, treats his parents badly and scorns them, is ungrateful and abhorrent, how much more abhorrent and foul does he not become, who does not respect and honor the priests?

## **The parents of the Forerunner**

About the parents of the Forerunner the evangelist informs us that both were righteous before God. Many times we see people being righteous, but not before God, nevertheless superficially and before people. Truly righteous however, is whoever is recognized as righteous by God. Such were the parents of the Forerunner. They also walked “in all the commandments and the righteousnesses of God and were blameless. Righteousnesses is one more name of the commandments of God. They are called thus, because since God is our maker and creator, and since whatever good we have, comes from God, God has full rights over us. We are God’s. So for this reason also we ought in everything to follow His will. Sts. Zechariahs and Elizabeth kept all the commandments of God, and furthermore not superficially, “not to be seen by men”, but in a blameless manner. With much humility and sincerity.

## **Holy parents – holy children**

So from such parents such an all holy child came forth. Because they comforted God with their life, they were granted to bring into life such a son, who was holy “from his mother’s womb” and who became a prophet and forerunner and baptist of the Savior of all. He played one of the most important roles in the work of the salvation of all humanity and in the course of human history.

Our contemporary charismatic elder Porphyrios, when parents would come to him and ask how to help their children to take the correct path, he would tell them to become holy. If they become holy, then their children will also become holy. The verification of this word of his, shows very clearly in the case of the parents of the Forerunner. They were holy and their child was sanctified and the whole world changed. So if we long to help the world to change for the better, let us become holy, in order to produce holy children, who will benefactor of the world and guide it to the knowledge of God and to repentance.

Archim. P. K.