

Aposticha:

TONE EIGHT

In my wretchedness I dare not raise my eyes to heaven, because of all the evil I have done; but like the Publican I groan and cry to Thee: O God, be merciful to me a sinner, and deliver me from the Pharisee's hypocrisy, for Thou only art compassionate (*twice*).²⁷

To the Martyrs

O martyrs of the Lord, ye hallow every place and heal every ill; and now we entreat you to pray that our souls may be delivered from the snares of the enemy.

Glory be to the Father. . . . Both now. . . .

Theotokion

The heavenly powers praise thee, O Virgin Mother full of grace, and we also glorify thy childbearing that none can understand. O Theotokos, pray for the salvation of our souls.

And the rest of Vespers as on the preceding Sundays.

Note that at the First Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday we venerate the Precious Cross, singing We venerate Thy Cross, O Master . . . , in placē of Order my steps in Thy word. . . .

²⁷ Luke 18: 10-13.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
on which we celebrate the memory of
OUR HOLY FATHER
JOHN OF THE LADDER

VESPERS ON SATURDAY EVENING

After the Psalm of Introduction (Psalm 103) and the Great Litany, we read Blessed is the man (the first kathisma of the Psalter).

To Lord, I have cried, ten stichera are sung: six of the Resurrection in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, and the following three in honour of the saint, the first of them being repeated:

TONE EIGHT

(to the special melody, O marvellous wonder. . .)

O holy father John, truly hast thou ever carried on thy lips the praises of the Lord, and with great wisdom hast thou studied the words of Holy Scripture that teach us how to practise the ascetic life. So hast thou gained the riches of grace, and thou hast become blessed, overthrowing all the purposes of the ungodly (*twice*).

Most glorious father John, with the fountain of thy tears thou hast cleansed thy soul, and by keeping vigils through the night thou hast gained God's mercy. Thou wast raised on wings, O blessed one, to the love of Him and of His beauty; and as is right thou dwellest now in His unending joy, with thy fellow soldiers in the spiritual fight, O holy saint of God.

O holy father John, through faith thou hast lifted up thy mind on wings to God; hating the restless confusion of this world, thou hast taken up thy Cross; and, following Him who sees all things, thou hast subjected thy rebellious body to His guidance through ascetic discipline, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Glory be to the Father. . . .

TONE FIVE

O holy father, hearing the voice of the Gospel of the Lord, thou hast forsaken the world, counting as naught its riches and its glory; and so thou hast cried out to all: 'Love God, and ye shall find eternal grace. Set nothing higher than His love, that, when He comes in glory, ye may find rest with all the saints.' At their prayers, O Christ, guard and save our souls.

Both now . . .

Then the *Theotokion* (*Dogmatikon*) in the Tone of the week from the *Octoechos*, followed by the Entrance, O joyful Light, and the *Prokimenon* of the day, The Lord is King.

At the Lity we sing the *stichera* of the patron saint of the church or monastery, and then:¹

Glory be to the Father. . . .

TONE EIGHT

We and all who follow the monastic life honour thee as teacher, O John our father; for we have learned through thee to journey on the straight path. Blessed art thou, for thou hast served Christ and triumphed over the power of the enemy. O fellow of the angels, companion of the righteous and the saints, pray with us unto the Lord, that mercy may be granted to our souls.

Both now . . .

Theotokion

O Virgin who hast not known a man, Mother of the most high God, thou hast ineffably conceived God in the flesh. O undefiled, accept the supplications of thy servants, for to all thou grantest cleansing from their sins. Receive our prayers and intercede for the salvation of us all.

We sing the *Aposticha* in the Tone of the week from the *Octoechos*, and then:

Glory be to the Father

TONE TWO

(to the Saint)

Let us honour John, angel upon earth and man of God in heaven,

¹ The printed books do not provide any texts for the Lity. We follow here the usage of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, Patmos.

adornment of the world, joy of the good and virtuous, glory of ascetics. For planted in the house of God he has blossomed with the flower of holiness, and spread abroad like a cedar in the desert, causing the sheep of Christ's spiritual flock to increase in sanctity and righteousness.²

Both now

Theotokion

O new wonder, greater than all the wonders of old! For who has ever known a mother to give birth without a man, and to carry in her arms Him who carries all creation? The Child conceived by thee, pure Virgin, is the Counsel and the Will of God. Since thou hast held Him as a babe in thine arms and hast gained a mother's boldness before Him, cease not to intercede for those who honour thee, that mercy and salvation may be granted to our souls.³

The *apolytikion* Hail, Theotokos Virgin, Mary full of grace (*three times*), and the rest of *Vespers*.

MATTINS

After the Six Psalms and the Great Litany, we sing The Lord is God, followed by the *troparion* (*apolytikion*) of the Resurrection in the Tone of the week (*twice*); Glory be to the Father . . . ; and then the *troparion* (*apolytikion*) of the saint:

(Greek use)

TONE EIGHT

With the rivers of thy tears thou hast made the barren desert fertile, and with the sighs of sorrow from thy heart thou hast made thy labours to bear fruit an hundredfold. With the glory of thy miracles thou hast become a light to the inhabited earth. O John our holy father, pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

Both now

² Ps. 91: 13-14.

³ Isa. 9: 6 (Sept.).

Theotokion
SAME TONE

O loving Lord, for our sakes Thou wast born of a Virgin and hast endured Crucifixion, despoiling death by death, and as God Thou hast revealed the Resurrection. Despise not Thy handywork, but show Thy love for man, O merciful Lord. Accept the intercessions made on our behalf by the Theotokos who bore Thee; and save, O our Saviour, Thy people from despair.

(*Slav use*)

TONE ONE

O John our father, saint of God, thou wast revealed as a citizen of the desert, an angel in a body and a worker of miracles. Through fasting, prayer and vigils thou hast received heavenly gifts of grace, and thou healest the sick and the souls of those that turn to thee with faith. Glory be to Him who gave thee strength; glory be to Him who crowned thee; glory be to Him who through thee grants to all men healing.

Both now

Theotokion
SAME TONE

At Gabriel's salutation, 'Hail!', the Master of all things took flesh in thee, O Virgin. Thou art the holy Ark of which the righteous David spoke; thou wast made wider than the heavens, for thou hast carried thy Creator in thy womb. Glory be to Him who dwelt in thee; glory be to Him who from thee came forth; glory be to Him who through thy childbearing has set us free.⁴

Then the readings from the Psalter; and the service continues as on the first Sunday in Lent (p. 302).

The Canon

We use four troparia (including the irmos) from the Canon of the Resurrection and two troparia from the Canon to the Theotokos, both in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos; four troparia from the first Canon in the Triodion,⁵ and four troparia from the second Canon, in honour of the saint.

⁴ Ps. 131: 8.

⁵ Based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 30-7).

CANTICLE ONE

First Canon
TONE FIVE

(*Irmos*) To God our Saviour

O Christ my Saviour, I have become like the man who fell among thieves, who was wounded and left half dead. For through my sins I have wounds more grievous than his.

Stripped of all Thy wealth, he cried out lamenting: 'O Saviour, I am gravely wounded; leave me not to the thieves.' So do I also pray to Thee: Merciful Lord, O save me.

My mind has been scourged with the whips of sin by wicked thieves and evil thoughts. Heal me, Christ my Saviour, and save me, for Thou art rich in mercy.

Theotokion

O undefiled Mother of Christ, God took flesh from thee while yet remaining always in the bosom of the Father: pray to Him without ceasing, that He may save from every peril the creatures He has formed.

Canon of the Saint

TONE EIGHT
(*by Ignatius*)

(*Irmos*) Having crossed the water as though it were dry land

Ascending from the dark sorrow of material things, O holy John, thou hast gone to dwell in spiritual light: give me light through thine intercessions to the Lord.

Suckled on the sweetness of abstinence, thou hast cast away the bitterness of sensual indulgence; and so, father, thou givest us a pleasure sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.⁶

Ascending to the height of the virtues and rejecting the pleasures that creep upon the ground, O holy father, thou hast become the sweetness of salvation to thy flock.

Theotokion

O thou who ineffably hast borne the Word and Wisdom of the Father, heal the harsh wounds of my soul and still the anguish of my heart.

⁶ Ps. 18: 11.

TONE FOUR

(*Katavasia*) I shall open my mouth and the Spirit will inspire it, and I shall utter the words of my song to the Queen and Mother: I shall be seen radiantly keeping feast and joyfully praising her wonders.

CANTICLE THREE

(*Irmos*) By Thy power, O God, establish us

Journeying on the path of life, O Christ, I have been sorely wounded by thieves because of my passions: I pray Thee, raise me up.

Thieves have robbed my mind and left me half dead, wounded by my sins: but heal me, O Lord.

My passions have stripped me bare of Thy commandments, O Saviour Christ, and I have been scourged by sensual pleasures. But pour oil upon my wounds.

Theotokion

Pray without ceasing, O pure Bride of God, to Him who came forth from thy womb, that those who sing thy praises may be delivered from the deceit of the devil.

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) Thou art the strong support of those that run to Thee

With the fiery coal of thine ascetic warfare, O saint, thou hast burnt up the thorns of the passions, giving warmth through thy fervour to all who follow the monastic life.

Through thine ascetic labours, O saint, thou hast become myrrh of sanctification, offered up as sweet-smelling fragrance to God.⁷

Attentive to the laws of asceticism, with the waters of thy tears thou hast drowned the passions, as the soldiers of Pharaoh once were drowned in the Red Sea.

Theotokion

Check the restless tumult of my thoughts, O pure Mother of God, and guide me to thy Son.

⁷ Eph. 5: 2.

(*Katavasia*) O Mother of God, thou living and plentiful fount, give strength to those united in spiritual fellowship, who sing hymns of praise to thee: and in thy divine glory vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Sessional Hymn

TONE FIVE

With Thy Holy Cross as our weapon of salvation, we cry aloud to Thee, our Saviour: O Thou who willingly hast suffered for our sake, save us, God of all, in Thy great mercy.

Glory be to the Father

Another Sessional Hymn, of the Saint:

TONE FOUR

Shining with the glory of the virtues, thou hast gone up to dwell in heaven, and in holiness thou hast entered the boundless depth of contemplation. Thou hast exposed to mockery all the snares of the demons, protecting mankind from their cruel violence. And now, O John, ladder of the virtues, thou dost intercede for the salvation of thy servants.

Both now

Theotokion

SAME TONE

He who is enthroned upon the cherubim and who dwells in the bosom of the Father, sits incarnate in thy bosom, O Lady, as though upon His holy throne. As God He is the ruler of all nations, and with understanding now we sing to Him; entreat Him for the salvation of thy servants.⁸

CANTICLE FOUR

(*Irmos*) I have heard tidings of the power of Thy Cross

Thieves have despoiled me of my godly actions, leaving me chastised and in agony.

My unstable thoughts have stripped me bare of Thy commandments, O Saviour, and I have been scourged by my transgressions.

The Levite, when he saw me wounded, passed by on the other side, O Saviour; but do Thou preserve me.

⁸ Ps. 98: 1; John 1: 18; 1 Cor. 14: 15.

Theotokion

As is right, we glorify thee, Virgin Theotokos, and with all the faithful we take refuge in thy haven.

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) O Lord, I have heard the mystery of Thy dispensation

Thou art a fragrant meadow and a living paradise of the virtues, in which there grows the fruit of abstinence; and with it thou dost nourish all who honour thee.

For all who follow the ascetic and monastic way, thou art in truth a lawgiver like Moses, a meek and gentle ruler like David; and we bless thee, father.⁹

Planted beside the waters of abstinence, O blessed father, thou art become a fruitful vine, bearing the grapes of true sanctity.¹⁰

Theotokion

Within time, O Mother of God, thou hast borne for us Him who shone forth timelessly from the Father. Entreat Him to save those who sing thy praises.

(*Katavasia*) Perceiving the unsearchable purpose of God concerning Thine Incarnation from a Virgin, O Most High, the prophet Habakkuk cried: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

CANTICLE FIVE

(*Irmos*) Watching early in the morning, we cry to Thee

Bind up, O Jesus, the wounds of my soul, as the Samaritan bound up the wounds of him that fell among thieves, and heal me from my pain, I pray, O Christ.

Scourged by my transgressions, O Christ, my soul is sick and in agony, and I lie naked and bereft of the divine virtues; but I beseech Thee, save me.

When the priest and the Levite saw me, they could not help me, but passed by on the other side. But Thou in Thy compassion hast given me salvation and preserved me.

⁹ Ps. 131: 1.

¹⁰ Ps. 1: 3.

Theotokion

I entreat Thee, Master, despise me not in my wretchedness, for my mind has been scourged painfully by thieves. But take pity on me, Saviour, at the intercessions of Thy Mother.

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) O Light that never sets

O blessed father, thou hast quenched all the passions with the dew of thine ascetic struggles, and with the fire of love and faith thou hast kindled the lamp of abstinence; thou art a light of dispassion and a child of the day.¹¹

With thy divine husbandry, O father, thou hast tended the grapes of faith; thou hast gathered them to the winepress and pressed them out by the labours of ascetic warfare; and, filling the spiritual cup of abstinence, thou makest glad the hearts of thy flock.¹²

With courage thou hast endured the assaults and wounds of the enemy; thou art a pillar of steadfastness, supporting thy flock, O blessed father; guiding thy sheep with the staff of God, thou feedest them in green pastures and beside the waters of abstinence.¹³

Theotokion

As thou thyself hast said, we call thee blessed, O Virgin. For the Lord has indeed done unto thee great things and magnified thee; born from thy womb, He has made thee true Mother of God.¹⁴

(*Katavasia*) The whole world was amazed at thy divine glory: for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, hast held in thy womb the God of all, and hast given birth to an eternal Son, who rewards with salvation all who sing thy praises.

CANTICLE SIX

(*Irmos*) The deep encompassed me

I have wasted my God-given life on the passions, O Master, and I am fiercely scourged in every part by my transgressions; but I turn to Thee for refuge and I pray: Have pity on me.

¹¹ 1 Thess. 5: 5.

¹² Ps. 103: 15.

¹³ Ps. 22: 1-2.

¹⁴ Luke 1: 48-9.

Scourging my mind with the passions, thieves have seized my wealth and left me as one dead. But take pity on me and save me, O Lord.

When the Levite saw how painfully I had been scourged, unable to endure the sight of my wounds he passed by on the other side. But Thou in Thy love hast poured upon me Thy rich mercy.

Theotokion

Rightly do we glorify thee as the Bush unconsumed by fire, the Mountain and the living Ladder and the Gate of Heaven, O glorious Mary, pride of the Orthodox.¹⁵

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) Be merciful to me, O Saviour

Thou hast received in thy soul the divine wealth of the Spirit: prayer without reproach, chastity, modesty, unremitting watchfulness, the labours of abstinence; and through these things thou hast become a house of God.

O wise father, thou hast passed by the worthless joys of this material world, and raised thy mind upon the wings of immaterial prayer; and through the perfection of thy life thou hast received an inheritance on high.

With the sweat of thine ascetic toil thou hast quenched the fiery arrows of the enemy; kindling the fire of faith, thou hast burnt up the proud insolence of unbelief and heresy.

Theotokion

The majesty of the Most High has shone out from Zion; through an ineffable union He has put on flesh from thee, O Virgin, and brought light to the world.

(*Katavasia*) As we celebrate this sacred and solemn feast of the Mother of God, let us come, clapping our hands, O people of the Lord, and give glory to God who was born of her.

Kontakion

TONE FOUR

Truly the Lord has set thee as a fixed star in the firmament of

¹⁵ Exod. 3: 2; Dan. 2: 34; Gen. 28: 12, 17; Ezek. 44: 1-3.

abstinence, giving light to the ends of the earth, O father John our teacher.

Ikos

Truly, O father, thou hast made thyself into a house of God, adorned through thy divine virtues with faith, hope and true love, as if with gold shining from afar; thou hast explained the laws of God, and practised abstinence as one who has no flesh; acquiring wisdom, courage, chastity and humility, thou wast raised on high; thou wast illumined with unceasing prayer, and hast attained the tabernacles of heaven, O father John our teacher.

CANTICLE SEVEN

(*Irmos*) The Lord of our fathers, exalted above all

Thieves fell upon me, poor wretch, and scourging me they left me a lifeless corpse; therefore I pray to Thee: come to my aid.

My ever-moving thoughts have robbed my mind and, striking me through the passions, they have left me dead, because of the multitude of my transgressions. But, O Saviour, heal me.

When the Levite saw me, injured and in pain, thinking my wounds incurable and unable to endure the sight of them, he passed by on the other side. But, O my Saviour, do Thou make me whole.

Theotokion

Taking flesh from the Virgin, O Christ, Thou hast saved me, pouring the oil of Thy rich mercy on my wounds. Therefore I glorify Thee.

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) The Children of Judaea, who dwelt of old in Babylon

Thou hast led thy flock to pasture, O father, in the green meadows of the heavenly Kingdom, and with the rod of true dogma thou hast driven away the wild beasts of heresy; and thou dost sing aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

Thou hast entered into the joy of the heavenly bridal chamber of Christ the King, clothed in a garment worthy of Him that called thee to the feast; and, seated beside Him, thou dost cry aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.¹⁶

¹⁶ Matt. 22: 11.

O father, thou art a river of abstinence, not polluted with sin, but washing clean the thoughts and purging away the filth of those who cry aloud in faith: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

Theotokion

The Lord of all came forth from thy womb, taking flesh from thee, O Virgin. Therefore with true Orthodox faith we honour thee as Theotokos, and we cry to thy Son: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

(*Katavasia*) The holy Children bravely trampled upon the threatening fire, refusing to worship created things in place of the Creator, and they sang in joy: 'Blessed art Thou and praised above all, O God of our fathers.'

CANTICLE EIGHT

(*Irmos*) For Thee, the Creator of all

Robbed by my thoughts and scourged by my transgressions, O Saviour, I have ruined my life, and I have been stripped of Thy divine image, O God who lovest mankind; but take pity on me.

Thou hast come down upon earth from on high, O Saviour, taking pity on me when I was wounded in every part by the scourgings of sin; and in Thy compassion, O Christ, Thou hast poured upon me the oil of Thy mercy.

O Master and Saviour, Thou hast given Thy body and soul as a ransom for me; when I was wounded in every part by the great number of my offences and there was none to heal me, Thou hast saved me in Thy mercy.

Theotokion

At the word of the God-Man, O Virgin, in ways past understanding thou hast borne the Lord and still remained inviolate. With all His works we bless thee and exalt thee above all for ever.

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) The King of heaven. . . .

O father John, truly in thee we have a living pillar and image of abstinence, and we all honour thy memory.

The brotherhood of monks rejoices, and the assembly of the

saints and the righteous dances with gladness: for as thy just reward thou hast received a crown with them.

Adorned with the virtues, thou hast entered the bridal chamber of ineffable glory, singing in praise of Christ for ever.

Theotokion

Reject us not, O Virgin Maiden, for we need thy help; and we sing in praise of thee and exalt thee above all for ever.

(*Katavasia*) The Offspring of the Theotokos saved the holy Children in the furnace. He who was then pre-figured has since been born on earth, and He gathers together all the creation to sing: O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord and exalt Him above all for ever.

CANTICLE NINE

(*Irmos*) Rejoice, Isaiah. . . .

Yielding by my own free choice to the passions of sensual pleasure, I have not kept Thy commandments, O Master; I have been stripped of grace and I lie wounded and naked. Therefore I pray to Thee, O Saviour: save me.

The Levite could not cleanse my wounds, but Thou hast come to me in Thy compassion, O loving Saviour, and poured upon me the oil of Thy mercies; and as the best of all physicians Thou hast healed me.

Since Thou art compassionate, Thou hast taken pity on me and saved me, O Christ my Saviour, when I had been painfully scourged by the thieves; and instead of the two silver pieces Thou hast given Thy soul and body as a ransom for me.

Theotokion

Beyond our understanding is thy childbearing, O Mother of God. For without man thou hast conceived, and in virginity thou hast given birth; and the Child that thou hast borne is God. Him we magnify, O Virgin, and we call thee blessed.

Second Canon

(*Irmos*) With all peoples let us honour and glorify the pure Theotokos

O blessed in God, thou art a physician to those sick through sin, an expeller of evil spirits; therefore we call thee blessed.

Leaving the earth wherein corruption dwells, thou hast gone to live, O father, in the land of the meek and gentle, and with them thou rejoicest in the blessings of God.¹⁷

Today is a festival, for it calls together every part of the monastic flock, inviting all to share in a feast of spiritual rejoicing and in the food of sinless life.

Theotokion

He who took up His abode in thee, all-blameless Lady, has overthrown the murderer that in malice caused the fall of our first father and mother; He has been born and He has saved us all.

(*Katavasia*) Let every mortal born on earth, radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy; and let the hosts of the angelic powers celebrate and honour the holy feast of the Mother of God, and let them cry: Hail! Pure and blessed ever-Virgin, who gavest birth to God.

The appointed exapostilarion of the Resurrection; Glory be to the Father . . . , and then the exapostilarion of the saint:

Thou hast rejected as burdensome the ease of the world; causing thy flesh to waste away through fasting, thou hast renewed the strength of thy soul, and thou wast enriched, O honoured saint, with heavenly glory. Cease not to intercede on our behalf, O John.

Both now : . . .

Theotokion

Saved through thee, O Lady, we acknowledge thee to be in truth the Theotokos; for in ways past speech thou hast borne God, who has destroyed death by the Cross and called to Himself the assemblies of the saints. With them we praise thee, O Virgin.

Lauds. We sing the eight stichera of the Resurrection in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, and then:

Ÿ. Arise, O Lord my God, lift up Thine hand: forget not Thy poor for ever (*Psalms* 9: 33).

¹⁷ Matt. 5: 5.

TONE ONE

Come, let us work in the mystical vineyard, making fruits of repentance grow within it; let us not labour for the sake of food and drink, but through prayer and fasting let us gain the virtues. And the Lord of the vineyard, pleased by our labour, will provide the payment, whereby He redeems our souls from the debt of sin, for He alone is rich in mercy.¹⁸

Glory be to the Father

Repeat Come, let us work in the mystical vineyard

Both now

Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Theotokos

Great Doxology, the two Litanies, and the Dismissal.

LITURGY

The Typika (Psalms 102 and 145) and the Beatitudes. With the Beatitudes we sing four troparia in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, and four troparia from Canticle Six of the first Canon in the Triodion.

Prokimenon:

TONE SEVEN

The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace (*Psalms* 28: 11).

Ÿ. Bring unto the Lord, O ye sons of God, bring unto the Lord young rams (*ibid.*, 1).

Prokimenon of the saint: TONE SEVEN

The saints shall be joyful with glory: they shall rejoice upon their beds (*Psalms* 149: 5).

Epistle: (For the day) Hebrews 6: 13-20.

(For the saint) Ephesians 5: 9-19.

Alleluia:

TONE SEVEN

Ÿ1. It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy Name, O Most High (*Psalms* 91: 2).

Ÿ2. To tell of Thy mercy in the morning and of Thy faithfulness every night (*ibid.*, 3).

¹⁸ Matt. 20: 1-16.

Gospel: (For the day) Mark 9: 17-31.

(For the saint) Matthew 4: 25-5: 12.

Communion verse: Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the heights. Alleluia.

And: The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance: he will not be afraid of any evil tidings. Alleluia.

VESPERS ON SUNDAY EVENING

There is no reading from the Psalter.

To Lord, I have cried, ten stichera are sung: four penitential stichera in the Tone of the week, and then three stichera from the Triodion:

TONE THREE

(by Joseph)

O ye faithful, let us take upon ourselves great labours in this season of abstinence, that we may obtain great glory, delivered from the flames of hell through the mercy of our great God and King.

Now that we have passed beyond the middle point in the time of the Fast, let us manifest in ourselves a beginning of divine glory, and let us hasten eagerly towards our journey's end, the life of holiness, that we may receive the joy that grows not old.

TONE SEVEN

(by Theodore)

Having passed beyond the middle point in this holy season of the Fast, with joy let us go forward to the part that still remains, anointing our souls with the oil of almsgiving. So may we be counted worthy to venerate the divine Passion of Christ our God, and to attain His dread and holy Resurrection.

Then three stichera to the saint of the day from the Menaion; Glory be to the Father . . . Both now . . . ; and the Theotokion from the Menaion.

Entrance, O joyful Light . . .

Great Prokimenon (Psalm 68):

TONE EIGHT

Turn not away Thy face from Thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily: hearken unto my soul, and deliver it.

☩ 1. Let Thy salvation, O God, succour me.

☩ 2. Let the poor see it and be glad.

☩ 3. Seek God, and your soul shall live.

Aposticha:

TONE SEVEN

Having planted His vineyard and called the labourers, the Saviour is at hand. Come, all who have striven to keep the Fast, and let us enjoy our reward; for the Giver is rich and full of compassion. After labouring a little, let us receive His mercy on our souls.¹⁹

☩. Unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes

TONE SIX

(by Stephen)

Adam fell among thieving thoughts: his mind was robbed, his soul wounded, and he lay naked with none to help. The priest that was before the Law did not attend to him; the Levite that came after the Law did not look upon him. Thou alone hast helped him, O God who camest not from Samaria but from the Theotokos: glory be to Thee.²⁰

☩. Have mercy upon us, O Lord

To the Martyrs

SAME TONE

Thy martyrs, O Lord, denied Thee not and forsook not Thy commandments: at their intercessions have mercy upon us.

Glory be to the Father Both now

Theotokion

SAME TONE

With the Archangel, O ye faithful, let us praise the heavenly Bridal Chamber and the Gate that was kept truly sealed. Hail, for through thee the Saviour of all came to dwell among us, Christ the Giver of Life. With thy hand, O Lady undefiled, cast down the godless tyrants, our enemies, for thou art the hope of Christians.²¹

And the rest of Vespers as on the preceding Sundays.

¹⁹ Matt. 20: 1-16; Luke 20: 9.

²⁰ Luke 10: 30-5.

²¹ Ps. 18: 6; Ezek. 44: 1-3.