

## THE 20<sup>th</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH OF MARCH

### COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHERS SLAIN IN THE MONASTERY OF ST. SABBAS AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," these stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As Valiant among the martyrs ...":

**L**oving the ultimate Goal of desire utterly, \* O venerable ones, \* ye did account the beauties of life to be but dung; \* and through vigil and prayer, \* through rain and burning heat, \* ye acquired those things which alone are lasting; \* and having dwelt together as one, \* by grace were ye shown to be \* dwellers with the angels.

**B**eaten with staves, \* stoned with rocks, \* cut down with swords, \* ye did not break your oneness of mind, O martyrs, \* bound together by love and fraternal desire; \* yet, slain together, \* your members cut off, O passion-bearers, \* ye have set yourselves upon the altar of God \* as unblemished sacrifices.

**C**onsumed by fire, \* laid waste by suffocation, \* ye committed your souls into the hands of the King of all \* as unblemished sacrifices, O glorious martyrs; \* ye have joined yourselves to the choirs of the incorporeal powers, \* and inherited everlasting glory. \* Pray ye unceasingly, \* that they that praise you \* may also have a share therein.

**Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:**

**O** Virgin who gavest birth \* unto God my Savior, \* grant me the choice and saving remedy of repentance: \* a torrent of tears, \* and thought of the dread and awesome hour \* of the impartial judgment; \* that by thy supplications \* I may escape fearsome torment \* and receive grace divine.

**Stavrotheotokion:** **W**hen she beheld Thee \* nailed to the Cross, O Lord, \* the ewe-lamb, Thy Mother, \* marveled and cried aloud: \* "What is this that I see, \* O my Son most desired, \* wherewith the disobedient and iniquitous assembly hath recompensed Thee, \* which enjoyed thy many wonders? \* But glory to Thine ineffable descent, O Master!"

## AT MATINS

Canon to the venerable martyrs, the acrostic

whereof is: "With hymns I glorify the martyrs who shared one way of life," the composition of Stephen the Sabbaite, in Tone VIII:

### ODE I

**Irmos: O** ye people, let us send up a hymn to our wondrous God, Who freed Israel from bondage, singing and crying out a hymn of victory: We shall chant unto Thee Who alone art Master!

Unto me who desire to praise the divinely crowned multitude of Thy sacred martyrs with hymns, O Christ, through their entreaties grant light from Heaven, that I may raise a divinely crowned hymn.

Having fled the world of deadly pleasures, O ye that are most rich, ye cast off defilement of the flesh and spirit; and having lived angelic lives, ye have passed on to a dwelling place on high.

Manifestly ordering your members and senses in accordance with the law of the Spirit, ye showed yourselves to be temples dedicated to God, O God-bearing martyrs; for Christ made His abode within you.

Having left corruptible wealth behind on earth and disdained the beautiful things of life like a dream, O saints, pleasing Christ ye have now received the unshakable kingdom.

**Theotokion: T**hou hast been shown to be the noetic ladder which Jacob, the chosen one of God, beheld, and from whence by His ineffable Word the Incorporeal One passed Who, in manner past recounting, became flesh through thee immutably, O Theotokos.

### ODE III

**Irmos: O** Lord, Fashioner of the vault of heaven and Creator of the Church: establish me in Thy love, O Summit of desire, Confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind.

Having sanctified your whole blameless life, O martyrs, ye truly offered yourselves up to the all-seeing God as divine immolation-s; and have received perfect crowns.

As dedicated disciples of the God-bearing Sabbas, desiring to withdraw from the tumults of the world, ye attained unto everlasting life, unerringly treading the path of tribulation.

Having cultivated the seed which was the word of God sown within you, and watered it abundantly with streams of tears, O venerable ones, bearing fruit ye have offered grain unto God an hundredfold

**Theotokion:** Having dwelt in the Virgin corporeally, O Lord, Thou didst appear as a man, as it befitteth Thee to be seen; and Thou hast shown her to be the true Theotokos and help of the faithful, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

**Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "That which was mystically ordered ...":**

Having mortified the fiery assaults and movements of the passions, O God-pleasing fasters, following the steps of God Who alone hath wrought all things, beaten, slain and cut down with violence by slaughter at the hands of barbarians, ye offered yourselves up to Him as living and hallowed sacrifices.

**Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:**

O thou that art full of divine joy, pure and blessed one, with the powers on High, the archangels and all the incorporeal ones, beseech Him that was born of thee for the lovingkindness of His compassions; that before the end He grant us forgiveness, cleansing of our sins and amendment of life, that we may find mercy.

**Stavrotheotokion:** Ever protected by the Cross of thy Son and God, O Virgin, we vanquish the assaults and wiles of the demons, hymning thee who art truly the Theotokos; and all generations bless thee with love, O all-pure one, as thou didst foretell. Wherefore, by thy supplications grant thou remission of our offenses.

#### **ODE IV**

**Irmos:** Thou didst mount Thy steeds, Thine apostles, O Lord, and didst take their bridles in Thy hands; and Thy chariot became salvation unto them that sing with faith: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Beholding the invincible martyrs, adorned with divers virtues, persevering in the waterless desert, the enemy became inflamed with wickedness, and, imbued with hatred, prepared himself for an assault upon you.

The evil serpent, having rooted deception for this purpose within his disciples, instructed the barbarian tribes in the slaying one of another; whereby he strove to drive the venerable from the desert.

The enemy of the righteous, having savagely gathered to him them that were round about him, was unable to drive the invincible ones away; and, vanquished invisibly, he arrayed himself against them visibly.

Full of poison and rage, the prince of wickedness and his warriors launched themselves, descended like wild beasts upon the blessed ones, and spilled torrents of their blood by inflicting upon them unbearable wounds.

Those whose hope was on earth sought for transitory things: a treasure of corruptible gold; but, rendered steadfast, the valorous ones, placing their trust in heaven, cried out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

**M**ercilessly, like wild beasts, they tortured the venerable ones with staves, sword and stoning, commanding them to tell where their choice treasures were hid; but they all remained steadfast through the law of love.

**Theotokion:** **O** Virgin and Mother, thou art the adornment of the apostles, the confirmation of the holy martyrs, the boast of the venerable, and the salvation of them that sweetly chant with faith: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

### **ODE V**

**Irmos:** **Why hast Thou turned Thy face from me, O Light unwaning? Why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me to the light of Thy commandments, and guide my steps, I pray Thee!**

**T**he venerable ones, having learned the union of the perfection of love, laid down their lives for their friends, taught by Thee, O Savior, emulating Thy voluntary passion more than other men.

**O** Christ Who wast of Thine own will born in the flesh, in manner far surpassing nature they showed themselves to be mightier than death at Thy command; for, having been brought together by Thy law, the divinely-wise right laudably made haste to die for their friends.

**H**aving sprinkled your souls with the noetic hyssop of baptism, ye were straightway sprinkled with your blood, O venerable ones; and tried like gold in the rushing of the fire, ye became a pleasing and sweet-smelling sacrifice unto God.

**Theotokion:** **H**aving acquired maternal boldness before thy Son, O all-pure one, disdain not forethought for thy kin, we pray, that we may set thee alone before the Master as the merciful cleansing of Christians.

### **ODE VI**

**Irmos:** **From the depths of sin did I cry unto the Lord Who can save me, and He led my life out of corruption, in that He is the Lover of mankind.**

**T**he favored ones of Christ did not fear the threats of the barbarians; for they continually made their life a training for death.

**T**hinking to enrich themselves, the impious mercilessly tortured the non-acquisitive ones; but they, having cast aside corruptible things, acquired incorruptible things.

**I**nvested with invincible power, the athletes of Christ vanquished the noetic destroyers and the insolence of the barbarians.

**Theotokion:** **A**s on a light cloud did the reigning Lord come upon thee, O all-immaculate one, to cast down the works of the Egyptian hands.

Kontakion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Having "been lifted up ...":

**H**aving manifestly disdained the pleasure of earthly and corruptible things, and chosen a life in the desert, despising the most beautiful things of this world and food which passeth away, O all-blessed ones, ye hence were accounted worthy of the kingdom of heaven and make merry with the choirs of martyrs and fasters. Wherefore, honoring your memory, we earnestly cry out to you: Deliver us from tribulations, O fathers!

### ODE VII

**Irmos:** **H**aving quenched the most pernicious power of the Chaldean furnace by the appearance of the Angel Who had descended into it, the youths cried out to the Creator: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

**T**he hostility of the hordes of adversaries, visible and invisible, grew weak at the sight of the martyrs in their wounds who were chanting: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

**H**aving wed themselves to Thee, O Christ, casting aside kin and homeland and wealth, wounded with desire for Thee, they that fled to Thee for refuge loved Thee Who alone existest, O our Deliverer, God of our fathers!

**T**he bloodlust of the barbarians did not alter Thy lovers of desert service, O Christ; for they did not fear those who slay the body, holding fast to Thy commandment as an immovable foundation.

**H**aving turned their desire from the world to Thee and armed themselves solely against the spirit of sin, Thy favored ones pleased Thee, embraced by most wise thought, O Lord Christ.

**O** martyrs, receiving within you the law writ upon the tablets of your hearts, ye preached the One God in Trinity, crying out to Him: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

**Theotokion:** **O** ye that walk in the light of the Lord, come, let us hymn the divine portal of the King of kings, pure Mary who is truly the Theotokos, for she is the hope of our souls.

### ODE VIII

**Irmos:** **T**he divinely struck harp of piety sounded forth a different hymn than the instruments of impiety: O ye works of the Lord, bless Christ forever!

**T**he equals of the angels, vying with the ranks of heaven, standing all night in vigils, sang: All ye works of the Lord, bless Christ forever!

**T**aking up their cross, with all their heart the martyrs followed after Thee, the Master, chanting: All ye works of the Lord, bless Christ forever!

**H**aving purified body, soul and spirit equally, consumed in the fire, O fathers, ye offered yourselves up as whole-burnt offerings to God, exalting Christ supremely for all ages.

**Trinitarian:** Let them that utter blasphemy, saying that Thou Who art indivisible art in two hypostases, be put to shame as ones who honor a godhead of four persons; for we worship Thee alone as One of the divine Trinity.

### **ODE IX**

**Irmos:** Heaven is struck with awe, and the ends of the earth are amazed that God hath appeared to man in the flesh, and that thy womb hath become more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, the legions of men and angels magnify thee as Theotokos.

**H**aving trained themselves in divers ways and overcome the machinations of the ruler of this world, the fasters, like athletes, put to shame the malice of the barbarians, enduring their assaults. Wherefore, they received twofold crowns from the just Judge of the contest.

**L**eading a life of fasting in caves and caverns, O blessed ones, ye were confined within a narrow cave in a lightless defile; and dyed with your own blood, consumed by fire and cruelly suffocated by smoke admixed with steam, ye were shown to be the victors.

**W**e hymn your feats which transcend nature, whereby ye contended against sin, youthfully opposing it as warriors of Christ, O glorious ones; for right gloriously did ye overcome it. And now, standing before the Most High with the ranks of the saints, remember ye us.

**A**rroyed in the heavens with thrice-radiant splendor, as dutiful children of Sabbas your father and instructor, O blessed ones, pray in behalf of us your fellow disciples and chanters, that general peace be granted to the Churches and salvation to our souls.

**Theotokion:** As Mother of the Deliverer, O all-pure one, thou hast once more summoned us who have rejected the life of heaven and wretchedly fallen into death; and thou hast vouchsafed us to make haste again to our first homeland. Wherefore, we unceasingly magnify thee, O Mother of God.