

THE 23rd DAY OF THE MONTH OF MARCH
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRED MONK NICON AND TWO
HUNDRED OF HIS DISCIPLES MARTYRED WITH HIM
AT VESPERS

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

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

With the bit of abstinence * thou didst curb the pleasures of the body * and the recalcitrance of the flesh, O blessed one, * vanquishing the full force of the enemy * with the power of the Spirit, * as one who art brave. * Hence, thou wast a leader of monastics, * who ever followed * thy most wise and divine preaching, * O Nicon.

Shining forth from the East * like the sun, O most glorious one, * thou didst bring light to the whole world * with the radiance of miracles, * guiding the choir of thy luminous disciples like a star. * With them thou didst suffer mightily, * beheaded by the sword, * and placing your souls * in the hands of the King and Master of all.

Neither starvation, nor tribulation, * nor nakedness, nor wounding, * nor a truly violent death * were able to separate you from the love of God, O right wondrous ones; * but, following the Shepherd, * like sheep led to the slaughter, * from the West ye reached * the never-ending rest of the heavenly kingdom, * O crown-bearing athletes.

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

O all-holy Bride of God, * deliver thou my lowly soul * from condemnation and grievous transgressions, * and by thy supplications release it from death, * and grant that I may receive the justification * on the day of trial * which the councils of the saints have received. * Before the end show me to be cleansed * by repentance and the shedding of tears.

Stavrotheotokion: As she beheld Thee * nailed to the Cross, O Lord, * the ewe-lamb, Thy Mother, marveled * and cried out: "What is this that I see, * O desired Son? * What are these things wherewith the faithless and iniquitous assembly hath recompensed Thee, * they who have enjoyed Thy miracles? * But glory to Thine ineffable condescension, * O Master!"

AT MATINS:

The Canon, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn thee, the namesake of victory, O blessed one," the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: Israel of old, having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, conquered the might of Amalek in the wilderness through Moses' hands stretched forth in the form of a cross.

Having conquered him who is crafty in wickedness with ascetic struggles, thou wast crowned with the beauties of martyrdom; and now thou standest before God, O venerable Nikon, praying for us who honor thee.

Strengthened by the might of Him Who hath given us strength in our weakness, O blessed one, thou didst contend first in battles, and then, as a victor, didst hasten to receive Christian baptism.

The most blessed regiment of thy disciples is adorned with martyrdom, enlightened before with fastings; and by struggles redoubled they wove far themselves twofold wreaths of victory, O wise one.

Theotokion: The portal of the descent to us of Thee, the East, O Lord, supernaturally gaveth birth to Thee in two natures, to Thee Who art uncontainable, Who art mystically called the East, the Sun and Light.

ODE III

Irmos: Thy Church doth rejoice in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and consolation!

Surrounded by a spiritual army, O martyr of Christ, thou didst equip the divine army for feats of suffering.

Having first crucified the flesh ascetically, O most glorious one, thou didst strive to vanquish the hordes of demons with the wounds of thy suffering.

Having come like a star from, the East, O Nikon, thou didst attain unto the Western lands. Wherefore, dying, thou didst set and shed thy light toward Christ.

Theotokion: The assembly of the martyrs imitated Thy sacrifice, O Master, mowing Thee to have sprung forth from the Maiden who kneweth not wedlock.

Sedalion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Having first lived venerably, O Nikon, thou didst assemble a choir of those obedient to God, who ever piously followed thee; and shining forth from the East to the West, like a luminous sun, with rays of sufferings, with the blood of your stripes ye set deception at nought.

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

O most immaculate Virgin who gavest birth to the transcendent God, with the incorporeal ones unceasingly entreat Him to grant remission of transgressions and correction of life before the end unto us who with faith and love hymn thee as is meet, O thou who alone art most laudable.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: **A**s Thine all-pure Mother beheld Thee suspended upon the Cross, O Word of God, lamenting maternally she exclaimed: "What is this new and strange wonder, O my Son? How is it that Thou, the Life of all, dost taste death, Who desirest to bring life to the dead, in that Thou art full of lovingkindness?"

ODE IV

Irmos: **B**eholding Thee lifted up upon the Cross, O Sun of righteousness, the Church stood rooted in her place, crying out as is meet: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lord!

Delighting in splendors divine, O right wondrous martyr Nicon, thou didst pass through streams of torments unscathed, and didst worthily receive the crown of victory.

Thou didst struggle as a faster, adorning thyself with the splendors of brave deeds; and having first mortified the passions of the body by suffering, thou didst later vanquish hordes of demons.

Ye arrayed yourselves with the weaponry of piety against the enemy, O divinely wise ones, and by a glorious death obtained immortality, chanting: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lord!

Theotokion: **T**he Creator, loving thee as her who is above creation, O Virgin Mother, showed thee forth as His Mother. Thee do the assemblies of athletes now entreat graciously.

ODE V

Irmos: **T**hou hast come into the world as a Light, O my Lord, a holy Light which turneth from the gloom of ignorance them that hymn Thee with faith.

Rightly obeying the godly admonitions of thy mother, O Nicon, learning higher things thou didst have the power of the Cross in battle.

Thy life, illumined with the light of the virtues, possessed suffering as a most magnificent adornment, O divinely wise and most honored one.

Obeying the laws laid down by God, the martyrs, having contended, manfully conquered the iniquitous with the help of God.

Theotokion: **F**or us didst thou give birth to the timeless Light, the Effulgence of the Father, Who in the richness of His goodness came under time, O most immaculate one.

ODE VI

Irmos: **I shall sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord, the Church crieth out to Thee, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.**

Like the sun of great radiance didst thou hasten from the East, O divinely wise one, leading the choir of thy disciples like stars; and ye all illumined the West with your rays.

With the drops of thy blood didst thou deluge the sea of polytheism, O martyr; and with the deep of thy struggles thou didst drown the cruel and most wicked author of evil.

Ye blossomed forth like lilies on the meadow of suffering, and like sweet-scented roses ye perfume our hearts with the beauties of martyrdom, O divinely inspired athletes.

Theotokion: **T**he choir of athletes, knowing thee to be the temple of God and the animate palace, a Mistress, entreateth thee, the one who hath removed the reproach of women.

ODE VII

Irmos: **The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, afire with love of piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!**

Tried by wounding more than gold is tried by fire, O divinely wise one, thou wast shown to be a pillar of the virtues, repelling the assaults of the demons, and crying: Blessed art Thou, O my God, Lord of our fathers!

After thine end, thy body, which had been secretly cast out, O martyr, emitting the radiance of divine healings, dispelled demonic outrage by the divine power of Him Who made thee manifest.

Having wholly enjoyed divine favor, O most blessed one, thou didst steadfastly give thy body over to wounding, and as thou didst desire, O venerable one, thou standest, crowned, before the Almighty in the heavens.

As a shepherd of the reason-endowed sheep, O wise one, thou didst preserve them unharmed by the noetic wolves; and abiding with them in the fold of heaven, thou standest before the Ultimate Object of holy desires.

Theotokion: **W**ithout corrupting thy virginity in the least, O Maiden, the Word of the Father made His abode within thee; and the glorious choir of the martyrs hath venerated thee, confessing thee to be the pure Theotokos.

ODE VIII

Irmos: Stretching forth his hands, Daniel shut the lions' mouths in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Vigilantly tending the pyre of thy heart, which is fed with torrents of tears and the blood of martyrdom, O venerable one, thou now dwellest in a chamber not fashioned by the hands of men, crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thou wast shown to be the adornment of fasters and martyrs, O venerable Nikon; for in both wast thou content, gaining over the one enemy victories which astonish the mind, and crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Having watered souls with blood, thou didst raise them to divine zeal, O venerable one, and with thy martyr's wounds thou didst wound the horde of the demons, showing forth the fittingness of thy name, and crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: Rend asunder the heavy chains of my falls, O pure and most lauded one who hast set aright the fall of Adam by thy birthgiving; and bring us to cry with pure thought: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Irmos: Christ, Who united the two disparate natures, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

The Bestower of crowns beheld thee flourishing in the beauty of thy wounds and clad in the robe dyed purple by thy martyr's blood; and He dwelt within thee who rejoicest in godly manner.

All-beauteous is the love which thou didst acquire for God, O Nikon; fervent is thy zeal which is kindled by divine fire, and wondrous the suffering which united thee to the angels of heaven.

The choir of athletes, having thee like a sun in the midst of the firmament of the Church, shining with divine light like stars, illumine the whole world with radiant splendors.

Thou wast taken up to the incorrupt mansions, presenting the two hundred-member choir of athletes to the Bestower of crowns, O martyr; with them be thou mindful of them that celebrate your sacred memory today.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast revealed as the abode of the Light Who for our sake revealed Himself through thee. Him do thou unceasingly entreat, that He enlighten the thoughts of us who piously hymn thee, O all-immaculate Virgin Mother.