

THE 19th DAY OF THE MONTH OF APRIL
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN OF THE ANCIENT CAVE
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone V:
Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

O venerable and right wondrous father John, wounded by the divine desire of Christ God Who for thy sake willingly became a wanderer, and clothed Himself in flesh from the Virgin, thou didst reach a strange land, and thou didst utterly estrange thyself to all the sweet things of the world, O wise and all-blessed father, and didst live as a stranger, acquiring the virtues: standing whole nights in prayer and the contemplation of death, thou didst restrain the passions by thine abstinence, showing thyself to be an emulator of those who fasted before thee, and with them thou hast been glorified.

O venerable and all-glorious father John, having been trained in the fold of the godly Chariton, thou didst draw forth grace like a sponge and didst pour it forth, emulating his divine ways; and having spent thy life in stillness, thou wast vouchsafed honored ordination, becoming a worthy priest, ever offering sacrifice. And like an unblemished lamb, purified by divine effulgence and enlightened in mind, thou wast borne up in mind to mystic visions, to excellent beatitude.

O all-blessed father John, strengthened by the power of the Trinity, thou didst avoid all the harm of heresy, through vision and divine activity didst cleave unto and attain the divine glory which is the ultimate of all desires, O wise and blessed one, and didst truly and worthily receive it after thy repose, rejoicing, shining and standing before God with the angelic choirs. Wherefore, be thou mindful of those who celebrate thy memory as is meet, O right wondrous one.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

To whom hast thou likened thyself, O my soul, ever prospering in what is worse and mindlessly adding manifold stripes to thy wounds, giving no thought that thou wilt be wounded thy whole body over, or that the Judge is approaching, before Whom thou wilt have to stand to receive sentence and retribution for thy deeds? Yet, turning, fall down before the Virgin, crying: O Mistress, O Mistress, disdain not me who have angered the right merciful God Who was born of thee for the salvation of men and was crucified in the flesh!

Stavrotheotokion: **W**hen thou didst behold suspended upon the Tree the unplanted Cluster of grapes which, like a vine, thou didst produce, His divine side pierced by a spear, thou didst say: "What is this, O my Son and God? How is it that Thou Who healest all infirmities and sufferings dost endure suffering, though in Thy divine nature Thou art dispassionate? How hath the ungrateful people recompensed Thee for Thy good works, O Benefactor?" the all-pure one cried out. Pray thou unceasingly, that by His sufferings He free me from the passions, that I may glorify thee.

AT MATINS

Canon of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: Israel of old, having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, vanquished the power of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms uplifted in the form of the Cross.

Strengthened from thy youth with hope in God thou didst hasten to the good God, O blessed John, fortifying thyself with the highest ascetic feats of monasticism.

Full of rich and radiant grace, and living in estimable places, thou didst honorably appoint ascents leading to the virtues, O all-blessed one.

Instructed by the might of the Spirit, having hastened to the fold of the God-bearing Chariton thou didst abide therein, becoming a sacred minister radiant in purity.

Theotokion: Through thee, O joyous and most pure one, Christ, the Sun of righteousness, hath appeared to us and illumined with light those who before sat in the fortresses of darkness.

ODE III

Irmos: Thy Church rejoiceth in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and consolation.

Having mortified the wisdom of thy flesh with exemplary asceticism, O father John, thou didst draw nigh to the life-creating Spirit. (Twice)

Divine and radiant effulgence manifestly dwelt in splendor within thy heart, O blessed father John.

Theotokion: Thou alone, O Mother of God, wast the mediatrix of good things transcending nature for those on earth; wherefore, we cry out to thee: Rejoice!

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Having wounded thy soul with divine desire, O blessed one, thou didst take thyself away, forsaking riches, food and splendor, and didst most honorably live a life of non-acquisition in foreign lands; and thou didst wound thy body with the pangs of abstinence, and, courageously living in stillness, didst attain the perfection of the virtues, O venerable one. Wherefore, we cry out to thee with faith: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love honor thy holy memory.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

All of us, the generations of men, call thee, the Virgin, blessed, who alone among women gavest birth without seed to God in the flesh; for the fire of the Godhead dwelt within thee, and with milk thou didst feed the Creator and Lord as an infant. Wherefore, we, the generation of angels and men, glorify thine all-holy birth giving as is meet, and together cry out to thee: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of offenses unto those who with faith worship thine all-holy birthgiving.

Stavrotheotokion: The ewe-lamb, beholding the Lamb, Shepherd and Deliverer upon the Cross, exclaimed, weeping, and bitterly lamenting, cried out: "The world rejoiceth, receiving deliverance through Thee, but my womb doth burn, beholding Thy crucifixion, which Thou endurest in the loving-kindness of Thy mercy. O longsuffering Lord, Thou abyss and inexhaustible well-spring of mercy, take pity and grant remission of transgressions unto those who hymn Thy divine sufferings with faith!"

ODE IV

Irmos: Out of love for Thine image, O Compassionate One, Thou didst stand upon Thy Cross, and the nations melted away; for Thou art my strength and boast, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Reared in a land illumined with godly splendor, and enlightened by radiant effulgence, O divinely wise father, thou didst live in virtue and abstinence.

Having forsaken thy homeland, thy kinfolk and friends, O divinely wise and blessed one, thou didst cleave unto Christ with greater desire, taking up thy cross.

Having died to all visible things through the Cause of life, O all-wise John, thou didst live in abstinence and didst depart unto Him.

Theotokion: He Who supernaturally made His abode within thy God-receiving womb, O Virgin, by divine power kept thee a virgin even after birthgiving.

ODE V

Irmos: Thou hast come, O my Lord, as a light into the world, a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance those who hymn Thee with faith.

Having acquired a pure mind through stillness, O father, thou didst escape the snares of the enemy by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Twice)

Thou didst live in the grace of God, in wisdom and doctrine, O divinely manifest and all-blessed holy one, becoming a priest.

Theotokion: All generations piously bless thee, O all-pure one, for thou didst truly give birth to the Blessed One in manner transcending nature and recounting.

ODE VI

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

As a lover of the Wisdom of God, thou wast crowned by Him with a wreath of the virtues, O divinely inspired one, becoming in all ways the disciple of the light-bearing Chariton. (Twice)

Thou didst set thy feet upon the rock of Christ, ascending the virtues by thine activity, O divinely wise father, and appointing ascents in thy heart with divine understanding.

Theotokion: By thy birth giving have we been freed from the curse of our first mother Eve; for, giving birth to Christ, O Virgin Mother, thou didst pour forth blessing upon all in its stead.

ODE VII

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

Clothed in divine power as in vesture, O all-blessed one, thou wast able to flee all the perils of heresy, crying out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord! (Twice)

The Lord, Who became a stranger upon the earth for our sake, in thy wandering, O blessed one, manifestly preserved thee who cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Theotokion: Rejoice, O hallowed and divine habitation of the Most High! For through thee, O Theotokos, hath joy been given to those who cry: Blessed art thou among women, O most immaculate Mistress!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Stretching forth his hands, Daniel closed the mouth of the lions in the den; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Comely in body and soul, and in thy piety, O venerable one, thou wast an instrument of divine understanding, a devotee of the commandments and a flute of pure hymnody, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord! (Twice)

O venerable and blessed one, thou. hast passed over to immortal life and blessedness without end, and hast been counted worthy to receive joy incorruptible, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **H**aving become incorrupt through thy divine birthgiving, O all-pure one, we shake off the dust of mortality; for thou, O pure Mistress, gavest birth to the true, natural and transcendent Life. Wherefore, we all call thee blessed, O Mary Bride of God.

ODE IX

Irmos: **C**hrist, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, Who uniteth two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin; wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

Thou didst achieve a most blessed end through the struggle of asceticism, O sacred father John, and, departing unto Christ, after death thou didst make thine abode in life devoid of suffering and pain. **(Twice)**

Thou hast been vouchsafed to dwell in the land of the meek, O venerable and blessed father, for thou wast an emulator of God-bearing men of inner stillness; and with them thou hast manifestly received delight.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Bride of God, in giving birth to Christ thou hast poured forth upon us a well-spring of immortality, whereby we are purified of all the defilement of sin.