

THE 24th DAY OF THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

AFTERFEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS INTO THE
TEMPLE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR CATHERINE OF
ALEXANDRIA COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR MERCURIUS
OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA

AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," six stichera; three to the great martyr Catherine, in Tone I:
Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Today doth the city of Alexandria most wisely adorn itself, * having thy swaddling clothes, O martyr, * within thy divine temple. * Wherefore, we also piously celebrate * thine honored memory, O Catherine, * Pray thou in behalf of them that honor thee.

Today let us celebrate the memory of Catherine, * for by word and by deed * she truly set at naught with might * all the powers of the enemy * and the opposition of the rhetors. * By her prayers deliver us, O God, * from the godless foe.

Rejoice, most glorious and honored martyr Catherine, * for the mount of Sinai, * whereon Moses beheld the bush which burned, yet was not consumed, * doth now keep thy God-pleasing body * which Christ transferred thither, * even until the time of His Second Coming.

And three stichera to the great martyr Mercurius, in Tone IV:

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

O passion-bearer Mercurius, having vanquished the adversary with the help of the Spirit, as an invincible warrior thou didst cut down myriads of noetic Moors with the sword of faith, and having brought thy struggle to an end in accordance with the law, thou didst receive a crown with all the sufferers, O most blessed great martyr.

An angel, sent to thee from heaven at the behest of the divine Spirit, healed thy wounds. Yet, after thy healing, O right glorious one, thou didst endure to be treacherously pierced with heated goads, and wast suspended and stretched out, bound to a heavy stone, and thy blood was shed everywhere, O martyr.

Serving as a soldier for an earthly king, O Mercurius, thou wast commanded by him to sacrifice to demons, O divinely wise and blessed one. Thou didst endure torments, fiery immolation and a violent death. And thou didst ascend, crowned, unto Christ and wast joined to the flocks of the martyrs, praying in behalf of the world.

Glory ..., in Tone II:

O ye that love the martyrs, let us joyfully make haste to the festival of the divinely wise martyr Catherine, and with praises let us crown her as with flowers, crying out to her: Rejoice, thou that didst denounce the insolence of the foolish rhetors as full of unlearned thoughts, and led them to the divine Faith! Rejoice, thou that gavest thy body over to subtle torments for the love of thy Creator, and wast not destroyed, in that thou wast an invincible maiden! Rejoice, thou that hast inherited mansions on high as a reward for thy pains, and dost now delight in everlasting glory, which desiring, may we that hymn thee not fall away from the hope thereof.

Now and ever ..., in Tone VIII:

After thy nativity, O Mistress, Bride of God, thou didst go to the Temple of the Lord to be raised in the Holy of Holies as a consecrated maiden. Then was Gabriel sent to thee, the all-immaculate one, bringing food unto thee. All of the heavenly powers marveled, beholding the Holy Spirit abiding within thee. Wherefore, O all-pure and undefiled Mother of God, who art glorified in heaven and on earth, save thou thy race.

At the Aposticha, these stichera for the feast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Come, all ye that love the feasts of the Church, * and with hymns let us honor * her that alone is the pure Theotokos and Virgin, * for she is led into the Temple of God, * therein to dwell now splendidly, * the truly most holy temple of Christ, * and mediatrix of all joy.

Stichos: The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto Thee.

Throw open the doors, O prophet, * and receive with faith her that is brought into the Temple of the Lord, * the boast of all angels and men, * their radiant joy, * that she may dwell and dance within, * she who is the temple and abode of God.

Stichos: They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the Temple of the King.

Mary, the Theotokos, is brought to the Temple, * receiving bread from the angel * who appeared, crying to her, Rejoice! * without knowing man thou shalt conceive a Son, * O blessed Virgin Theotokos, Bride of God, * thou good inheritance and restoration of mortals.

Glory ..., in Tone II:

Having acquired an immaterial life, and having attained unto the godless tribunal, thou didst stand, wearing the radiance of God like flowers, arrayed in divine might, O victorious and honored Catherine, and thou didst mock the tyrant's command and didst put an end to the audacious discourse of the rhetors, O much-suffering one.

Now and ever ..., of the feast, in Tone VIII:

David foretold thee, O all-pure one, foreseeing the sanctification of thine entry into the Temple. Therein do the ends of the earth, holding festival today, glorify thee, O all-hymned one. For today, O thou Mother of the Word of life, who before giving birth wast a Virgin and after giving birth remained incorrupt, Zechariah maketh merry in the Temple, accepting thee, O Mistress; and the Holy of Holies rejoiceth, receiving thee, the wellspring of our life. Wherefore, we also cry out in psalms to thee: Beseech thy Son and our God in our behalf, that He grant us great mercy.

Troparion of the Great Martyr Catherine, in Tone IV:

Thy ewe-lamb Catherine crieth out to Thee with a loud voice, O Jesus: I love Thee, O my Bridegroom, and, seeking Thee, I pass through many struggles; I am crucified and buried with Thee in Thy baptism, and suffer for Thy sake, that I might reign with Thee; I die for Thee, that I might live with Thee. As an unblemished sacrifice accept me, who sacrifice myself with love for Thee. By her prayers save Thou our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

Or this troparion, in Tone IV:

With thy virtues, as with the rays of the sun, thou didst enlighten the unbelieving philosophers; and, like the most radiant moon shining on them that walk at night, thou didst drive away the darkness of unbelief. Thou didst bring the empress to faith and didst denounce the tyrant, O divinely elect bride. O blessed Catherine, with desire didst thou make haste to the heavenly bridal chamber, to Christ the most comely Bridegroom, and by Him hast thou been crowned with a royal crown. Standing with the angels before Him, do thou pray for us that keep thy most honored memory.

Glory ..., of the Great Martyr Mercurius, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Mercurius, O Lord, in his suffering received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God. For, possessed of Thy might, he cast down the tormentors and set at naught the feeble audacity of the demons. By his prayers do Thou save our souls.

Now and ever ..., of the feast, in Tone IV:

Today is the prelude of God's good will and the proclamation of the salvation of man. The Virgin hath manifestly appeared in the Temple of God and proclaimeth Christ unto all to her let us cry aloud: Rejoice, O thou fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation!

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Today is the prelude of God's good will and the proclamation of the salvation of man. The Virgin hath manifestly appeared in the Temple of God and proclaimeth Christ unto all to her let us cry aloud: Rejoice, O thou fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation!

Troparion of the great martyr Catherine, in Tone IV:

With thy virtues, as with the rays of the sun, thou didst enlighten the unbelieving philosophers; and, like the most radiant moon shining on them that walk at night, thou didst drive away the darkness of unbelief. Thou didst bring the empress to faith and didst denounce the tyrant, O divinely elect bride. O blessed Catherine, with desire didst thou make haste to the heavenly bridal chamber, to Christ the most comely Bridegroom, and by Him hast thou been crowned with a royal crown. Standing with the angels before Him, do thou pray for us that keep thy most honored memory.

Glory ..., Troparion of the great martyr Mercurius, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Mercurius, O Lord, in his suffering received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God. For possessed of Thy might, he cast down the tormentors and set at naught the feeble audacity of the demons. By his prayers do Thou save our souls.

Now and ever ..., Troparion of the feast.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ..."-

Praise ye, O virgins! Keep festival, ye mothers! Give glory, ye people! Ye priests, bless ye the all-pure Mother of God! For she, who before was a little child in the flesh, is brought to the Temple as the most holy temple of God. Wherefore, celebrating a spiritual feast, we hymn her as an intercessor for the human race.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and the above is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ...":

Being thyself the Holy of Holies, O Theotokos, thou wast brought to live in the Holy of Holies, as is meet, as an animate ark of the Lord and a truly divine habitation of the Holy Spirit, O Virgin Mary. Wherefore, thy Son, Who is the only-begotten of the Father, and is consubstantial with the Holy Spirit, made His abode within thee without the aid of man, deifying all mankind.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and the above is repeated.

Canon I of the Feast of the Entry of Our Lady, in Tone IV, with six troparia, including the Irmos; and one canon each to the great martyrs, with eight troparia-

ODE I

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, and it will be filled with the Spirit, and I shall utter praise unto the Queen and Mother; I shall appear radiantly keeping festival, and joyously shall I hymn her Entry.

O all-pure one, we know thee to be a treasury of wisdom and an ever-flowing fountain of grace; and we pray thee rain down drops of knowledge upon us, that we may praise thee forever.

Being a temple and palace more exalted than the heavens, O all-pure one, thou wast set apart in the Temple of God to be prepared as a divine dwelling-place for His advent.

Shining with the Light of grace, the Theotokos hath illumined all and assembled them to adorn her most splendid festival. Come ye, let us draw nigh to her!

The glorious portal which thoughts cannot pass, having opened the doors of the Temple of God, doth now command us that have assembled to delight in her divine wonders.

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine, the acrostic whereof is: "With hymns do I hymn the ever-memorable Catherine," the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: The staff of Moses once working a wonder, striking the sea in the form of a cross and dividing it, downed the mounted tyrant Pharaoh and saved Israel, who fled on foot chanting a hymn unto God.

By the prayers of the most wise martyr Catherine, O Christ, enlighten Thou the darkened eye of my soul, granting me a ray of thy splendor, O Master, which destroyeth all the gloom of my soul-destroying falls.

O most wise one, guided by the divine commandments of the Master and consumed with love for Him, in haste thou didst run to thy struggles and didst awe the tormentors with thy knowledge, discourse, wisdom and grace.

Directed by the mighty hand of Christ, thou didst escape the tempests of idolatry, O martyr, voyaging dryshod with the sail of the Cross and the divine winds of the Spirit, chanting a hymn unto God.

Rejoicing in the beauties of virginity, O wise Catherine, and possessed of divine knowledge from heaven, thou didst right boldly and courageously put to shame the proponents of false knowledge, vanquishing them mightily.

Theotokion: O all-pure one, he that proclaimeth thee to be the Theotokos doth reject every heresy; for thou gavest birth unto the ever-existing Word of God, Who became flesh immutably, O Theotokos, who art more exalted than all creation.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius, the acrostic whereof is:

"May the might of Mercurius preserve me!" the composition of Joseph the Hymnographer, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: That which was cut down divided the indivisible, and the sun beheld land which it had never seen. Water drowned the wicked foe, and Israel traversed the impassable, chanting the hymn: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Standing joyfully before the Wellspring of blessings with the choirs of heaven, O Mercurius, and filled with divine delight, O ever-memorable one, preserve them that with love celebrate thy festival, chanting unto the Lord: Gloriously hast Thou been glorified!

Willingly didst thou enter the arena of torment, O wise one, strengthened with the power of Christ, Who for our sakes willingly endured His saving sufferings; and, rejoicing, thou didst cry out: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Adorned with the confession of Christ, O blessed one, thou didst openly revile the words of the tyrant and, with gladness, didst endure all manner of pain, O Mercurius, crying out to Him that strengthened thee: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Theotokion: For our sake didst Thou appear incarnate of the Virgin Maiden, becoming man like unto us; and Thou dost reveal Mercurius, Thy valiant athlete, to be a faithful witness to Thy sufferings, who chanteth mightily unto Thee: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

ODE III

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and abundant fount, in thy divine glory establish thou them that hymn thee and that spiritually form themselves into a choir; and vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Receiving the pure and undefiled one, who is more splendid than all creation, the animate bridal chamber of God, the beautiful Temple and chamber doth today appear as that which adorneth the bride for her wedding.

David, preceding the chorus, doth leap and dance with us, and declareth thee, O all-pure one, the queen adorned, who standeth in the Temple before our King and God, O most pure one.

From her, from whom transgressions went forth among the human race, hath her correction and incorruption blossomed forth, the Theotokos, who is led today into the house of God.

The angelic armies and a multitude of all men leap for joy, and they advance as lamp-bearers before thy countenance, proclaiming thy majesty in the house of God.

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

Irmos: O Christ, Who in the beginning established the heavens in wisdom and founded the earth upon the waters, make me steadfast upon the rock of Thy commandments, for none is holy as Thee, O Thou that alone lovest mankind.

Responding of thine own will, thou didst go to thy suffering voluntarily, emulating Christ; and, having radiantly vanquished myriads of the prince of this world, thou wast revealed as crucified, O God-pleasing Catherine.

With strength of mind didst thou denounce the tormentors, who were overwhelmed in the abyss of godlessness, O all-praised martyr, plainly propounding the dogmas of the knowledge of God, illumined with the wisdom of God.

He that whispered thoughts of equality with God into the ears of Eve is now trod underfoot by a young maiden; for, defended with the sword of the Cross, the martyr Catherine hath put him to shame, glorying over him immeasurably.

Theotokion: O Theotokos, who alone art all-pure, raise up my morbid mind through the activity of the Life Who, from thee, manifested Himself to the world, cleansing the wounds and stripes of my sins.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: Thou art the confirmation of them that have recourse to Thee, O Lord; Thou art the light of the benighted, and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

All aflame with divine love, O glorious Mercurius, thou didst regard fire and bonds, the sword and torments as but a dream.

Meeting with grievous wounds, thou didst hymn the Creator, O wise martyr, and didst receive the healing thereof, O glorious one.

Strengthened by the divine staff, O right valorous martyr, like an athlete thou didst mightily cast down the audacity of the enemy.

Theotokion: To prefigure thy birthgiving, which passeth understanding, O pure one, a bush appeared, burning with fire, yet unconsumed.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Willingly lifted up on the Cross ...":

The most pure temple of the Savior, the precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the sacred treasury of the glory of God, is on this day brought into the house of the Lord, bringing with her the grace that is in the divine Spirit, to her do the angels of God chant the hymn: She is the heavenly tabernacle!

Ikos: Beholding the grace of the ineffable and divine mysteries of God made plainly manifest in and filling the Virgin, I rejoice; yet I know not how to understand this strange and ineffable image. How hath the pure one alone been shown to be above all creation, visible and noetic? Wherefore, wishing to praise her, I am greatly in awe in mind and word; yet, making bold, I proclaim and magnify her, saying: She is the heavenly tabernacle!

Kontakion of the Great Martyr Mercurius, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

Glorifying him with hymns, let us bless Mercurius, the warrior unvanquished in battle, the helper unashamed amid misfortunes, for he doth deliver from tribulations and sorrows them that celebrate his memory with gladness.

Sedalion of the Great Martyr Catherine, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up on the Cross ...":

Thou didst love Christ thy Bridegroom, radiantly trimming thy lamp and shining forth with virtue, O glorious one. Wherefore, with Him thou hast entered into the bridal chamber, receiving a crown of suffering from Him. From misfortunes do thou deliver us that keep thy memory, O Catherine.

Glory ..., the Sedalion of the Great Martyr Mercurius, in the same tone:
Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Struggling, the martyr Mercurius put the deceiver to shame and became a mighty champion of Christ. Therefore, he hath now been numbered among the choirs of heaven, worthily sharing in everlasting glory. Wherefore, we faithfully celebrate his sacred memory.

Now and ever ..., the Sedalion of the feast, in the same tone:

O David, go thou before us into the Temple of God, and, rejoicing, receive thou our Queen, and cry out unto her: Enter thou, O Lady! Enter thou into the Temple of the King! Her glory is understood allegorically, for from her doth Christ the Light desire to pour Himself forth upon all!

ODE IV

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Perceiving the unfathomable counsel of God, the incarnation from the Virgin of Thee, the Most High, the prophet Habbakuk cried out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

The Temple of God, receiving today the portal through whom none may pass, hath ceased to perform any service of the Law, crying: Truly truth hath appeared to them that are on earth!

The mountain overshadowed, which Habbakuk beheld of old, prefigured her that hath made her abode in the inaccessible chambers of the Temple, flourishing with virtues, for she doth cover the ends of the earth therewith.

All the earth hath seen most glorious things, things strange and marvelous, for the Virgin, receiving food from an angel, doth receive tokens of God's dispensation.

Revealed as temple and palace and animate heaven, O divine bride of the King, thou art brought today to the Temple of the Law to be kept for Him, O all-pure one.

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

Irmos: **T**hou art my strength, O Lord, Thou art my power; Thou art my God, Thou art my joy, Who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, hast visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the prophet Habbakuk, I cry unto Thee: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

O ever-memorable martyr Catherine, thou didst show the determination of an athlete, setting thyself against the hostile one with great endurance, trampling him beneath thy lovely feet by the power of the Cross, O passion-bearer, thou boast of the martyrs.

O most blessed Catherine, bride of Christ, thou art luminous with the radiant beams of divine beauty, splendid in comeliness. Wherefore, in gladness doth thou chant unto the Master: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Thou didst set at naught the audacity of the tyrant with the godly discourse of thy wisdom, for thou didst rescue from the abyss of the false worship of demons them that were deceived, teaching them to cry out unto Christ in hymns: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

O all-praised one, who hast mightily trampled down the audacity of the enemy, the right glorious and splendid festival of thy memory hath dawned like the sun, and thereon we cry aloud to the Master: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Theotokion: **N**ow hath been cast down the might of them that reject the veneration of the icons of thee, O pure Maiden, and of Him that, in a manner surpassing understanding, was incarnate of thee and enlightened the whole world, and of all the saints. Enlighten them that honor thee with faith, O thou that alone art all-hymned.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: I have heard the mystery of Thy dispensation, O Lord; I have considered Thy works, and glorified Thy divinity.

Thou didst make thyself like unto thy Creator, O divinely wise one, by the sufferings of thy divine martyrdom, and from Him hast thou received splendid crowns, in that thou art unconquered, O glorious one.

Now hast thou been arrayed in a garment woven of the grace of the Most High, O martyr, having shed the robe of mortality.

Having contended, even to the shedding of thy blood, against sin, thou wast shown forth as a victor and hast been vouchsafed the glory of the Most High, O Mercurius.

Theotokion: O Ever-virgin, the saving Word descended upon thee like a shower and hath dried up the flood of polytheism.

ODE V

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: All things are filled with awe at thy divine glory, for thou, O Virgin that hast not known wedlock, didst have within thy womb Him that is God over all, and didst give birth to the timeless Son, granting peace unto all that hymn thee.

The all-pure Virgin, the glorious sanctity and sacred offering which is brought today to the Temple of God, is preserved as a habitation for our one God, the King of all, as He Himself doth know.

Zechariah, beholding once the beauty of thy soul, cried out in faith: Thou art the deliverance, thou art the joy of all, thou art our restoration, through whom the Uncontainable One shall appear unto me contained.

O, thy wonders which pass understanding, O all-pure one! Strange is thy birth giving; strange is the manner of thy growth; strange also, most glorious and unutterable by men, are all thy wonders, O Bride of God.

A most radiant lamp, O Bride of God, thou hast shone forth today in the house of the Lord and dost illumine us with the precious gifts of thy wonders, O pure and all-hymned Theotokos.

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

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!

Aflame with the fire of love for thy Master, O most glorious martyr, and seeking to behold His incomprehensible beauty, thou didst give thyself over to wounds of thine own accord, radiant with the graces of virginity.

Having splendidly adorned thyself with most-sacred sufferings, O good virgin maiden, thou didst ascend to the heavenly bridal chamber of Christ, and hast now been radiantly joined to thy Bridegroom in gladness, O most blessed one.

Thou art shown to be a most radiant maiden who hast loved Him that also is desired; and having finished a most difficult course, following Him Who hath been poured forth as the fragrance of thy noetic myrrh, thou didst cry out: I come, O my Bridegroom!

Theotokion: **K**nowing thee to be the true Theotokos, and knowing the Word of God Who was born of thee, O all-pure Mistress, we all preach Him Who is known in two independent natures and wills, O Mother and Bride of God.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: **Rising at dawn, we cry unto Thee: Save us, O Lord; for Thou art our God, and we know none other than Thee.**

Lacerated, cut with a blade without respite, O Mercurius, thou didst endure, strengthened by divine hope.

Having fortified thy heart with noetic Stone, O glorious Mercurius, thou didst not waver when crushed by a stone.

Having shared in the sufferings of thy Master, thou didst partake of His glory and divine splendor.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, who hast given birth unto the Life which hath slain death: Slay thou the sin which liveth within me.

ODE VI

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **Celebrating this divine and most honored festival of the Mother of God, come, ye divinely wise, let us clap our hands and glorify God, Who was born of her.**

Thou that hast upheld all things by Thy word hast hearkened to the prayer of the righteous ones. Wherefore, Thou hast loosed the infirmity of the barren woman, in that Thou art compassionate, and hast given them her that is the cause of joy.

Wishing to make His salvation known to the Gentiles, the Lord hath now taken from among men her that hath not known wedlock, as a sign of reconciliation and renewal.

As a house of grace, wherein treasures of the ineffable dispensation of God are laid up, O most pure one, thou didst share in unfading delight in the Temple.

Receiving thee as a royal diadem, O Bride of God, the Temple hath been made splendid and hath mounted to better things, beholding in thee the fulfillment of the prophecies.

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

Irmos: The abyss of my sins and the tempest of my transgressions discomfit me and thrust me down into the depths of violent despondency; but stretch forth Thy mighty arm unto me, as Thou didst to Peter, and save me, O my Guide.

The good and all-pure Word, beholding thee all resplendent in the radiance and beauty of virginity and empurpled in the blood of thy martyrdom, O maiden, caused thee to dwell in the mansions of heaven.

By the Cross wast thou able to do away with the dominion of the tyrants, denouncing the vanity of earthly wisdom and pouring forth dogmas of divinely inspired teaching, O most wise and ever-memorable Catherine.

Mightily enduring the pain of thy wounds, O most glorious martyr, thou didst cast down to the ground him that of old drove Adam from the sweetness of paradise through deceit, and thou hast been crowned with the crowns of the kingdom.

Theotokion: By thine entreaties, O Mother, Virgin Theotokos, make thy Son and our Judge, Who doth deliver us from evil circumstances, to be merciful unto me on the day of Judgment, for in thee alone do I place my trust.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: I pour forth my prayers unto the Lord, and to Him do I declare my grief, for my soul is full of evil and my life hath drawn nigh unto hell, and, like Jonah, I pray: Lead me up from corruption, O God!

The ever-existent Word enlivened thee, beholding thee enduring all manner of torments for His sake, O wise martyr, and through His angel He commanded thee to take heart, O Mercurius, and in no wise to fear the opposition of the tormentors.

The serpent of many guises is slain and trampled beneath the beautiful feet of the athlete, the valiant warrior, for, striving unto death towards the wounds of torture of thine own will, thou wast full of glory.

To the Master didst thou wholly offer the desire of thy heart, O martyr; and, having endured the rack, thou wast crowned by Him as a victor and dost now stand before Him in the heavens with all the martyrs, O Mercurius.

Theotokion: At the angel's cry thou didst conceive the Angel of Great Counsel, O Maiden, and thou didst give birth unto Him incarnate of thy most pure blood Who, in His unutterable mercy, hath shown to all the ways which lead to life, O all-immaculate one.

Kontakion of the Great Martyr Catherine, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "Seeking the highest...":

O ye that love the martyrs, raise up an honored chorus in godly manner, honoring the most wise Catherine; for in the arena she preached Christ and trod upon the serpent, putting down the knowledge of the rhetors.

Ikos: **H**aving received the wisdom of God from childhood, O martyr, thou didst also master well all external wisdom; and learning therefrom the movement of the elements and creation through discourse and Him that by His word fashioned them in the beginning, day and night didst thou render thanksgiving unto Him, setting at naught idols and them that worship them, putting down the knowledge of the rhetors.

ODE VII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **T**he divinely wise youths worshipped not a creation rather than the Creator, but, manfully trampling the threat of the fire underfoot, they rejoiced, chanting: **Blessed art Thou, the all-hymned Lord and God of our fathers!**

Lo, today a joyous spring hath dawned upon the ends of the earth, enlightening our souls, thoughts and minds with grace: the festival of the Theotokos. Let us mystically feast this day!

Let all things-heaven and earth, the ranks of angels and the multitude of men-bear gifts today unto the Queen and Mother of God; and let them cry out: Our joy and deliverance is brought to the Temple!

The Scriptures have come to pass, the Law hath faded like a shadow, and rays of grace have shone forth upon thee who hast entered into the Temple of God, O pure Virgin Mother, wherein thou art blessed.

Heaven and earth and the netherworld are subject to thine Offspring as Creator and God, O most pure one, and every nation of mortals doth confess that the Lord and Savior of our souls hath appeared.

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the fire stood in awe of the condescension of God; wherefore, the youths, dancing with joyous step in the furnace as in a meadow, chanted: **Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!**

The boast of martyrs and a teacher of piety wast thou, leading a multitude of martyrs unto Christ, thy radiant Bridegroom. And with them dost thou cry aloud, O all-praised one, chanting: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Thy discourse most wise brought many out of the madness of idolatry unto salvation, and thou didst show them forth as radiant martyrs, who cry aloud with thee: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Following after Thee, the maiden was brought to Thee beheaded by the sword, emulating Thy most pure Passion, crying out unto Thee, our Creator, and saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **T**he Holy of Holies dwelt within thee in hallowed manner, O pure Virgin Theotokos, and He was born of thee incarnate to save them that cry out in faith: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: **I**n the furnace the Hebrew children boldly trod upon the flame and transformed the fire into dew, crying out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Illumined with the light of heavenly enlightenment, O valiant warrior, thou dost enlighten them that now do hymn thee and chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

O blessed one, thou hast hymned the Benefactor of all, consumed with love for Him and burning with material fire; and thou didst chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

They that rendered honor unto stone and were stony of heart, O martyr, with a stone weighted down the neck of thee who cried: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Having mingled thy precious blood with the blood of the Master and Lover of mankind, thou didst show thyself to be a participant in His sufferings, O Mercurius, crying out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Theotokion: **T**he ranks of angels stand in awe of the depth of thy mystery, O Theotokos; for God appeared incarnate of thee, He to Whom we chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **H**earken, O pure Virgin Theotokos! Let Gabriel give utterance unto the true and ancient counsel of the Most High: Make thou ready to receive God! For through thee hath the Boundless One come to dwell with men: Wherefore, rejoicing, I cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Anna, once, leading the all-pure temple to the house of God, faithfully said unto the priest, crying aloud: Now accept thou this child, given me by God; lead her into the Temple of the Creator; and, rejoicing, chant unto Him: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

And Zechariah then, beholding them in the Spirit, said unto Anna: Thou dost bring hither the true Mother of Life, whom the prophets of God have clearly foretold as the Theotokos! How, therefore, can the Temple hold her? Wherefore, marveling, I cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

The handmaid of God have I been, answered Anna unto him, and I call upon Him with faith and prayer to accept the fruit of my birth-pangs, that, having received this child, I might bring her that was born unto Him that bestowed her. Wherefore, I cry aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Truly this is a matter of the Law, the priest said to her, and strange doth this thing seem unto me, beholding her that doth most gloriously surpass the holy ones in grace led into the house of God. Wherefore, rejoicing, I cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but, beholding them saved by a better power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The empress, converted by thy teachings, advanced in piety and, mightily enduring the infliction of pain, was clearly vouchsafed the everlasting kingdom of heaven, crying out to the Master: Ye priests, bless; ye people, exalt Christ supremely for all ages!

Let the entreaties of the faithful be entrusted to the martyrs, for the passion-bearer doth stand before Christ, asking that which is best for all and mediating salvation for them that earnestly celebrate her all-holy and honored memory and faithfully cry out: Ye people, exalt Christ supremely for all ages!

Throwing wide the portals of paradise, the Bridegroom doth receive thee, O all-wise one; and He hath made thee to dwell in a most radiant chamber, showing thee to be one that shares in His kingdom and His suffering. And, standing now before Him, splendidly adorned, O daughter of the King, forget us not.

The tyrant tempted thee with alluring words; the cruel one sought to deceive thee with persuasions, hoping thereby to weaken thy resolve, O glorious one; but, wishing to betroth thyself to Christ, thou didst cry out to the Master: Ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

Theotokion: O all-immaculate Theotokos, thou art more sacred than the supernatural ranks of angels, for from thy virginal womb, which kneweth not wedlock, thou gavest birth unto their Creator and Lord in two natures, unconfused and immutable, God incarnate in a single hypostasis.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but, beholding them saved by a better power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The choir of passion-bearers accepted as one of their number thee who wast adorned and radiant with the precious beauties of thy sufferings and thy pious and honorable martyrdom. And now thou dost unceasingly cry out: Ye priests, bless; ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

Piously didst thou finish thy course, O glorious one, and valiantly didst thou put the foe to shame; and, laying hold of a heavenly trophy as victor, thou dost now rejoice with the angelic choirs and dost cry out with them unceasingly: Ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

In meeting thy death by the sword, and receiving the expected end, which thou didst desire, O most blessed one, thou didst water the ground with outpourings of thy blood; and thy blessed and victorious body didst thou show forth as whiter than snow, chanting: Ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

Theotokion: All we, the faithful, hymn thee, O all-pure one, as her that is the cause of our restoration; for in manner beyond reproach thou didst give birth unto God, the Cause of all, Who in His lovingkindness hath restored His image which hath been marred by wickedness, O thou that alone art all-blessed and joyous.

ODE IX

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: May the hands of the profane in no wise touch the Theotokos, the animate ark of God; but let the lips of the faithful, unceasingly chanting the cry of the angel, joyfully cry out: Truly thou art more highly exalted than all, O pure Virgin!

O pure Theotokos, as thou hast the most radiant beauty of purity of soul and art full of the grace of God from heaven, with the ever-existent light thou dost ever enlighten them that cry out with joy: Truly thou art more highly exalted than all, O pure Virgin!

Thy wonder doth surpass the power of words, O pure Theotokos, for in thee I perceive a body impervious to the movement of sin. Wherefore, thankfully I cry out to thee: Truly thou art more highly exalted than all, O pure Virgin!

Most gloriously did the Law prefigure thee, O pure one, as the tabernacle, the divine jar, the awesome ark, the veil, the staff, the inviolable temple and portal of God. Wherefore, all these things teach us to cry to thee: Truly thou art more highly exalted than all, O pure Virgin!

In hymnody David cried out to thee prophetically, calling thee the daughter of the King in the comeliness of thy virtues, beholding thee standing, elaborately adorned, at the right hand of God. Wherefore, in prophecy he cried out: Truly thou art more highly exalted than all, O pure Virgin!

Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine

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

Adorned with bridal ornaments, thou hast passed on to splendid bridal chambers, holding the lamp of virginity in thy right hand and thy severed head in the other. And now, standing before Christ, thy Bridegroom, preserve thou them that hymn thee.

Thy prayer was accepted, O divinely wise one, for the Master doth save from temptations them that call upon thy name with faith, O honored one, and He doth bestow health upon them, delivering them from divers ailments, spiritual and bodily. Wherefore, in gladness we bless thee, O Catherine.

Thou hast now attained the calm harbor, O martyr, having easily sailed over this world's sea of threefold waves, and in good order, not being tempted, O most wise virgin; and thou dost offer varied riches, a multitude of martyrs, unto Christ, O most blessed Catherine.

Now joining chorus with choirs of virgins within the bridal chambers of heaven, and illumined with rays of thy sufferings, O most wise Catherine, thou hast loosed the bonds of my falls, earnestly entreating the Benefactor of all, for Whom thou didst shed thy blood.

Theotokion: Thou hast appeared, O Virgin Mother of God, giving birth in the body, in manner transcending nature, unto the good Word to Whom the Father gaveth utterance from His own heart before all ages, in that He is good, and Whom we now know to be more exalted than all bodies, even though clad in a body Himself.

Canon to the Great Martyr Mercurius

Irmos: Every ear is awed to hear of the ineffable condescension of God, that the Most High willingly did lower Himself even unto taking flesh, becoming man through the Virgin's womb. Wherefore, O ye faithful, let us magnify the all-pure Theotokos.

With grace the martyrs now dispel the stench of dung and with ineffable discourse they drive away our foul passions, and pour forth waters for the healing of our bones and water the souls of them that hymn their wondrous miracles.

We honor thee in sacred manner as a great pillar of the Church of Christ, an indestructible rampart, a city which cannot be taken captive, a mighty warrior of God the King of all, a destroyer of our enemies and a noetic and universal beacon, O martyr.

Thou didst receive an angel of light as a companion before thy suffering, a divinely wise one. Wherefore, lacerated, burned with candles and grievously cut asunder and beheaded with a sword, thou wast not afraid, O most valiant athlete of Christ.

Thy divine memorial hath dawned as a day full of enlightenment, gladness and joy for us that honor thee, O martyr Mercurius, whereon do thou remember us that keep thy memory and deliver us from grievous temptations, misfortunes and passions.

Theotokion: O portal of Light, enlighten my soul which hath been blinded by the passions and darkened by wicked thoughts, and endangered; and deliver me from temptations, misfortunes and sorrows, that I may glorify thee, the hope and confirmation of the faithful

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...":

Aflame with wisdom, O virgin Catherine, most honorable of women, thou glory of passion-bearers, through God thou didst denounce the skill of the philosophers as foolishness and fables, having acquired the truly all-immaculate Mother of God as companion.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., of the feast:

Spec. Mel.: "To the watching disciples ...":

The ranks of angels and choir of martyrs celebrate with us today on the divine entry of the godly Maiden and Mother of the Lord, together with Joachim and Anna, and the steadfast Mercurius and the all-glorious Catherine. By their prayers may we find remission of our offenses, we pray.

At the Praises, four stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

Celebrating the most sacred memory * of thine honored suffering, * O all-praised Catherine, * with unceasing cries we glorify * Jesus, the Lover of mankind, * our Savior and Lord, * Who gaveth thee steadfast patience * and showed thee forth as victorious, * and granted thee discourse, * and awed the rhetors. (Twice)

O willing martyr, * most glorious Catherine, * thou didst appear earnestly denouncing the tyrant * and the wicked madness of poly theism, * setting them at naught with the radiance of knowledge of God * and divine grace. * Thus, Christ, the Savior of our souls, * hath crowned her * as a martyr * and an immaculate virgin.

With the opening of thy mouth, * O most glorious Catherine, * thou didst receive the grace of the Spirit; * and having cleansed thyself * by thy life and patient thought, * thou didst trample down the audacity of the tyrant, * and with divine wisdom didst prefer spiritual beauty * to the beauty of the body, * O adornment of passion-bearers.

Glory ..., in Tone II, the composition of Babylas the Monk:

Having achieved an immaterial life, and having attained unto the godless tribunal, thou didst stand, wearing the radiance of God like flowers, arrayed in divine might, O victorious and honored Catherine, and thou didst mock the tyrant's command and didst put an end to the audacious discourse of the rhetors, O much-suffering one.

Now and ever ..., in Tone IV, the composition of Sergius of the Holy City:

Gathering today, O ye assemblies of the faithful, let us spiritually hold festival, and piously let us praise the divine Maiden, Virgin and Theotokos, who is brought to the Temple of the Lord, who was foreordained of all generations to be the dwelling-place of Christ the King and God of all. O virgins, bearing candles, go ye on before, honoring the honored procession of the Ever-Virgin. O mothers, setting aside all grief, joyously follow after her that will become the Mother of God and mediatrix of the joy of the world. And let us all therefore cry out with joy, Rejoice! unto the joyous one, who doth ever pray for our souls.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

The thrice-radiant Light * enkindling thee, O Theotokos, * in the Temple of glory, * doth send thee heavenly food, * magnifying thee.

Stichos: The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto Thee.

From the root of David * didst thou spring forth, O Virgin; * and Gabriel, bringing thee joy, * did cry out: * Thou shalt give birth unto God, O all-pure one.

Stichos: They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the Temple of the King.

Good was the sacred * and divine union * of Joachim and Anna, * of whom the pure one was born * who hath now been brought to her Creator.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., in the same melody:

O gate of heaven, * accept ye the Virgin Mary * who hath not known man, *
the pure Theotokos, * from whom came forth the deliverance of men.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four from Odes VII and VIII of the Canon of the Feast, and four from Ode VI of the Canon to the Great Martyr Catherine.

Lo, today a joyous spring hath dawned upon the ends of the earth, enlightening our souls, thoughts and minds with grace: the festival of the Theotokos. Let us mystically feast this day!

Let all things-heaven and earth, the ranks of angels and the multitude of men-bear gifts today unto the Queen and Mother of God; and let them cry out: Our joy and deliverance is brought to the Temple!

The Scriptures have come to pass, the Law hath faded like a shadow, and rays of grace have shone forth upon thee who hast entered into the Temple of God, O pure Virgin Mother, wherein thou art blessed.

Heaven and earth and the netherworld are subject to thine Offspring as Creator and God, O most pure one, and every nation of mortals doth confess that the Lord and Savior of our souls hath appeared.

Anna, once, leading the all-pure temple to the house of God, faithfully said unto the priest, crying aloud: Now accept thou this child, given me by God; lead her into the Temple of the Creator; and, rejoicing, chant unto Him: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

And Zechariah then, beholding them in the Spirit, said unto Anna: Thou dost bring hither the true Mother of Life, whom the prophets of God have clearly foretold as the Theotokos! How, therefore, can the Temple hold her? Wherefore, marveling, I cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

The handmaid of God have I been, answered Anna unto him, and I call upon Him with faith and prayer to accept the fruit of my birth-pangs, that, having received this child, I might bring her that was born unto Him that bestowed her. Wherefore, I cry aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Truly this is a matter of the Law, the priest said to her, and strange doth this thing seem unto me, beholding her that doth most gloriously surpass the holy ones in grace led into the house of God. Wherefore, rejoicing, I cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Troparion of the feast, , in Tone IV:

Today is the prelude of God's good will and the proclamation of the salvation of man. The Virgin hath manifestly appeared in the Temple of God and proclaimeth Christ unto all to her let us cry aloud: Rejoice, O thou fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation!

Troparion of the Great Martyr Catherine, in Tone IV:

Thy ewe-lamb Catherine crieth out to Thee with a loud voice, O Jesus: I love Thee, O my Bridegroom, and, seeking Thee, I pass through many struggles; I am crucified and buried with Thee in Thy baptism, and suffer for Thy sake, that I might reign with Thee; I die for Thee, that I might live with Thee. As an unblemished sacrifice accept me, who sacrifice myself with love for Thee. By her prayers save Thou our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

Or this troparion, in Tone IV:

With thy virtues, as with the rays of the sun, thou didst enlighten the unbelieving philosophers; and, like the most radiant moon shining on them that walk at night, thou didst drive away the darkness of unbelief. Thou didst bring the empress to faith and didst denounce the tyrant, O divinely elect bride. O blessed Catherine, with desire didst thou make haste to the heavenly bridal chamber, to Christ the most comely Bridegroom, and by Him hast thou been crowned with a royal crown. Standing with the angels before Him, do thou pray for us that keep thy most honored memory.

Troparion of the Great Martyr Mercurius, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Mercurius, O Lord, in his suffering received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God. For, possessed of Thy might, he cast down the tormentors and set at naught the feeble audacity of the demons. By his prayers do Thou save our souls.

Kontakion of the Great Martyr Mercurius, in Tone IV:

Glorifying him with hymns, let us bless Mercurius, the warrior unvanquished in battle, the helper unashamed amid misfortunes, for he doth deliver from tribulations and sorrows them that celebrate his memory with gladness.

Kontakion of the Great Martyr Catherine, in Tone II:

O ye that love the martyrs, raise up an honored chorus in godly manner, honoring the most wise Catherine; for in the arena she preached Christ and trod upon the serpent, putting down the knowledge of the rhetors.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone IV:

The most pure temple of the Savior, the precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the sacred treasury of the glory of God, is on this day brought into the house of the Lord, bringing with her the grace that is in the divine Spirit, to her do the angels of God chant the hymn: She is the heavenly tabernacle!

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the wellsprings of Israel.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS [6:10-16]

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Alleluia, in Tone I: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [21:12-19]

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.