

THE 17th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET DANIEL
& OF THE THREE HOLY YOUTHS, ANANIAS, AZARIAS & MISAEI
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the prophet, in Tone IV:

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

The wondrous Daniel, * having made his heart the pure abode of the Spirit, * illumined by Him * doth manifestly proclaim * the revelation of things to come; * and, adorned with the splendor of prophecy, * he clearly interpreteth the hidden dreams * of the all iniquitous and mighty kings.

Having rendered thy body strong beforehand * with intense fasting, * thou didst close the mouths of the lions; * for, standing in their midst, * O wondrous prophet, * and lifting thine eyes to our good God, * thou didst remain unharmed * through the ineffable power * of the Deliverer of our souls * Who all-gloriously accomplisheth all things.

O wondrous prophet, * thou didst behold the Unapproachable One, * the just Judge, * sitting on a throne, * surrounded by angels. * And, marveling at the awesome and terrible sight, * thou didst describe it for all who came after, * recounting the second coming * of our incarnate God.

And 3 stichera of the holy youths, in the same tone:

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

Observing the God-given laws, * O most blessed ones, * ye did not defile yourselves with abominable foods, * but, keeping the beauty of your souls incorrupt, * ye preserved the flower of your flesh * untainted and unwithered * and your splendor comely * for the Master Who glorifieth His favored ones.

Enkindled by the divine flame, * the youths prevailed over the fire; * for the honored ones were seen to be bedewed therein, * forming an all-splendid choir, * chanting in melodious hymnody; * for Daniel rejoiced, * beholding the immutable kingdom of Christ, * in that he is a most excellent prophet.

Marveling at the wisdom of thy words * and the understanding of the youths, * O right wondrous Daniel, * the tyrants appointed you * to rule and govern * the land of Chaldea, * O honored ones; * for the adversary knew to marvel most manifestly * at your virtue and splendor of life; * for ye restrained the passions gaining power over you.

Glory ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone II:

Today, the Prophet Daniel hath spiritually assembled us, O ye faithful, and laid an abundant banquet of the virtues for rich and poor, paupers, wanderers, and household servants, filling a noetic cup with the water of piety, gladdening the hearts of the faithful and imparting the grace of the Holy Spirit, for he is a most splendid luminary who, shining forth in the world, cast down all the worship of the Assyrians and shut the mouths of the untamed beasts. And with him let the three youths be praised who, though not gold by nature, were shown to be tried like gold; for the fire of the furnace melted them together, yet preserved them whole, and naphtha, sulphur and tinder crowned them. May the Lord Who hath led us to the turning of the year vouchsafe that we also may attain unto the lordly and honorable day of the nativity of Christ, Who through their supplications bestoweth cleansing of sins and great mercy upon us.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, the composition of Andrew Pyrrhus:

In the same tone:

Come ye all, and with faith let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, noetically offering up hymns of glorification like the star of the magi, and with the shepherds let us cry aloud: The deliverance of the nations hath come forth from the Virgin's womb, summoning the faithful.

At the Aposticha, stichera from the Oktoechos;

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

Daniel, the man of divine desires, seeing Thee, O Lord, the Stone not cut by human hands, foretold that Thou wouldst without seed be born a babe, the Word incarnate of the Virgin, God immutable, the Savior of our souls.

Troparion, in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the Prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone II:

When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, * then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning flash of Thy Divinity. * And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost regions, * all the Hosts of the heavens cried aloud to Thee: * O Life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

AT MATINS

One canon from the Oktoechos, and two of the saints:

ODE I

Canon of the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "With hymns I will crown the wise Daniel", the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: O ye people, let us send up hymnody to our wondrous God, Who freed Israel from slavery, chanting a hymn of victory and crying aloud: We sing to Thee Who alone art Master!

O Savior and Benefactor, Cause of every good thing, Who lovest mankind: with thy radiant effulgence illumine my mind, that I may praise the glorious memory of Thy prophet.

Thou didst shine forth in chastity like the dawn and didst save the chaste Susanna who was in danger; for God, Who knoweth all secrets, raised thee up to condemn the cruel elders.

The descendents of Abraham, strengthened by the fear of God, valiantly spurned the most iniquitous food; and, nurtured by desire for piety, have been taken up into the greatest glory.

Theotokion: O most sacred Daniel, thou didst perceive the only Ever-virgin, the all-pure Maiden, as the noetic mountain from whence was cut the Chief Cornerstone Who hath crushed all falsehood.

Canon of the three holy youths, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn the three youths and the great Daniel", the composition of Theophanes, in the same tone:

Irmos: Traversing the water as though it were dry land, and escaping the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried aloud: Let us chant unto our Deliverer and God!

Let us glorify the unoriginate Word Who was divinely begotten of the Father before time began, and Whose likeness was seen by the youths in the furnace.

Firmly reviling the words of the impious tyrant, the noble youths did not wish to defile themselves with vile foods like the all-iniquitous Chaldeans.

Ye fed yourselves spiritually with the word of God and bodily with foods ye grew yourselves, and showed yourselves to the king as more comely of appearance than those who ate gross foods.

Theotokion: O Maiden who sprang forth from David and gavest birth to the Deliverer, thou healest the venom which the serpent poured bitterly into the ears of Eve.

ODE III

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **T**hou art the confirmation of those who have recourse to Thee, O Lord, Thou art the light of the benighted; and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

Receiving understanding and wisdom from God, thou didst interpret obscure dreams for the kings.

Scattering the food-offerings, O glorious one, thou didst slay the material serpent; for thou didst first vanquish the immaterial demons.

Theotokion: Illumined with radiance, O glorious one, thou beholdest the manifest mountain blessed by God, the adornment of men.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **T**hou art the confirmation of those who have recourse to Thee, O Lord, Thou art the light of the benighted; and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

The youths of David, having acquired an understanding taught by God, O Master, kept the laws of their fathers with godly wisdom.

Fire did not consume the most pure bodies of the pious ones, for they had already been consumed by the fasting which nourisheth the soul.

Wondrously bedewed in the midst of the furnace, the three youths sing universal and most laudable praise.

Theotokion: That thou mightest show forth Thy birthgiving from the body of the Virgin, O Master, Thou didst save the bodies of the virginal youths in the furnace.

Kontakion of the prophet, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Enlightened by the Spirit, thy pure heart became the receptacle of most splendid prophecy: for thou beheldest far-off things as though they were present, and, cast into the pit, didst tame the lions. Wherefore, we honor thee, O blessed and glorious Prophet Daniel.

Ikos: Jesus Christ, our true God, Whose divine advent thou didst manifestly proclaim, do thou entreat without ceasing for those who with gladness celebrate this thy divine memorial and honor thee with love, that we be saved from all temptations, sins and evil circumstances, for thou hast boldness before Him, O divinely wise one; and grant that I may open my lips to hymn thine excellent discourse.

Sedalion of the youths, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

In the flame the youths prophetically inscribed the image of the Trinity with the pen of faith in immaterial ink; and they mystically beheld the Word's extreme descent to the earth and have proclaimed it to all. Wherefore, receiving the dew of the Spirit from heaven, they pour forth gifts upon the faithful who cry out to Thee together: O Christ God, as Thou art compassionate grant remission of transgressions unto those who with love celebrate their holy memory!

Glory ..., Sedalion of the prophet, in the same tone & melody:

Enriched by the grace of prophecy, thou didst describe the birth giving of the Virgin in shadowy form, but didst manifestly interpret the dreams of the king. And, cast into the pit as a martyr, thou didst most gloriously teach the lions to fast, O blessed one. Wherefore, thou hast destroyed the worship of the ungodly, O right wondrous Daniel. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love celebrate thy holy memory.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Rejoice, O fiery throne of God! Rejoice, O Maiden, thou royal seat and bower all-adorned with divers colors, thou bridal-chamber hung with gold and purple, cloak of scarlet hue, decorated temple, sword of lightning, lamp of great radiance! Rejoice, O Theotokos, thou twelve-walled city, gate of beaten gold, tabernacle adorned by God! Rejoice, O glorious Bride who hast let the Sun fall like rain! Rejoice, thou only splendor of my soul!

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

ODE IV

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: With divine sight the prophet perceived Thee, O Word, Who wouldst become incarnate of the only Theotokos, the mountain overshadowed; and with fear he glorified Thy power.

Preserving the law in piety, O prophet, thou didst truly come to know the Bestower of wisdom Who teacheth men profound mysteries and illumineth them in darkness.

Living a sacred life, O thou who wast revealed by God, thou wast called a man of divine desires; for, having manfully trampled the passions underfoot, thou hast been translated to the life which ageth not.

The grace of the Comforter which dwelt within thee, O Daniel, showed thee to be the radiant victor over tyrants and kings, and the abode of wisdom.

Theotokion: The Prophet Daniel beheld Thee, O Word, as the Stone cut, not by human hands, from the mountain of the Virgin Theotokos; and he cried out and hymned Thy divinity.

Canon of the Youths

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

By divine grace the most wise Daniel, divinely illumined in mind, interpreted the dreams of the sovereigns.

The suffering of the youths in the furnace shone with miracles; for they prevailed upon the tyrant to acknowledge Thee, O Almighty.

The melodies of the instruments and the harmonious playing of music did not lead the valiant ones astray, and they did not worship the golden image.

Theotokion: With hymns the children in Babylon honored thine all-divine Son, Whom they recognized in the furnace, O most hymned one.

ODE V

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: O Lord Who hast brought the ends of the earth into the light of divine knowledge out of the night of ignorance, illumine me with the dawning of Thy love for mankind.

Illumining thy struggles of suffering with the proclamation of prophecy, thou art resplendent in both, full of divine inspiration.

By splendors of wisdom which pass understanding thou hast been shown to be all-wise, O blessed and divinely eloquent Daniel who art most great; and thou hast enlightened all things.

Theotokion: O pure one, the glorious Prophet Daniel with images doth describe the mystery of the ineffable incarnation of the Most High Who came forth from thee.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou turned Thy face from me, O Light never-waving? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

Having studied the law, O Savior, Thy favored ones, the great Daniel and the three godly-minded youths, did not deny Thee; but, receiving strength from Thee, our Benefactor, they manfully vanquished the tyrant.

Noetically did Daniel study Thy mysteries, O Thou Who lovest mankind; for in purity of mind he beheld Thee as the Son of man coming upon a cloud, as the Judge and King of all the nations.

Shining like a golden beam, O children, your company shone with splendor greater than that of a sapphire; and set afire with zeal for piety, ye entered the furnace joyfully and formed yourselves into a universal chorus.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, the divine Daniel manifestly prefigured thee as a mountain; and the three youths, beholding the flame bearing dew, with hymns praise thy divine birth giving as that of the Savior, Creator and Lord.

ODE VI

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **As Thou didst deliver the Prophet Jonah from the uttermost depths, O Christ God, deliver me also from my sins, in that Thou lovest mankind, and direct Thou my life, I pray.**

Beholding the angelic choirs in most radiant light, thou hast become their most excellent emulator, delighting in the splendors of the King of all.

Proclaiming the salvific advent of the Word, thou didst also foretell the destruction of the temple, the fulfillment of the law, and gifts of grace which pass all understanding.

Theotokion: **B**ehold! the Virgin whose image the glorious Daniel beheld, shall manifestly conceive Christ God in her womb, illumined by the Spirit.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **The abyss of sins and the tempest of transgression assail me and drag me down in the depths of violent despair; but extend to me thy mighty hand, as Thou didst to Peter, O Helmsman, and save me!**

Having gained control over natural passions through the power of the Word, ye became rulers of the land of the Chaldean peoples, O ye wise descendents of David; for virtue knoweth how to render honor to those who have acquired her.

Daniel, having arrayed himself of old in life-bearing mortality, with food slew the evil serpent which the Chaldeans impiously considered a god; and he wisely slew the ungodly priests.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Mother and Theotokos, by thy supplications entreat the merciful Judge, thy Son, that He deliver me from cruel punishment on the day of judgment; for on thee alone do I set my hope.

Kontakion of the youths, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Ikos: **S**tretch forth Thy hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsteth after us, not swallow us up; and spare our souls, as Thou once didst spare Thy three children in Babylon, who glorified Thee unceasingly and were cast for Thy sake into a furnace, from whence they cried out to Thee: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

ODE VII

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **The Hebrew children in the furnace boldly trampled the flame underfoot and transformed the fire into dew, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!**

Protected by the law, O prophet, thou didst not allow thyself to be most iniquitously defiled, and, divinely illumined with understanding, thou didst cry out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Thy miracle filled all with awe; for, caught up, the Prophet Habbakuk appeared before thee, a prophet, bearing food to thee and crying aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Imprisoned in a pit and offered as food to the lions, O blessed one, thou wast saved, God protecting thee, and didst cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **T**hou pourest forth in abundance a stream of healings, O Virgin Mother of God; for Daniel clearly perceived thee as the mountain from whence the Savior shone forth, the God of our fathers.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **In Babylon, the pious children would not worship the golden image, but, cast into the midst of the fiery furnace, they chanted a hymn, saying: O supremely exalted God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

God-loving voices sang to the Almighty out of the midst of the fire; for, forming a divine choir, Azarias chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The harp of the youths theologized concerning the Almighty, the God of all Who manifestly appeared to them in the furnace as they chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Having watched as the three youths were cast into the furnace, the king beheld a fourth appear, Whom He called the Son of God; and he cried out to all: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Possessed of a mind illumined with divine radiance, O Daniel blessed of God, thou didst manifestly foresee the birth giving of the Virgin prefigured in mystical images, and didst cry: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: The divinely eloquent youths in the furnace, trampling the flame and the fire underfoot, chanted: **Bless the Lord, ye works of the Lord!**

Through active vision thou wast shown to be manifest in sacred manner, O prophet, and didst chant with the incorporeal ones: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thee, O most blessed one, do we all praise, and, rejoicing on thine honored festival, we cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: O divinely eloquent one, perceiving the all-wondrous Maiden in symbolic images, thou didst cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Canon of the Youths

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

Striving to preserve the nobility of Abraham, O venerable ones, ye acquired his own foundation of faith and hope, his patience and endurance of temptations, crying aloud: Ye priests, bless ye the Master! Ye people, exalt Him supremely forever!

Shining forth like beacons and making the earth like heaven, rendered luminous by the enlightenment of piety, and having formed a universal choir, the youths chant to the Master Who saved them from perils: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The descendents of Abraham, extinguishing the burning furnace and binding the jaws of the lions in their youth, rejoicing, hymn Thee now, the King and Benefactor of all: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **T**he most wise Daniel teacheth the mysteries, and the three divinely wise youths prefigure thy birthgiving, O all-pure one, beholding in images Him Who ineffably issued forth from thy womb, Whom the children bless, the priests hymn and the people exalt supremely for all ages.

ODE IX

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, we confess thee to be the true Theotokos, magnifying thee with the incorporeal choirs.

Thou didst reap the harvest of thy pangs, ever dancing in the heavens with the prophets about the most exalted throne of the Almighty.

In the light of the threefold Sun thou standest now, crowned, before thine ultimate Desire, rejoicing with the incorporeal choirs.

Theotokion: **B**eautiful is the glory which thou now enjoyest! For thou, O honored prophet, hast been vouchsafed to proclaim to all, in images, the most hymned Maiden.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, we confess thee to be the true Theotokos, magnifying thee with the incorporeal choirs.

Ye have attained your desired end and stand before your ultimate Desire in the mansions of heaven, O youths who are most rich.

Having produced the grain of incorruption with tears, rejoicing, ye have received the sheaves of your goodly labor.

Splendor hath now shone forth upon you as is meet, and gladness of heart hath blossomed forth; for grief hath fled away from where ye have made your abode.

Theotokion: **T**hou hast departed from the fields of death, O Virgin, having given birth to the Lord, the Bestower of life, Who Bestoweth life upon those who magnify thee with faith.

Exapostilarion from the Oktoechos; and Glory ..., that of the prophet:

Let Daniel, the greatest among the prophets, be honored now, for he beheld Christ our God as the Stone cut, not by human hands, from the mountain of the pure Virgin. And with him let the three youths be praised whom the divine and ineffable image of the Virgin saved unharmed by the fire of the furnace, and whereby the world hath been saved.

Now & ever ...,

The all-wise Daniel teacheth the mysteries through the divine Spirit, O all-pure one, and by faith the three children of Abraham prefigure thy seedless birthgiving; for the Word Who is uncircumscribable in His divinity, desiring to be circumscribed by the flesh through thee, O Theotokos, is born in Bethlehem for men's salvation.

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos: and Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Malaxas, in Tone VI:

When the noetic Sun of righteousness desired to shine forth from the Virgin's womb, the three youths, equal in number to the Trinity, shone forth upon us beforehand out of the fiery furnace, prefiguring in themselves the awesome mystery. And with them the most splendid Prophet Daniel illuminated the ends of the earth with the light of prophecy, proclaiming Christ to be the Stone not cut by human hands, quarried from the Virgin, the mountain overshadowed, Who issueth forth for the salvation of our souls.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the prophet; and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the youths.

Receiving understanding and wisdom from God, thou didst interpret obscure dreams for the kings. (Twice)

Scattering the food-offerings, O glorious one, thou didst slay the material serpent; for thou didst first vanquish the immaterial demons. (Twice)

Having gained control over natural passions through the power of the Word, ye became rulers of the land of the Chaldean peoples, O ye wise descendents of David; for virtue knoweth how to render honor to those who have acquired her.

Daniel, having arrayed himself of old in life-bearing mortality, with food slew the evil serpent which the Chaldeans impiously considered a god; and he wisely slew the ungodly priests. (Twice)

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Mother and Theotokos, by thy supplications entreat the merciful Judge, thy Son, that He deliver me from cruel punishment on the Day of Judgment, for on thee alone do I set my hope.

Troparion, in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the Prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone II:

When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, * then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning flash of Thy Divinity. * And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost regions, * all the Hosts of the heavens cried aloud to Thee: * O Life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion of the youths, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Kontakion of the prophet, in Tone III:

Enlightened by the Spirit, thy pure heart became the receptacle of most splendid prophecy: for thou beheldest far-off things as though they were present, and, cast into the pit, didst tame the lions. Wherefore, we honor thee, O blessed and glorious Prophet Daniel.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel
Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, §330 [HEB. 11: 33-40]

Brethren: All the saints who, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds .and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: 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.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE §62 [11:47-12: 1]

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: "Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchers. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

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