

THE 18th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR SEBASTIAN & HIS COMPANY
AT VESPERS

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

Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

With the dye of thy precious blood * thou didst make for thyself a costly robe of purple, * and, having arrayed thyself therein, * thou truly dwellest * in the kingdom on high, * standing before God, the King of all. * Him do thou entreat, * that He grant unto our souls * peace and great mercy.

With Sebastian there suffered Zoe, * Mark and Marcellinus, * and the divinely wise Tiburtius, * enduring threefold waves of torments; * and they have now made their abode * in divine peace devoid of pain, * wherein they pray * that peace and great mercy * be granted to our souls.

O blessed invincible martyrs, * having forsaken earthly things, * ye have hastened to the heavens, * adorned with your wounds * and splendidly arrayed * in your honored sufferings. * Wherefore, pray ye, * that peace and great mercy * be granted to our souls.

But if Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...II, the following stichera of the Theotokos are chanted before the foregoing stichera of the martyrs, in the same tone & melody:

Incorruptibly didst thou give birth unto God * Who hath destroyed corruption * and poured forth incorruption, * O incorrupt and undefiled one. * Wherefore, I beseech thee: * By thy prayers, O pure one, * renew me who have become corrupt through wicked deeds, * that with love I may glorify and magnify thee * who hast exalted our race.

O all-hymned Mistress, * thou hope and confirmation, * refuge and help of the faithful, * thee do we entreat: * From all misfortune keep thou thy servants * that worship thy birthgiving with faith, * and pray thou unto Christ, * that He grant our souls * peace and great mercy.

Alas! What shall become of me * who have defiled mind, soul and body with transgressions? * What shall I do? * How will I be able to avoid the unquenchable flame * and the everlasting and unbreakable bonds? * But before the end * entreat thy Son, O all-immaculate one, * to grant me forgiveness.

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

In thy womb * thou didst bear Christ, * the Fire of divinity, * O all-pure one. * Him do thou now beseech, * that He quench the easily kindled matter of my passions, * deliver me from everlasting fire, * and vouchsafe me the splendor of the righteous * when He cometh to judge all things.

Stavrotheotokion: **O**nce, the undefiled Virgin, * beholding on the Tree * Him to Whom she had given birth from her seedless womb, * unable to bear the wounding of her womb, * said, rending her hair: * How is it that Thou Who holdest all creation in the palm of Thy hand * art lifted, up on the Cross * like one condemned, * O Thou Who desirest to save mankind in whatever way is possible?

Troparion, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and that of the martyrs, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "I wisely render divine honor to thee, O martyr," the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

ODE I

Irmos: Thy victorious right arm hath in godly manner been glorified in strength; for as almighty, O Immortal One, it smote the adversary, fashioning anew the path of the deep for the Israelites.

Illumined by the divine rays of the worshipful Trinity, O ever-memorable one, do thou by thy supplications, show forth as partakers of the light those who with faith honor thy luminous and sacred feast.

Possessed of a mind radiant and, replete with honorable effulgence, as one sensible and wise, O martyred athlete, thine only desire was He Who Is, and through faith thou didst receive Him.

With divine beads of sweat thou didst truly blot out the reasoning of thy flesh, and with the blood of thy suffering thou didst cry up the turgid streams of polytheism, O divinely wise martyr who art most rich.

By thy divine teachings thou didst lead to the master a regiment of athletes, casting down all the impiety of the tyrants by the grace of the Holy Spirit; and with them thou prayest that we be saved.

Theotokion: Thou gavest birth to a little Babe-Him Who hath been with the Father from before the beginning of time; and thou renewest the laws of nature, O pure, all-pure Virgin Mother, by thy supernatural, honored and divine birthgiving.

ODE III

Irmos: O Thou Who alone hast known the weakness of human nature, having in Thy mercy formed Thyself therein: Thou dost gird me about with power from on high, that I may chant to Thee: Holy is the living temple of Thine ineffable glory, O Thou Who lovest mankind!

O invincible martyr, who led forth an honorable army, arrayed in the divine armor of the Faith, ye have cast down the legions of the foe and all the wiles of the tyrants by the power of the Spirit.

Having established the ascents of thy heart upon the noetic rock with pious wisdom, O much-suffering martyr, thou didst not fall prey to the wiles of the deceitful serpent; but hast been a foundation of piety for all in spirit.

Bound and suspended on a tree, thou didst endure the cruel piercing of your members, O martyr; yet by the divine power of God thou wast straightway shown to be whole and unharmed, O glorious one, putting the wiles of the enemy to shame.

Theotokion: **O** most immaculate one, thou hast been shown to be the noetic sanctuary and pure abode of Him Who sanctifieth all things; for from thee hath God appeared incarnate, known to the world in two natures, but in a single Hypostasis, O Bride of God.

Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up ..." :

With the staining of thy blood thou didst dye a robe of martyrdom, and thou didst array thyself therein as with a costly robe of purple, O Sebastian. Wherefore, thou hast made thine abode with Christ in the endless kingdom on high, and with those who suffered with thee hast received a cross. Joining chorus with them, O wise one, be thou ever mindful of us.

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

He Who sitteth upon the throne of the cherubim and abideth in the bosom of the Father sitteth in thy bosom as upon His holy throne, O Mistress; for as God incarnate He truly reigneth over all the nations; and we now chant to Him with understanding. Him do thou entreat, that thy servants be saved.

Stavrotheotokion: **S**he who in latter times gave birth in the flesh unto Thee Who wast begotten of the unoriginate Father, beholding Thee hanging upon the Cross, cried out: "Woe is me, O most beloved Jesus! How is it that Thou Who art glorified as God by the angels art now crucified by iniquitous men, O my Son? I hymn Thee, O Long-suffering One!"

ODE IV

Irmos: **Habbakuk, gazing with the eyes of foresight upon thee, the mountain overshadowed by the grace of God, prophesied that the Holy One of Israel would come forth from thee, for our salvation and restoration.**

O Tiburtius, the Lord giveth thee power to vanquish the enemy in thy weak flesh; for when the fire was kindled, thou didst enter therein like the youths, O most mighty martyr, and didst receive the dew of heaven.

Thou hast joined the heavenly ministers, O Tiburtius, for, serving Christ, thou didst offer up pure sacrifices in spirit, O sacred minister, thou glory and boast of the martyrs; wherefore, we joyfully honor thee.

Suspended upright, lacerated with sharp blades, pierced with the grievous wounds of arrows, and buried in a pit, wherein he received his divine end, Castulus of valiant mind rejoiced.

Performing healings in the Holy Spirit, O blessed Sebastian, thou didst magnificently proclaim salvation to the people who piously looked for enlightenment, and thou didst finish the race of martyrdom.

Theotokion: The transcendent God chose thee alone from among all generations, O all-immaculate Mistress Theotokos, and, becoming man, the Creator of human nature assumed the essence of humanity.

ODE V

Irmos: O Christ Who hast enlightened the ends of the world with the radiance of Thy coming and hast illumined them with Thy Cross: with the light of Thy divine knowledge enlighten the hearts of those who hymn Thee in Orthodox manner.

Thy paths and ways, which lead to the Lord alone, tripped the aimless steps of the enemy and were for many a straight and firm path, O most honored martyr of Christ.

Before the tribunal the most wise Marcellinus and Mark spake with eloquence of the saving advent of Christ, and, bound together, they were pierced with sharp blades, receiving the adornment of martyrdom.

Marcellinus and Mark, mightily emulating the suffering of Him Who hath slain our passions, were pierced with spears, and, crowned, have joined the choirs of passion-bearers.

Theotokion: O most immaculate one, thou all-radiant cloud of the Sun, by thy supplications dispel the clouds from my soul and illumine my mind, which hath become darkened by negligence, that I may hymn thee, O most hymned one.

ODE VI

Irmos: The uttermost abyss hath surrounded us, and there is none to deliver us. We are accounted as lambs for the slaughter. Save Thy people, O our God, for Thou art the strength and correction of the weak!

By steadfastness of mind thou wast most honorably shown to be tireless when thou wast pitilessly beaten with staves and pierced by many arrows. Wherefore, thou hast passed, rejoicing, over to the never-waning light, O martyr.

Christ imparted life to thee, who struggled and fought the demons, sustained grievous wounds, and looked to Him with the eyes of thy heart, O invincible martyr Sebastian.

With the hard staves of thine all-wise words thou didst smash falsehood, demolish the sanctuaries of the enemy, destroy their idolatrous temples and raise thyself up as a temple of the divine Spirit.

Theotokion: Thou hast restored our nature, which hath become corrupt through disobedience, having given birth to Him Who reneweth all things by His divine will, O divine joyous one, who alone among women art blessed.

N.B.: There is no Kontakion for this service.

ODE VII

Irmos: **O** Theotokos, we, the faithful, perceive thee to be a noetic furnace; for, as the supremely Exalted One saved the three youths, in thy womb, the praised and most glorious God of our fathers wholly renewed the world.

Strengthened by Thy mighty power, O Christ, Thy passion-bearers vanquished the foe, trampled falsehood underfoot, and give their bodies over to wounding, chanting: Praised and all-glorious is the God of our fathers!

Having struggled well, Marcellinus and the glorious Mark, Tiburtius and the most wise Castulus, the divinely radiant passion-bearers and martyrs, have passed over to heaven, hymning our praised and all-glorious God.

As a youth thou didst noetically tread upon the flame, O athlete Tiburtius, like the children of old, receiving the dew of the Spirit from on high, and chanting earnestly: Praised and all-glorious is the God of our fathers!

Suspended aloft like a lamb, O glorious martyr Zoe, thou didst choke the enemy with the cords of thy patiently-endured pangs, and thou livest even after death, O most lauded one, chanting: Praised and all-glorious is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **O** pure one, we call thee the golden jar, the most holy table of the divine Bread of life, the place of sanctity, the throne most high, whereon God hath rested: the praised and all-glorious God of our fathers.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **The children of Israel in the furnace, shining more brightly than gold in a crucible in the beauty of their piety, said: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

Desiring to die to the world and all things in the world, O most honored one, thou wast vouchsafed the things of life, crying out most earnestly: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The iniquitous ones cruelly set thee in a pit most deep, and, filling it in, slew thee, O ever-memorable Castulus, who chanted fervently: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

As the namesake of life, O Zoe, thou hast obtained blessed life; for thou didst leave this life of corruption by violent strangulation, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **I**n giving birth to the comely God and Master Who adorneth the human race with divine beauties, O pure one, thou thyself wast adorned. To Him do we chant: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: The bush which burnt with fire yet was not consumed showed forth an image of thy pure birthgiving. And now we pray that the furnace of temptations which rageth against us may be extinguished, that we may magnify thee unceasingly, O Theotokos.

That thou mightest be counted worthy of divine splendor, everlasting glory and beauty, O most blessed Sebastian, thou didst manfully endure torment, pain and death; wherefore, we all magnify thee.

Thou wast shown to be like the sun amid stars, with those who suffered with thee, O martyr; and now, through your sacred sufferings, ye illumine with pure splendors the divine foundation of the Church, and dispel all the boastfulness of the demons.

Tiburtius, Marcellinus and Mark, Zoe and Castulus, loving Christ, suffer together with the divinely wise Sebastian, their instructor, and equally receive crowns of victory, praying ever in our behalf.

The divine choir of the martyrs, taken up and caused to dwell in the radiant mansions, go about the heavens rejoicing, ever entreating Him Who loveth mankind, in behalf of us who bless them forever.

Theotokion: The noetic armies are filled with awe, beholding the divine Effulgence of the Father ineffably held in thine arms and assuming our form, that He might deify mortals, O most immaculate Virgin Mother.