

THE 8th DAY OF THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR THEODORE THE GENERAL
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET ZACHARIAH,
AFTERFEAST OF THE MEETING OF OUR LORD
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 3 Stichera of the great martyr, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: “As one valiant among the martyrs ...”:

A courageous spiritual athlete, * and an invincible warrior, * wast thou revealed to be by the Holy Spirit, * having cast down the adversary * with the wisdom of thy words, * O wise one, and the enduring testimony of thy deeds. * Wherefore, thou hast received crowns of victory * and been joined to the choirs on high, ** O great martyr Theodore.

Thou wast a pillar of godly piety, * O most noetically rich martyr; * for, abhorring the temples of the impious, * thou wast brought as a most perfect lamb * and a right acceptable sacrifice, * unto Him Who was blamelessly sacrificed for thy sake, * Who hath glorified thy holy memory, * and hath given thee to those who are in the world ** as a treasury of miracles, O Theodore.

Lifted up upon a cross, thy flesh lacerated, * wounded with sharp arrows, * tormented by all the crafty arts of torture, * and beheaded by the sword, * thou wast shown to be steadfast and invincible * through the power of Him that was nailed to the Cross, ** O Theodore, thou glory of the martyrs.

And 3 Stichera of the prophet, in Tone VIII:
Spec. Mel.: “What shall we call you ...”:

Possessed of a life equal to that of the angels, * thou dost plainly converse with them, * O divinely revealed one, * illumining thy mind with things that surpass understanding: * the purity of wondrous images, * the revelation of great mysteries, * prophetic proclamations, * and spiritual renewal. ** Pray thou that our souls be saved.

Thou wast shown to be an earthly angel, * having, while on earth, heavenly companions, * for thou wast a beholder of heavenly visions, * a noetic beacon, * and a radiant light, * a fruitful olive tree, as the Psalm doth say, * which in a godly manner * doth pour forth oil upon the pious. ** Pray thou that our souls be saved.

Enjoying the longed-for deification, * clearly partaking * of everlasting delight, * and beholding ineffable glory, * adorned with crowns of comeliness, * as a most true prophet of God * pray thou on behalf of those who earnestly hymn thee, * O thou who art pleasing to God, ** that our souls be saved.

If it be the Fast: Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion in Tone VIII:

To whom hast thou likened thyself, * O wretched soul, * in no wise rousing thyself to repentance, * nor fearing the fire which awaiteth the evil? * Arise, and cry and call out * unto our only assistance: * O Virgin Mother, * entreat thy Son and our God, * that He deliver me from the snares of the deceiver!

Stavrotheotokion: The ewe-lamb, as she beheld the Lamb * stretched out of His own will upon the Tree of the Cross, * cried out maternally, * in pain with her weeping: * O my Son, what is this strange sight? * O Longsuffering One, how is it that Thou art slain, * Who, as Lord, bestoweth life upon all, * granting resurrection to mortals? * I glorify Thy great condescension, O my God!

But if it be not the Fast: Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

O all ye faithful, let us bless the great and noble martyr Theodore as is meet; for he is the namesake of God's gifts and the heir of His blessedness, the champion of the world, and he doth pray to Christ God on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., of the feast, in the same tone,

The composition of Andrew of Crete:

He Who is borne upon the cherubim and hymned by the seraphim, hath been borne into the temple of God today in accordance with the law, sitting in the arms of the elder as upon a throne, and as God doth receive the offerings from Joseph: a pair of turtledoves - the undefiled Church and the people newly-chosen from among the gentiles; and two young pigeons - the Old, and the beginning of the New. And Symeon, having finally received the fulfillment of the promise made to him, blessed the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, foretelling in imagery the sufferings she would endure and asked from God deliverance, and cried aloud: "Lettest now Thy servant depart, O Master, as Thou didst tell me before; for I have seen Thee, the pre eternal Light, the Savior and Lord of the Christian people!"

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone II:

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

Open wide, ye gates of heaven, * for Christ is carried into the temple * as a Babe * by the Virgin Mother ** unto God His Father.

Verse: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, * according to Thy word.

Christ, the coal of fire * which appeared unto the holy Isaiah, * now resteth in the arms of the Theotokos * as in a pair of tongs, ** and He is given to the elder.

Verse: A light to lighten the Gentiles, * and the glory of Thy people Israel.

In fear and joy * Simeon held the Master * in his arms, * and asked for his release from life, ** singing the praises of the Mother of God.

Glory ..., in Tone V:

Today hath the honored memory of Christ's athlete shone forth more brightly than the morning star, invisibly illumining the hearts of the faithful and dispelling gloom from their souls by the activity of the grace of the Holy Spirit. O ye who love the martyrs, let us cry out to him: Rejoice, O blessed Theodore, for thou hast been revealed to the faithful as a God-given grace, showering a multitude of miracles upon those who flee unto thee. And unceasingly entreating Christ, fail not to obtain eternal blessings for those who celebrate thy holy memory with faith.

Both now ..., of the feast, in Tone V:

The Ancient of days, having become a babe, is borne into the temple by the Virgin Mother, fulfilling the promise of His own law; and Symeon, receiving Him, said: “Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, O Holy One!”

Troparion of the great martyr, in Tone IV:

Through true recruitment didst thou become * a most worthy general of the heavenly King, * O passion-bearer Theodore; * for thou didst wisely put on the whole armor of God * and, vanquishing legions of demons, * thou didst reveal thyself to be a victorious athlete. ** Wherefore, with faith do we ever bless thee.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, * for from thee hath shone forth Christ our God, the Sun of righteousness, * illumining those in darkness. * Be glad, also, O righteous elder * who hath received in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, ** Who granteth us the resurrection.

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, * for from thee hath shone forth Christ our God, the Sun of righteousness, * illumining those in darkness. * Be glad, also, O righteous elder * who hath received in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, ** Who granteth us the resurrection.

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

Through true recruitment didst thou become * a most worthy general of the heavenly King, * O passion-bearer Theodore; * for thou didst wisely put on the whole armor of God * and, vanquishing legions of demons, * thou didst reveal thyself to be a victorious athlete. ** Wherefore, with faith do we ever bless thee.

Both now ..., that of the feast.

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: “Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...”:

Rejoicing, the sacred Symeon took in his arms, Thee Who had assumed flesh from the Virgin, O Christ, crying aloud: Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master! And like Anna, the blameless and glorious prophetess, who offered Thee confession and hymnody, we cry out to Thee, O Bestower of life: Glory to Thee Who hast thus been well pleased!

Glory ..., Both now ..., and the above is repeated.

After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “Of the shepherds pipes...”:

Thou that art co-beginningless with the Father wast born on earth; and, though unapproachable, Thou wast borne to the temple where the elder, rejoicing, took Thee in his arms and cried aloud: Now lettest me depart whom Thou hast visited according to Thy word, O Thou Whose good pleasure it is, as God, to save the human race.

Glory ..., Both now ..., and the above is repeated.

Canon of the Feast, with 6 Troparia, including its Irmos; two canons for the saints, with 4 Troparia each.

ODE I

Canon of the feast, the acrostic whereof is:

“Joyously the elder embraceth Christ,” the composition of Cosmas, in Tone III:

Irmos: The Sun once passed over dry land * in the midst of the deep. * For the water on both sides became firm as a wall * while the people traversed the sea on foot, * chanting in a manner pleasing to God: * Let us sing unto the Lord; * for gloriously hath he been glorified.

Let the clouds pour forth rain, for Christ the Sun Who is borne aloft upon a light cloud is brought to the temple as a babe in the arms of the unblemished one. Wherefore, O ye faithful, let us cry aloud: Let us sing unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Be strong, ye hands of Symeon feeble with age; and ye weary legs of the elder, hasten straightway to meet Christ, joining chorus with the incorporeal ones, chanting: Let us sing unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

O ye heavens stretched out in wisdom, be glad; and rejoice, O thou earth! For Christ the Fashioner, having come forth from the most blessed womb of His Mother, is borne by the Virgin Mother as a babe to God the Father, He Who was before all the ages, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Canon of the great martyr, in Tone VIII

Irmos: **The wonderworking staff of Moses, * striking and dividing the sea in the figure of a cross, * once drowned Pharaoh the pursuing charioteer, * while it saved the fleeing people of Israel * as they fled on foot, * chanting a hymn unto God.**

O Theodore, great among the martyrs, manifestly endued with divine splendor, sacredly adorned with the crown of martyrdom and radiant with the glory of the Holy Trinity: be thou mindful of us who praise thee.

Full of light, full of divine grace, the sacred memory of thine honored struggles hath shone forth upon us, illumining with most radiant splendor all who piously honor thee, O Theodore, martyr and athlete.

When the tempest of idolatry beset humanity, the sacred martyr, guided by the divine grace of the Cross, reached the haven of heaven rejoicing, having ended his voyage untouched by the storm.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, portal of God, open unto me the doors of repentance, enlighten my soul with holy thoughts, and drive away the gloomy darkness of the passions; that, rejoicing, I may honor and bless thee as is meet.

Canon of the prophet, in Tone VIII

Irmos: **Let us sing unto the Lord, * who led His people through the Red Sea: * for He alone hath gloriously been glorified.**

In that the Giver of life doth hearken to thine entreaties, grant me enlightenment, O most wondrous prophet Zechariah.

Adorned with the beauties of divine comeliness, with purity of soul thou dost behold the beauties of the angels.

As one full of the sanctity of angelic splendor, O divinely wise one, thou didst have angels enlightening and conversing with thee, O thou god-possessed prophet.

Theotokion: **T**hou hast loosed the curse of Eve, our first mother, O all-immaculate one; for, having given birth unto Christ, thou hast enriched the world with blessings.

ODE III

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **O** Lord, Thou firm foundation of those who put their trust in Thee, do Thou confirm the Church, which Thou hast purchased with Thy precious blood.

He Who is the firstborn of the Father from before all ages, hath appeared as the firstborn child of the undefiled Virgin, extending His outstretched hand to Adam.

God the Word hath appeared as a Child, that He might restore the first-formed man who, through deception, had become childish in his mind.

The Creator, having without change become a young Child, hath reshaped our nature, which shall return unto the ground out of which it was taken, according to the form of His divinity.

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: **O** Christ fortify me on the rock of Thy commandments, * Thou who in the beginning didst establish the heavens with understanding * and didst establish the earth upon the waters, * for there is none holy save Thee, **O** only Lover of mankind.

Like a mighty lion thou didst stand in the midst of the judgment hall, announcing the word of salvation, reproaching the impious, proclaiming the truth and denouncing the delusion of godlessness, O Theodore.

The tyrant was amazed at thy valor, O wise one; and, moved to bestial wrath, he mercilessly flogged thee with a lash of hide, O Theodore, who had wrought destruction upon the abominable graven images.

Shown forth as crowned by the power of the divine Spirit and strengthened by the grace of the Cross, O divinely wise one, with brave determination thou didst wipe away the bloody drops of thy wounds as though drops of water.

Theotokion: **T**he Lord Who was born of thee hath truly done great things to thee, and all generations bless thee, O Mother of God.

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: **T**here is none as holy as the Lord, * and none as righteous as our God, * Whom the whole of creation hymns: * There is none more righteous than Thee, **O** Lord.

The grace of the Most High overshadowed thee, enlightening and teaching thee through the holy angels with the divine guidance of ineffable knowledge, O most wise and blessed one.

Instructed in divine goodness as one most pure, O most noetically rich prophet, thou didst learn to live fruitfully, with divine sanctification, in the most sacred city.

An unshakable rampart, the confirmation of the divinely wise people, and the salvation of souls, art Thou, O Lord, as the wondrous prophet foretold of old.

Theotokion: The incorrupt and most pure Offspring of thy birthgiving, O Theotokos, hath delivered the world from corruption and death, for thou hast given birth to the Savior, the eternal Word.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone I:

O Thou Who didst hallow the Virgin's womb by Thy birth * and didst bless the hands of Symeon as was meet, * by anticipation Thou hast now saved even us, O Christ God. * But in the midst of battle grant peace to Thy community, * and strengthen the hierarchs whom Thou hast loved, ** O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

Ikos: Let us make haste to the Theotokos, desiring to behold her Son borne unto Symeon. Looking upon Him from heaven, the bodiless hosts in amazement proclaim: "We behold things wondrous, most glorious, unapproachable and ineffable: for He Who created Adam is borne as an infant; He Whom naught can contain is held in the elder's arms; He Who is in the infinite bosom of His Father is willingly constrained in the flesh, but not in His divinity, He Who alone is the Lover of mankind."

Sessional Hymn of the great martyr, in Tone VIII:

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

Having put on the whole armor of God and cast down the delusion of idolatry, thou didst move the angels to praise thy struggles; for, having enflamed thy mind with divine love, thou didst bravely endure a fiery death. Wherefore, true to thy name, thou dost distribute godly gifts to those who ask, O passion-bearer Theodore. Wherefore, we cry out to thee: Beseech Christ God, that He grant forgiveness of sins unto those who with love celebrate thy memory.

Glory ..., Sessional Hymn of the prophet, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

O wondrous Zechariah, thou didst behold the steeds of the chariot, the incorporeal servants, who are guided by the hand of the God of all. Rejoicing with them, as an ever-memorable prophet, do thou pray that those who keep thy most sacred memory with unwavering faith be guided to the path of divine knowledge.

Both now ..., of the feast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "The choir of angels ...":

He Who is with the Father seated upon the holy throne, hath come to earth born of the Virgin; He Who is unbounded by time, hath become a babe; and Symeon, receiving Him in his arms rejoicing, saith: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Compassionate One, having gladdened me!"

But if it be the Fast: Both now ..., Theotokion in Tone I:

Incomprehensible and unapproachable * is the dread mystery of God * which hath been wrought in thee, O joyous Lady; * for, having conceived, thou didst give birth unto the Unapproachable One, * Who was wrapped in flesh by thy most pure blood. * Him do thou ever entreat as thy Son, O pure one, ** that our souls be saved.

Stavrotheotokion: Thy pure Mother who hath not known wedlock, O Christ, * upon seeing Thee hanging dead upon the Cross, * said, weeping maternally: * How hath the iniquitous and ungrateful synagogue of the Jews repaid Thee, * which hath enjoyed Thy many and great wonders, ** O my Son?

ODE IV

Canon of the feast

Irmos: Thy virtue, hath covered the heavens, O Christ, * for having come forth from the Ark of Thy sanctification, * from Thine undefiled Mother, * Thou hast appeared in the temple of Thy glory * as an infant borne in arms, * filling all with Thy praise.

Rejoicing, the Theotokos cried aloud: O Symeon, initiate of ineffable mysteries, take in thine arms Christ, the Word Who hath become a babe, of Whom thou wast informed of old by the Holy Spirit, and cry out to Him: All things are filled with Thy praise!

O Symeon, rejoicing take up Christ, the little Child, on Whom thou hast set thy hope, the Consolation of the Israel of God, the Creator and Master of the law, Who fulfilleth the tenets of the law; and cry aloud to Him: All things are filled with Thy praise!

Beholding the beginningless Word borne as a babe in the flesh by the Virgin as on the throne of the cherubim, the Author of all, Symeon marveled and cried aloud to Him: All things are filled with Thy praise!

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: Thou, O Lord, art my strength and Thou art my power, * Thou art my God and Thou art my joy, * Thou Who, while never leaving the bosom of Thy Father, * hast visited our poverty. * Therefore with the Prophet Habbakuk I cry unto Thee, * 'Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!'

Having Christ speaking through thee, O blessed one, thou didst set at naught the pride of Lucinius with words of wisdom; for, lo! truly didst thou denounce his great impiety, O martyr, and amaze those who beheld thy most glorious deeds, O Theodore, noble-minded sufferer.

Hung aloft by the iniquity of the tyrant, torn with iron claws, stained with the drops of thine own unjustly shed blood, thou didst put off the coarse garments of the corruption of mortality.

Theotokion: Wipe away the wicked handwriting of my sins with the spear that pierced the sacred side of Him Whose desire it was to become incarnate of thee, O most holy Virgin, and pray that I, who have thoughtlessly separated myself from God, may be inscribed in the book of the saved.

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: Thou hast enlightened * with the knowledge of God * the ends of the universe * that lay in the night of ignorance, * do Thou also, O Lord, illumine me * with the dawning of Thy love for mankind.

O all-blessed one, clearly thou dost instruct all to honor the illumining Essence which, though One, is defined in three Suns and doth ever bring forth into being all creatures by the abundance of His grace.

Being thyself a chariot of God and beholding divers angelic chariots moving as ordained, O prophet, thou wast deemed worthy to surpass them.

O all-blessed one, in a sacred manner thou didst behold the lamp of great splendor, an image of the radiance of God, and hast seen Him Who seeth all things, and by Whom all are saved.

Theotokion: The God-seeing and divinely wise prophets foresaw thy pure birthgiving, prefiguring it in many and divers images.

ODE V

Canon of the feast

Irmos: In a vision Isaiah saw upon a throne, * God lifted up on high * borne aloft by angels of glory; * and he cried: 'Woe is me! * For I have foreseen God made flesh, * the Lord of the never-setting light * and the King of peace.'

The divine elder, comprehending the glory that was revealed of old to the prophet, and beholding the Word held in His Mother's arms, cried aloud: Rejoice, O pure one, for like a throne, God the unwaning Light. Who reigneth with peace, is held by thee!

The elder, bowing low and divinely touching the feet of the Mother of God who kneweth not wedlock, said: O pure one, thou dost bear Fire! I fear to hold the infant God, the unwaning Light, Who reigneth with peace!

Isaiah, purified by the burning ember brought by the seraphim, and the elder illumined by the O Mother of God, cried to her: thou hast given me Him Whom thou dost bear in thine arms as with tongs, the Light unwaning, Who reigneth with peace.

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: O Light never-waning, * why hast Thou turned Thy face from me * and why has the alien darkness surrounded me, * wretched though I be? * But do Thou guide my steps I implore Thee * and turn me back towards the light of Thy commandments.

Illumined with the radiance of the divine Spirit and consumed with love for Christ, nurtured with the hope of heaven, thou didst ardently despise the flesh knowing neither pain nor paying heed to torment.

Bearing the easy yoke of the Master upon thy neck, O most blessed passion-bearer, and weighted down with a great weight, thou didst not yield in any way, nor wast thou shaken or conquered, O valiant warrior Theodore.

Having called thee from heaven, the supremely good Word made thee valorous, and by His power thou didst endure the bitter pain, torment, want and death visited upon thee by the iniquitous, O glorious martyr of Christ.

Theotokion: **P**ray thou that I remain whole, and that my good disposition never change, and that I may walk according to that which is right and do those things which are pleasing unto God, O good one who hast given birth unto the good Word Who hath delivered us from irrationality.

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: **T**hou hast enlightened * with the knowledge of God * the ends of the universe * that lay in the night of ignorance, * do Thou also, O Lord, illumine me * with the dawning of Thy love for mankind.

Foreseeing the suffering of the Savior with a pure heart and keenness of mind, the prophet Zechariah is rightly blessed.

Supra-naturally the holy prophet commanded beforehand, saying: Rejoice, O Zion, for thy righteous King doth come, saving all by His meekness!

The glory of the prophets and adornment of divinely eloquent men hath illumined the world with the radiance of prophecy.

Theotokion: **H**aving renewed us through the Virgin's birthgiving, He that became a man for our sake hath freed us from the ancient transgression.

ODE VI

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **T**he Elder, having seen with his eyes the salvation * that was to come unto the peoples from God, * cried aloud unto Thee: * 'O Christ, Thou art my God.'

In Sion wast Thou set as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense for the disobedient, and the inviolate salvation of the faithful.

Clearly bearing the lineaments of Him Who begot Thee before the ages, in Thy tender compassion Thou hast now been clothed in the weakness of the earth-born.

Now lettest him that worshipped Thee as the Son of the Most High, the Son of the Virgin, God become a Child, depart in peace.

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: I will pour out my prayer unto the Lord, * and to Him will I proclaim my grief; * for my soul is filled with evils, * and my life unto Hades hath drawn nigh, * and like Jonah I pray unto Thee: * Raise me up from corruption, O

Thou wast crucified in the image of the Passion of the Dispassionate One, O glorious martyr, nailed to a tree, emulating the Master Who voluntarily freed mankind of the passions by the Cross, O most blessed one.

Hung upon a tree like the Lamb, shot full of arrows, thine eyes plucked out, wounded throughout thy body, O blessed one, thou didst wound the hearts of thine enemies with the spear of thy passion.

Though torrents of boundless torments threatened the house of thy soul, yet it remained unshaken, for it was founded upon the immovable rock of Him that shone forth from the Virgin and enlightened the human race.

Theotokion: O Mary, Sovereign Lady of all the world, as thou didst give birth unto the Lord of all, do thou deliver me from bondage to the enemy, rescue me from his torment, and save me who place unwavering hope in thee.

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: I will pour out my prayer unto the Lord, * and to Him will I proclaim my grief; * for my soul is filled with evils, * and my life unto Hades hath drawn nigh, * and like Jonah I pray unto Thee: * Raise me up from corruption, O

Filled with prophetic inspiration and having learned knowledge of things to come in a manner surpassing nature, thou wast sent to preach the grace which was to come, knowing the approach of the day of the Cross of the Lord, O thou who art pleasing to God.

Adorned with spiritual understanding, thou wast deemed worthy of gifts which are beyond comprehension, O most noetically rich prophet, beholding angelic manifestations and ranks, and proclamations and glories which teach wondrous and divine mysteries.

Having acquired the lamp of the virtues, thou dost shine with the radiance of divine knowledge, foretelling the mystic Lamp whereby, in a manner past all telling, the incarnate Word would appear as God out of Zion, O Zechariah, thou God-pleasing prophet.

Theotokion: Loving the beauty of Jacob, the Sun of the Godhead which established heaven, revealed thee to be a noetic heaven, O Theotokos, shining forth in the flesh from thy womb, and illumining the world with grace.

Kontakion of the great martyr, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "Seeking the Highest ...":

Having put on the whole armor of faith * with valor of soul, * and taking in hand the word of God as a spear, * thou didst conquer the enemy, O Theodore, * great among the martyrs. * With them cease thou never to entreat Christ God ** on behalf of us all.

Ikos: **C**ome, all ye faithful and with wreaths of hymnody let us crown Theodore, the most radiant adornment of the martyrs; for in the splendor of his miracles he is shown to be God's great gift to the world. Having vanquished Belial the enemy by his honorable struggle, he raineth down a deluge of healing with the drops of his blood. In all these things doth Christ rejoice, and He granteth everlasting peace. Wherefore, we cry out to the martyr: Pray thou unceasingly on behalf of us all!

ODE VII

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **O** Thou who in the midst of the fire * bedewed the children as they discoursed on things divine, * and Who didst take up Thy dwelling in the pure Virgin: * O Word of God Thee do we reverently praise chanting: * O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou.

I go to announce glad tidings unto Adam and Eve who dwell in Hades, cried Symeon, joining chorus with the prophets, singing: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

God, the Redeemer of the race of mortals shall go even unto Hades; He shall grant forgiveness to all, sight to the blind, and even the mute shall chant: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

And Symeon foretold to the Virgin: A sword shall pierce thy heart, O incorrupt one, beholding thy Son upon the Cross, to Whom we cry out: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: **O**nce in Babylon the fire stood in awe * of God's condescension; * for which sake the youths in the furnace, * dancing with joyous steps as in a meadow, chanted: * O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Rejoicing, thou didst speak of the mighty works of the Ruler of all; wherefore, those who looked on, in amazement forsook the tyranny of deceit and cried out with faith: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Rejoicing, with the nets of thy most wise words thou didst draw forth from the depths of ignorance those who drew near, O most blessed Theodore, making divine martyrs of them, who chanted: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

A holy angel, entering the prison where thou wast bound to a column, loosed thee, O Theodore, granting thee boldness and strengthening thee to cry aloud: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: **O** Christ, for the sake of her who gave birth to Thee, take pity and save me who have lived in sloth and disdained Thy holy laws and Thy sacred commandments, for Thou art our God and abundantly merciful Benefactor.

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: **The Hebrew children in the furnace * boldly trampled upon the flames, * changing the fire into dew, they cried aloud: * ‘Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, throughout the ages’.**

Thy divinely inspired proclamations have gone forth throughout all the earth, and the power of thy words, which say: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, Who art praised and supremely exalted throughout the ages!

Wholly illumined with radiance from on high, thou didst behold things which are to come as though they were happening in the present. Wherefore, O most noetically rich prophet, thou didst cry aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, Who art praised and supremely exalted throughout the ages!

Theotokion: **W**ith hymns do I honor thee, O Virgin, who hast honored the human race which of old was condemned through grievous dishonor, and I chant: Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, O all-pure one!

ODE VIII

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **United together in the unbearable fire, * yet not harmed by the flame, * the children, champions of godliness, sang a divine hymn: * O all ye works of the Lord, * bless ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.**

O people of Israel, beholding your glory, Emmanuel, the Babe born of the Virgin, join ye now in chorus in the presence of the Ark of God, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Behold, cried Symeon, this One Who is both God and Babe shall be a sign of contradiction. O ye faithful, let us cry aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

God the Word, being Life itself and having become a Babe, shall be the downfall of the disobedient, but the restoration of those who chant with faith: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: **In his wrath the Chaldean Tyrant made the furnace blaze, * with heat fanned sevenfold for the servants of God; * but when he perceived that they had been saved by a greater power * he cried aloud to the Creator and Redeemer; * ‘ye children bless, ye priests praise, * ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages’.**

Splendidly struggling, thou didst vanquish the enemy, having destroyed his armies with the weapon of faith. Wherefore, thou hast been crowned with a wreath of victory, chanting unto thy Master: Ye youths bless; ye priests praise, ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

After thy glorious crucifixion, thy blessed suffering and thy boundless torments, thou didst bow thy neck before God, O blessed one and thy precious head was cut off with a sword while crying out to the Master: Ye youths bless; ye priests praise, ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Thy sacred and much-suffering body hath been a wellspring of healing for the faithful, whence they that piously have recourse thereto draw forth deliverance from passions and salvation for their souls, crying out to the Master: Ye youths bless; ye priests praise, ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Theotokion: O Virgin, enliven my soul which hath been slain; raise it, for it hath fallen; heal it, for it hath been wounded; grant peace to my mind, calm thou the waves of temptations, and save me who cry out: Ye youths bless; ye priests praise, ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: Glorified in the holy mountain, * the Lord revealed the mystery of the Ever-Virgin unto Moses * in the flames of the burning bush: * praise ye and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

The divine Zechariah, converser with angels, commandeth: Rejoice exceedingly, O Mount Zion, holy city; and thou, O Jerusalem, be glad throughout all ages!

Adorn thyself, O prophet Zechariah, beholding the words fulfilled which thou didst utter in prophecy, enlightened by the Spirit, unto those who praise the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Among the myrtle trees didst thou behold angels standing who instructed thee in knowledge of all things, praising Christ throughout all ages, O glorious prophet.

Theotokion: Rejoice, thou fiery throne of the Lord! Rejoice, portal of the immaterial Radiance! Rejoice, swift cloud which revealed the Sun of righteousness to the world, O pure Birthgiver of God!

ODE IX

Canon of the feast

Irmos: In the shadow and the letter of the Law, * let us, the faithful, discern a figure: * every male child that openeth the womb * shall be sanctified to God. * Therefore we magnify the firstborn Word * and Son of the beginningless Father, * the firstborn Child of a Mother who hath not known a man.

The ancients were wont to offer a pair of new-born doves and two young birds, but the godly elder and the chaste prophetess Anna serve in their stead, magnifying the only-begotten Son of the Father, Who was born of the Virgin and is borne into the temple.

Thou hast imparted unto me the joy of Thy salvation, cried Symeon. Accept Thou Thy servant, for I am weary of the shadow, as a mystic and sacred preacher of the new grace, magnifying Thee in praise!

The aged Anna, chaste and venerable, prophesying in sacred manner, openly confessed the Lord in the temple, and she magnified the Theotokos, proclaiming her to all present.

Canon of the great martyr

Irmos: Heaven was stricken with awe, * and the ends of the earth were filled with amazement, * for God hath appeared in the flesh, * and thy womb was rendered more spacious than the heavens. * Wherefore, the ranks of men and of angels * magnify thee as the Theotokos.

Thou didst wholly consecrate thyself to our God, the Lamb Who was slain, O martyr who wast raised up as a sweet-smelling holocaust unto Him, a sacred offering, a sacrifice perfect and most pure. Wherefore, we praise and bless thee as is meet.

As the dawn of a radiant day, and as the sun, didst thou appear, O Theodore, piously illumining the earth with thy wonders and the splendid rays of thy suffering, driving away the darkness of error and the passions, O all-blessed Theodore.

Having conquered the incorporeal foe, thou wast united with the angels while yet in the flesh, and with the choirs of the martyrs art ever gladdened. With them thou dost ever hymn the Trinity, O thrice-blessed Theodore, beacon of the Church and adornment of passion-bearers.

The earth hath been gladdened by the deposition of thy precious body, O Theodore, and heaven rejoiceth, having acquired thy sacred soul. And mankind, ever celebrating thine honored memory, entreats thee in their prayers as our intercessor, O most blessed one.

Theotokion: O Virgin beloved of God, having bathed the wounds of my heart in pure repentance and tearful weeping, entreat the Good One on my behalf, that He save me from all defilement, so that I may bless and magnify thee, O most immaculate one.

Canon of the prophet

Irmos: With never ceasing praises we magnify thee, * the Mother of God Most High, * who art higher than the all-pure hosts, * and who beyond comprehension knew not wedlock, * yet hath truly given birth to God.

Having forsaken every earthly feeling, O all-wise one, thou dost stand radiantly before the divine and most pure Mind, offering up prayers on behalf of the world. Wherefore, we all bless thee, O Zechariah.

Following the words of thy lips, O thou who hast been divinely revealed, we call upon the Lord; and, saved by Him, O Zechariah, we reverently bless thee as a prophet and preacher of the Truth.

By thy prayers, O divinely inspired one, render the Master merciful unto those who with faith celebrate thy sacred and renowned feast and with love honor thee as a prophet and divine preacher of the Truth.

Theotokion: Clearly knowing thee to be a sea of miracles and a wellspring of blessings, O pure Theotokos, and trusting in thine intercession, we make haste and speedily have recourse to thy protection.

Exapostilarion of the great martyr,

Spec. Mel.: “By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...”:

Thou didst utterly quench all the fiery darts of the wicked and the raging of demons, and having died for thy faith in the Creator, O blessed Theodore, as a witness to the Truth, thou dost save all those who have recourse to thee, from every tribulation and from the malice of the evil one.

Glory ..., Both now ..., that of the feast:

The elder, brought into the temple by the Spirit, took the Master of the Law in his arms, crying: Do Thou now loose me from the bond of the flesh according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen the revelation of the Gentiles, and the salvation of Israel!

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: “O all-praised martyrs ...”:

The pure one, as the truly most splendid Ark of God bearing cleansing, doth bring Christ into the temple, and with honor place Him in the hands of the godly Simeon. Wherefore, the Holy of Holies hath now been sanctified and rejoiceth in Him that alone is holy.

Verse: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, * according to Thy word.

Today Simeon hath been glorified, receiving Christ as a live coal in a godly manner and cleansed, he kisseth Him with his lips, confessing and rejoicing, and asketh leave of Him to depart. And now, piously blessing Him, we all honor Him with unceasing praise.

Verse: A light to lighten the Gentiles, * and the glory of Thy people Israel.

The pure Virgin, the living portal, bare within her the King and Lord, and to the temple she beareth Him that entered through the doors which were of old mystically shut. Wherefore, forming a choir in her presence, we all praise her with holy hymns.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Having set thyself a feat of martyrdom, thou didst bravely oppose falsehood, O Theodore, and with thy tongue of fiery eloquence didst put the inhumanity of Lucinius to shame. Wherefore, rejoicing with the angels, O blessed one, entreat Christ God, that He be merciful unto us on the day of Judgment.

Both now ..., in Tone V:

Examine ye the Scriptures, as Christ our God said in the Gospels, for therein we find Him born, wrapped in swaddling bands, laid in a manger, fed with milk, undergoing circumcision, and carried by Symeon, not in semblance or disguise, but in truth appearing to the world. To Him do we cry aloud: O pre-eternal God, glory be to Thee!

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from ODE VIII of the canon of the feast, and 4 from ODE VI of the canon of the great martyr.

O people of Israel, beholding your glory, Emmanuel, the Babe born of the Virgin, join ye now in chorus in the presence of the Ark of God, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages! (Twice)

Behold, cried Symeon, this One Who is both God and Babe shall be a sign of contradiction. O ye faithful, let us cry aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

God the Word, being Life itself and having become a Babe, shall be the downfall of the disobedient, but the restoration of those who chant with faith: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Thou wast crucified in the image of the Passion of the Dispassionate One, O glorious martyr, nailed to a tree, emulating the Master Who voluntarily freed mankind of the passions by the Cross, O most blessed one.

Hung upon a tree like the Lamb, shot full of arrows, thine eyes plucked out, wounded throughout thy body, O blessed one, thou didst wound the hearts of thine enemies with the spear of thy passion.

Though torrents of boundless torments threatened the house of thy soul, yet it remained unshaken, for it was founded upon the immovable rock of Him that shone forth from the Virgin and enlightened the human race.

Theotokion: **O** Mary, Sovereign Lady of all the world, as thou didst give birth unto the Lord of all, do thou deliver me from bondage to the enemy, rescue me from his torment, and save me who place unwavering hope in thee.

Troparion of the feast, in Tone I:

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, * for from thee hath shone forth Christ our God, the Sun of righteousness, * illumining those in darkness. * Be glad, also, O righteous elder * who hath received in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, ** Who granteth us the resurrection.

Troparion of the great martyr, in Tone IV:

Through true recruitment didst thou become * a most worthy general of the heavenly King, * O passion-bearer Theodore; * for thou didst wisely put on the whole armor of God * and, vanquishing legions of demons, * thou didst reveal thyself to be a victorious athlete. ** Wherefore, with faith do we ever bless thee.

Kontakion of the great martyr, in Tone II:

Having put on the whole armor of faith * with valor of soul, * and taking in hand the word of God as a spear, * thou didst conquer the enemy, O Theodore, * great among the martyrs. * With them cease thou never to entreat Christ God ** on behalf of us all.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone I:

O Thou Who didst hallow the Virgin's womb by Thy birth * and didst bless the hands of Symeon as was meet, * by anticipation Thou hast now saved even us, O Christ God. * But in the midst of battle grant peace to Thy community, * and strengthen the hierarchs whom Thou hast loved, ** O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, and shall hope in Him.

Verse: Harken, O God, unto my prayer, when I make supplication unto Thee.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY (2:1-10)

My son Timothy: be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous man shall flourish like a palm tree, and like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied.

Verse: They that are planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God they shall blossom forth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (10:16-22)

The Lord said unto His disciples: Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Communion Verse: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.