

THE 1ST SATURDAY FOLLOWING THE APODOSIS OF THE EXALTATION
OF THE CROSS, IN THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
(SATURDAY ON OR AFTER 22 SEPTEMBER)
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHERS WHOSE
INCORRUPT RELICS LIE IN THE NEAR CAVES OF KIEV
AT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant “Blessed is the man ...,” the first antiphon.

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 6 Stichera of the venerable fathers, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: “Having set aside ...”:

Joining chorus to a harp playing spiritual hymns, we summon all the assemblies of those who love the feasts of the Church to praise the company of the industrious and God-bearing fathers; and we set as its foundation His great and wondrous Anthony and the divinely wise Theodosius, through whose prayers and those of all the fathers of the Caves we entreat Thy love for mankind, O Christ, Thou King of all: Grant grace to Thy people, and in memory of them save the souls of those who praise Thee with faith. (Twice)

With songs let us all reverently hymn Anthony of the Caves, the chief among the fathers, the head of their whole assembly, and the God-bearing Barlaam, the diligent emulator of his virtues, the radiant beam; and let us honor them together with praises, and cry out with a voice of joy, saying: O our most blessed and venerable fathers, beseech Christ God, that those who celebrate your memory with love may receive mercy. (Twice)

Rejoice, O right fertile land of Russia, who hast nurtured citizens of the Jerusalem on high! Sing forth with a voice of gladsome celebration! And thou, O rich mountain of the Caves, who hast gathered warriors for the King of heaven and shown them to be mighty men of spiritual desires: speak now unto them, saying: O God-bearing fathers, with the light of your grace enkindle the noetic lamps, the souls of those who honor your assembly with love. (Twice)

Glory ..., of the venerable fathers, in Tone VIII:

Who can describe the powers of the Lord? What tongue of mortal men can recount your wondrous life, O our God-bearing fathers of the Caves: how ye endured sufferings, and what struggles ye undertook, laying waste to your flesh by vigils, fasting and tears, crushing the pride of the enemy by prayers and humility? And having shone forth like angels in your mortal bodies, ye have made your abode in the mansions of heaven; wherefore, visit today those who with praises hymn you, the honorable company of fasters in God, and entreat Christ God, that we may receive great mercy.

Both now ..., Theotokion Dogmaticon, in Tone VIII:

In His love for mankind, the King of heaven appeared on earth * and dwelt among men; * for He Who received flesh from the pure Virgin * and cameth forth from her having received human nature, * is the only Son of God, * twofold in nature but not Hypostasis. * Therefore, proclaiming Him to be truly perfect God and perfect man, * we confess Christ our God. * Him do thou beseech, O unwedded Mother, ** that our souls find mercy!

Entrance. Prokeimenon of the day. Three Lessons.:

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself. As gold in the furnace hath He tried them and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. They that put their trust in Him shall understand the truth: and such as be faithful in love shall abide with Him: for grace and mercy is to His saints, and He hath care for His elect.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with his right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them. He shall take to Him His jealousy for complete amour, and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies. He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment for an invincible shield. His severe wrath shall He sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with Him against the unwise. Then shall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds, as from a well drawn bow, shall they be cast as out of a stone bow, and the water of the sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them, and like a storm shall blow them away: thus iniquity shall lay waste the whole earth, and ill dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the mighty. Hear, therefore, O ye kings, and understand; learn, ye that be judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations. For power is given you by the Lord, and sovereignty from the Most High.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds: that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect unto His chosen.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera of the venerable fathers, in Tone IV:

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

Come, ye people, * and with hymns let us go forth * to greet as valiant warriors of Christ * the foremost choir of the God-bearing fathers * who were the first to shine forth in the Caves. * For, lo! they come to us with all speed * from the noetic Sion, * bearing abundant grace from their full treasury, ** bestowing it upon those who venerate their council with honor.

Verse: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, * and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Gathering today * in this holy temple, O ye people, * bearing lamps, greet ye the assembly of monks, * which hath illumined the honored heaven * like noetic stars in a rational firmament; * and lift up your voices with cries of entreaty, * saying: O God-bearing and most blessed ones, * pray ye for those ** who hymn your company with love.

Verse: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, * O ye righteous.

In gladness come together with us today, * O ye choirs of Christ-loving people, * and, weaving wreaths of praise * and calling each by name, * greet the assembly of God-bearing fathers * who in the Cave shone forth in fasting; * for they illumine with the beams of their grace * the souls of those who magnify them with love ** and celebrate their memorial with faith.

Glory ..., of the venerable fathers, in Tone VI:

When the King of everlasting glory planted His Cross like a spear, the legion of ascetics assembled, and the regiment of venerable fathers of godly fame stood on the Mount of the Caves, wielding their weapons invincibly against the foe, whereby they utterly defeated the hordes of the demons; and having arrived in the mansions of heaven, they have received crowns of victory from Christ God our Savior, and pray unceasingly on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VI:

O Theotokos, thou art the true vine * that hast budded forth for us the Fruit of life. * Thee do we entreat: * Pray thou, O Lady, with the holy apostles, that He have mercy upon our souls.

At the blessing of the Loaves, the Troparion of the venerable fathers, in Tone IV:

The great Anthony, the pillar of fire and radiant sun * who shone forth on the Mount of the Caves, * do we bring before Thee, O Christ, * with the whole council of God-bearing fathers, to make supplication. * For their sake we pray: * Grant grace to their monastery ** and great mercy to our souls. (Twice)

And “Virgin Theotokos, rejoice ...,” (Once).

But if a vigil is not served, then after the Troparion:

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from all ages * and unknown to the ranks of Angels, * hath been revealed to those on earth through thee, O Theotokos: * God incarnate in an uncommingled union, * Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake, * and through it hath raised up the first-formed man, ** and saved our souls from death.

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the venerable fathers, in Tone IV:

The great Anthony, the pillar of fire and radiant sun * who shone forth on the Mount of the Caves, * do we bring before Thee, O Christ, * with the whole council of God-bearing fathers, to make supplication. * For their sake we pray: * Grant grace to their monastery ** and great mercy to our souls. (Twice)

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

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast appeared ...”:

With many tribulations ye traversed the path of this life, and, having reached the goal of your noetic desire, ye have made your abode in the bridal-chamber of divine glory. And, rejoicing now with the King and God of all, pray ye, that we who honor your company may also share in your gladness, O most blessed fathers.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone I:

By thy supplications, O joyous one, mediate and ask for our souls a multitude of compassions and the cleansing of transgressions for all who hymn thee, the pure Mother and Virgin.

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

Having heard of the wedding of the Lamb in the bridal-chamber of heaven, when the summons of the King Most High went out to all, ye forsook all earthly attachments, O God-bearing fathers; and having purified your garments with streams of tears, ye entered, clean, into the banquet of Christ God. Before the doors are closed and entry thereto is denied, pray ye, that we also, entering in with repentance, may partake of it with you.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone III:

Ever beholding the wedding-chamber adorned with everlasting glory, we desire to enter therein; yet lacking wedding garments, we are ashamed. Let us not be bound by the angels and cast out, O Virgin Mary, but as thou art the vesture of boldness for the naked, adorn us and lead us into the kingdom of Christ.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify you, O our venerable fathers of the Caves, and we honor your holy memory; for ye entreat Christ God on our behalf.

Selected Psalm verse:

A: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Alleluia ..., Glory to Thee, O God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

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

Following the call of your Lord, and taking the Cross in your hands like a staff, ye were undaunted by the fear which lay in wait in the darkness, but passed through it with trust to the calm haven; and having found the reward of your struggles, ye rejoice in unapproachable light. Wherefore, we honor you, O most blessed fathers, as ones who ever entreat Christ God that He grant remission of offenses unto those who with love celebrate your holy memory.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

Having thee, O Virgin Bride of God, who alone among women art blessed, as the boast and adornment of virgins, as an invincible ally in battle, the confirmation of the afflicted and speedy visitation of the grieving, we fall down today in thy temple and offer thee our entreaties, that thou beseech Christ God to grant remission of offenses unto those who piously worship thy most holy birthgiving.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV

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

Verse: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (4:25-5:12)

At that time, there followed Jesus great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from, Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

After Psalm 50, this Sticheron, in Tone VIII:

Who can describe the powers of the Lord? What tongue of mortals can recount your wondrous life, O our God-bearing fathers of the Caves: how ye endured sufferings, and what struggles ye undertook, laying waste to your flesh by vigils, fasting and tears, crushing the pride of the enemy by prayers and humility? And having shone forth like angels in your mortal bodies, ye have made your abode in the mansions of heaven; wherefore, visit today those who with praises hymn you, the honorable company of fasters in God, and entreat Christ God, that we may receive great mercy.

Canon of supplication to the Theotokos (the Paraclysis), with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos; and of the venerable fathers, with 8 Troparia, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us, O ye people, send up a hymn * unto our wondrous God * Who hath freed Israel from bondage, * chanting a hymn of victory * and crying aloud: * We sing unto Thee, O only Master.

In memory of Thy venerable ones, O my Christ, grant me help from on high and teach me, making me wise by Thy holy Paraclete, that I may offer praises in hymnody to Thee, the only Master.

The council of the God-bearing fathers hath assembled in God. O ye people, come venerate them, bearing with you animate sacrifices. For, lo! they summon us to offer glory to the King of all, the only Master.

The East and the land of Russia brought them forth, and the Mount of the Caves caused them to grow like divinely planted trees. Embracing them, O ye people, make haste to venerate them, and let us offer hymnody to the Master.

Thou art a noetic Garden of Paradise, O holy Mount of the Caves, who hast produced many spiritual trees, the blessed fathers whom no one is able to honor fittingly. For all of them together we offer praise and hymnody to the one Master.

The great Anthony, the right fruitful tree, the olive branch brought to the Mount of the Caves from Athos, whose fruits make glad our souls, offereth hymnody to Thee, O Christ, the Master of all.

Full of faith and piety, the gilder of the church founded by God, and Nikon who adorned it with icons, shone forth as great luminaries, and, honoring them, we offer hymnody to Thee, O Christ, the Master of all.

Glory ..., **R**endering glory to Thee, O most holy Trinity, we bring before thee as our advocate the wondrous Barlaam, Who spurned the glory of his noble birth, saying: “For Thy sake I consider my glory in this world to be but dust, that in the next I may find glory with Thee, the Master of all.”

Both now ..., **O** thou who by thy birthgiving hast led the human race back to its primal nobility, lead me, who have been disgraced by the treachery of the demons, to noetic glory, that I may ever sing to thee: Rejoice, O pure Mother of God, thou glory of the Orthodox!

ODE III

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

Even though there is no comely hymnody on my lips, yet I offer such as I have to thee, O God-bearing Ephraim; for, having withdrawn from service to an earthly prince, thou didst serve the King of heaven, and received thy reward from the hand of the Lord.

I honor Isaiah who is excellent in the gift of miracles, and I hymn him as the recipient of the diocese of Rostov, praying that he might join me, the lost sheep, to the flock of the Most High Shepherd, and lead me into His fold by his supplications.

I praise the blessed Damian, the adornment of priests and healers; for, burning with love for all, he healed many with oil and prayer. By his treatment heal me also, O Master Who lovest mankind.

Meat it is to honor thee with praises, O Jeremiah, for thou wast honored from on high with the gift of clairvoyance and didst penetrate the secrets of all by the revelation of God. Remember me, who am in the oblivion of countless sins, O blessed one, and be thou my guide to repentance.

O Matthew, who clearly beheld the entry of the demons, and corrected those who give cause for the assaults of the passions, as one who perceiveth my error with noetic eyes, guide me aright, that I may magnify thee continually, O venerable one.

O Simon, good shepherd and lamp of Suzdal, and thou, O Nicetas the Recluse, as lovers of the Great Lavra and zealots of monastic correction, by your instruction set me aright who have fallen, O fathers.

Glory ..., **I**n this life the venerable ones preserved Thy glory in their souls, O Holy Trinity; wherefore, they have been deemed worthy of everlasting glory by Thee. May we not be deprived thereof, for we set the council thereof before Thee today to make supplication on our behalf.

Both now ..., **A**s thou art the ineffable gladness of the venerable, make me a partaker of their joy, and deprive me not of the glory of the saints, for through God all things are possible for thee, and thou doest whatsoever thou desirest, O Mary Bride of God.

Sessional Hymn of the venerable fathers, in Tone VIII:

I make bold to honor the council of the God-bearing fathers, the noetic stars illumining the land of Russia; but as I have a soul darkened by the passions, my mind is at a loss. Dispel the darkness of inconstant thought, that with honor I may chant a hymn to you, O most blessed fathers.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion in Tone VIII:

Rejoice, O Mother of the never-setting star, O ray of the mystical Dawn! For through thee have we come to behold the Light, the true Sun of righteousness, and illumined by His rays, we hymn thee continually, O divinely blessed Maiden.

ODE IV

Irmos: From the overshadowed mountain, * from the only Theotokos, * the Prophet in divine vision * foresaw Thy coming in the flesh, O Word, * and with fear he glorified Thy power.

According to Thy divine foreknowledge, the God-bearing fathers shone forth from the mountain like beacons upon the earth illumining the land of Russia by the splendor of their life; and we, marveling at it, glorify Thy power, O Christ.

We are astonished that, though in the flesh, they emulated the angels, undertaking a feat beyond their nature; for giving wings to their souls in love for God, they preferred nothing in the world to it: wherefore, they received Thy power in the weakness of their flesh, O Christ.

Stephen was mighty in fasting, and Anastasius had boldness before God; for in their entreaty they received all things. And honoring their industriousness, I glorify Thy power, O my Christ.

Thy venerable Isaacius, who was deceived by darkness disguised as light, yet himself deceived the darkness by the light of correction, so that the children of darkness are now afraid of his name, prayeth that we be delivered from such temptation, that we may ever glorify Thy power.

I make bold to honor the struggles of Elijah of Murom, the invincible warrior, who had on his hand the wound of a sword; yet the love for Thee which he had in his heart, O Christ, inflicted a much deeper wound upon him, for which he was crowned, glorifying Thy power.

We glorify the might of Nikon amid temptation for he endured much at the hands of the infidels; yet far greater humility and salvation did he acquire through endurance. Through his supplications may we also be saved and glorify Thine omnipotent power, O Christ.

Glory ..., We glorify the Godhead of three Hypostases in one Essence - the Father, the Son and the most holy Spirit; and we hymn Thee, the one God, and, falling down in worship at the memorial of our venerable fathers, we glorify Thy power.

Both now ..., Setting my hope on thee, I am in nowise affrighted by the assaults of the demons; and having acquired boldness through thee, I stand against the horrors of Satan, knowing that thou art the thunder which terrifies the enemy, O Sovereign Lady.

ODE V

Irmos: Deliver me, I pray Thee, * from the dark night of the passions, * and grant my spirit, to seek Thee * at the dawning of the morning, * guided by the light of Thy commandments, O Christ.

Putting aside the gloom of the passions and harmful lust, through patience Thy venerable ones hastened to the contest, O Lord; wherefore, they have been illumined with grace by Thee, walking in the light of Thy precepts, O Savior.

Let us glorify the memory of Titus the priest, who by humility trampled the wrathful demon underfoot, and Laurence the Recluse, who had boldness against evil spirits; for they kept Thy commandments and are glorified in Thy light, O Savior.

Even though I make bold to praise Sisoës who shone forth in asceticism, yet I am unable to bless him as is meet; wherefore, I flee to Thee alone, O Savior, by Thy gifts grant me the power to praise Thy favored one.

Theophilus, excellent in wonders, is hymned, for yet in this life he astonished many by his working of miracles; and he hath now received the yet greater gift to aid others, in that he kept Thy commandments, O Savior.

We honor Basil and Theodore with the martyrs, for accused by a demon, they were put to torture by the prince though they were innocent; and the one met his end by being shot with arrows, while the other reposed amid fire and smoke. Yet they are glorified together in Thy kingdom, O Savior.

Prochorus is praised in his wonder-working and labors; for feeding like a bird on unsown weeds, and to others he gave splendid bread made from pig-weed, transforming ashes into salt; and marveling at this working of miracles, we glorify Thee, O Savior.

Glory ..., Led by the Spirit, John, who shone forth in fasting, was called the child of the most High; for he found nourishment in the word of God more than in food. Wherefore, he passed through this life easily, as though on wings, receiving Thy power from Thee, O Savior.

Both now ..., Having all thy glory within thee, O daughter of the King, thou standest, arrayed and all-adorned, before the throne of the Trinity; and receiving therefrom radiance which surpasseth that of the sun, look thou upon us with the beams of thy goodness, that we may continually hymn thy power, O Virgin Mother.

ODE VI

Irmos: Held fast by a multitude of sins O Lover of mankind, * like the Prophet I fall down before Thy tender compassions. * Accept me O Lord and save me.

Constrained am I by love to praise your council, O God-bearing fathers; for ye have been praised by God and man, in that ye spurned the glory of this world in this life, that ye might fulfill the commandments of Christ.

What tongue can describe the glory which ye acquired by your manifold labors and perfected by grace, O venerable ones, and the signs which reveal your wondrous benefactions and healings? Thereby disdain us not who are weak, that we may fulfill the commandments of Christ.

O most wondrous Agapitos, who bestowest abundant miracles, and ye, O venerable Helladius and Abramius: as ye have great boldness before the Master of all, disdain not your servants, but pray ye, that we be delivered from the assaults of the enemy and ever do the will of God.

O John of great love, who showed forth love for thy brother even after death by the movement of thy body, and thou, O Theophilus, who washed away defilement with tears of glorification: inseparable now as ye were then, pray ye together to God, that we might have true love for Him and unfeigned love for our neighbor.

O Damian, who with the wonder-worker Sabbas didst heal bodily sufferings by prayers and oil, disdain us not who are afflicted with sufferings Of soul, but with the curative gift of your supplications heal the wounds of our hearts, that we may offer up prayers pleasing to God.

O obedient Nectarius, with Sergius who shared your character: as ye placed your souls beneath the yoke of obedience to Christ, through your supplication bend our stubbornness beneath the yoke of Jesus Who was obedient, that we may diligently fulfill His commandments.

Glory ..., Mercurius the pastor, the glory of the city of Smolensk, who tended well the sheep of the Shepherd of shepherds, burned in spirit to be inseparable from the choir of the venerable fathers of the Caves; wherefore, after his death he arrived miraculously on a raft: he resteth bodily in the holy cave, but in soul he rejoiceth with the venerable ones in everlasting glory.

Both now ..., Having gained no access to the habitation of the venerable by my works, I flee to thee, O Lady Theotokos, for thou art the portal of heaven and the ladder which the prophet beheld. Wherefore, by thy grace grant me ascent in my heart, and open unto me the gates of thy mercy.

Kontakion of the venerable fathers, in Tone II:

Come, ye people, * and spiritually beholding with noetic eyes * the choir of ascetics assembled, * let us honor them with praises, * and bowing down before their relics let us offer them gifts of love; * for they are our mediators before God, ** the intercessors for our souls.

Ikos: Who alone can praise Thy saints, O Good One? One may reckon that they have multiplied more than the sands of the shore. But do Thou, O Master Christ, Who counteth the multitude of the stars, and callest them all by their names, accept the supplications of all of them on our behalf, and show forth Thy compassions upon Thy people. For we know that they have great boldness before Thy majesty, and that they mediate before Thee, for they ever pray for our souls.

ODE VII

Irmos: Thou didst bedew the Children in the furnace, * and Thou didst preserve Thy Mother as a Virgin after childbirth: * Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers.

O divinely beauteous choir of the fathers of the Caves, help me to offer up the hymn of the youths, that by your guidance I may chant dispassionately with the Christ-loving people: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

O much-suffering Pimen, thou didst not only pass this life in pain with thanksgiving, but by thy supplication gavest relief to others amid their pangs. As thou art now in repose devoid of pain, release me from pain that I may chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

O righteous Eustathius, thou wast rightly a worker of pure gold and silver, seven times purified, and from thence thou didst pass to the working of noetic virtues. And having adorned thy soul therewith, thou didst set it forth as pure as gold, chanting: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

O glorious Nestor, who by thy writing hast set forth for us the most wondrous times and eras of the Church and the virtues of the fathers of ancient times, and wast an earnest lover of their works, blessing thee now with them, we chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

O Eustratius, adornment of martyrs, thou wast shown to be another charioteer like Elijah; for as he was taken up into heaven, so didst thou also enter the same celestial gates on a chariot of fire when a voice summoned thee from the majestic glory, where thou chantest with a cry of joy: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

O blessed fathers Helladius and Luke the steward, glorious in well-bestowed miracles, as good doers of the commandments of the Master ye have now received your reward from the Torrent of sweetness, and ye joyfully chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Glory ..., the most holy Spirit hearkeneth to our spirit, O God-bearing fathers, for ye are the children of God and fellow heirs with Christ: ye labor for Him and with Him are glorified, chanting: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Both now ..., the Holy Spirit came upon thee, and the power of the Most High, overshadowing thee, showed thee to be a pure Mother even after birthgiving; and delivered thereby from slavery to the alien one, all generations call thee blessed, for the blessed God of our fathers hath blessed thee.

ODE VIII

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.**

O God-bearing fathers, ye have spread forth rays of grace and illumined the whole land of Russia with miracles; wherefore, we hymn the Lord Who revealed you as great luminaries on the holy mount of the Caves, and we supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

It is not the great and stormy sea, but the holy cave which revealeth your relics like precious pearls, O favored ones of God; and with outpourings of miracles ye enrich all who have recourse to you with faith and who with praises supremely exalt the Lord throughout all ages.

Matthew, the foreseer of things to come, and John who shineth more brightly than all others in great suffering, with Moses, the mirror of purity, by miracles have been revealed, like precious stones hidden in the cave, to those who approach them with faith and with praises supremely exalt the Lord throughout all ages.

Let Ephraim the eunuch, the wise turtledove who brought the olive-branch of the Studite Typicon to the holy monastery, and Arethas who is adorned with the ways of the elders, be glorified with the clairvoyant Jeremiah: for they have taught all to glorify the Lord throughout all ages.

Mark the grave-digger hath been shown to be a model for the industrious, a guide for the penitent, and a resurrector of the dead; for they listened to his words with fear, as if they were the roaring of a lion; and his voice now terrifieth the demons, for he liveth with the Lord throughout the ages.

Gregory, not of Caesarea, but from the Lavra of the Caves, hath been shown to be a wonderworker, who by his prayers held fast and immovable the thieves whom he caught stealing his vegetables, and who was slain by being drowned in the river, now rejoiceth with the venerable Sergius in the waters of peace, hymning the Lord throughout the ages.

We bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord:

Glory to Erasmus, who adorned the church of the Caves with icons, and to Onesimus, the namesake of goodly profit, to whose company we add the wondrous Matthew, who possessed the gift of prophecy. In these three the name of the Trinity is glorified throughout all ages.

Both now ..., Whoso desireth not to glorify thee forever, O pure Virgin, is the enemy of his own salvation; for thy glory is spread forth upon all who glorify thee, unto their salvation! O Mary Bride of God.

ODE IX

Irmos: **The prophetic vision of the lawgiver on the mountain, * in the fire of the burning bush, * prefigured thy birthgiving O Ever-Virgin, * the salvation of us the faithful, * wherefore with never silent hymns we magnify thee.**

In a dark cave on the holy mountain ye established your abodes, O most blessed fathers; and ye made of it a divine garden of paradise, adorning it with virtues and miracles, as with right fertile trees, from which those who approach with faith receive the fruits of healing ever magnifying you with praises.

Spyridon, the lily of innocence, and Nicodemus the namesake of victory, the two bakers of bread for the Eucharist, who made pure loaves as a gift for God, also made of themselves a sacrifice of sweet savor; and with them we number also Anatolius, glorifying them all.

O Alypius of angelic wisdom, and Gregory of Byzantium, ye most skillful iconographers, with the pigments of your good deeds correct our untutored work, that, standing in splendor before Christ, we may magnify you with glory.

Pimen, the fragrant blossom of ascetics, and Ephraim the priest, are goodly olive-trees; and the faithful, having been anointed by the gift of their grace, give thanks and continually magnify with glorifications the Creator of all.

Onuphrius, the lover of silence, and Isaiah, the turtle-dove who loveth the wilderness, with the blessed Sylvester, are a three-stranded sling against the demons, who are driven away by them; for, having utterly set at naught the assaults of the passions, they have received the gift to help others. Wherefore, they are magnified by all.

Four princes of Russia are hymned: Vladimir the equal of the apostles, with the divinely wise Boris and Gleb, and with them also Nicholas Svyatosha - on whom, as on a noetic chariot, God rested. Wherefore, they are magnified by all.

Glory ..., **G**lory to the radiant martyr Barbara, to Euphrosynia of Polotsk, the splendor of virgins, and to Juliana, who bestoweth healing, the oil of grace, upon the infirm! O Holy Trinity, for the sake of these three virgins save all who magnify Thee with worship.

Both now ..., **R**ejoice, O most holy Virgin, thou glory of the saints! Rejoice, O ark for those who desire to find salvation amid this most tempestuous life! Rejoice, O rock giving drink to those who thirst for everlasting good things! This salutation do we all offer thee, magnifying thee with hymns.

Exapostilarion of the venerable fathers:

With songs we hymn the hierarchs of the Russian land: Michael, the first of them, with Hilarion, Peter, Alexis and Jonah, Photius and Cyprian, Ephraim, Nicholas and Nicetas, the hieromartyr Macarius, Leontius and Symeon; and we appoint the whole company of pastors to make supplication. For their sake, O Christ, save Thou our souls.

Theotokion: **O** true Mother of the unblemished and most high Lamb, I am a sheep of thy holy fold, yet have wandered away through vain works into vile iniquities. Guide me, I pray, and save my soul from the noetic wolves.

On the Praises, 4 Stichera of the venerable fathers, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “When from the Tree ...”:

With single-minded soul and hearts * reasoning as one did ye agree, O most blessed fathers, * and, rejecting all passionate attachments to the world, * and taking up your cross, in obedience to the words of the Lord, * by voluntary poverty ye followed after Christ God, * Who impoverished Himself for our sake. * By Him ye have now been enriched in heaven with the treasures of incorruption, * which do ye send down also upon us, that we may be enriched, ** and through your mediation may receive great mercy from the Master of all. **(Twice)**

Rejoice, O choir of divinely assembled fathers, * for, living the angelic life with oneness of soul in this world, * ye established your abode in a dark cave, * and having attached yourselves to God through many labors, ye received adoption from him. * Falling down before you, we pray: * as ye stand before the Merciful One, mercifully regard us, * and by your mediation move Christ, the Lover of mankind, to mercy, * that we may find the forgiveness of sins ** and may receive mercy on the day of judgment.

A day hath dawned more radiantly than the sun: * the most festive memorial of the God-bearing fathers; * and it illumineth the assembly of those who love the feasts of the Church * with rays of the grace of a multitude of miracles. * Wherefore, O most blessed ones, we hasten to you with faith * and fall down before your relics, * entreating your speedy visitation amid our needs. * Disdain not our plea, but as ye have boldness before the Master, ** ask for us great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

With love do we bring you gifts of hymnody and great honors, O our most blessed fathers of the Caves, saying: Rejoice, adornment of the Russian land! Rejoice, mighty warriors of the heavenly King! Rejoice, radiant stars of the noetic firmament! Rejoice, citizens of Sion on high! Rejoice, flowers of paradise laden with perfume! Rejoice, our allies amid tribulations, mediators of salvation! As ye have boldness before the Master, earnestly pray to Him on behalf of our souls.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

O Sovereign Lady, accept the entreaties of thy servants, and deliver us from all want and grief.

Great Doxology. Troparion. Litanies. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from ODE III, and 4 from ODE VI of the canon of the venerable fathers.

Even though there is no beauteous hymnody on my lips, yet do I offer such as I have to thee, O God-bearing Ephraim; for, having withdrawn from service to an earthly prince, thou didst serve the King of heaven, and hast received thy reward from the hand of the Lord.

I honor Isaiah who is excellent in the gift of miracles, and I hymn him as the recipient of the diocese of Rostov, praying that he might join me, the lost sheep, to the flock of the Most High Shepherd, and lead me into His fold by his supplications.

I praise the blessed Damian, the adornment of priests and healers; for, burning with love for all, he healed many with oil and prayer. By his treatment heal me also, O Master Who lovest mankind.

Meet it is to honor thee with praises, O Jeremiah, for thou wast honored from on high with the gift of clairvoyance and didst penetrate the secrets of men through the revelation of God. Remember me, who am in the oblivion of countless sins, O blessed one, and be thou my guide to repentance.

Constrained am I by love to praise your council, O God-bearing fathers; for ye have been praised by God and man, in that ye spurned the glory of this world in this life, that ye might fulfill the commandments of Christ.

What tongue can describe the glory which ye acquired by your manifold labors and perfected by grace, O venerable ones, and the signs which reveal your wondrous benefactions and healings? Thereby disdain us not who are weak, that we may fulfill the commandments of Christ.

Glory ..., Mercurius the pastor, the glory of the city of Smolensk, who tended well the sheep of the Shepherd of shepherds, burned in spirit to be inseparable from the choir of the venerable fathers of the Caves; wherefore, after his death he arrived miraculously on a raft: he resteth bodily in the holy cave, but in soul he rejoiceth with the venerable ones in everlasting glory.

Both now ..., Having gained no access to the habitation of the venerable by my works, I flee to thee, O Lady Theotokos, for thou art the portal of heaven and the ladder which the prophet beheld. Wherefore, by thy grace grant me ascent in my heart, and open unto me the gates of thy mercy.

Troparion of the venerable fathers, in Tone IV:

The great Anthony, the pillar of fire and radiant sun * who shone forth on the Mount of the Caves, * do we bring before Thee, O Christ, * with the whole council of God-bearing fathers, to make supplication. * For their sake we pray: * Grant grace to their monastery ** and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion of the venerable fathers, in Tone II:

Come, ye people, * and spiritually beholding with noetic eyes * the choir of ascetics assembled, * let us honor them with praises, * and bowing down before their relics let us offer them gifts of love; * for they are our mediators before God, ** the intercessors for our souls.

Prokeimenon, in Tone VII: Precious in the sight of the Lord * is the death of His saints.

Verse: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, §176 (II COR. 4: 6-15)

Brethren: God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of Us!. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

Alleluia, in Tone VI: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Verse: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, §43 (MATT 11:27-30)

The Lord said to His disciples: All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

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