

STICHERA AND SESSIONAL HYMNS
SUNG ON FRIDAY EVENING AND SATURDAY
MORNING IN THE EIGHT TONES FROM THE
OKTOECHOS

TONE FIVE

AT VESPERS ON FRIDAY EVENING

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” after the Stichera of the day from the Triodion, we chant the following Stichera of the holy martyrs:

Verse: Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; * O Lord, hear my voice.

Girding themselves with the shield of faith, and arming themselves with the sign of the Cross, Thy saints O Lord, bravely gave themselves over to torments, casting down the pride and delusion of the devil. By their supplications, O God almighty, send down peace upon the world, and great mercy upon our souls.

Verse: Let Thine ears be attentive * to the voice of my supplication.

Despising all things earthly, and bravely withstanding torture, ye were not deprived of your goodly hope, but became heirs of the Kingdom of heaven. O ye all-praised martyrs, since ye have boldness before God the Lover of mankind, ask that peace be granted to the world, and great mercy to our souls.

Verse: If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? * For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Intercede on our behalf, O holy martyrs, that we may be delivered from our iniquities: for unto you hath been given the grace to pray for us.

Verse: For Thy name’s sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, * my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

With your souls filled with insatiable love, O holy martyrs, ye did not deny Christ; and enduring divers wounds in sufferings, ye cast down the audacity of the tyrants, and keeping the faith unaltered and unharmed, ye were translated to the heavens. Wherefore, since ye have boldness before Him, ask that He grant us great mercy.

Then four Stichera from the Menaion (repeating the first)

Glory ..., a composition of St. John the Damascene:

For the reposed: I called to mind the words of the Prophet, ‘I am but dust and ashes.’ I went also to the tombs, and beheld the bones laid bare, and I said: ‘Which is the king or which the warrior, which the rich man or which the beggar, which the righteous or which the sinner?’ But grant rest with the righteous, O Lord, to Thy servants, as the Lover of mankind.

Both now ...,

Theotokion: In the Red Sea of old * an image of the Bride who knew not wedlock was depicted. * There Moses was the one who parted the sea, * here Gabriel is the minister of the miracle. * At that time Israel marched dry-shod through the deep, * now the Virgin doth seedlessly give birth to Christ. * The sea after Israel’s passage remained impassable; * the Immaculate one after bearing Emmanuel remained incorrupt. * O God, who doth exist and is pre-eternal, * and hath appeared as man, ** have mercy upon us.

If the Liturgy of the Presanctified gifts is not served, the following is chanted at the Aposticha:

AT FRIDAY VESPERS APOSTICHA

Intercede on our behalf, O holy martyrs, that we may be delivered from our iniquities: for unto you hath been given the grace to pray for us.

Verse: Blessed are they whom Thou hast chosen * and taken to Thyself, O Lord.

With your souls filled with insatiable love, O holy martyrs, ye did not deny Christ; and enduring divers wounds in sufferings, ye cast down the audacity of the tyrants, and keeping the faith unaltered and unharmed, ye were translated to the heavens. Wherefore, since ye have boldness before Him, ask that He grant us great mercy.

Verse: Their souls * shall dwell among good things.

For the reposed: I called to mind the words of the Prophet, ‘I am but dust and ashes.’ I went also to the tombs, and beheld the bones laid bare, and I said: ‘Which is the king or which the warrior, which the rich man or which the beggar, which the righteous or which the sinner?’ But grant rest with the righteous, O Lord, to Thy servants, as the Lover of mankind.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion:

O thou who art full of joy, intercede by thy supplications, and beg that a multitude of compassions, and the cleansing of our many sins, be granted to our souls, we entreat thee.

AT MATINS ON SATURDAY MORNING

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymns of the Martyrs:

Through the miracles of Thy holy martyrs, O Christ God, Thou hast given us an indestructible rampart. By their supplications make steadfast Thy faithful peoples, in that Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Verse: Wondrous is God in His saints, * the God of Israel.

Thy martyrs, O Lord, longing to drink from the cup of Thy sufferings; forsook the beauties of life, and shared in the life of the angels. By their intercessions, O Christ, grant peace and great mercy to our souls.

Verse: In the Saints that are in the earth * hath the Lord been wondrous.

The hosts of heaven marveled exceedingly at the corrections of the holy martyrs; how, fighting the good fight in their mortal bodies, they invisibly vanquished the incorporeal foe by the power of the Cross; and they pray unto the Lord, that our souls find mercy.

Glory ...,

For the reposed: With the righteous grant rest, O our Savior, unto Thy servants, and settle them in Thy courts, as it hath been written, overlooking, in that Thou art good, all their transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, committed either knowingly and unknowingly, O Lover of mankind.

Both now ...,

O Christ God, Who hath shone forth upon the world from the Virgin and shown us forth as children of the light: have mercy upon us!

ON THE PRAISES

Verse: Praise Him for His mighty acts, * praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness.

To the Martyrs: Blessed is the army of the heavenly King: for though the passion-bearers were born of this earth, spurning the pangs of their bodies they hastened to attain to the dignity of the angels; and through their sufferings were deemed worthy of the honour of the incorporeal hosts. By their prayers, O Lord, send down upon us great mercy.

Verse: Praise Him with the sound of trumpet, * praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Thy passion-bearers, O Lord, emulating the life of the angelic ranks; endured tortures as though incorporeal, in oneness of mind possessing the hope of the blessings promised them. By their intercessions, O Christ God, grant peace to Thy world, and great mercy to our souls.

Verse: Praise Him with timbrel and dance, * praise him with strings and flute.

The holy martyrs struggled here on earth, enduring cold and given over to fire and water. And as the waters received them, they cried aloud: “We went through fire and water, and Thou didst bring us out into refreshment!” By their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy upon us!

Verse: Praise Him with tuneful cymbals, praise Him with cymbals of jubilation. * Let every breath praise the Lord.

Rejoicing in the midst of their torments, the saints cried aloud: “These things are goods with which we may trade with the Lord: for, instead of the wounds we bear on our bodies, radiant vesture shall blossom forth for us upon our resurrection; instead of dishonor, we shall receive crowns; instead of fetters in prison, we shall receive paradise; and instead of condemnation with malefactors, we shall have life with the angels!” By their supplications, O Lord, save Thou our souls!

Glory ...,

For the reposed: Thou hast fashioned me, O Lord, and set Thine hand upon me; and Thou hast commanded me, saying; ‘To the earth shalt thou return once more.’ Guide me on Thy right path, forgive me my transgressions, and absolve and save me, I pray Thee, O Lover of mankind.

Both now ...,

Theotokion: Alas, O wretched soul! What answer wilt thou have to give to the Judge at that hour when the thrones are set for judgment and the Judge descendeth from the heavens, with myriads of angels? When He is seated upon the judgment seat to try His unprofitable servants like me, what shalt thou bring forth then? Truly naught, having defiled thy mind and body, wherefore, fall down before the Virgin, and cry without ceasing, that she grant thee abundant forgiveness of sins!

AT SATURDAY MATINS APOSTICHA:

A composition by Theophanes:

Spec. Mel.: “Rejoice ...”:

With the light of Thy countenance, O Christ, enlighten those who have departed, as Thou art compassionate, and lead them to a place of verdure, beside the waters of Thy pure divine repose. In the longed for bosom of our

forefather Abraham, where Thy light shineth in purity, and the springs of love ever pour forth, where the assemblies of all the righteous rejoice and exult in Thy goodness. Number Thy servants with them, and grant them great mercy. ‘

Verse: Blessed are they whom Thou hast chosen * and taken to Thyself,
O Lord.

O Compassionate One, be Thou well-pleased to grant those who have passed from transitory things unto Thee, the Master of all and our God, all-harmonious voices to hymn and glorify Thy might; and grant that they may be enlightened by Thy beauty, and in a most pure manner partake of sweet and beautiful communion with Thee, where the angels rejoice around Thy throne and the choirs of the saints joyously stand round about. Grant rest with them and great mercy unto Thy servants.

Verse: Their souls * shall dwell among good things.

Unto those who have fallen asleep in faith, grant rest with the choir of the prophets, with the ranks of the apostles and the martyrs, and with all those who from time immemorial, have been justified by Thy redeeming Passion and Thy Blood, by which Thou hast ransomed captive mankind. In Thy love forgive them all their offences, for Thou alone hast lived a sinless life upon the earth, Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art free among the dead. Therefore grant unto Thy servants rest and great mercy.

Glory ..., Both now ...,

Theotokion: **H**aving conceived Christ the King and Bestower of life, we who were enslaved by the law of sin, O Lady, have been set free, O only Virgin Mother. Through Him we are freely justified by grace. Entreat Him now to write into the book of life, the names of those who acknowledge thee to be the Birthgiver of God; that saved by Thy mediation, we may receive from Thy Son redemption, worshipping Him Who granteth the world great mercy.