

THE 4th DAY OF THE MONTH OF JANUARY
THE FORE-FEAST OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT
THE SYNAXIS OF THE SEVENTY APOSTLES
THE COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER THEOCTISTUS OF
CUOMO IN SICILY
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 6 Stichera: 3 of the holy apostles, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast given a sign ...”:

O ye faithful, with sacred hymns * let us bless Cleopas, Andronicus, * Silvanus and Agabus, Ananias and Philip, * Prochorus, Nicanor, * Rufus and Sosthenes, * Linus and Stachys, Stephen, * Timon, Hermas, Phlegon, Mark, Luke, * Sosipater, Jason and Gaius, ** Tychicus and Philemon.

As is meet, let Narcissus * and Trophimus be praised, * with Caesanus, Zenas and Aristarchus, Mark, * Silas and Gaius, Quartus, Hermes and Asyncritus, * Apollos and Cephas, Clement and Justus, * Quartus, Erastus, Luke, Onesiphorus, * Carpus. Euodias, Matthias and James, * Urban and Aristobulus, ** Tychicus and Aristarchus.

Let us honor the honored preachers of God: * Prudens, Herodion and Artemas. * Philologus, Olympas and Rodion, * Apelles and Amplias, * Patrobus and Mark, * Tertius and Thaddeus, * the wondrous Epenetus, Achaius, Aquila, * Lucius, Barnabas and Fortunatus, ** and glorious Apollos and Crispus.

And 3 Stichera of the venerable one, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “When from the Tree ...”:

When thou didst wound thy soul * with divine desire, O all-blessed one, * rejoicing thou didst take up thy cross * and follow after Christ; * and having mortified the wisdom of the flesh through abstinence, * thou didst receive the living activity of the Spirit, * enabling thee to banish the winter of infirmities * with the fervor of thy right acceptable prayers. ** Wherefore, together we bless thee.

When thou didst cleanse the sight of thy soul * through earnest prayers and most steadfast fasting, O father, * thou didst become a temple * of the three-sunned Godhead; * and receiving the divine anointing * of the priesthood of God * thou didst enter within the inaccessible, * offering up in sacrifice Him that was slain for thy sake, ** for the sake of an ineffable companionship.

Manifest as meek and guileless, O father Theoctistus, * in wholeness of character * thou didst truly inherit the land of the meek; * and deified through communion with God, * thou dost delight in the sustenance * of true joy and gladness. * Cease thou not to remember us here * who ardently honor thee ** and celebrate thy godly repose.

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

Splendid hath the past feast been, and most glorious is the present day, for thereon did the magi do homage to the Savior, and hereon a glorious servant hath baptized the Master. Then piping shepherds, beholding the Lord, marveled; and now the voice of the Father hath proclaimed His only-begotten Son.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “Thy martyrs, O Lord ...”:

“**W**hy dost Thou incline Thy holy head before me who am clay and shadow, O my Christ Who art ineffable Fire, before which the angelic hosts tremble?” said John to his Creator, when He came to be baptized. “Great is Thy condescension, O compassionate Bestower of life!”

Verse: Therefore will I remember Thee * from the land of Jordan and Hermoniem.

Lo! our enlightenment and deliverance and salvation shall go forth into the Jordan openly to strip Himself naked and to be clothed in the waters as in a robe, thus clothing the nakedness of all who have been stripped naked by the adverse counsel of the serpent.

Verse: The waters saw Thee, O God, * the waters saw Thee and were afraid.

He that is truly unbearable Fire shall go forth into the Jordan to cleanse me who have been destroyed by the wicked violation. In the midst of the waters He shall receive the rain of heaven which washeth away the stain of many transgressions, in that He is compassionate and greatly merciful.

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

The Christ of truth cometh to the Jordan to be baptized of John, and he sayeth unto Him: “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? I who am grass dare not touch fire! But do Thou, O Master, sanctify me by Thy divine revelation!”

Troparion of the holy apostles, in Tone III:

O holy Apostles * entreat the Merciful God * that He grant remission of sins ** unto our souls

Glory ..., Both now ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Zebulon! * Adorn thyself, O Nephthali! * O River Jordan, leaping up, * receive thou the Master Who cometh to be baptized! * Rejoice, O Adam, with our first mother! * Hide not yourselves as ye did before in paradise; * for He who beheld you naked hath appeared, * that He may clothe you in your primal raiment. ** Christ hath appeared, desiring to make all creation new!

AT COMPLINE

The canon, the acrostic whereof is: "I chant the long hymn of Great Thursday," in Tone VI, the Irmoi whereof are repeated twice, with 6 Troparia.

ODE I

Irmos: **T**he Red Sea was parted by a blow from the staff of Moses, * and the deep with its waves became dry, * becoming a path to the unarmed people of Israel, * but to the fully armed ones it became a grave. * A hymn of Praise well-pleasing to God was sung: * gloriously hath Christ our God been glorified.

The infinite, all-effecting and munificent Wisdom of God hath built a house for Himself of the pure Mother who knew not a man; and now He cometh to the streams of the Jordan, enriching mortals with His divinity for their renewal.

Making clear the ineffable mysteries, the Wisdom of God summoneth to the light all among the nations who before lay in the darkness of ignorance, leading them up to knowledge of the truth and to the light through baptism which cleanseth men's hearts, and edifieth them through the Spirit.

Let us now hearken to the utterances of the prophets prompted by the Spirit; for Christ Who baptizeth in the Spirit and in fire cometh to the Jordan. Come ye to Him and be enlightened, for your faces shall not be ashamed.

ODE III

Irmos: **O** Lord Thou art the God and Creator of all, * becoming poor, Thou hast united Thyself * without passion to a creature, * and by the streams which Thou didst desire to enter, * Thou Thyself didst declare unto the people: * Draw ye forth the water of life * and ye shall be firmly established in the faith.

O Savior, Thou comest to bestow the grace of baptism, which setteth free souls and bodies; wherefore, Thou dost now grant us also grace upon grace, crying aloud: Draw ye forth the water of life, and make yourselves steadfast through faith!

The foolish man who knoweth not God is subject to destruction; for he depriveth himself of every good thing through his wicked endeavors, and utterly falleth away from salvation. From his fate may all of us who know Christ be delivered!

ODE IV

Irmos: **T**he prophet, foreseeing thine ineffable mystery, **O** Christ, * declared: Thou hast set forth the mighty grace of baptism, * unto all who receive it with faith, * for deliverance from our sins!

Thou hast made haste to the baptism which poureth forth forgiveness upon mortals, and Thou callest all that are weighed down with transgressions and have lived wickedly in impurity, promising to bestow rest of soul upon them, in that Thou art compassionate.

Thou enterest into communion with my flesh, that Thou mightest bestow upon me Thy divinity; for, being the immutable image of Thy Father, Thou dost pass beneath the hand of Thy creation, O Savior, being manifest as a man save without sin, purifying that which is like unto Thee by Thy likeness thereto, O Word.

Manifest are drink, anointing and the Spirit of Thy sealing, O Savior, and knowledge, mystic gifts, and the right comely works of the gifts of God; for the Father sent Thee, His only begotten Son, into the world for the cleansing thereof.

ODE V

Irmos: Held fast in the grip of fear, * the Forerunner refused to baptize Christ, * reverently gazing upon Him * Who covereth the chambers with water, * standing in the water.

The Wisdom of God, Who supporteth the formless chambers of water upon the air, Who restraineth the deep and upholdeth the seas, cometh to the Jordan, receiving baptism at the hands of His servant.

Having fashioned human nature, Christ, Who covereth the heavens with clouds and is clothed with light, hath now come to purify it through baptism; and He is seen naked in the Jordan's streams Who holdeth all things in His hand.

ODE VI

Irmos: The uttermost depths of sin have encompassed me; * and its stormy waves I can endure no more, * wherefore like Jonah I cry out to Thee, O Master: * Lead me up from corruption.

Knowing Thee to be the Lord, O Savior, at Thy birth the heavens declared Thy glory to the earth; and now at Thy baptism the Father declareth Thee to be His beloved Son.

Let everyone that hath undergone defilement wash it away with their tears, and with trembling let him approach Christ Who cometh to purify our nature with fire and the Spirit of God.

ODE VII

Irmos: In Babylon the Children feared not the fiery furnace; * but cast into the midst of the flames * they were bedewed and sang: * 'O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou.'

Let no one make falsehood, inciting others to hatred, and wickedly teaching the earnest man to repay evil with evil; but let us honor one another in the love of the Lord Who hath revealed Himself.

As friends of Christ, keep ye watch together but a little while for Him that hath taken on our form, and cometh to receive baptism, and hath appeared in our guise for the purification of that which was created in His image, unto our deliverance from transgressions.

“If any will go down and be buried with Me in baptism, with Me will he inherit glory and resurrection!” doth Christ now exclaim. Let us now faithfully go forth to meet Him!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Suffering affliction for the sake of the laws of their fathers, * the blessed Children in Babylon * scorned the foolish decree of the King. * Standing together in the midst of the flames, they remained unharmed, * and sang a song fitting for almighty God: * ‘O ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord * and exalt Him above all throughout all ages.’

O ye who have received God as a guest, having wisely partaken of nourishment in Bethlehem and rendered up glory with the angels, shepherds and magi, unto the Incarnate One, let us now mystically go to the Jordan, beholding the great mystery which Christ Himself doth accomplish, Whom we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Keeping the chief portion of the Law and the prophets, and having established ourselves in love, we shall be emulators of Christ Who in His extreme love took flesh, and reconciled us to the Father through baptism, teaching us to chant: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

John received Him who came to wash away the sins of the world with water; but constrained by fear he forbade Him. “I have need to be baptized of Thee,” protested to the Bridegroom, his friend, the voice of the Word, the harbinger of the Sun, “For Thee do we supremely exalt throughout all ages!”

ODE IX

Irmos: Having before, in the lowly cave, * delighted in the hospitality of the Master * and the feast of immortality, * let us now hasten to the Jordan, * and behold the strange mystery * which hath brought down the effulgence from on high.

Go ye from Bethlehem to the land of the Jordan, O ye who thrive on miracles, and there behold deeds mystically wrought through the baptism of Christ Who is come to renew Adam, for He became incarnate for this cause.

The Creator, Who before the ages was begotten of the Father, hath in these latter days been born, incarnate without change, of the pure, virginal and godly Maiden, remaining God and man, that He might renew Adam through baptism.

Thou hast come as a man in essence, not as an illusory phantom; for as one among many, Thou hast requested baptism, Thou that alone art nature free of guilt. For Thou camest to bury man’s guilt, being baptized in the waters.

Then again, the Irmos: “Having before, in the lowly cave ...” is sung.

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the forefeast in tone IV:

Make ready, O Zebulon! * Adorn thyself, O Nephthali! * O River Jordan, leaping up, * receive thou the Master Who cometh to be baptized! * Rejoice, O Adam, with our first mother! * Hide not yourselves as ye did before in paradise; * for He who beheld you naked hath appeared, * that He may clothe you in your primal raiment. ** Christ hath appeared, desiring to make all creation new! (Twice)

Glory ..., the Troparion of the holy apostles, in tone III:

O holy Apostles * entreat the Merciful God * that He grant remission of sins ** unto our souls

Now and ever ..., the Troparion of the forefeast (Once).

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

Spec. Mel.: “Go Thou quickly before us ...”:

Lo! Christ approacheth Jordan and inviteth the Forerunner, saying: “Come and baptize in the river’s streams Me Who cleanseth the world wholly of its sin! Stretch forth thine hand and touch the crown of My divine head, for I have come to heal the transgression of man with My hands!”

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

Spec. Mel.: “Having been lifted up ...”:

O ye faithful, beholding the Master and King of all Who cometh to baptism in a godly manner, let us hymn Him, and with love let us prepare the ways of our hearts, washing away the defilement of our grievous transgressions. For, lo! He cometh to the streams of the Jordan to save the race of mankind.

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

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast arisen ...”

Rejoice, O great Baptist of the Lord! For Christ hath come to be baptized of Thee. Touch thou the crown of the divine head of God Who in His hand holdeth all things and in His good pleasure saveth the race of mankind!

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

Celebrating the splendid solemnity of the forefeast of the enlightenment of Christ, let us all shine forth in the virtues; for He that is Lord over all cometh from Galilee to John, to pour forth in the streams of the Jordan the baptism of salvation upon the human race through the fire of the Spirit, in that He is God.

Three Canons: that of the Forefeast, with 6 Troparia, including its Irmos; that of the holy apostles, with 4 Troparia; and that of the venerable one, with 4 Troparia.

ODE I

Canon for the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the Greek alphabet. In Tone VI:

Irmos: When Israel walked on foot in the sea as on dry land, * on seeing their pursuer Pharaoh drowned, * they cried: * Let us sing to God * a song of victory.

Let creation rejoice, and let the lands of the Gentiles chant, for Jesus, the King of all the earth, cometh forth to accomplish our salvation in the streams of the Jordan.

Arrayed in flesh from the Virgin's blood, and in a robe of royal purple, O Lord, Thou dost come naked to the river's streams, thereby clothing my nakedness.

As Thou art the Son of the beginningless Father, O Compassionate One, Thou dost humbly approach the son of Zacharias, requesting baptism, that through grace Thou mightest make us children of God.

Canon of the holy apostles, the acrostic whereof is: "Let me praise the second circle of Christ's disciples", the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, * and be filled with the Spirit, * and utter discourse to the Queen and Mother; * and be seen radiantly keeping festival, * joyfully praising her wonders.

As disciples of Christ Who for our sake revealed Himself in fleshly matter, O all-praised ones, ye have illumined all the world with the radiance of piety, driving away the darkness of godlessness.

As beacons of most godly aspect, Crispus, Prochorus, Andronicus, Thaddeus and Nicanor followed after Christ, forsaking the pollution and impermanence of corruptible things.

With the might of the Spirit did ye overcome the might of the destroyer; and with the strength of divine understanding did ye heal those totally paralyzed by the savagery of godlessness.

As apostles, as hierarchs of God, as true ministers of things past understanding, Amplius, Stachys and Philip preached the Lord Who hath appeared in the likeness of the flesh.

Theotokion: Let us honor the palace of God the King, wherein He made His abode as was His pleasure; and let us lift up our voices in song to her who alone is the Theotokos who hath not known a man, for, for her sake we have been deified.

Canon of the venerable one, in Tone II:

Irmos: In the deep of old the infinite Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army. * But the Incarnate Word annihilated pernicious sin. * Exceedingly glorious is the Lord, * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Christ, the Torrent of sweetness, cometh like a servant to the waters of Jordan to be washed. Ye mountains, leap for joy! Ye hills, gird yourselves about with joy! Ye defiled ones, make ready for the divine cleansing!

Thy radiant memory hath today shone forth the sun-like rays of thy corrections, driving away the cloud of our passions. And celebrating it, with faith and love we call thee blessed.

Having taken wing through the love of Christ, thou didst soar aloft, forsaking the tumult of the world. Wherefore, thou didst live like an angel, setting thyself apart for fasting through onerous labor and abstinence.

Theotokion: **C**ome ye, and with a pure mind let us bless the pure one, the beauty of Jacob, whom God loved and chose, and within whom He made His abode. Let us hymn her as the tabernacle of sanctification, the most honored of all creatures.

ODE III

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **T**here is none as holy as Thou, * O Lord my God, * who hast exalted the horn of Thy faithful O good One, * and strengthened us upon the rock * of Thy confession.

As God Who hast mastery over all, Thou dost bear the guise of a servant; and to a servant dost Thou come in the flesh, O Compassionate One, freeing us from slavery to the enemy through Thy divinely accomplished baptism.

Wherefore hast Thou come to the river's streams? What manner of cleansing dost Thou desire? What defilement seekest Thou to wash away? I hymn Thy tender compassion and condescension which pass understanding, O Word!

Seeking the lamb which the savage wolf tore asunder through deception, O Christ, Thou dost stand in the Jordan's streams, crying out to the Forerunner: Come thou and baptize Me!

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: **O** Theotokos, thou living and plentiful fount, * establish in spiritual fellowship those who sing hymns to thee, * and in thy divine glory * grant them crowns of glory.

The Word sent thee forth, O all-wise ones, like rivers throughout all the world, filling it with floods of the Spirit of God and removing the flame of godlessness by grace.

Let us hymn the godly Timon, Silas and Silvanus; and with faith let us praise the glorious Epenetus, Urban and Agabus, the true preachers of Christ.

Being already blessed, having truly acquired God, the blessed Teacher, O all-wise ones, those who before were accursed did ye show forth as partakers of the blessedness of God.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Mother, truly pure wast thou before giving birth, during birthgiving, and after birthgiving; for thou hast given birth unto God Whom the company of angels hath most splendidly heralded.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: On the rock of faith hast Thou established me, * and Thou hast emboldened my mouth against mine enemies. * For my spirit rejoiceth when I sing: * There is none as holy as our God * and none more righteous than Thee, O Lord.

He that created the deeps and covered the chambers thereof with the waters, cometh forth into the waters to be baptized. Be thou careful, O soul, to cleanse thyself of the passions, offering up a flourishing of the virtues.

Through the Spirit's cultivation, O Theoctistus, thou didst bloom in the meadow of fasting like a sweet-smelling rose, ever filling with fragrance those who sin: There is none holy save Thee, O Lord!

Like a fruitful olive tree hast thou sprung forth in the house of the Lord, O venerable Theoctistus, anointing with the oil of thy labors the faces of us that sing: There is none holy save Thee, O Lord!

Theotokion: Many are they who war against me from above, and my life hath grown faint in pain; and I have fallen headlong into the abyss of transgressions. Save me, O Sovereign Lady; disdain me not, for thee do I have as an invincible intercessor.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

Today the Lord crieth out to John in the streams of the Jordan: * Fear not to baptize me, ** for I am come to save Adam the first-formed!

Ikos: I do not demand of thee that thou pass the bounds of propriety, O Forerunner. I do not tell thee: Say unto Me what thou sayest unto the iniquitous and what thou teachest sinners. Only baptize Me, keeping silent and awaiting what shall come of the baptism. For in this wise thou shalt receive a dignity greater than all the prophets. For none of them ever beheld Me save in figures and shadows and indistinct images. But thou seest Me standing before thee. For I am come to save Adam the first-formed!

Sessional Hymn of the holy apostles, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the divine Faith ...":

O unshakeable pillars of the Church, as ye are disciples of God, the Foundation of piety, preserve it unharmed, dispelling the temptations of the deceiver, and ever entreating Christ God to grant us great mercy.

Glory ..., the Sessional Hymn of the venerable one, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ...":

With the shepherd's pipe of the Word thou didst tend the Lord's flock on the pasture of dispassion in a god-pleasing manner, O god-bearer Theoctistus, and thou didst lead it, saved, unto God. And departing to Him thou didst receive a reward meet for thy labors. Glory to Him hath given thee strength! Glory to Him who hath crowned thee! Glory to Him who worketh healings for all through thee!

Both now ..., in Tone I:

When Jesus had been born of the Virgin Mary and was baptized of John in the Jordan, the Spirit, seen in the guise of a dove, descended upon Him. Wherefore, the angels said to the prophet, crying aloud: Glory to Thine advent, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thine economy, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind!

ODE IV

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Christ is my power, * my God and my Lord, * the holy Church divinely singeth, * crying with a pure mind, * keeping festival in the Lord.

When the stream of the Jordan beheld Thee, O Lord, it drew back. But our nature, which hath been humbled by the many passions, doing homage to Thee, hath returned back to the heavens.

The sun was struck with fear, beholding Thee, the Sun, naked in the flesh and mystically illumining our whole nature which hath been stripped naked through the dark transgression, O Master.

Lo! the cleansing, deliverance, renewal and enlightenment of all hath come to His own! Let us therefore cleave unto Him through purity of life!

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: Perceiving the profound counsel of God, * that the incarnation of Thee the Most High, * will be from a Virgin, * the Prophet Habbakuk cried aloud: * Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Like stallions the divinely wise disciples of the Savior entered the sea of paganism, roiling it; and they saved the faithful by holy water and the Spirit.

Prudens, Apelles and Philologus, Herodion, Rufus and Patrobus have shone like the sun upon the earth enlightening the faithful, and delivering them from the darkness of unbelief.

O glorious ones, the Compassionate One, having brought you together, launched you like sharp arrows, as bolts to fell the enemy and to heal by the grace of God those grievously wounded.

Let us offer praise to the Redeemer, hymning the divinely eloquent Rodion, the glorious Hermes, the wise Asyncritus, and the godly Linus and Gaius.

Theotokion: The exceedingly blessed choir of those who of old uttered prophecies in the Spirit, O all-pure one, doth now in a godly manner, and with sacred and divine utterances, call thee the portal of Heaven and the mountain densely wooded.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: From a Virgin didst Thou come forth, not as an ambassador, * nor as an Angel, * but the very Lord himself incarnate, * and didst save me, the whole man; * wherefore I cry to Thee: * Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

The streams of thy sweat sought after the sweetness of afflictions, obliterating the bitterness of the demons and driving away diseases, O glorious one, and dispelling the infirmity of fame by aspersion, O right wondrous one.

Deified by unceasing purifications, O venerable one, thou wast a most luminous beacon for monastics, a most renowned model and guide, and an unshakeable pillar.

Thou didst cleave the sea of the passions with the staff of faith, O venerable father Theoctistus; and having drowned the invisible Pharaoh, thou didst attain unto the promised land.

Theotokion: Day and night I cry unto thee, O all-immaculate one, and I am saved. And through thy mediation I scale the rampart of pleasures and am delivered from the temptation of the demons.

ODE V

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Illumine with Thy divine light, I pray, O Good One, * the souls of those who with love rise early to pray to Thee, * that they may know Thee, O Word of God, * as the true God, * Who recalleth us from the darkness of sin.

Let us bring to Christ a pure life as an offering of fruit, for He Who alone is the sinless Creator of all cometh to wash away the defilement of sins with the waters and grace.

O ye people who from of old have been sitting in the darkness of sorrows, a Light which fadeth not away hath appeared unto us! Behold, and be ye illumined with its rays, and hymn ye the grace of Him who hath appeared!

To Thy great Forerunner dost Thou come, O most compassionate. Lord, bringing a great mystery to pass, ineffably magnifying humanity through baptism.

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: All creation stands in awe of thy divine glory; * for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, * didst contain within thy womb the God of all, * and gave birth to the timeless Son, * bestowing peace, upon all who hymn thee.

Receiving, as apostles, the authority to bind and to loose, O all-praised ones, ye released those bound with the bonds of unbelief. Wherefore, joining chorus, we faithfully celebrate your memory.

With divine hymnody let Aristarchus be honored, together with Tertius, Jason and Sosthenes, Caesar and Mark, Luke and Sosipater, Quartus and the godly Apelles, Clement and Epaphras, and Erastus the all-wise.

The Lord sent you forth, as He did the twelve, to uproot all impiety and to plant the knowledge of God splendidly among all mankind, O glorious apostles, intercessors for our souls.

Theotokion: Enlighten the eyes of my heart, O Virgin, and illumine men with the radiance of repentance. From everlasting darkness deliver me, O portal of light, thou refuge of all Christians who hymn thee with faith.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: O Christ my Savior, the enlightenment of those lying in the darkness of sin. * I rise early to hymn Thee O King of Peace, * enlighten me with Thy radiance, * for I know no other God than Thee.

Having renewed the ground of thy heart with the plough of prayer, thou didst sow it with the seed of the word, O divinely wise father, and reap the grain of abundance, thereby nurturing the souls of all the pious who hymn thee.

Ever possessed of a vigilant mind, O divinely wise father, thou didst lull to sleep the soul-corrupting passions and strive to attain unto the dawn of God, to the radiance of the unwaning Light, wherein is the abode of all those who rejoice.

As a luminous light-bearer, full of the gifts of the Spirit of God, O father, manifesting a character pure and guileless, thou wast revealed to all to be an angel living in a body.

Theotokion: Thou hast been shown to be the portal of the Orient Who revealed Himself from on high, and the most exalted throne of the King, O most pure one, and the lofty ladder reaching to Heaven, whereby Christ descended and communed with rejected mankind.

ODE VI

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, * I run to Thy calm haven, and cry to Thee: * Raise up my life from corruption, * O greatly Merciful One.

Vested in a human form, Christ cometh to His servant asking baptism, by grace showing forth the enslaved to be liberated from passions.

Being water, full of mysteries, O our only Lord, as a river of peace Thou hast come to the river, asking to be baptized by the least drops thereof, O Thou that alone art sinless.

The choir of angels on high doth marvel, beholding Thee Who coverest heaven with clouds, naked; and they cry aloud: What is this Thy great condescension towards mankind?

Lo! He that is full hath emptied Himself; He that is invisible hath appeared incarnate! Rejoice, O river Jordan! Fill up thy streams, that thou mightest wash the Regeneration of all!

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: Celebrating the divine and solemn feast * of the Mother of God * O ye divinely wise, * let us come, clapping our hands, * and glorify God who was born of her.

O ye apostles, manifest as animate clouds, ye have sprinkled the saving water of life upon all the world, bedewing the hearts of the faithful.

The power of your divine words vanquished the great evil of the rhetors and made wise the ignorant who had become foolish through the knowledge of deception, O all-wise ones.

Let the divine Prudens and Trophimus, the glorious Philemon, Aristarchus, Onesiphorus and the most renowned Tychicus, be exalted as disciples of the Word.

Theotokion: I hymn thee; O thou that alone art all-hymned! I ever glorify thee, O divinely glorious one! And I bless thee whom all generations call blessed, O divinely blessed Virgin.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, * I appeal to the unfathomable abyss of Thy compassion: * Raise me up from corruption, O God.

Shown to be a vessel of the Holy Spirit Who breathed power into thee, O all-blessed God-bearer Theoctistus, thou didst beat the wicked spirits into submission.

With the staff of thy discourse thou didst graze thy reason-endowed flock on the pasture of fasting, O venerable father, and guide them to the fold of Heaven.

Theotokion: He that stretched out the Heavens with a gesture hath shown thee to be another heaven on earth, O immaculate Birthgiver of God; for from thee He hath revealed Himself to those in darkness.

Kontakion of the holy apostles, in Tone II:

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

In hymns, O ye faithful, * let us piously praise the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ; * for, through them have we all learned to honor * the indivisible Trinity. ** And they remain beacons of the divine Faith.

Ikos: With sacred hymnody, O ye faithful, let us together praise the choir of the seventy apostles: Stephen, Prochorus, Silas and Nicanor, Mark, Matthias and Herodion, Crescens and Phlegon, Barnabas, Linus and Olympas, Ananias, Luke and Asyncritus, and the rest; for they remain beacons of the divine Faith.

ODE VII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: An Angel made the furnace bedew the holy Children. * But the command of God consumed the Chaldeans * and prevailed upon the tyrant to cry: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

How can the river's streams admit Thee Who art the Torrent of sweetness, O Christ? How can the Forerunner stretch forth his hand over Thee Who with Thy hand hast created all, and delivered us from the hands of the deceiver?

As Thou art Thyself a stream of goodness, how is it that Thou comest to the streams of the Jordan seeking to give us to drink the waters of incorruption, we who through wicked eating have been cast down into corruption through the hatred of the serpent?

Let the mountains pour forth joy, and let the hills leap up in gladness; let the rivers clap their hands, for Christ hath appeared and cometh to the river to drown men's transgressions.

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: Refusing to worship created things * in place of the Creator, * the divinely wise youths bravely trampled down the threatening fire * and rejoicing they sang aloud: * O supremely hymned Lord and God of our Fathers, Blessed art Thou.

Casting the word as a net, ye draw up from the depths the far-flung nations; and confirming their thoughts with signs and wonders, O wise apostles, ye were revealed to be guides for the erring.

Having entered the harbor most calm, ye were shown to be saviors of those tempest-tossed on the sea of evils, and all-wise helmsmen who cry aloud: O Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Let us all bless Euodias and Carpus, Tychicus and Cephas, Justus and Artemas, and Zenas the glorious, for they are Disciples of Christ who chant: O Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The apostles of Christ, whose visages shone like lightning through the Spirit, delivered those held fast by the night of ignorance, guided to the Light of life those who ever cry: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Theotokion: A mercy seat hast thou been for us that are ever sinning, O all-immaculate one, having given birth supra-naturally unto Christ Who taketh away the sins of the world, to Whom we cry aloud: O Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: The godless order of the lawless tyrant * fanned the roaring flame; * but Christ bedewed the God-fearing children with the Spirit, * therefore He is blessed and supremely exalted.

Let the wilderness of Jordan blossom forth today, for the redemption of all cometh by the fire of the Godhead to submerge in water and the Spirit us who have been grievously crushed down by our falls into sin.

With outpourings of tears thou didst extinguish the burnings of the passions, O blessed Theoctistus, pouring forth ever-living streams of miracles whereby infirmities both of body and soul are washed away, O most glorious one.

The meekness of David didst thou emulate, O father, having acquired the blameless dispassion of Job, the simplicity of Jacob, and the faith of Abraham and the fervor of Peter. Dwelling with them, be thou mindful of us.

Theotokion: Having given birth unto the hypostatic Life for our sake, unto Him who hath abolished death by death, O Virgin, by thine entreaties enliven me who have been slain by grievous tempests, O pure, blessed and exceedingly glorious one.

ODE VIII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Thou didst make flame bedew the holy children, * and didst burn the sacrifice of a righteous man with water. * For Thou alone, O Christ, dost do all as Thou willest, * Thee do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Elisha clove the river's streams with the mantle of Elijah, foreshadowing the grace of baptism which Christ, our only Benefactor, hath thereby accomplished, by going up to them.

The glorious Prophet Elisha once prefigured the grace of baptism, making waters that before were barren fruitful through salt, through the power of our God Who hath manifested Himself.

Every valley is filled with divine gifts, and every contrary hill is laid low, and the crooked ways are made straight again through the appearance of our incarnate God.

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: The Offspring of the Theotokos * saved the holy children in the furnace. * He who was then prefigured hath now been born on earth, * and He gathereth all creation to hymn thee: * all ye works praise ye the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Having cultivated stony minds with the plough of the word, O all-glorious ones, ye sowed therein the seed of salvation and reaped a multitude of the saved, the grain of piety, an hundredfold, O all-wise apostles of the Lord.

Let us with divine praises honor James, Cleopas, Barnabas and Stephen, the all-wise Narcissus, Mark, Aristobulus and Apelles, crying aloud: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Bearing the cross instead of a breastplate, ye manfully arrayed yourselves against all the legions of the serpent, O all-wise apostles, and vanquished them. And with faith ye netted the men he had captured, and brought them to the Master, the Bestower of life.

Theotokion: O wonder more exalted than all wonders! How is it that thou hast given birth, yet remainest a virgin, O all-holy Bride of God? For thou didst bear the Word Who is co-beginningless with the Father. To Him do we all sing: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: God Who descended into the fiery furnace * with the Hebrew children, * and transformed the flame into dew, * do ye works hymn, * and supremely exalt as Lord throughout all ages.

O Savior, Thou well-spring of wisdom, in the Jordan Thou wast manifest as the enlightenment and cleansing of souls. Bestowing upon us a refreshing torrent of living water, and drowning our sin in the waters.

Having truly passed thy life in guilelessness, O divinely wise father, with a mind most perfected thou didst set at naught the malice of the enemy, crying aloud: Hymn the Lord, all ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Now the axe doth threaten to hew down souls. Hasten thou, O my soul, and, having cut down the thorns of the passions, bring ripe fruits to the Lord, being saved by the prayers of the God-bearer.

Theotokion: O out of all generations Christ chose thee as a habitation for Himself, O Theotokos, renewing us corruptible mortals by a better union. Wherefore, we hymn thee throughout all ages!

ODE IX

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: It is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

O Christ Who with Thy hands fashioned mankind, Thou dost go down under the hand of the Forerunner, humbling Thyself as a man, that Thou mightest exalt me who of old was humbled and perished. Glory to Thy glorious and strange economy!

The cleansing and enlightenment of souls is prepared! The loosing of grievous bonds is come! Be glad, O river Jordan! Make merry, all creation! Clap your hands, earth and sea, glorifying the supremely good Christ!

As Thou art the fullness of all good things, Thou dost come crying out to Thy servant who hath been filled with holiness and who marvelleth at Thy condescension: Draw nigh and baptize Me, for I wish to fill the nature of mortals with sanctification and purification!

Canon of the holy apostles

Irmos: Let every mortal born on earth, * radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy; * and let the host of the angelic powers * celebrate and honor the holy feast of the Mother of God, * and let them cry aloud: * Rejoice! O all-blessed Theotokos, * thou pure Ever-Virgin.

O Christ, heal Thou the contrition of our hearts through the prayers of those who loved Thee, who preached Thee as God and Lord, the Creator of all, among all the nations, and dispelled all the gloom of idolatry with the light of their preaching.

Like bolts of lightning have Luke and Hermas, Mark and Ananias, Matthias and the sacred Olympus enlightened the world, and have manifestly illumined the fullness of the faithful. Let us today faithfully honor them with sacred hymns of honor.

Let us stand reverently in the house of the Lord and bless the sacred heralds and disciples, rich in angelic wisdom, the saviors, defenders and intercessors for all who honor their memory.

Aquila, Achaicus, the glorious Lucius and Fortunatus, together with the sixty-six other favorites and sacred disciples of Christ, have been illumined with the immaterial life of the Spirit. And they illumine the hearts of all through their light-bearing commemoration today.

Theotokion: **T**he radiance of the splendor of thy birthgiving hath shone forth and illumined all the world and destroyed the prince of darkness, O all-pure Birthgiver of God, thou boast of angels and salvation of all those who praise thee with unceasing voices.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: **The beginningless Son of God the Father and the Lord, * became flesh from the Virgin, * to give light to those in darkness, * and to gather the dispersed. * Wherefore we magnify the all-hymned Theotokos!**

Thou wast a pure dwelling-place of God, O venerable Theoctistus, having not befouled the beauty of thy soul with the mire of sins, wholly adorning thyself with good gifts. Wherefore, we honor thee.

Adorned with the virtues, enlightened with love, luminous with divers good deeds, thou didst pass over to thy fathers, O wise father, in the richness of old age, stored up like ripe wheat in the granaries of God.

Thy flock doth today join chorus, celebrating the splendid commemoration of thy repose. Standing with the angels before God, O thrice-blessed and all-blessed one, cease not to bless them from Heaven even after thy repose.

Theotokion: **O** pure Virgin, who hast given birth unto Him Who is life, for the deliverance of mortals: enliven my soul, as thou art compassionate, who alone art intercessor for those who have recourse to thy protection, O all-immaculate one.

Exapostilarion of the holy apostles:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

O all-praised apostles and disciples of the supremely compassionate Christ, ye who beheld God: fall not silent in your supplications on behalf of us who keep your memory with love, that we may find forgiveness of sins and divine grace on the day of Judgment.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast visited us ...”:

Make ready, O Zabulon! Adorn thyself, O Nephthali! Receive, O Jordan, the Creator and God of all, Who cometh to thee in the flesh, desireth to wash away our sins!

On the Praises, 4 Stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: “Proceed, ye hosts of angels ...”:

Christ is come to the Jordan’s streams, Whose herald appeared before Him; and He said to the Forerunner: “Come and wash Me with the waters; baptize Me Who now go down into there, for I have come to wash away the first fall of Adam.” O our God Who hast manifested Thyself, glory be to Thee!

“**I** have in no wise reckoned the number of the stars of the heights of Heaven, nor have I measured the earth.” the Forerunner said to the Master; “And how can I touch Thy head with my hand? How can I baptize Thee Who holdest all creation in Thy hand? Wherefore, I cry to Thee: O our God Who hast manifested Thyself, glory be to Thee!”

“**B**eing enthroned together with the Father and the Spirit, I am borne up in triumph by the legions of the angels. Yet in My tender compassion I was born a stranger in the little cave in Bethlehem. Wherefore, lend Me now thy right hand, that in Me I may wash away the transgressions of the world!”

“**O**f old, in the days of Noah, Thou didst drown sin, O Thou Who by Thy word didst throw wide the flood-gates of the heavens. And how will Jordan bear the sight of Thee? For already its streams draw back! All creation doth recognize Thee, and I cry out to Thee: O our God Who hast manifested Thyself, glory be to Thee!”

Glory ..., in the same melody:

“**T**hat the Father’s good pleasure might be fulfilled, I have come to earth clothed in poverty. Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool. I incline My neck before Thee, for this I have come to do. Baptize Me Who wash away the transgression of all mankind in Myself”

Both now ..., in the same melody:

“**O** Thou Who of old guided Israel with a pillar of fire and cloud, and Who sent down dew in the wilderness! Thou that hast dominion over all, Who art ineffable in Thy nature! How art Thou clothed in human form? I, who am grass, dare not touch Thee Who art fire! Do Thou Thyself baptize me, for I have need to receive cleansing from Thee!”

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “O house of Ephratha ...”:

In the streams of the Jordan * hast Thou appeared, * O effulgence of the glory of the Father, * washing away by baptism ** the defilement of our souls.

Verse: Therefore will I remember Thee * from the land of Jordan and Hermoniem.

O prophet John, * receive thou the Redeemer of the world * Who cometh like a servant, * and baptize the Creator ** for the renewal of mortals.

Verse: The waters saw Thee, O God, * the waters saw Thee and were afraid.

Enlightenment is come! * Deliverance hath appeared! * Come ye to the Jordan, * and let us descend together to be cleansed ** and to sing the hymns of the forefeast!

Glory ..., Both now ..., in the same melody:

Today doth Christ * grant the forgiveness of salvation * unto mankind, * cleansing away impurity from their souls * by the fire of baptism.

AT LITURGY

At the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from ODE III of the canon of the forefeast, and 4 from ODE VI of the canon of the holy apostles.

As God Who hast mastery over all, Thou dost bear the guise of a servant; and to a servant dost Thou come in the flesh, O Compassionate One, freeing us from slavery to the enemy through Thy divinely accomplished baptism. (Twice)

Wherefore hast Thou come to the river's streams? What manner of cleansing dost Thou desire? What defilement seekest Thou to wash away? I hymn Thy tender compassion and condescension which pass understanding, O Word!

Seeking the lamb which the savage wolf tore asunder through deception, O Christ, Thou dost stand in the Jordan's streams, crying out to the Forerunner: Come thou and baptize Me!

O ye apostles, manifest as animate clouds, ye have sprinkled the saving water of life upon all the world, bedewing the hearts of the faithful.

The power of your divine words vanquished the great evil of the rhetors and made wise the ignorant who had become foolish through the knowledge of deception, O all-wise ones.

Let the divine Prudens and Trophimus, the glorious Philemon, Aristarchus, Onesiphorus and the most renowned Tychicus, be exalted as disciples of the Word.

Theotokion: I hymn thee; O thou that alone art all-hymned! I ever glorify thee, O divinely glorious one! And I bless thee whom all generations call blessed, O divinely blessed Virgin.

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Zebulon! * Adorn thyself, O Nephthali! * O River Jordan, leaping up, * receive thou the Master Who cometh to be baptized! * Rejoice, O Adam, with our first mother! * Hide not yourselves as ye did before in paradise; * for He who beheld you naked hath appeared, * that He may clothe you in your primal raiment. ** Christ hath appeared, desiring to make all creation new!

Troparion of the holy apostles, in Tone III:

O holy apostles, * beseech the merciful God, * that He grant unto our souls ** the remission of sins.

Glory ..., Kontakion of the holy apostles, in Tone II:

In hymns, O ye faithful, * let us piously praise the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ; * for, through them have we all learned to honor * the indivisible Trinity. ** And they remain beacons of the divine Faith.

Both now ..., Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Today the Lord crieth out to John in the streams of the Jordan: * Fear not to baptize me, ** for I am come to save Adam the first-formed!

Prokeimenon, in Tone VIII: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, * and their words unto the ends of the world.

Verse: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the works of His hands.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, (ROM 8: 8-14)

Brethren: they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Alleluia, in Tone I: The heavens shall confess Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

Verse: God Who is glorified in the council of the saints.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, §50 (LK 10:1-15)

At that time, the LORD appointed seventy other apostles; and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them: The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them: The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say: Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if

the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

Communion Verse: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.