

THE 9th DAY OF THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR NICEPHORUS
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 3 Stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “When from the Tree ...”:

Submitting to the laws of Him * Who, for our sake, * assumed our flesh on earth and endured His honored Passion, * O divinely blessed one, * thou didst show love for thy neighbor, * which is the epitome of the law and the prophets. * Wherefore, thou didst receive a blessed end, * O Nicephorus, ** and standest now before the Wellspring of love.

Having bended thy neck to God, * before Whom all knees do bend, * O wondrous martyr; * thy head wast severed and parted from thy comely body, * and with thy most honored mind * thou hast been united to Christ, the Head of all * And now drawing close to His light, * O Nicephorus, ** beseech enlightenment for us who praise thee.

Thou hast sanctified the earth * with the streams of thy blood shed for Christ, * O martyr, * and by thy spirit thou hast gladdened * the spirits of the bodiless hosts, * enlightening the whole flock of the martyrs, O blessed one, * and now united with them as a valiant warrior * and an invincible martyr, ** pray thou to God on our behalf.

Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone VI:

O passion-bearer Nicephorus, thou hast clearly shown to all that he who loveth not his neighbor cannot love the Master; wherefore, in purity thou didst love thine own neighbor Saprucius. Hence, thou didst take wing to divine Desire, and lay down thy life in confession of Christ and the Faith. But Saprucius of ill repute, having conceived for thee an implacable hatred, showed himself a betrayer of Christ the Master. Standing now before Him, pray thou that our souls be saved.

Both now ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: “Having set all aside ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: A sword pierced thy heart, * O most pure Sovereign Lady, * as Symeon said, * when thou didst behold Him Who shone forth from thee ineffably, * condemned by the iniquitous * and lifted up upon the Cross, * tasting vinegar and gall, * His side pierced, * His hands and feet run through with nails; * and, lamenting, thou didst exclaim, crying out maternally: * “What is this new mystery, ** O my Child most sweet?”

Troparion of the martyr, in Tone IV:

In his sufferings, Thy martyr Nicephorus O Lord, * received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God; * for, possessed of Thy might, * he set at naught the tyrants and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. ** By his supplications save Thou our souls.

AT MATINS

Canon of the martyr, the acrostic whereof is:

“With songs I hymn Nicephorus, glorious among athletes”, the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

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

O Christ, Author of peace, as Thou art our Benefactor, by the supplications of Thy martyr bring the ship of my soul, which is cruelly tossed by the perils and billows of the raging sea of life, into a profound calm.

With rational thought, O most wise one, thou didst piously subject the passion of anger to the mind of thy soul, and hastening to thy friend Sapphirus, yearning to be reconciled with him, O wondrous one, thou didst submit to the laws of the Savior.

Triadicon: **C**onfessing the thrice-radiant effulgence of the One Godhead, which is equal in might and essence, co-enthroned and equal in nature, let us honor God in three Hypostases, professing the Word, the Father and the Spirit to be indivisible.

Theotokion: **I**n truth, even a heavenly intelligence is unable to comprehend thine unapproachable mystery, O all-praised one; for it was the good pleasure of Him Who is co-enthroned with the Father, to make His abode within thy womb and to become known in two natures.

ODE III

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

Summoned forth, Nicephorus was shown to be a victor in his deeds; for dispelling the gloom of deception, and driving it far away, he cried aloud: There is none as holy as Thee, O only Lover of mankind!

Believing in the Master Who was slain for thy sake, thou didst hasten of thine own will to death, desiring His voluntary mortality, strengthened as a victorious martyr by the power of God.

Nicephorus, the favorite of Christ, hath clearly been shown to be a struggler on earth and a champion in the heavens, crying out with the incorporeal ranks: There is none as holy as Thee, O only Lover of mankind!

Triadicon: **I**llumined through faith by the divinely inspired commandments, we all confess the one uncreated Godhead: the Word Who cameth forth from the great mind of God, and the Spirit Who likewise proceedeth from Him.

Theotokion: **H**aving conceived in thy womb, without knowing wedlock, Him Who was begotten of the Father before all ages, O Virgin, for us thou hast given birth to God and man, in Whom each nature is perfect and undivided.

Kontakion of the martyr, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: “The choir of the angels ...”:

Bound by the bond of love, O Nicephorus, * thou didst manifestly destroy the malice of hatred, * and beheaded by the sword, * as a divine martyr of the incarnate Savior, * thou dost entreat Him, ** on behalf of us who hymn thy glorious memory.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: “When the stone had been sealed ...”:

Thou didst dye thy purple robe in thine own blood, and invested therewith as an invincible warrior, and bearing the Cross as a scepter, thou didst hasten from earth to the heavens, O blessed Nicephorus, and standest before the King of all. Glory to Him Who gaveth thee strength! Glory to Him Who hath crowned thee! Glory to Him Who, through thee, worketh healings for all!

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

Stretching forth thy divine arms, wherewith thou didst bear the Creator Who in His goodness hath become incarnate, O most pure virgin, beseech Him to deliver from temptations, sufferings and tribulations us who praise thee with love and cry aloud: Glory to Him Who made His abode within thee! Glory to Him Who issued forth from thee! Glory to Him Who hath delivered us by thy birthgiving!

Stavrotheotokion: **B**eholding Thee stretched out dead upon the Cross, O Christ, Thine immaculate Mother cried aloud: “O my Son, Who with the Father and the Spirit, art beginningless, what is this ineffable dispensation, wherewith Thou hast saved the work of Thy most pure hands, O Compassionate One?”

ODE IV

Irmos: **T**hou, O Lord, art my strength and Thou art my power, * Thou art my God and Thou art my joy, * Thou Who, while never leaving the bosom of Thy Father, * hast visited our poverty. * Therefore with the Prophet Habbakuk I cry unto Thee, * ‘Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!’

Deemed worthy of divine illumination, O blessed Nicephorus, thou didst live a godly life and now illumined splendidly with divine light, preserve those who keep thy memory and cry out with faith, O divinely wise one: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Having joined the martyrs of Christ, thou shinest forth; for thou didst destroy the delusion of polytheism, thy head being severed, and with the torrents of thy blood didst drown the deception of idolatry, crying out to the Master: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Sapricius, who kept not Thy laws, O Savior, hath been stripped of Thy divine grace; and, going over to Thine enemies, the wretched one hath been deprived of the glory of Thy martyrs. Wherefore, marveling at Thy just providence, we cry out to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Triadicon: **T**he beginningless Father, the Author of all, is Light. The Word is Light. The Holy Spirit is Light. The Three-Sunned Godhead, which shineth forth ineffably from the Father, as from a wellspring, from before all ages, is known in one Essence, Power and Glory.

Theotokion: **O** most pure one, He Who within thee hath become wholly united to mankind doth renew all mankind, without leaving the bosom of the Father; for, deigning to dwell in thy womb, in the richness of His tender compassions, He voluntarily impoverished Himself, enriching the world with divinity.

ODE V

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

With the torrents of thy blood springing forth like the four principal divine virtues, thou hast watered the garden of the Church, O blessed Nicephorus; and from thence we draw forth divine gifts for our souls.

The sower of malice captured the wretched one through remembrance of wrongs; but the Author of goodness and peace drew forth, in his place, the divinely wise martyr Nicephorus, who is adorned by the vision of the light of God.

Emulating Thy voluntary suffering, O Savior, the divinely wise one hath been sanctified; for, sprinkled with drops which fall from Thy side, he offereth unto Thee the streams of his own blood, approaching Thee beheaded by the sword.

Triadicon: **K**nowing Orthodoxy to be the foundation of salvation, we profess in three Hypostases the co-beginningless Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the one Godhead, one Essence, one Will, and one Activity.

Theotokion: **N**oetically the assembly of the prophets learned of thy mysteries, for the Master showed thee to be the portal of heaven on earth; and, incarnate of thee, O Virgin, the Sun of righteousness hath shone forth upon those in darkness.

ODE VI

Irmos: **T**he abyss of my sins and the storm of my transgressions * disquieten me and thrust me down * into the depths of despondency; * but do Thou stretch forth Thy mighty arm, * unto me as Thou didst to Peter, * and save me, O my Guide.

Heal thou the wounds of my heart, O divinely wise Nicephorus, and, dispelling the gloom of the passions, drive it away with the beams of the divine radiance which lieth within thee, entreating Christ the Redeemer, O blessed one.

Calmly traversing the tempest of the threefold waves of idolatry with the sail of the Cross and the winds of the Spirit, O invincible martyred passion-bearer Nicephorus, thou hast attained unto the calm haven of Christ.

Thou didst suffer in martyrdom and truly become a victor, mightily destroying the machinations of the serpent; and having shared in the sufferings of the Master, O blessed one, thou hast now been glorified as is meet.

Theotokion: The noetic hosts of the angels stand in awe, marveling as they behold Him, Who is with the Father and the Spirit from before all ages, born in the flesh, of thy womb, as a Babe, O most pure Birthgiver of God.

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: “Today the Virgin ...”:

Soaring aloft in the love of the Lord, O glorious one, * and taking His glorious Cross upon thy shoulder, * thou didst put to shame the wiles of the devil, * suffering even unto death, * and hast been shown to be a bearer of the trophy of truth, * a warrior and initiate of the mysteries ** of the grace of God.

Ikos: Thou didst manifestly love the teaching of Paul and having planted it in thy breast, O glorious one, thou didst cry aloud: “Love doth not vaunt itself! The perfect Creator of mankind hath given it to us. For the sake of love He endured all: the nails and the Cross, vinegar and spittle; with a spear His holy side was pierced, and hath thereby poured forth upon us His divine blood and water.” And having desired Him, thou hast been shown to be a victor, a warrior by profession, and an initiate of the mysteries of the grace of God.

ODE VII

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

For thee death was a departure from the things of this world, O blessed Nicephorus, and ascending into heaven and the things of heaven, thou hast joined chorus with the angels, and doth now chant: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Strengthened by the suffering of the Almighty, O divinely wise one, thou didst cast down to the ground high-mindedness and the brow of superiority as weakness, crying out to the Creator: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Running, Nicephorus finished the race of martyrdom, his heart enlarged through the activity of the divine Spirit; and now he fervently crieth out to Thee, O Master: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Triadicon: Knowing Thee, the Father, to be the first and beginningless Mind, Who begat the co-beginningless Word without suffering and outside of time, and Who brought forth the all-holy Spirit, we cry aloud: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Thou wast both Virgin and Mother, O pure Birthgiver of God, ineffably conceiving God in thy womb, Who was incarnate of thee and is known in two natures, having dwelt on earth as both God and man.

ODE VIII

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

Signed with the grace of the Savior, when called thou didst set thyself apart for the contest, O martyr of Christ; and gaining victory over the adversary, thou wast adorned with crowns of victory, chanting in a godly manner: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Sanctified by water and the Spirit, O all-blessed Nicephorus, and stained with the blood of thy martyrdom, as a true martyr of Christ God thou hast acquired radiant splendor, wherein thou dost now cry aloud: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Triadicon: With the incorporeal ranks ye children bless, ye priests hymn, and ye people supremely exalt throughout all ages, the one eternally-flowing Source of goodness: the unbegotten, beginningless and supremely perfect Godhead, the Creator and King of all,

Theotokion: More holy than the heavenly ranks of angels wast thou, O all-hymned Theotokos; for, by thy virginal womb which kneweth not wedlock, thou hast given birth unto the Creator and Lord: God incarnate in one Hypostasis and two Natures, without commingling or change.

ODE IX

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

Clad, like a bridegroom, in garments woven from the blood of torments, O most blessed Nicephorus, thou didst depart to partake of the divine splendor of the Benefactor of all, Who adorned and embellished thee with His honored suffering on the Cross.

Thou wast drawn by the comeliness of the Master, of which there is none more comely; and yearning to delight in His never-waning and wondrous splendor, aflame with the love of thy Lord, thou didst urge the tormenters to cut off thy head with the sword, O Nicephorus.

Having contended splendidly against deception and vanquished it as victorious, O glorious martyr of Christ, thou didst receive the gift of a Crown for thy head, and as a martyr having joined chorus with the choirs of the martyrs, thou dost stand before the throne of the King of all, O Nicephorus.

Triadicon: **G**lorifying the Son, Who was divinely begotten of the unbegotten Father, and the holy Spirit, Who proceedeth from Him from before all ages, we honor the three Hypostases of the transcendent and reigning Trinity, united in a threefold Unity; and theologizing, we magnify God.

Theotokion: **T**hou hast been shown, O Virgin Mother of God, to have given birth, in a manner transcending nature, to the supremely good Word, Whom the Father begat from before all ages, in that He is good. Him do we now also understand as transcending all flesh, though He wrapped Himself in the flesh.

Exapostilarion in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: “The heavens with the stars ...”:

Thou wast shown to be a true namesake of victory, O Nicephorus, having vanquished the tyrants by thy love and thy torments. Wherefore, thou hast received from the Lord a crown of victory.

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

By thy mighty protection, O pure one, * preserve all of us, thy servants unharmed, * by the attacks of enemies; ** for thee alone do we have as our refuge in times of need.

AT LITURGY

Troparion of the martyr, in Tone IV:

In his sufferings, Thy martyr Nicephorus O Lord, * received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God; * for, possessed of Thy might, * he set at naught the tyrants and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. ** By his supplications save Thou our souls.

Kontakion of the martyr, in Tone I:

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Another Kontakion, in Tone III:

Soaring aloft in the love of the Lord, O glorious one, * and taking His glorious Cross upon thy shoulder, * thou didst put to shame the wiles of the devil, * suffering even unto death, * and hast been shown to be a bearer of the trophy of truth, * a warrior and initiate of the mysteries ** of the grace of God.