

TRIODION

FIRST WEEK OF LENT: SATURDAY MATINS

The usual beginning, with the Six psalms, the great Litany:

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion to St Theodore, in Tone II:

Great are the achievements of faith! * The holy martyr Theodore rejoiced in the fountain of the flames * as though in the still waters of rest; * consumed in the fire, he was offered as a sacrifice to the Trinity. ** By his intercessions, O Christ God, save Thou our souls. (Twice)

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

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension, * O Theotokos; * for, thy purity sealed and thy virginity intact, * thou art known to be a true Mother, having given birth unto God. ** Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Then followeth the 1st chanting of the Psalter (Kathisma XVI). Followed by the Sessional Hymns of the holy martyrs, in the Tone of the week. Then followeth the 2nd chanting of the Psalter (Kathisma XVII) and:

Sessional Hymn, in Tone III:

Burning with orthodox faith, thou didst squelch the delusion of false teaching, * and destroy the godless idols, * and being sacrificed as a whole burnt offering to God, * thou dost bring joy to the ends of the earth by thy miracles, * O glorious martyr Pray thou to Christ God ** that we be granted great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone III:

The Lord, who strengthened thee in thy sufferings, * hath given thee to all the inhabited earth as a divine gift. * O martyr Theodore, thou who healest the diseases of our soul * and doth conquer the passions of our body, ** pray to Christ God that we be granted great mercy.

Both now ..., in Tone III:

O most pure Virgin, thou hast carried within thy womb * the uncontainable God, who shone forth before all ages from the Father, * the hypostatic Word and consubstantial Son. * With the prophets and the martyrs, * with the holy monks, the ascetics and the righteous, ** entreat Him that we be granted the remission of our transgressions.

Psalm 50, followed by the Canon to the patron saint of the Church (or Monastery) with 6 Troparia, and the two canons to St Theodore with 8 Troparia, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Canon of the temple, then:

First canon, by John, Metropolitan of Euchaita;

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.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

He who transcendeth all things hath set thee higher than all His elect, for thou hast given birth to Him ineffably. Therefore today, O all-hymned Virgin, we bring before thee the crowned passion-bearer, and we sing his praises.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Great among martyrs, the illustrious and renowned one, is famed for his miracles from one end of the earth to the other. Therefore I hymn the praises of Theodore

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

A day of gladness hath dawned in the season of mourning, and with its light it hath dispersed the gloominess thereof. Through the grace of the holy martyr, it heralds from afar the coming feast.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

With the blood of holy sacrifice the Lord purifieth the Church. Wherefore He who was Himself offered in sacrifice, hath accepted the sacrifice of the martyr who suffered for the sake of His divine glory.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Out of season but with splendor, we keep this festival while fasting. For, the Lady who beautifieth all things, doth now share in the memorial of the martyr, who endured with the shedding of his blood.

Second canon, by the same John 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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O God, who art truly wonderful in Thy saints, in Thy mercy O Christ fill me with wonder; and grant me the words whereby I may praise Thy martyr.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O Passion-bearer of Christ, thou didst show thyself to be steadfast in suffering and unflinching in affliction; and do thou now be swift, O Theodore, in coming to our aid.

Glory ..., The tyrant wickedly rejected from the depths of his soul the pious faith of the fathers, and desiring to embark on an unholy plan, he set himself at enmity with God.

Both now ..., The prophecies spoken by God through holy men of old have been manifest clearly in thee, O Mother and Virgin: for by a birth fearful and transcending nature thou hast borne the true God.

Katavasia: 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.

ODE III

Canon of the temple, then:

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The people of Christ, long to see the day of thy Son; to symbolize this O Lady, they celebrate this present festival, honoring thee and thy glorious passion-bearer.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Victorious over the best of the multifarious Idols, the greatest among martyrs turneth the sorrow of this present season into joy, granting us relief from the weariness of the holy Fast.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Fitting and appropriate is the gift which thou wast granted O martyr; of which thou callest us to partake in part thereof, wherefore we joyfully offer thee our gifts of praise.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Thou didst lay a good foundation through thy victory, O glorious martyr; for with courage transcending nature thou didst overthrow the beast of destruction, which breathed fire and murder.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Raging as fiercely as the apostate of old, the new apostate sprinkled the blood of pagan sacrifices on the market food, polluting it as though with poison. But the plan of the cursed one failed, outwitted by the martyr.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

The whole earth, O Virgin, is filled with the knowledge of the Lord who came forth into the world from thee; and great is the grace of the divine martyrs who have confirmed the truth through their lives.

Second canon

Irmos: There 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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Of old the deceiver whispered into the ears of Eve, and through her beguiled Adam by deceit; and now he once again poureth forth the wicked poison of his deceit.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Bearing hatred and filled with rage against those who lived righteously; the deceiver sought opportunity to act upon his wicked hatred of them.

Glory ..., We have entered now upon the beginning days of the Fast, when every Christian purifieth himself by great abstinence.

Both now ..., O all-holy Virgin, firm hope of the world, our protection and Mediatrix; O good one, turn not away from the prayer of us thy servants, who with love ever call thee blessed.

Katavasia: 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.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

Putting on the whole armor of God, thou didst overthrow the falsehood of the idols, wherefore the angels glorify thy struggles. With thy mind on fire with divine love, thou didst bravely scorn death in the flames. Rightly art thou named “The gift of God”, for unto all who ask, O passion-bearer Theodore, thou dost grant divine gifts and healing. Beseech Christ God, that we who with love celebrate thy holy memory be granted the remission of sins.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Thou wast not weakened by the flattery of Maximian; but, imbued with courage by the words of Christ, by fire thou didst reduce the temple of the idols to ashes. Having bravely overcome the adversary, thou didst pass through the fire, as sayeth the Psalmist, as though through water. Therefore, as a just reward

for all thy sufferings, O passion-bearer Theodore, thou hast become a source of healing. Beseech Christ God, that we who with love celebrate thy holy memory may be granted the remission of sins.

Both now ..., in Tone VIII:

As the all-immaculate Bride of the Creator, * Mother of the Redeemer, who knewest not a man, * and as the receptacle of the Comforter O all-hymned one, * hasten thou to deliver me, * the vile abode of iniquity and noetic plaything of the demons, * from their evil machinations; * and make me the bright dwelling-place of the virtues, * O thou incorrupt light-bearing one. * Drive away the clouds of the passions and grant that, * by thy supplications, * I may receive a portion on high ** and share in the never-waning light.

ODE IV

Canon of the temple, then:

Irmos: He who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, * Jesus the true God, * is come in a swift cloud * and with His sinless hands he hath saved those who cry: * Glory to Thy power, O Christ.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O new and marvelous union and intermingling! By His birth the God-Man hath united virginity with childbearing; and honoring His martyr, He hath united a day of gladness with the days of mourning.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

See how Christ's soldier loved his Master! For in his zeal he consumed the enemies of Christ with fire. And as his final feat he eagerly offered himself as an acceptable sacrifice.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The Passion-bearer was triumphant in sufferings, and in his speech scornful of torture, and astonishing his onlookers, he became a strange and marvelous spectacle to the whole of creation.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O what forbearance! My God and Master suffered even after death, yet not one of His bones was broken. So it was with His soldier: the fire and the wheel touched not his dead body.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Dying with the Master, the servants of life, having been raised with Him from the dead, now live with Him eternally. Together with the Son, they glorify the Mother, blessing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Second canon

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The plot devised by the most impure ruler was truly strange: for he thought he could defile the people of Christ with unclean food.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The plan of the transgressor was put into effect: all the clean foods were taken away, and replaced with food that had been polluted with sacrificial blood.

Glory ..., **T**his became known and spoken of by all Christians; and having learned of it, they gathered in the holy temple of the Lord.

Both now ..., **S**he who gave birth to Thee, begotten of the Father before all ages, do we the faithful set before Thee as an intercessor O Christ. Hearken unto her prayers and be gracious to Thy servants.

Katavasia: He who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, * Jesus the true God, * is come in a swift cloud * and with His sinless hands he hath saved those who cry: * Glory to Thy power, O Christ.

ODE V

Canon of the temple, then:

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Today the entranceway to grace hath been opened, for the present time of rest doth prefigure the coming feast of the Resurrection, while radiantly honoring the Queen of Light and the glorious martyr.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

God hath bestowed a glorious gift on those who love the revealing of the appearance of His beloved Son; Theodore the accomplisher of the wonderful deeds of the Creator, and the Power of things divine.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O enemy of mankind's salvation, useless were thy shafts and arrows against the martyr. Though put to death, he is alive and ever-watchful; and, opposing all thine evil works, he saveth every Orthodox Christian.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Strange was the miracle that came to pass in God's Handmaiden! Confirmed by the sufferings of the passion-bearers, it is accepted with undoubting faith, and it remaineth forever the wonderment and worship of the faithful.

Second canon

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The Archbishop was overcome with amazement, when he learned of the plan of the ungodly one; celebrating an all-night vigil, he prayed to God that He not utterly abandon the people of His inheritance.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

In truth God came swiftly to the aid of those who invoked Him with sincere and fervent prayer; and did not neglect them, but quickly granted them to fashion a resolution.

Glory ..., **W**ith all speed a helper was sent from on high to the earth, the passion-bearer Theodore: Appearing in a dream to the Chief Shepherd he told him how to defeat the plan of the lawless one.

Both now ..., **N**o one who fervently fleeth to thee for help, O Lady, is ever put to shame: but asking for grace, he speedily receiveth the reward unto his spiritual benefit.

Katavasia: 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.

ODE VI

Canon of the temple, then:

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The friends and children of Thy bridal chamber cannot fast, O Savior, since they have Thee the Bridegroom in their midst, together with Thy Mother and Thy friend; they welcome Thee as a guest, and minister to Thee.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The wicked one fell away from the God of salvation; he fell away from wisdom; and with madness rose up against the faith. But his plans were thwarted by those of the illustrious one.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Having suffered, the martyr became more wise, through his actions more courageous; resisting the tyrants, he gained victory, and even after death ceased not from righting wrongs.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Having been delivered this day O Lady, from soul-destroying peril through the miracles of thy passion-bearer, in accordance with thy divine providence, we render thanks to him and thee alike.

Second canon

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Awed by the strange vision in which thou didst appear to him, the Archbishop said: “Who art thou, my lord, that speakest to me? Enlighten and teach me, how I may find speedy help.”

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Theodore replied: “I am a passion-bearer. Take heed! Boil wheat, and distribute it among the people, and ye shall thus be saved from the polluted food of the punisher.”

Glory ..., Great is the wonder which thou hast performed, and marvelous is thy help O Theodore. Taking courage then, we turn to thee for refuge, and we beseech thee: Save thou thy servants.

Both now ..., Through the good pleasure of the Father, and by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon thee, thou wast made the dwelling-place of the Light, the pure tabernacle of the Word: do thou guide me with thy light.

Katavasia: 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.

Kontakion of the holy great-martyr, in Tone VIII;

The faith of Christ didst thou carry as a shield within thy heart, * trampling underfoot the power of the enemy * O greatly-suffering martyr; as one unconquerable ** thou hast received a heavenly and eternal crown.

Ikos: O Thou who art seated on the throne of light, with faith and with thankfulness we sing Thy praises. For Thou hast granted us a divine gift: the courageous one in his sufferings - august Theodore, thrice-blessed in his life, as a champion of the truth, who with pious devotion held fast to Christ; a mighty victor over the deceitful enemy, as one unconquerable.

SYNAXARION READING

Verse: The Recruit entertaineth the city with the nourishment of Kollyva, Thereby rendering the polluted delicacies ineffective.

When Julian the Apostate, who ruled over the Empire after Constantios, the son of Constantine the Great, had departed from Christ to idolatry, a mighty persecution was stirred up against Christians, both openly and secretly. Refraining from inflicting savage or inhuman punishments on them, the ungodly Emperor tempted the Christians in the following way: feeling shame, and at the same time suspecting that more might be added to their numbers if he persecuted them openly, the crafty and impious man plotted somehow to pollute them secretly. Observing that our Christian race purifies itself and devotes itself to God more during the First Week of the Fast, he summoned the Eparch of the city and ordered him to remove the food that was usually for sale and to set out other comestibles in the marketplace, namely bread and beverages, having first mixed these with the blood from his sacrificial offerings, polluting them in the process, so that, when the Christians purchased them during the Fast, they might be defiled rather than cleansed. The Eparch carried

out his order immediately and set out all over the marketplace the food and drink that had been polluted with blood from the sacrifices. But the all-seeing eye of God, Who catches the wise of this world in their cleverness and ever provides for us, His servants, destroyed the loathsome devices directed against us by the Apostate. He dispatched His Great Trophy-bearer, Theodore the Recruit, to Evdoxios, the Archbishop of the city, who had obtained this office improperly. Standing before Evdoxios, not in a dream, but while he was awake, St. Theodore spoke words such as these: “Arise with all speed and gather together the flock of Christ, and order them under no circumstances to buy any of the items set out in the marketplace; for they have been polluted by the most impious Emperor with blood from his sacrificial offerings.” Puzzled by this, the Archbishop asked: “And how can those who do not have abundant provisions in their homes easily avoid buying food from the marketplace?” “Provide them with Kollyva,” the Saint replied, “to relieve them in their time of need.” Puzzled again, and not knowing what Kollyva was, Evdoxios asked the Saint for an explanation. The great Theodore replied: “It is boiled wheat; for this is what we are accustomed to calling it in Evchaïta.” When the Archbishop inquired who precisely this provider for the Christian people might be, the Saint answered: “I am Theodore, the Martyr of Christ, Who has just now sent me to aid you.” The Archbishop arose at once and announced what he had seen to the multitude. By acting thus, he preserved Christ’s flock unharmed by the machination of their enemy, the Apostate. When Julian saw that his trickery had been exposed, that he had accomplished nothing, and that he had been sufficiently put to shame, he ordered the usual comestibles to be put back in the marketplace. At the end of the week, the Christian people gave thanks to their benefactor, the Martyr, and joyously celebrated his memorial on this Saturday with Kollyva. Ever since then, and up until now, we faithful revive this miracle, lest the Martyr’s great deed become forgotten with the passage of time, and celebrate the memory of the Great Theodore with Kollyva.

By his intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen

ODE VII

Canon of the temple, then:

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Thou hast said O just Master, that Thy righteous servants are not bound by the Law. Wherefore Thine own Mother and Thy servant, the worker of many miracles, by the radiance of their memorial, release us today from the laws of fasting.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

How sweet, how great and joyful is this present feast, which the greatest and most glorious of the martyrs hath established for us. He who through a single miracle kept the people of Christ pure from defilement.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Having withstood the wickedness of the serpent, let us with songs of triumph and garlands of praise honor him who prevailed against the enemy, who destroyeth the soul and defileth the living body.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

The ancestor of mankind, though forewarned, did not flee the soul-destroying food. But thy faithful people instructed by thy martyr, turned away from the all-deadly food; and with him they offer thee, O Lady, a sacrifice of salvific thanksgiving.

Second canon

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Thou didst appear, O glorious saint, as a cloud quenching the flames of sadness, saving from the furnace of the tyrant all the faithful who cry: “O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O lawless king, in shame let thy lips, which conceived a lawless plot against us, be sealed; for thy strength hath been destroyed by the King of Kings and Lord of all.

Glory ..., **O** Foolish Julian, thy heart altogether filled with evil, plotting against our wise God, deceitfully scheming against us who chant praises unto Him, Who granteth us His grace.

Both now ..., Thy conceiving is beyond all words, and thy childbearing transcends all understanding, O all-immaculate Virgin: for thou hast given birth in the flesh to God who saveth all mankind from corruption. Therefore, O blessed Theotokos, we glorify thee.

Katavasia: 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.

ODE VIII

Canon of the temple, then:

Irmos: O almighty Redeemer of all, * having descended and bedewed the children * in the midst of the flame, * Thou didst teach them to sing: * All ye works bless and hymn the Lord.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

By thy childbearing thou hast filled heaven and earth with joy; and now, in the time of abstinence, grant festive grace unto thy servant, who radiantly observes the feast.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O ye men, let us keep the Sabbath today, resting from our labors of the past days: for God blessed the day of rest, as now He does also with the solemn feast of the martyr.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Truly this is the first among Sabbaths, the Sabbath of Sabbaths; it is filled with the grace of the martyr and the power of the Divinity, for we celebrate the memorial of a great deliverance.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

With the holy food of God the King, the pure one delivered us from the polluted food of the lawless one; and in such a marvelous manner, miraculously sanctified the seventh day of the week.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

The voluntary death of the martyrs confirms the mystery brought to pass in thee, O Maiden. For they put their trust in God incarnate, who willingly accepted suffering, and bravely offered themselves in sacrifice. “

Second canon

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

By the divine power thou wast delivered from the flames, O martyr Theodore, and now by thy divine protection thou dost save us from the wicked schemes of the transgressor.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Thy servants wept and lamented in the evening, because of the evil snare of the apostate. But joy shone forth in the morning through thy fervent aid, O long-suffering martyr.

Refrain: Let us bless the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the Lord!

When we fall into danger, we find thee to be a deliverer who saveth us from the machinations of the enemy, O Theodore, passion-bearer of Christ, and we glorify thee throughout all ages.

Both now ..., The mind of man is powerless to express the mystery of thy childbearing, O pure Virgin; therefore with reverent faith we honor thee as the Theotokos and we glorify thee throughout all ages.

Verse: We praise, bless and worship the Lord, singing and exalting him throughout all ages!

Katavasia: 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.

And then we chant the Hymn of the most holy Theotokos (the Magnificat)

ODE IX

Canon of the temple, then:

Irmos: Thy birthgiving was revealed to be incorrupt, * God came forth from thy womb, * and He appeared upon earth in mortal flesh * and dwelt among mankind; * Wherefore we all magnify thee, O Theotokos.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Multitudes from every place run to the ark of testimony, to the indwelling grace of him who outshineth all other martyrs in glory, and whom with the Sovereign Lady, we magnify.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

O Church of Christ, be ye strengthened in the face of those who fight in vain against thee. For the friends of Christ, living and departed, take care for thee, as did the courageous one, whose feast thou keepest with thanksgiving.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Thought to be long since dead, his deeds show him to be alive even after his repose, protecting the faith with the same zeal as before. He who hath enriched us, our benefactor, do we magnify.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Like a Book of God sealed as with a divine seal by my hymns: I offer thee my praises, O Virgin, thereby giving greater glory to thy martyr.

Second canon

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.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

Thou hast been shown to be a faithful champion O glorious martyr, and a strong defense unto us who now honor thy holy and eternal memory, the struggles of thy suffering, and the divine protection brought unto us.

Refrain: Holy great martyr Theodore pray to God for us.

The all-blessed miracle accomplished by thee is praised in all the world O blessed Theodore: therefore, gathering at this yearly festival, we give glory to Christ who hath glorified thee.

Glory ..., Seeing the love of those who sing thy praises, O martyr of Christ, grant them in return an increase in grace. Knowing how great is our faith, O most glorious one: cease not to show thyself to be a fervent intercessor before God on our behalf.

Both now ..., We shall not cease to sing thy praises, O Virgin: thou art our helper and protection, our swift support, our defender who can never be put to shame. Do thou ever keep thy servants from every harm, and deliver them from every wile of the evil one.

Katavasia: 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.

Exapostilarion of the holy great-martyr, in Tone III:

O crowned Saint, thou who standest now with the angels * before the judgment-seat of Christ: * Filled with the light of heaven, O passion-bearer, * intercede without ceasing for the peace of the whole world, * and for the salvation of us who reverently celebrate Thine effulgent memory, ** O spiritually rich martyr Theodore. (Twice)

Both now ..., Theotokion:

Wishing to restore the fallen world from corruption, * the Lord came to dwell within thy womb, O Theotokos, * as He alone knoweth. * And all of us who have found salvation cry aloud to thee the Angel's greeting: * Rejoice! all-hymned one, * most blessed among women, ** for thou hast brought forth joy to the whole world.

On the Praises. 4 Stichera of the holy great-martyr, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of Heaven ...":

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

O ye faithful, let us gather with one accord * and praise in mystical hymns the champion of the heavenly army, * the long-suffering warrior of our holy faith; * let us say "O wondrous martyr of Jesus, ** pray thou on behalf of us who honor thee."

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

In truth, thou art named "The gift of God" * O thrice-blessed Theodore, * for thou hast been given as a comforter to all those in affliction: * For all they who in sincerity draw near thy shrine worshipping Christ, ** receive with joy the reward of thy miracles.

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

By thy struggles of suffering * thou hast treasured up for thyself the riches and glory of holiness, * offering all thy strength as a gift acceptable to God, * and in those struggles ** fulfilling with eagerness thy God-given name.

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

Let us rejoice with the most radiant solemnity of the divine martyr; * and let us all who love to keep the feasts faithfully rejoice, * as we honor the joyful celebration of his death. * Let us sing in praise of Jesus, ** who hath glorified his memory.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O Theodore, in thy wisdom * thou hast shown thyself to the world to be a gift of holiness, * a treasury of divine life. * Wisely hath Christ glorified thy memory; * and rejoicing in thy feast, we the faithful with one accord, ** praise thy labors and thy sufferings.

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 Sovereign Lady, with the holy apostles, ** that He have mercy upon our souls.

On the Aposticha, of the holy great-martyr, in Tone IV:

Now the company of martyrs * rejoiceth at thy shrine, O passion-bearer Theodore, * and the ranks of angels extol thy fortitude in suffering. * Christ Himself, the Giver of crowns is present, * and with His right hand He granteth rich gifts of grace to those * who sing thy praises. * Thou didst seek and find Him whom thou didst desire, * and now that thou dwellest in His presence, * thou dost ever converse with Him. ** Beseech Him, that He save and enlighten our souls.

Verse: The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, * and shall hope in Him

The pure and undefiled Fast hath now begun, * and bringeth us to the celebration of the martyr's miracles. * Through the Fast our souls are cleansed from defilement, * and through the martyr's miracles and sufferings we are granted strength * to fight courageously against the passions. * Illumined, therefore, by the grace of holy abstinence * and by the wonders worked by Theodore the martyr, * we are strengthened by our faith in Christ, ** and beseech Him to grant salvation to our souls.

Verse: The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree: * and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Lebanon

O Theodore, since thou dost possess a martyr's boldness before God, * thou didst bring to nothing the vain scheme * devised by the apostate against the faith of Christ. * Fighting as a champion in defense of good and honorable people, * through an awesome visitation thou didst deliver them * from food defiled by sacrifice to idols. * Wherefore we honor thee as a destroyer of idols, * as a savior and guardian of Christ's flock, * and as a protector ever ready to hearken to our supplications; * in our hymns of praise we ask that, through thine intercessions, ** forgiveness and illumination may be granted to our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Through thy sufferings thou wast armed with good courage, * O passion-bearer of Christ, * and by His power thou didst mystically defend holy worship. * Thou didst render the impious idols * and the cruel tyrant powerless, * scorning torments and the fire that burneth for but a moment. * In both name and reality thou art a Godly gift: ** by thine intercessions do thou save those who celebrate thy memory.

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

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

Then: It is good to give thanks unto the Lord ..., Trisagion through Our Father .., then:

Troparion to the holy great-martyr, in Tone II;

Great are the achievements of faith! * The holy martyr Theodore rejoiced in the fountain of the flames * as though in the still waters of rest; * consumed in the fire, he was offered as a sacrifice to the Trinity. ** By his intercessions, O Christ God, save Thou our souls.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II;

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension, * O Theotokos; * for, thy purity sealed and thy virginity intact, * thou art known to be a true Mother, having given birth unto God. ** Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Litany: Have mercy upon us ...,

Priest: For a merciful God art Thou, and the Lover of mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Priest: He that is blessed, Christ our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. O Heavenly King, strengthen Orthodox Christians, establish the Faith, subdue the nations, give peace to the world, keep well this city (or habitation, or town); settle our departed fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous, and receive us in penitence and confession, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Then the reader immediately begineth the first hour.

AT THE LITURGY

On the Beatitudes we chant 4 Troparia from ODE III of the first canon, and 4 Troparia from ODE VI of the second canon of the holy great-martyr.

The people of Christ, long to see the day of thy Son; to symbolize this O Lady, they celebrate this present festival, honoring thee and thy glorious passion-bearer.

Victorious over the best of the multifarious Idols, the greatest among martyrs turneth the sorrow of this present season into joy, granting us relief from the weariness of the holy Fast.

Fitting and appropriate is the gift which thou wast granted O martyr; of which thou callest us to partake in part thereof, wherefore we joyfully offer thee our gifts of praise.

Thou didst lay a good foundation through thy victory, O glorious martyr; for with courage transcending nature thou didst overthrow the beast of destruction, which breathed fire and murder.

Awed by the strange vision in which thou didst appear to him, the Archbishop said: "Who art thou, my lord, that speakest to me? Enlighten and teach me, how I may find speedy help."

Theodore replied: "I am a passion-bearer. Take heed! Boil wheat, and distribute it among the people, and ye shall thus be saved from the polluted food of the punisher."

Glory ..., Great is the wonder which thou hast performed, and marvelous is thy help O Theodore. Taking courage then, we turn to thee for refuge, and we beseech thee: save thou thy servants.

Both now ..., Through the good pleasure of the Father, and by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon thee, thou wast made the dwelling-place of the Light, the pure tabernacle of the Word: do thou guide me with thy light.

Troparion of the holy great-martyr, in Tone II;

Great are the achievements of faith! * The holy martyr Theodore rejoiced in the fountain of the flames * as though in the still waters of rest; * consumed in the fire, he was offered as a sacrifice to the Trinity. ** By his intercessions, O Christ God, save Thou our souls.

Kontakion of the holy great-martyr, in Tone VIII;

The faith of Christ didst thou carry as a shield within thy heart, * trampling underfoot the power of the enemy * O greatly-suffering martyr; as one unconquerable ** thou hast received a heavenly and eternal crown.

Prokeimenon, in Tone VII;

Prokeimenon: The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, * and shall hope in Him.

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

EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO THE HEBREWS (1 : 1 - 12.)

Brethren: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

2nd EPISTLE OF ST PAUL TO TIMOTHY (2: 1 - 10)

My child Timothy: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of

the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Alleluia, in Tone IV:

Verse: The righteous man shall flourish like a palm tree; * and like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied.

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

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK (2:23 - 3:5).

At that time: Jesus went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN (15:17 - 16:2).

The Lord spake unto His disciples saying: These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because

ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Communion verse: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be: he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. Alleluia...,