

THE 5th DAY OF THE MONTH OF JANUARY

FOREFEAST OF THE THEOPHANY

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS THEOPEMPTUS & THEONAS

COMMEMORATION OF THE VENERABLE SYNCLETICA

AT VESPERS

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

Spec. Mel.: “As one valiant among the martyrs ...”:

Let us hymn * the wise Theonas and Theopemptus * for, submitting to the dogmas of Christ, * and having splendidly set at naught all ungodly worship, * they worshiped the one Lord and God * in holiness, honor and goodly hope, * right boldly confessing Him * before the tyrants; ** wherefore they have been crowned from on high.

Having forsaken as fleeting * those things of life which drag men downwards, * the delight of food * and glory which fadeth like a flower, O all-praised ones, * ye cleaved unto Christ, * enkindled by His comely beauty, * and offered yourselves to Him as sweet-smelling roses, * and have been divinely crowned ** with the diadem of the incorrupt kingdom.

Having hated the world * ye have been shown to transcend the world, * and have joined the Church of the firstborn; * and with the angels ye chant incorrupt hymnody, * standing together before God. * And having rejected * the vile delusion of idolatry, * as martyrs ye have put to shame ** the mindlessness of the tyrants.

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

Spec. Mel.: “Joy of the ranks of heaven ...”:

Having truly desired the glory of the fathers, * thou didst love incorrupt glory; * wherefore, forsaking that which is sweet, * thou gavest thy body over to all manner of pain. * And, reigning with Christ, ** thou now receivest the reward of thy pangs.

He Who permitted the devil when he asked to tempt Job, * desiring to try thee like gold, * left thy body to the violence of the evil one; * but having put the tempter to shame * by the patient endurance of infirmities, ** thou hast been crowned with a wreath of victory.

Yearning for the comely beauty of Christ the Bridegroom, * and desiring to wed thyself to Him * by all manner of good works, * thou didst adorn thyself with the pangs of abstinence; * wherefore, thou now reignest with Him ** in His bridal-chamber.

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Make ready, O River Jordan! For, lo! Christ God cometh to be baptized by John, that in thy waters He might crush the heads of the invisible serpents by His divinity! Rejoice, O desert of Jordan! Ye mountains, leap up with gladness; for our eternal Life cometh to restore Adam! O forerunner John, thou art the voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare ye the ways of the Lord and make straight His paths!”

On the Aposticha, these Stichera of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: “On the third day ...”:

O earth, and ye that are above the earth, * leap up and rejoice! * the Torrent of sweetness * is baptized in the river, * drying up the outpouring of malice; ** and He poureth forth divine forgiveness.

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

As the Bestower of light * Jesus hath no need to be baptized, * yet He cometh in the flesh to the streams of the Jordan, * desiring to enlighten those * who are in darkness. ** With fervor let us greet Him with faith!

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

Having assumed the guise of a servant, * thou comest to be baptized by a servant, * in the streams of the Jordan, O Christ, * delivering us from bondage * to the ancient sin, ** sanctifying and illumining us.

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

Let the desert of Jordan rejoice, and let it blossom like a lily; for therein hath been heard the voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord!” For He Who set forth the mountains with a measure and the forested places with His scales, Who as God filleth all things, is baptized by a servant, granting rich gifts at the beginning of His impoverishment. Eve once heard: “In pain thou shalt give birth to children”; but now the Virgin hath heard: “Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee, Who hath great mercy!”

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

At one time the River Jordan * was turned back by the mantle of Elisha * when Elijah was borne aloft, * and the waters were parted on either side, * and the path which before was wet became dry for him, * as a true image of baptism, * whereby we pass through the flow of life. * Christ hath appeared in the Jordan ** to sanctify the waters.

AT COMPLINE

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is: “On this day I hymn the great Sabbath”. The Irmoi of each ODE are chanted twice, and the Troparia are repeated to make up the number 6; whereupon the Irmos is chanted again by both choirs together. The canon is composed in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: He Who in ancient times * hid the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, * hath drawn together and covered the streams of the Jordan, * cleansing now my humanity with purity, * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

O Lord my God, we chant holy songs and the hymnody of the forefeast unto Thee Who by Thy divine epiphany hath mystically restored us and lead us up to the divine effulgence.

Those above and those on earth were filled with awe, O Savior, beholding Thee, Who art pre-eternal above, manifesting Thyself here below, and they hymned Thy condescension which transcendeth words.

That all things might be filled with Thy glory, Thou didst abase Thyself even to assuming the guise of a servant; and now, as a servant, Thou bowest Thy head beneath the hand of a servant, purifying my physical being in Thy loving-kindness.

ODE III

Irmos: When creation beheld Thee, * Who founded the whole earth upon the waters, * covered in the flesh by the waters, * it was seized with awe, and cried aloud: * None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Of old Thou didst show forth images of Thy Theophany through the prophets, and now Thou hast spoken hidden things through Thine actions, revealing mysteries to mankind today, and granting a new regeneration.

With trembling Jordan hath spread its waters like shoulders, to receive the Creator Who is baptized bodily and sanctifieth all things, crying: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Through baptism Christ bestoweth great provision for salvation to those who sense His divine effulgence, crying with gladness: None is holy save Thee, O Lord Who lovest mankind!

ODE IV

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine arrival for baptism, * Habbakuk cried out in awe: * Thy horses are in the sea, O Savior, * troubling the many waters.

When Thou didst appear in the body, the earth was hallowed, the waters were blessed, and heaven was enlightened; and the human race was delivered from the bitter tyranny of the enemy.

As the words of God are uttered, the forerunner now cometh from the desert to the Jordan, saying: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”, summoning all to the glory of God.

He Who of old transformed the sea into dry land and caused springs of water to gush forth from an unquarried rock now accomplisheth the washing away of transgressions in the streams of the Jordan, through the fire of the Spirit.

ODE V

Irmos: Thy Theophany, O Christ, the Unwaning Light, * that mercifully came to pass for us, * Isaiah, keeping watch, beheld out of the night, * and he cried aloud: * Come, O ye who have been illumined! * Wash ye with divine water, * and manifestly cleanse your souls and bodies * by the Spirit!

Through fire and the Spirit and by water Thou makest mortals new, as the Creator and new Adam, accomplishing a strange regeneration and a wondrous restoration, making them new through God-given baptism without first breaking and melting them down.

Thou makest souls new through the Spirit, and by water dost sanctify their body, which is composed of divers parts, building up the life of man; for as the Physician of souls and bodies with wise forethought Thou appliest the remedy which each part requireth.

O Thou Who wast begotten of the Father before time began and didst issue forth from the pure one, Thou camest to him who was born of the barren woman, asking for baptism as a man; and out of water and through the Spirit Thou didst mystically make the Church, which before was childless, full of children.

ODE VI

Irmos: The divine Baptist was engulfed by fear, * but was not held fast by it: * for even though straw may wither, when it approacheth fire, * upon hearing “Suffer it to be so now”, * he hastened, like a servant, to fulfill the command; * having heard the voice from on high * bearing witness to the pre-eternal Son!

Thou didst register, yet didst not become a slave when Thou didst submit to the edicts of Caesar; for though, while granting us release from slavery, Thou dost voluntarily submit and pay his tax, yet Thou hast now freed us who before were sold under the law of sin, making us worthy of adoption.

As King of nature, Thou dost reign, yet not in earthly fashion; for even though, being born of the tribe of David according to the flesh, O Savior, Thou hast received the throne of his kingdom, yet Thou dost have Thine own dominion of kingship with the Father from before time began, and reigning forever with the Spirit.

Of old the prince of this world was also called king of those in the waters; yet he is drowned by Thy cleansing and cast down, as once was the demonic Legion in the lake, O Savior; and by Thy mighty hand Thou hast vouchsafed liberation to the work of Thy hands, which was enslaved by him.

ODE VII

Irmos: O ineffable wonder! * He Who delivered the holy Children from the fiery furnace * boweth His head and asketh baptism of a servant, * cleansing those who cry: * O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Of old the streams of the Jordan were parted by the mantle, prefiguring Thy baptism, whereby the tunic of the passions hath been rent in twain and a robe of incorruption hath been fashioned for those who cry out to God: Blessed art Thou!

Rich are the streams, for, receiving in them the Creator as He is baptized, they have been shown to be a well-spring of living water, for the salvation of us who chant: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Signifying the mortality assumed by God, we stand with Christ in the threefold immersion in the water of baptism, sharing in His resurrection on the third day, and crying out to Christ: Blessed art Thou throughout the ages!

One is the grace of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, perfecting in its bestowal those who with faith desire divine baptism and have received the authority of adoption, that they might cry aloud: Blessed art Thou, O God!

ODE VIII

Irmos Be ye astonished and afraid, O heaven, * and let the foundations of the earth be shaken; * for lo! He Who of old burnt the sacrifice of the righteous man with water * doth clothe Himself in water! * Him do ye children bless, ye priests hymn, * ye people exalt supremely throughout all ages!

Christ cometh to grant deliverance to all the faithful through baptism; for thereby He cleanseth Adam, raiseth up the fallen, putteth the fallen tyrant to shame, openeth the heavens, draweth down the divine Spirit and granteth a share in incorruption.

The deceit of the enemy hath come to an end, for the voice of one crying in the wilderness crieth: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!", and commandeth: "Make straight His paths!" For the valley, the nature of mortals, which is humbled is now exalted, and the mountains and hills, our enemies, have been cast down.

O the most glorious gifts! O the divine grace and ineffable love! For, lo! the sinless Master and Creator cleanseth me with water, enlighteneth me with fire, and maketh me perfect through the divine Spirit, clothing Himself in my nature now in the Jordan.

ODE IX

Irmos: Lament not in vain, O mankind, * choked by despair and subject to evil, * but with a compunctionate soul draw nigh * unto Him Who cleanseth all things, * for He alone is pure * and through baptism granteth forgiveness.

Before Thou didst cause wonder in thy strange and supra-natural nativity from the Virgin, O Word of God; and now, most gloriously performing a great mystery through honorable participation, we magnify the font which hath become fruitful through the divine Spirit.

The earth was hallowed by Thy holy nativity, O Word, when the heavens proclaimed Thy glory by the star; and now the nature of water is blessed as Thou art baptized in the flesh, and the race of mortals hath again entered into its primal nobility.

Let all the earth rejoice! Let heaven be glad! Let the world dance! Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the springs, the lakes and the depths of the sea rejoice together! For Christ cometh to purify and save Adam through divine baptism!

And the Irmos is chanted again.

AT MATINS

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

At one time the River Jordan * was turned back by the mantle of Elisha * when Elijah was borne aloft, * and the waters were parted on either side, * and the path which before was wet became dry for him, * as a true image of baptism, * whereby we pass through the flow of life. * Christ hath appeared in the Jordan ** to sanctify the waters. (Thrice)

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

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

Be glad, O River Jordan! For to thee doth the Creator come of His own will, to receive baptism from a servant, in that He is compassionate. Adorn thyself and dance, O Adam, and Eve our first mother! The supremely good God hath come, the deliverance of all!

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

The Master, as the Torrent of delight, cometh forth to be baptized in the river’s streams, desiring to fill me with purity through the waters; and John, beholding Him, cried aloud: “How can I stretch forth my hand to touch the head of Thee before Whom all things tremble?”

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

Spec. Mel.: “Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...”:

Clothing the nakedness of Adam in the raiment of glory, O Compassionate One, Thou desirest to strip Thyself naked in the flesh, in the River Jordan. O the most glorious wonder! How doth water receive Thee, O Lord and Master, Who coverest the floodgates with waters, as it is written? O Jesus our Benefactor, we all hymn Thine epiphany!

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

Christ our God, the great Sun Who shone forth from the Virgin, as from a cloud, cometh to shine forth in the Jordan, dispelling the darkness of sin and illumining the ends of the world. Let us pray with piety, that we may receive His effulgence, asking for great mercy.

Canon of the forefeast, with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos; that of the holy martyrs, with 4 Troparia; and that of the venerable one, with 4 Troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Irmos: **H**aving been delivered from bitter slavery, * Israel traversed the impassable as though dry land; * and beholding the enemy drowned, * they chanted unto God as to their Redeemer, * Who worketh wonders with His upraised arm, * for He hath been glorified.

Christ cometh to baptism! Christ arriveth at the Jordan! Christ now burieth our sins in the water, in that He is good! With gladness let us chant unto Him, for He hath been glorified.

Let the clouds, rejoicing, let great gladness fall! Jesus Christ cometh forth to drown the torrents of men's sin in the waters of the Jordan, granting enlightenment unto all.

Behold, the Light is revealed! Behold, purification is shown forth! Lo! the Savior standeth forth to shine rays of His divine splendor upon those in darkness! Let us joyfully embrace Him with pure thoughts.

Canon of the holy martyrs, in Tone VII:

Irmos: Let us sing a song of victory unto the Lord, * who drowned all the power of Pharaoh in the sea: * for He hath been glorified.

Come, ye faithful, and together let us celebrate on the forefeast the memorial of the athletes, glorifying Christ in spiritual hymns.

The passion-bearers of Christ and steadfast champions of the Faith, having mightily armed themselves against ungodliness, vanquished the enemy,

The ungodly and impious tyrant, alien to the Faith of Christ, having raged against the passion-bearers, hath been destroyed by their faith.

Theotokion: O Birthgiver of God, from all want do thou save the flock which thou hast acquired, making entreaty to our God and Savior.

Canon of the venerable one in Tone II:

Irmos: Come, O ye people, * let us sing a song to Christ our God, * Who divided the sea, * and made a way for the nation * which He had brought up out of the bondage of Egypt; * for He hath been glorified.

I who am senseless and wholly impure come forth to crown thy memory with hymns, setting my hope on thee: Grant me the discourse of wisdom and understanding by thy supplications.

Having taken thy whole mind up to the divine heights, and come to know the abyss of good things and the goodness of delight, thou didst endure all that befell thee.

Desiring great glory, thou gavest wings to thy mind, to soar aloft to God Most High, and through abstinence and pangs didst lighten thy body, which drew thee down toward the earth.

Theotokion: He Who became incarnate of thy womb, O Birthgiver of God, remained what He was before and bestowed upon us who were created from dust, that which we were in the beginning, delivering us from our transgressions.

ODE III

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Let no mortal boast in his wisdom or wealth, * but rather in his faith in the Lord, * crying out to Christ God in an Orthodox manner, * ever chanting: do Thou Establish me O Master, * upon the rock of Thy commandments!

Christ, Who hath been seated with the Father and the Spirit from before time began, and Who became incarnate of the Virgin in latter times, cometh to baptism, granting immortality unto all through the divine font, as He alone knoweth.

Desiring, in the tender compassion of His mercy, to bury our sins with water in the streams of the Jordan, Christ God cometh forth and by baptism restoreth us who have become corrupt.

Covering the shameful nakedness of our first father Adam, Thou hast voluntarily stripped Thyself naked, O Christ, and coverest Thyself in the streams of the Jordan, O Thou Who alone art greatly merciful, and Who coverest Thy chambers with waters.

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: My heart hath been established in the Lord; * my horn hath been exalted in my God; * my mouth hath been enlarged over the enemy; * and I am gladdened in Thy salvation.

Let us praise Theopemptus and the most glorious Theonas, the proponents of piety and faith, the divine athletes.

Having shown yourselves to be a rule, a model and an example, O great martyrs of Christ, ye became guides to martyrdom for the saints.

Zealous for their life of virtue, the martyrs who stood together with them at the tribunal, cried aloud: “We are all Christians!”

Theotokion: Thou wast ineffably born of the Virgin, O Thou Who lovest mankind, and hast revealed Thyself as was pleasing to Thee, and restored the world, O Lord.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: O Lord, who didst slay sin upon the tree, * firmly establish us in Thee, * and in the hearts of us who hymn Thee * plant the fear of Thee.

Thou didst not spare thy flesh many wounds, nor the agony of being dragged unrestrainedly to the pangs of abstinence, wherein the tempter was expelled.

Thou didst choose the narrow path which leadeth to the divine life of incorruption, spurning the wide path, of which there is truly naught worse for the mind to contemplate.

Thou didst escape the burning flower of youth by the restraints and pangs of asceticism, and with the outpourings of thy tears didst extinguish the burning of thine eyes.

Theotokion: The Word Who became incarnate of thee, O all-pure one, desiring to wash away the defilement of the flesh, amazed the water's flow with the manner of His cleansing.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "Seeking the highest ...":

O Christ, Who in Thy compassion and infinite mercy * takest away the multitude of all our transgressions, * Thou comest as a man to be baptized in the waters of the Jordan, * clothing me in the raiment of the ancient glory ** of which I was cruelly stripped bare.

Sessional Hymn of the holy martyrs, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

Theopemptus, who hath been shown to be a holy hierarch for those here below, together with the steadfast Theonas, his fellow spiritual athlete, were wounded, and cried out with joy to the torturers who were unable to bear their opposition: "I honor Thee Who alone hast buried the transgressions of mortals in the streams of the Jordan!"

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

Spec. Mel.: "The co-beginningless Word ...":

Thou hast transcended the pain of enduring ascetic feats, and dost enjoy higher mansions in the heavens and hast been filled with a greater radiance, for thou didst manfully tread the difficult path, overcoming things present, and make thyself like unto the angels, and now thou dost share in their glory.

Both now ..., Sessional Hymn of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

The great Rain cometh forth to the river's streams, desiring to be baptized in the flesh; and to Him the godly forerunner said in fear: "How can I baptize Thee Who art wholly without defilement? How can I stretch forth my hand to the head of Thee before Whom all things tremble?"

ODE IV

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Of old, Habbakuk heard wondrous report of Thee O Christ, * and cried aloud in fear: * God shall come forth from Theman, * the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, * to save His anointed ones! * **Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

Draw ye forth the water of life! For, lo! the River of peace truly cometh to dry up the turbulent waters of unbelief and to pour forth enlightenment upon those who sing to Him: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Be glad, O human nature, thou desert which before was arid with thirst! The Torrent of delight hath now appeared, freeing all from the burning heat of sin with the waters of the Jordan. To Him do we chant with faith: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

The voice of one crying forth in prophecy thundered forth unto barren minds, saying: “Prepare ye straight ways for Christ Who cometh, that He might through baptism purify us who have grown old, releasing us from our primal condemnation!”

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: I heard report of Thee * and became filled with fear; * I understood Thy works * and became filled with awe, O Lord.

Ye watered the whole world with divine discourses, O great martyrs of Christ, and set falsehood at naught.

Riches which cannot be taken away did the spiritual athletes truly find, and they spat upon wealth, glory and the fame of mortals.

Having armed themselves with the armor of Christ, therein the passion-bearers cast down all the savagery of the tyrants.

Theotokion: O pure Mother, blessed and holy Virgin, from every evil circumstance save those who hymn thee.

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 unto Thee: * Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Excelling in the beauty of thy body, thou wast spoken of by many, who did not obtain their desire. Wherefore, having laid waste to thy body, thou didst partake of divine beauty.

Like Job, thou didst endure bodily affliction and didst not protest the sentence imposed upon thee; and, transcending nature and time, thou hast received a divine habitation.

Thou didst withdraw from thy kinfolk, parents and estates, seeking Christ alone, the inexhaustible riches which cannot be taken away, and with Him thou hast been shown to be a partaker of glory on high.

Theotokion: Thine Offspring hath delivered Adam from corruption, having become like man except for corruption; for thy conceiving transcended mankind. Wherefore, O Maiden, deliver me from corruption and evils.

ODE V

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **Do** Thou shine forth O Christ, Thy never-waning light * upon the hearts of those who hymn Thee with faith, * granting us peace beyond understanding; * Whereby by Thy light we flee the night of ignorance * coming unto the day, * glorifying Thee O Lover of mankind.

As King of peace, Thou hast broken down the middle-wall of enmity, appearing to those on earth in the guise of the flesh; wherefore, beholding Thine arrival, John marveled in fear when he was commanded to place his hand upon Thee.

Hastening, Christ cometh now to crush the heads of the serpents in the waters, and crieth out to the trembling Baptist: “Stretch forth thy hand, and touch my head, and shake off thine awe, and do that which thou art commanded!”

The prophet once uttered the grace of baptism in the divine Spirit, striking the streams of the Jordan with his mantle; and they have parted, making for us a path to the divine regeneration of Christ Who hath appeared therein.

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: **Rising at dawn O Word unto Thy glory and praise, * we unceasingly hymn the image of Thy Cross, * which Thou hast bestowed upon us * as a weapon of assistance.**

The wise spiritual athletes, the warriors of the Faith, having valiantly vanquished the torments of the most iniquitous enemy, have together received crowns.

Neither inducements, nor lies, nor earthly glory were able to bring an end to your contest of faith, O spiritual athletes; wherefore, ye rejoice!

Standing before the throne of the glory of the Lord; do thou with the angels make unceasing supplication that He grant cleansing of transgressions to those who hymn you with faith.

Theotokion: O all-holy Virgin who art full of joy, and who, in a manner past description, hast given birth to the Word in time; entreat Him, that He save our souls.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: **O Lord, Bestower of light and Creator of the ages: * guide us in the light of Thy commandments, * for we know none other God than Thee.**

Thou wast a temple of the Word Who dwelleth among the pure spirits, O wise one; for thou hast illumined the beauty of thy soul with the manifold pangs of abstinence, O most glorious one.

Thou didst mortify the flesh which was robed in purple with natural grace through many pangs, making the shining image of thy soul yet brighter in radiance with the light of the virtues.

Having set the matter of thy body afire with the desire of thy soul for Christ, thou dost now truly rejoice immaterially with the immaterial angels, gazing upon God.

Theotokion: **T**he Head of the pious, Who without seed was truly born from thy womb, O all-pure one, hath now crushed the heads of the serpents who made their lair in the streams.

ODE VI

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **I** am held fast in boundless passions, * and have fallen into the sea-monster of evil; * but do Thou lead me up from corruption O God, * as once Thou didst Jonah, * and by faith grant me dispassion, * that I may offer a noetic sacrifice of praise and salvation * unto Thee.

Showing forth the loving-kindness of His compassions, the immutable Christ cometh to a servant in the guise of a servant, asking baptism, and rescuing mankind from slavery; and marveling at His coming, the forerunner stood in awe, held fast by fear.

How can the river's streams receive Thee, the unbearable Fire Who now cometh forth? How can the angels of heaven look upon Thy nakedness? How can the hand of John stretch forth to touch Thee, O beginningless Word of God, Who created him on earth?

Fleeing, the sea is parted, disclosing for the new people a divine path which He Who most gloriously poured forth water from the rock, having come in the flesh, hath made in the midst of the river. Let us glorify as God Him Who hath built up anew our former ruin.

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: **J**onah cried out from the belly of Hades: * Lead my life up from corruption! * And we cry aloud unto Thee: * O almighty Savior, have mercy on us!

Contending in the tribunal, the martyrs abolished the delusion of idolatry and rooted out all ungodliness from the earth by their martyrdom.

O glorious martyrs, the enemy and persecutor of the Faith set his minions to slay thee cruelly with swords, like lambs.

When the choir of the saints beheld the torments armed with swords, they manfully cried aloud: "We are soldiers of Christ, O tyrant!"

Theotokion: **C**ease thou never in thy supplications to our God, to Whom thou didst ineffably give birth, O Theotokos, that He deliver from misfortunes us who hymn thee, O pure Ever-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.

Illumined with the radiance of the Spirit, thou didst reject all the delight of the flesh as a thing of the night; for thou wast crowned with the desire for good things.

Today thy luminous memorial hath shone forth from afar, enlightening the darkness of men's souls, O adornment of struggling monks.

Thou didst preserve the purity of thy virginity, honoring the incorrupt bridal-chamber; for thou wast aflame with desire for Christ, thine awesome Bridegroom.

Theotokion: That we might be filled with glory, the Lord of glory hath come to inglorious humanity; and, washed like a man, thy Son hath glorified mankind.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

In the streams of the Jordan the Lord crieth out to John today: * Fear not to baptize Me, ** for I have come to save Adam the first-formed!

Ikos: “I do not require thee to transgress the bounds of what is meet, O Baptist; I am not saying unto thee: Tell Me what thou tellest the iniquitous, and what thou teachest sinners. Only baptize Me in silence, awaiting those things which come through baptism; for it is for the sake of this that thou hast received a dignity which even the angels do not possess; for I have made thee greater than all the prophets. Thus, not one of them beheld Me plainly, but only in images, shadows and reflections; but thou beheldest Me standing before thee. For I am come to save Adam the first-formed!”

ODE VII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Having passed through the unbearable flame of the furnace * as though it were a bridal-chamber, * the children who for the sake of piety, * were revealed as holy * chanted together, singing the hymn: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Christ hath revealed Himself as our salvation, granting us enlightenment. Let heaven rejoice, and let the clouds truly drop down righteousness upon those who cry: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The fleece which Gideon foresaw, the full cup of water drawn forth therefrom, manifestly foretold Thy baptism, O Christ, which, having undergone it, Thou givest to those who chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Elisha, in healing the barren and brackish waters, prefigured the fruitfulness of the precious font which would mystically come upon those who chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: **T**hou didst bedew the burning furnace, O Savior, * and didst save the children who chanted, proclaiming: * Blessed art Thou throughout the ages, * O Lord God of our fathers!

Together ye accepted martyrdom, slain by the sword with your wives and children, crying out to Christ: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

The saints rejoiced, beholding themselves slain by the sword, and with faith they cried aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

The savagery of the ungodly hath been abated from the earth, the false gods have fallen headlong and been broken asunder by the confession of the martyrs, who have received crowns.

Theotokion: **S**ave thy flock from every evil circumstance, O most holy and pure one, for thou alone art the intercessor of our race, O all-hymned and blessed Theotokos.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: **T**he 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.

The adversary, plotting wickedly, strove to weaken the strength of thy soul by infirmities; but he who tried the patience of Job was driven away by thy wisdom and pangs, wounded by thy patience, O wise one.

Rich in beauty, thy soul hath now left the threefold billows of life for the right tranquil haven in the divine habitations, O wise one, where a place of rest hath been prepared for thee because of thy great endurance of sufferings.

Thou didst wisely teach, saying: “One must never change one’s place of residence in the coenobitic life, for endurance winneth great rewards.” And thou wast truly not slow to employ words and actions to benefit monastics.

Theotokion: **T**he nature of water cleanseth me of sin through the wisdom of thy supra-natural Offspring, O Virgin Bride of God; for the cleansing of God, the Creator of life, cleanseth me who have defiled myself with many sins.

ODE VIII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **T**he furnace moist with dew * was an image and prefiguring of a wonder past nature, * burning not the Children whom it had received, * so the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin’s womb * into which it had descended. * Therefore in song let us sing: * Let the whole creation bless the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

With a loud voice let us send up praise to the Master. He hath arrived! He hath appeared! He Who clotheth the sky with clouds cometh up to the waters and doth strip Himself naked. And He is baptized, cleansing us who chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Come ye, and let us noetically go to the Jordan; and let us behold therein a great sight: for Jesus our enlightenment cometh and boweth His head beneath the hand of a servant, who crieth out with trembling: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Burning in the waters of the Jordan, the glowing Ember which Isaiah foresaw, hath consumed all the tinder of sin and granted restoration to the ruined. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: **The King of glory, who is alone without beginning, * Before Whom all the powers of heaven stand in awe * and the hosts of angels tremble: * O ye priests praise and ye people * supremely exalt Him throughout the ages.**

The wise spiritual athletes, confessing the only compassionate King of glory, received crowns of honor, crying out with goodly boldness: Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

The athletes of Christ steadfastly opposed the tormenters, suffering valiantly, and they vanquished the delusion of idolatry, crying out with goodly boldness: Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Triumphing over the threats and tortures of the tyrants, like adamants the valiant warriors joyously cried out: Hymn the Lord, ye priests! Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Theotokion: **The one compassionate and pre-eternal Word, Who was born of the Virgin in the latter days and hath saved the human race, do ye hymn, O priests! Ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout the 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.**

While living on earth, thou didst truly desire to reach the land of the blessed, where the ranks of the angels, the venerable, the fasters and virgins, dwelling eternally, hymn Christ throughout all ages.

As one higher than many in natural comeliness, thou didst care for thy soul, wisely preserving thy spiritual beauty; wherefore, having caused the beauty of thy body to wither, thou didst set thy soul afire with abstinence.

Having acquired a mind vigilant for God through spiritual fervor, thou didst set the wiles of the lying deviser of evils utterly at naught, O glorious one; and now, having fallen asleep, thou livest forever.

Theotokion: Desiring to restore mortals, O pure one, thy Son hasteneth to the Jordan as a man in His extreme love; for there He hath broken Him Who brought ruin upon all, renewing the world by thy supplications.

ODE IX

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Ineffable is the mystery of the Virgin: * for she is heaven and the throne of the cherubim, * and hath been revealed as the radiant bridal-chamber * of Christ God Almighty. * Wherefore we piously magnify her as the Theotokos.

An awesome and most glorious mystery do I behold! Jesus cometh of His own will to the River Jordan, crying out to John: “Grant Me the loan of thy right hand, My friend, that it may perform awesome works for the preservation of My people.”

Let the desert of the Jordan put forth flowers! O ye who lie in darkness, a great Light hath revealed Itself to you! Beholding it, leap ye up! Coming from Galilee, Christ desireth to be baptized in the flesh by a servant!

Be glad now and dance, O Jordan! Leap ye up, O John! Rejoice, all the world! Lo! Christ hath appeared: He strippeth Himself naked and is baptized, clothing mankind in the raiment of incorruption!

Canon of the holy martyrs

Irmos: O ye faithful, with hymns let us magnify the Theotokos, * who in a manner transcending nature became a mother, * and is a Virgin by nature, * she alone is blessed among women!

The passion-bearers of Christ, having trampled all the rites of idolatry underfoot by their faith and piously reached the divine end of their contest, have been made steadfast through faith.

Having spurned all earthly things through faith and together suffered zealously, the passion-bearers of Christ received healing from God.

The passion-bearers, having manfully armed themselves with faith, cast down the hordes of the enemy by the Cross of the Lord, and have received crowns.

Theotokion: Having conceived in thy womb the unapproachable Word and given birth to Him for us without seed, pray thou earnestly, that our souls be saved.

Canon of the venerable one

Irmos: The Son of the Beginningless Father, God and Lord, * hath appeared to us incarnate of a Virgin, * to enlighten those in darkness, * and to gather the dispersed; * therefore the all-hymned Theotokos do we magnify.

Resplendent in the beauties of virginity, O glorious one, thou didst adorn thyself with the crown of the ascetic life; wherefore, thine awesome Bridegroom, by love of Whom thou wast wounded, hath crowned thee with a twofold crown.

Thy trust in things to come, which: thou didst have in thy heart, did not disappoint thee, O most honored one; for thou hast now received from the Savior, the reward of thy pangs, for having passed through every form of ascetic endeavor.

Clothing thyself in the might and compassion of Christ, O honored one, thou didst bring down to the ground the pride of him who didst speak falsehood against the Most High. Wherefore, Jesus, the Bestower of victory, hath adorned thee with the crown of victory.

Theotokion: In thee hath might been imparted to our fallen first father, who lacked the strength to go further; for through the baptism of thy Son all malice hath now been drowned. Wherefore, we proclaim thee the cause of purification.

Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Spec. Mel.: “By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...”:

When the Jordan beheld thee naked, with trembling it said to him who was born of the barren woman: “O John, thou durst not baptize the Lord, Who purifieth all creation with fire and the Spirit! For He hath come to sanctify mortals and the nature of water!”

Glory ..., Both now ..., another Exapostilarion:

Spec. Mel.: “By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...”:

He Who in the flesh shone forth from the Virgin in Bethlehem now hasteneth to the Jordan, to wash away the defilement of mortals, leading to the light through divine baptism those who are in darkness.

On the praises, 4 Stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: “O ye angelic hosts, go forth ...”:

Wherefore dost thou not comprehend the dispensation which I bring to pass for the salvation of all, O Baptist? Forsake now the things of the past, and ponder that which is profitable. Believe on God Who hath come down, and, having once refused, obey Me now; for I Who am God have come to cleanse Adam of the fall in My tender compassion. O Jesus Who takest our sins upon Thy shoulders.

Thou hast come to the streams of the Jordan, and I am filled with fear at Thine awesome coming. How then dost Thou command me to baptize Thee? Thou hast come Thyself to cleanse me: how then dost Thou, Who art the purification of all, ask baptism of me?

I am the unapproachable Word, though I have clothed My nature in the guise of a servant and have come to the Jordan. Refuse Me not, but come hither and fear not. Draw nigh unto Me, setting thy right hand upon My head, crying: O our blessed God Who hast appeared, glory be to Thee!

O how far beyond understanding is Thine infinite self-abasement for the sake of me who am fallen, O Word of God! I have recognized Thee Who in thy loving-kindness clothed Thyself in Adam and restorest the descendents of Adam, and, obedient to Thy command, with faith I cry unto Thee: O our blessed God Who hast appeared, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in the same melody:

Serving the Master with trembling, John rejoiceth in soul and crieth out with gladness: “Rejoice with me, all ye generations of our first father! For our Hope hath arrived! Christ hath come to the Jordan to wash away all the sin of Adam, in that He is compassionate!”

Both now ..., in the same melody:

O ye people, let us chant unto Him Who was born of the Virgin and hath been baptized in the River Jordan, and let us cry out to Him: O King of all creation, grant that we may, without condemnation, with a clear conscience, and with faith, attain unto thy holy resurrection from the dead on the third day.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone II:

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

Behold! the King, * the Hope of Israel, * hath arrived! * Rejoice, O ye people, ** for the Light hath revealed Himself.

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

Now hath the divine Light * become visible in the flesh * to those on earth, * revealed Himself to those in darkness ** and shone forth grace upon all.

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

O prophet, friend of the Bridegroom, * thou beacon of the Light * and ray of the Sun, * forerunner of the Word: ** minister unto Him!

Glory ..., Both now ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone VIII:

“O John the Baptist, who recognized Me, the Lamb, in My Mother’s womb, minister unto Me in the river, and offer worship unto Me with the angels. Stretching forth thy hand, touch Mine most pure head with thy hand; and when thou beholdest the mountains trembling and Jordan turning back, cry aloud with them: O Lord Who didst become incarnate of the Virgin for our salvation, glory be to Thee!”

**After “It is good to give thanks ...,” Trisagion through Our Father ..., Troparion.
Litanies. Dismissal.**