

THE 7th DAY OF THE MONTH OF MARCH

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYRS WHO WERE BISHOPS IN CHERSON

BASIL, CAPITO, AGATHADORUS, ELPIDIUS, AETHERIUS, AND EUGENE AT VESPERS:

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

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

O fathers of heavenly mind, ye were invincible martyrs, * most praiseworthy hierarchs * and beacons of the universe, * immovable pillars of the Church of God * and a base for the dogmas, * instructors of the pious * and destroyers of falsehood, * light-bearing guides for our souls, * fellow citizens with the angels ** and champions of the Trinity.

With divine discourses * let the glorious Ephraim be blessed, * together with the divinely wise Basil, the great Capito, * the godly Agathadorus, * Elpidius and Aetherius, * and the glorious Eugene; * for, having lived venerably * and suffered in a sacred manner, ** they were shown to be residents of the kingdom of heaven.

Having slain carnal knowledge with feats of asceticism, * the glorious Basil raised a reposed man from the dead * by invoking the name of God; * and the most sacred shepherd Capito, * rejoicing while standing in the midst of the flame, * wast seen to be unconsumed. * By their supplications, O Lover of mankind, * grant us the means of atonement ** and Thy great mercy.

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

Take away the defilement of my passionate heart, * O all-hymned Theotokos, * cleanse thou all the wounds * and the putridity * which cometh from sin, O pure one, * and halt the wavering of my mind; * that I, thy wretched and unprofitable servant, * may magnify thy power ** and thy great assistance.

Stavrotheotokion: **T**he most pure one, * beholding Christ, the Lover of mankind, crucified, * His side pierced by a lance, * cried out, lamenting: * “What is this, O my Son? * How have these thankless people rewarded Thee * for the good things Thou hast done for them? * Dost Thou hasten to leave me childless, O most Beloved? ** I marvel, O Compassionate One, at Thy voluntary crucifixion!”

AT MATINS:

The Canon of the holy hieromartyrs, the acrostic whereof is: “I honor, the seven-man choir of pastors,” the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: **T**hrough the deep of the Red Sea, * marched dry shod Israel of old, * and by Moses’ outstretched hands, * raised in the form of a cross, * the power of Amalek was routed in the wilderness.

O martyrs infused with outpourings of divine light, deliver from the gloom of the passions those who ever piously praise this, your brilliant and radiant feast.

The incarnate Word of God showed you, the all-gloriously blessed pastors, how to proclaim His divinity to the erring and to those who languish in ignorance, O venerable ones.

Full of the life-creating waters of the Spirit, ye gave drink unto those who wasted away in the heat of the cruel one, and guided them to the water of salvation, O glorious ones.

Theotokion: **I**n a manner past understanding the ban on our ancestors hath been lifted by thine Offspring, O most pure one, and they have gained again their original access to paradise, loudly praising thee.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**hy Church, O Christ, rejoiceth in Thee crying aloud: * Thou, O Lord, art my strength, * my refuge and foundation.

Thy mind, enkindled with divine fire, O Basil all-wise, utterly consumed the brushwood of ungodliness, in that thou art a most excellent pastor.

With the light of the Spirit, O glorious one, thou didst draw those who are in the darkness of cruel passions toward the enlightenment of holy baptism.

Thy steps were directed toward God, O Basil, and by grace thou didst turn all from the path of error to the knowledge of God.

Theotokion: **T**hou hast given birth unto the mighty God Who hath delivered mankind from the constraint of the enemy, O most pure and all-hymned Virgin.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone III:

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

Sanctified by the myrrh of anointing, ye were shown to be pastors to the divinely wise people; and sacrificed like pure lambs, ye offered yourselves to the Word, the Chief Shepherd, Who was slaughtered like a lamb, O all-praised martyrs and luminaries of the whole world. Wherefore, with love we all celebrate your divine memory.

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

As an uncultivated vine, O Virgin, * thou didst sprout forth the most comely Cluster of grapes * Which poureth forth upon us the wine of salvation * making glad the souls and bodies of all. * Wherefore, ever blessing thee as the cause of good things, * with the angel we cry out to thee: ** Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace!

Stavrotheotokion: Thy pure unwedded Mother, O Christ, * upon seeing Thee hanging dead upon the Cross, * said, weeping maternally: * “How hath the iniquitous and thankless council of the Jews * repaid Thy many and great wonders, O my Son, * Thou Who filled them with Thy gifts? ** I hymn Thy divine condescension!”

ODE IV

Irmos: Beholding Thee, the Sun of righteousness, * lifted up upon the cross, * the Church now standeth arrayed and doth worthily cry aloud: * Glory be to Thy power, O Lord.

Let the choir of most sacred martyrs be hymned; for, illumined with the grace of the priesthood and martyrdom, it chanteth in gladness: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

By the Holy Spirit are Ephraim and Agathadorus, Basil and Capito, Aetherius, Eugene and the godly Elpidius, shown to be God-bearing helmsmen of the Church.

Having learned divine things, O godly fathers, ye tended the people in holiness and righteousness, and received your end by martyrdom, O blessed ones.

Taught by thee to believe in Christ our God, O most sacred martyr Basil, they that were dead through unbelief received eternal life through the resurrection of a dead man.

Theotokion: Having given birth to the hypostatic Life, Christ our God Who in His tender compassion became a man in a manner past understanding, O Virgin, thou hast given life to mortal mankind.

ODE V

Irmos: Thou, O Lord, who camest into the world, * art my light, * a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance * those who sing Thy praises in faith.

Calling faithfully upon the name of the Lord, O God-bearing fathers, ye drained the cup of honorable suffering.

He Who alone breatheth resurrection upon the dead, by thy supplication, O Basil, raised up a dead man, rendering thy preaching radiant.

Proclaiming the Son equal in honor to the Father, O fathers, ye expelled the tyranny of polytheistic idolatry.

Theotokion: Blessed are the people who know thee to be the Mother of the Master of all and who with love call thee blessed, O all-immaculate one.

ODE VI

Irmos: **The church crieth out unto Thee O Lord, * ‘I will sacrifice unto Thee with a voice of praise’ * having been cleansed of the blood of the demons’ * by the blood that for mercy’s sake flowed from Thy side.**

With praises let us crown Agathadorus and Eugene, the great Basil and the wise Elpidius, who are valiant martyrs and hierarchs.

Setting the laws of salvation before the iniquitous by nurturing in the law, O all-wise ones, ye drew them toward the enlightenment of piety.

Ye were sheep of divers cities, yet were shown to be shepherds of one people and heirs of the city of God, wherein ye reside, O martyrs who have pleased God.

Theotokion: **The shadows of the law and the indistinct images of the prophets prefigured thee, O all-immaculate Virgin, as the one who, at the ineffable word, conceived the Offspring Who saveth the world.**

Kontakion of the holy hieromartyrs, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “He Who dwelleth in the highest ...”:

The radiant day of the pastors * who were bishops in Cherson * hath dawned with splendor. * We hymn the feast of those who suffered for the sheep of Christ. * O hieromartyrs, entreat Christ, the Chief Shepherd, * that He honor us with a place with the sheep on His right hand, * that we may cry aloud to you: * Rejoice, O sacred fathers ** who shed your blood for Christ!

ODE VII

Irmos: **In the Persian furnace the youths and descendants of Abraham, * burning with a love of piety * rather than by a flame of fire, * cried aloud saying: * Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord.**

Rejoicing, thou didst enter the furnace, O Capito, yet remained unconsumed, like the three youths, plucking those who came to believe through thy divine miracles from the future fire of unbelief.

Neither fearing nor afraid of the tyrant’s command, O most sacred Capito, thou didst array thyself in a sacred robe, bearing therein a fiery ember, O blessed one.

With thy divine words thou didst close off the path of foolishness, imparting an understanding of piety to all that were sunk in the abyss of the madness of idolatry, O Capito performer of the divine mysteries, and acceptable to God.

Theotokion: **The Word of God Who with His hand fashioned Eve, O Maiden, desiring to edify all, fashioned Himself within thy womb, He Who is co-enthroned with the Father and the Spirit, in His humanity received a beginning in time.**

ODE VIII

Irmos: **Having spread his hands, Daniel closed the lions jaws * in their den; * while the zealously pious youths, * girded with virtue, * quenched the power of the fire and cried aloud: * Bless ye the Lord, all ye works of the Lord.**

Having mortified the flesh with pangs, O venerable fathers, ye won immortal life for all who worshipped dead gods, who, saved, ever cry out with you: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Together let us hymn Eugene and Agathadorus, Ephraim and Elpidius, with Aetherius, Basil and Capito, O ye faithful, as vanquishers of the enemy and hierarchs of Christ. To Him let us cry aloud: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

With thy teachings thou didst gladden the people, O father Ephraim, and now having passed on to the never-waning effulgence and everlasting gladness, thou hast received the reward for thy labors, crying aloud: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Dwelling on earth like an angel, O all-blessed Basil, thou didst come to reign over the passions of the flesh through grace; and having passed on to the heavenly kingdom, standing before Christ the King, thou dost cry aloud: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **T**he Transcendent One, born of thee, O most pure one, was seen as a man, manifesting Himself as dual in nature, activity and will, as was His pleasure, wherein He revealed Himself to us. To Him let us cry aloud: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Irmos: **A** cornerstone not cut by hand O Virgin, * was cut from thee the unhewn mountain: * even Christ, Who hath joined together the disparate natures; * therefore rejoicing we magnify thee, * O Theotokos.

Celebrating the sacred memory of the holy hieromartyrs, come ye, let us all honor with sacred hymns those who pray to our most compassionate God on our behalf.

Drugged across the ground by the ungodly, O divine martyrs, ye were shown to be like precious stones, shattering the hardness of deception by the power of God. Wherefore, ye are called blessed, as is meet.

Today, the city of Cherson celebrates your memory, for ye were shown to be its pillars, divine ramparts and foundations, teachers and intercessors, O blessed pastors of God.

The choir of the fathers, with Eugene, Ephraim and Capito, Elpidius and Aetherius, the glorious Basil and the divinely wise Agathadorus, hath already been joined with the choir of the angels.

Theotokion: **T**he Maiden full of the grace of God, bearing in her arms Christ Who holdeth all things in His hand, cried out in wonder, saying: “How can I recognize Thee as my Son, Who art mine unapproachable Creator?”