

THE 27th DAY OF THE MONTH OF MARCH

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR IRENIEUS OF SIRMIMUM

This service is transferred to March 27th because of the Apodosis of the Annunciation

AT VESPERS

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

Today the heavens are opened with joy for the most radiant soul of the hieromartyr, ascendeth from the earth. The flaming sword of the cherub hath been anointed with his blood, shed for Christ, and obediently withdraweth from the gates of Eden. And the choirs of the righteous, rejoicing cry aloud, beholding the blessed! Irenieus being led into the eternal mansions.

Rejoice, O pastor of Sirmium, magnificent adornment of the Church of Christ, unshakeable pillar of the Faith, most wise and most beloved hierarch who, though young in years, wast an elder in understanding! Accounting the things of this earth as but naught, thou didst obtain Christ, wherefore, thou art now ineffably gladdened.

Today the Church is splendidly arrayed, in a robe empurpled by the blood of the martyr, and hath been crowned with the wreath of his goodly confession! Today the waters of the River Sava have been sanctified by receiving the sacred body of the blessed Irenieus, and the faithful, celebrating the holy memory of the passion-bearer with fear and love, cry out: Glory to Thee, O Christ God, for Thou hast revealed a new mediator for us, the all-praised hierarch of Sirmium, whose supplications on our behalf be Thou well pleased to accept, and for whose sake do Thou grant us great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

In the hope of receiving everlasting glory from God in heaven, thou didst accept dishonor from those on earth, O all-praised Irenieus, and loving incorruptible life, thou didst deign to bow thy head beneath the sword. Wherefore, having acquired great boldness before Christ, we earnestly beseech thee: Incline the tender compassion of God toward us, and, going before thy sheep as a shepherd, lead us up to the path of salvation, watching over our souls.

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

Spec. Mel.: “Having set aside ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: **W**hen, of old, the unblemished ewe-lamb and immaculate Sovereign Lady, * beheld her Lamb * upon the tree of the Cross, * she exclaimed maternally, and marveling cried aloud: * “O my Child most sweet, * what is this new and most strange sight I see? * How hath the thankless synagogue * betrayed Thee to the judgment-seat of Pilate * and condemned Thee to death, * Who art the Life of all? * Yet do I hymn Thine ineffable condescension, ** O Word!”

After the Aposticha Stichera, Glory ..., in Tone V:

No longer is the Church of Sirmium arrayed in widow's vesture, pouring forth torrents of martyrs' blood and escorting its pastors to their death! For, lo! the time of the dominion of the heathen hath come to an end, and the true Faith hath blossomed forth through the prayers of Irenieus, the blessed athlete and hierarch, the chief prelate of the Church of Sirmium. And celebrating his memory with love, we cry out without ceasing: Remember thy flock, which thou hast gathered together, O wise one, delivering thy sheep from cruel wolves, and nurture them in rich meadows!

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

Stavrotheotokion: Standing before the Cross, O Jesus, she who gave Thee birth lamented, weeping and crying aloud: "I cannot bear these things, beholding Thee Whom I bore nailed to the Tree. As one who knew not a man I avoid the pangs of birthgiving: how now is it that I am beset by pain and wounded in heart? For now are fulfilled the words spoken by Symeon: "A sword will pierce thy heart, O immaculate one!, Yet do thou arise, O my Son, and save those who hymn Thee!"

If needed, we chant this Troparion, in Tone II:

Chant now and clap your hands, O Church of Sirmium! * Leap up, ye waters of the River Sava, * adorning thyself in the name of the all-praised Irenieus! * For, having fought the good fight and kept the Faith, * sealing it with his blood, he hath acquired great boldness before God, * Whom he entreateth without ceasing, ** that his Christian flock be saved in peace.

AT MATINS

Canon of the holy hieromartyr, the acrostic whereof is: “Grant peace to us who hymn thy memory with faith”, the composition of Valerian, in Tone II:

ODE I

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

Come, O ye who love the martyrs, and let us honor today the sacred memory of the all-praised Irenieus, who, emulating Christ, laid down his life for his sheep, and sealed his blessed confession with his own blood, whereby Christ God hath gloriously been glorified.

Thou didst love the true Faith utterly, and for its sake didst count all transitory things as naught, O blessed Irenieus, putting the savagery of the tyrants to shame by thy patience, and steadfastly enduring multifarious torments, whereby Christ, the Judge of the contest, hath gloriously been glorified.

Having acquired perfect understanding through piety, and attained unto the measure of Christ’s stature, though young in years thou didst take up the shepherd’s staff, whereby Christ, the Chief Shepherd, was gloriously glorified in thee.

Theotokion: **W**e hymn thee who art more holy than the saints, the Mother of our God, the astonishment of the angelic ranks, the strength and adornment of the martyrs, and the salvation of the faithful.

ODE III

Irmos: The desert of the barren Church of the nations * blossomed like a lily * at Thy coming, O Lord, * therein hath my heart been established

“**D**eny Christ Whom thou dost worship!” the tyrant cried to the blessed Irenieus, when he stood before the unjust tribunal, emulating Christ the King, Who had stood before Pilate. And, boldly confessing Him to be the God and Creator of all, he put the ungodly and their idols to shame and confirmed the true Faith.

“**H**ow long wilt thou remain in thy foolishness?” the tyrant cried out again to the holy one; “Sacrifice to our gods, and thy soul shall live!” But, filled with the Holy Spirit, he replied: “I glorify the hypostatic Wisdom of God, for Whose sake ye call me a fool! To Him alone will I sacrifice with a voice of praise; for, lo! He calleth me to imperishable life through torments of short duration.”

“**T**hough thou endurest cruel torments, yet dost thou remain without understanding,” the prefect said, gazing upon the tortured saint and marveling. But he, lifting his eyes to heaven, cried out: “O Christ God, Who gavest Thy shoulders over to scourging and Thy cheeks to buffeting, Who wast nailed to the Cross for my sake: strengthen me who pray fervently to Thee at this time, making me steadfast on the rock of the confession of Thee!”

Theotokion: **O** blessed Theotokos mediatrix of life and everlasting gladness for us, entrusting ourselves to thine intercession, we hope to be saved.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone VII:

The blessed Irenaeus, standing today before Christ, the Chief Shepherd, offereth bold supplication on behalf of all who celebrate his memory; and, looking down from the heavens upon his flock, he crieth out with the voice of the Church: “O my beloved children, remember me who have laid down my life for you! Remember the pain and labors which I endured for you, and, casting off the works of darkness, clothe yourselves in Christ, that I may rejoice unceasingly in you, asking for you great mercy from God!”

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

Thou art more honorable than the glorious cherubim, O most holy Virgin. For they, unable to endure the power of God, cover their faces with their wings while they offer worship; while thou, gazing upon the incarnate Word with thine own eyes, dost bear Him. Unceasingly beseech Him on behalf of our souls.

Stavrotheotokion: **O** pure Ever-virgin Theotokos, beholding thy Son hanging upon the Cross, weeping maternally thou didst magnify His awesome condescension, O Sovereign Lady who knewest not wedlock.

ODE IV

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!**

“**D**o not the wounds which I have inflicted upon thee suffice?” the tyrant again asked the saint, “or shall I give thee over to tortures yet more cruel? Submit to my command and deny thy God!” But the holy one, boldly confessing Christ, said: “Shall I then deny Him Who, being God, appeared on earth in the guise of poverty for my sake, and Who, though sinless, suffered for my sins, that He might freely give me His kingdom and imperishable life? Yet do I cry out to Him with love: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!”

“**W**ilt thou not spare thy youth? Wilt thou ignore all the beautiful and delightful things in this life? Wherefore dost thou mindlessly commit thyself to death?” the tyrant said in perplexity. But the holy one said to him: “Behold, I look to Him Who is more comely than all the children of mankind, Who calleth me to life which groweth not old! His servant am I, and, worshiping Him alone, I cry out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!”

“**I**f thou wilt not take heed for thyself,” the tyrant said, marveling, “then have pity on thy children. Behold how they shed tears, crying out bitterly.” But the holy one, turning his gaze upon them, replied: “I have left them, but the Lord will receive them. They have a heavenly Father to care for them, Who in time will lead them also to that radiant place into which I hope to enter this day.”

Theotokion: By thine omnipotent supplication and tireless intercession thou dost unceasingly save the whole world, O Theotokos, averting the just wrath of God from mankind. Wherefore, we cry aloud: Rejoice, thou hope of all!

ODE V

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

“Why shed ye tears without understanding, O children?” the blessed Irenieus cried out to his children and flock; “Rather rejoice for me, for I shall pass over sorrows to that which is most sweet, I shall pass over from grief to that which is most profitable. God, Who knoweth men’s hearts, knoweth that I love you. Yet do I desire to be released and to dwell with Christ.”

“If ye love me, O children,” the saint cried aloud with tears, “remember all my words, whereby I instructed you; and mightily hold fast to the Faith which I have taught you, that, standing before Christ, the Chief Shepherd, I may with confidence cry out with the prophet: Behold, here am I, and the children whom God hath given me!”

“Pray for me, O my spiritual children,” the passion-bearer and hierarch cried out, “and thus recompense me for the labors wherewith I labored in your enlightenment; for if ye desire not to be parted from me in spirit, fall not away from the faith and love of Christ, and cleave unto Him alone, for we know none other God than Him.”

Theotokion: Shining more brightly than the sun in the glory of thy perpetual virginity, and revealing the Bestower of light to the world, O Theotokos, thou dost utterly disperse the darkness of sin, illumining the faithful with thy grace:

ODE VI

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

O most wise Irenieus, thou didst consider thy prison-cell to be a bridal-chamber, tribulations to be joy, and beatings and dishonor to be glory; wherefore, when the sentence of death was pronounced over thee, thou didst rejoice in thy spirit, expecting to pass from this corrupt life to incorruption, and desiring to enjoy everlasting rest.

“I say to thee, O Irenieus,” the tyrant exclaimed to the saint, “behold! death awaiteth thee and beheading by the sword! Wilt thou not now worship our gods?” But the blessed hieromartyr cried out: “I worship Him alone Who rose from the dead, and Who by His power shall gloriously resurrect me from the corruption of the grave!”

The tyrant asked the following: “Hast thou no wife? Hast thou no children?” But the saint answered him, saying: “Nay, but I have Christ my God, in Whom I shall find all again!”

Theotokion: **F**rom the pit of the passions and the snares of the enemy lead us up, thy servants, to thy Son and God, O Theotokos, praying with the blessed Irenieus and moving Him to have mercy upon us.

Kontakion of the holy hieromartyr, in Tone VIII:

As is meet, let us hymn Irenieus, the pastor of Sirmium, * the namesake of peace and right victorious warrior of Christ, * who most gloriously trampled underfoot the ancient prince of this world * and strengthened his own hands for battle against him; * and let us cry out to him with heartfelt love: * Pray thou unceasingly to Christ, the King of peace, ** that He grant peace to the whole world and great mercy to our souls!

Ikos: **P**reserving in thy heart the peace of God which passeth all understanding, O blessed Irenieus, thou didst heed the fiery mouth of the preeminent apostle, who said that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore, with manly wisdom thou didst rise up against it, showing thyself to be a glorious vanquisher of the passions and the ungodly persecutors. Thou didst lay down thy life for Christ, and didst establish the true Faith in the land of Sirmium. Therefore, faithfully celebrating thy memory, we cry out with fervor: Pray thou unceasingly to Christ, the King of peace, that He grant peace to the whole world and great mercy to our souls!

ODE VII

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 Church of Sirmium, which Thou hast given me, O Christ, do Thou preserve by Thy name, forever immaculate,” the holy Irenieus cried out, praying to the Savior; and, rejoicing in his imminent departure, he said: “Now have I come to know that the Lord, the Judge of the contest, Who alone is blessed and most glorious, doth deign to accept my life as a sacrifice of sweet savor!”

Lifting up his hands, the blessed hieromartyr blessed the sheep of his flock, crying out fervently to Christ: “Behold, I come to Thee, O my King and my God, but I leave these behind in this vain world. Preserve them through Thy grace, O Thou Who alone art compassionate and omnipotent, and make them steadfast in the Faith!”

“The cherubim are Thy chariot, O God, and the heaven of heavens is Thy throne,” the holy Irenieus cried aloud. “And even if I, Thine unprofitable servant, lay down my life for Thee, yet, confident of Thy compassions, I offer this supplication for my sheep, and I hope that it will be heard by Thee, the most merciful Savior.”

Theotokion: Rejoice, O thou who art more beautiful than the garden of paradise! Rejoice, thou who art more holy than the saints! Pour forth the dew of thy grace upon the faithful who cry out to thee from the furnace of temptations: Even though we have sinned, yet may we be accepted with contrite heart!

ODE VIII

Irmos: In Babylon, the activity of the fire was once divided, * for, by the command of God it consumed the Chaldeans, * but bedewed the faithful, who chant: * Bless ye the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thy spiritual children were bitterly downcast when thou wast taken and led to death, O Irenieus; and, following after thee, they beat their breasts, crying out: “Whither goest thou, O our good shepherd? To whose care art thou leaving us? Who now will defend us from the noetic wolf, and who will find us when we are lost? Speak unto us, therefore, a word of consolation, that, understanding the dispensation of God, we may glorify Him throughout all ages!”

“O my beloved children,” the blessed passion-bearer replied to his flock, “have ye not heard the Lord and Savior, Who saith: ‘Fear not those who slay the body, but cannot slay the soul. Even though I depart from you in the body, yet shall I remain with you in my spirit, throughout all ages.’”

The Church of Sirmium was given to heartfelt weeping when thou wast beheaded by the sword, O Irenieus; yet, adorned by thy glorious contest, it cried out to Christ God with thankful mouth: “Glory to Thee, O Jesus, Thou boast of the martyrs! For Thou hast given Thy strength to Thy minister, Who hath most gloriously vanquished the princes of darkness today and made the true Faith steadfast throughout all ages!”

Theotokion: In thee do we boast, O Virgin Theotokos; for of old thou didst trample the head of the serpent underfoot by thine ineffable birthgiving, crushing his power. Wherefore, thou dost ever grant victory over the enemy to the Christian people.

ODE IX

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

Celebrating his memory with love, we magnify the hierarch of Sirmium and pastor of our souls, who was young in years but wiser than elders, who accepted death for Christ and ever abideth in heaven.

O emulator of the compassionate and merciful God, follower of the love of Christ, thou dost generously give goodly gifts to those who ask, and quickly fulfillst our entreaties. Wherefore, O Irenieus, we magnify thee as our fervent mediator and mighty helper.

Where thou now abidest in gladness before the face of the Lord, O our blessed hierarch, there let us, thy children, be with thee, when with thy bold mediation thou openest to us the gates of paradise and inclinest the tender compassion of God toward us. Him do we magnify throughout all ages!

Theotokion: O most merciful Queen and Theotokos, entreat the merciful Savior of our souls on our behalf, that thanking thee, we may unceasingly magnify thee.

Exapostilarion:

Lo! we have come to the sunset of our life! Night is falling, and we are lost in a place barren of virtue. Yet lighting the torch of Christ with love, do thou, O our shepherd, come forth to search for us who are perishing, and, having found us, lead us back to the straight path, that, following thee and listening to thy voice, we may attain unto the courts of God and enjoy everlasting rest.

Glory ...; Both now ..., Theotokion:

Look down upon our afflictions and tribulations, O all-immaculate Virgin, and cover us with thy protecting veil, lest the depredations of the infidels overwhelm us and we perish before their onslaught. Earnestly beseech thy Son and God, that He extend to us His compassion and lead us to the safe refuge of His loving-kindness, where, illumined by His grace, we may find rest for our souls.

AT LITURGY

Troparion of the holy hieromartyr, in Tone II:

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