

THE 23rd DAY OF THE MONTH OF MARCH
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRED MONK NIKON AND TWO
HUNDRED OF HIS DISCIPLES MARTYRED WITH HIM
AT VESPERS

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

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

With the yoke of abstinence * thou didst curb the pleasures of the body * and the recalcitrance of the flesh, O blessed one, * vanquishing the full force of the enemy * with the power of the Spirit, * as one who art brave. * Hence, thou wast a leader of monastics, * who ever followed ** thine all-wise and divine preaching, O Nikon.

Shining forth from the East * like the sun, O most glorious one, * thou didst bring light to the whole world * with the radiance of miracles, * guiding the choir of thy luminous disciples like a star. * With them thou didst suffer mightily, * beheaded by the sword, * placing your souls ** in the hands of the King and Master of all.

Neither starvation, nor tribulation, * nor nakedness, nor wounding, * nor a truly violent death * were able to separate you from the love of God, O right wondrous ones; * but, following the Shepherd, * like sheep led to the slaughter, * from the West ye reached * the never-ending rest of the heavenly kingdom, ** O crown-bearing passion-bearers.

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

Deliver thou my soul * from condemnation and grievous transgressions, * O most holy Bride of God, * and rescue it from death by thy supplications. * Grant that on the day of trial * I may receive the justification * which the assemblies of the saints have received; * and before the end show me forth as cleansed through repentance ** and by the shedding of tears.

Stavrotheotokion: **B**eholding Thee * nailed to the Cross, O Lord, * the ewe-lamb Thy Mother marveled * and cried out: “What is this that I see, * O my Son most desired? * How hast Thou been rewarded * by the unfaithful and iniquitous assembly * which hath enjoyed Thy many miracles? ** Yet glory to Thine ineffable condescension, O Master!”

AT MATINS:

The Canon of the venerable martyrs, the acrostic whereof is:

“I hymn thee, the namesake of victory, O blessed one,”

the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: Through 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.

Having conquered him who is crafty in wickedness, by thine ascetic struggles, thou wast crowned with the beauties of martyrdom; and now thou standest before God, O venerable Nikon, praying for us who honor thee.

Strengthened by the might of Him Who hath given us strength in our weakness, O blessed one, thou didst contend first in battles, and then, as a victor, hastening to receive Christian baptism.

The exceedingly blessed regiment of thy disciples hath been adorned with martyrdom, enlightened before with fastings; and by redoubled struggles they wove for themselves twofold wreaths of victory, O wise one.

Theotokion: The portal of the descent of Thee to us, O Lord, mystically called the East, the Sun and Light, supra-naturally gave birth to Thee Who art uncontainable, in two natures.

ODE III

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

Surrounded by a spiritual army, O martyr of Christ, thou didst equip the divine army for feats of suffering.

Having first crucified the flesh ascetically, O most glorious one, thou didst strive to vanquish the hordes of demons with the wounds of thy suffering.

Having come like a star from, the East, O Nikon, thou didst attain unto the Western lands. Wherefore, dying, thou didst set and shed thy light toward Christ.

Theotokion: The assembly of the martyrs imitated Thy sacrifice, O Master, knowing Thee to have sprung forth from the Maiden who knew not wedlock.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Go thou quickly before ...”:

Having first lived venerably, O Nikon, thou didst assemble a choir of those obedient to God, who piously followed thee; shining forth from the East to the West, like a luminous sun, with rays of sufferings, with the blood of your stripes ye vanquished all deception.

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

O all-immaculate Virgin * who hast given birth to the transcendent God: * do thou unceasingly entreat Him with the incorporeal ones, * that He grant forgiveness of transgressions * and correction of life before the end, * to us who, as is meet, hymn thee with faith and love, ** O thou who alone art all-hymned.

Stavrotheotokion: **U**pon beholding Thee suspended upon the Cross, * O Word of God, * Thy most pure Mother exclaimed, lamenting maternally: * “What is this new and strange wonder, O my Son? * How is it that Thou, the Life of all, hast tasted death, * desiring to bring life to mortals, ** in so far as Thou art compassionate?”

ODE IV

Irmos: **B**eholding 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.

Delighting in divine splendors, O right wondrous martyr Nikon, thou didst pass through streams of torments unscathed, and worthily received the crown of victory.

Thou didst struggle as a faster, adorning thyself with the splendors of brave deeds; and having first mortified the passions of the body by suffering, thou didst later vanquish hordes of demons.

Ye arrayed yourselves with the weaponry of piety against the enemy, O divinely wise ones, and by a glorious death obtained immortality, chanting: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Theotokion: **T**he Creator, loving thee as her who is above creation, O Virgin Mother, showed thee forth as His Mother. Thee do the assemblies of spiritual athletes now entreat graciously.

ODE V

Irmos: **T**hou, 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.

Rightly obeying the godly admonitions of thy mother, O Nikon, learning higher things thou didst take the power of the Cross into battle.

Thy life, illumined with the light of the virtues, possessed suffering as a most magnificent adornment, O divinely wise and all-honored one.

Obeying the laws laid down by God, the martyrs, having contended, manfully conquered the iniquitous with the help of God.

Theotokion: **F**or us thou didst give birth to the timeless Light, the Effulgence of the Father, Who in the richness of His goodness came under time, O all-immaculate one.

ODE VI

Irmos: **T**he 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.

Like a sun of great radiance thou didst hasten from the East, O divinely wise one, leading the choir of thy disciples like stars; illumining the West with your rays.

With the drops of thy blood didst thou deluge the sea of polytheism, O martyr; and by the abyss of thy struggles, drown the cruel and most wicked author of evil.

Blossoming forth like lilies in the meadow of suffering, and like sweet-scented roses ye have perfumed our hearts with the beauties of martyrdom, O divinely inspired passion-bearers.

Theotokion: **T**he choir of passion-bearers, knowing thee to be the temple of God and the animate palace, O Lady, entreateth thee, the one who hath removed the reproach of women.

ODE VII

Irmos: **I**n 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.

Tried by wounding more than gold is tried by fire, O divinely wise one, thou wast shown to be a pillar of the virtues, repelling the assaults of the demons, and crying aloud: Blessed art Thou, O my God, Lord of our fathers!

After thine end, thy body, which had been secretly cast out, O martyr, emitting the radiance of divine healings, dispelled demonic outrage by the divine power of Him Who hath revealed thee.

Having wholly enjoyed divine favor, O all-blessed one, thou didst steadfastly give thy body over to wounding, and as thou didst desire, O venerable one, thou standest, crowned, before the Almighty in the heavens.

As a shepherd of the reason-endowed sheep, O wise one, thou didst preserve them unharmed by the noetic wolves; and abiding with them in the fold of heaven, thou standest before the most supremely desired One.

Theotokion: **W**ithout corrupting thy virginity in the least, O Maiden, the Word of the Father made His abode within thee; and the glorious choir of the martyrs hath venerated thee, confessing thee to be the pure Theotokos.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **H**aving 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.

Vigilantly tending the pyre of thy heart, which is fed with torrents of tears and the blood of martyrdom, O venerable one, thou now dwellest in a chamber not fashioned by the hands of mortals, crying aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thou wast shown to be the adornment of fasters and martyrs, O venerable Nikon; for in both thou didst contest, gaining victories over them, astonishing the mind, and crying aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Having watered souls with blood, thou didst raise them to divine zeal, O venerable one, and with thy martyr's wounds thou didst wound the horde of the demons, showing forth the appropriateness of thy name, and crying aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: Rend asunder the heavy chains of my falls, O pure and all-praised one, who hast set aright the fall of Adam by thy birthgiving; and grant us to cry with pure thought: Bless the Lord, all 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.

The Bestower of crowns beheld thee flourishing in the beauty of thy wounds and clad in the robe dyed purple by thy martyr's blood; and He dwelt within thee who rejoicest in a godly manner.

All-beauteous is the love which thou didst acquire for God, O Nikon; fervent is thy zeal which is kindled by divine fire, and wondrous the suffering which united thee to the angels of heaven.

The choir of passion-bearers, having thee like a sun in the midst of the firmament of the Church, shining with divine light like stars, illumines the whole world with radiant splendors.

Thou wast taken up to the incorrupt mansions, presenting the two hundred-member choir of spiritual athletes to the Bestower of crowns, O martyr; with them be thou mindful of those who celebrate thy sacred memory today.

Theotokion: Thou wast revealed to be the abode of the Light Who for our sake manifest Himself through thee. Him do thou unceasingly entreat, that He enlighten the thoughts of us who piously hymn thee, O all-immaculate Virgin Mother.