

THE 24th DAY OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROTOMARTYR AND EQUAL OF THE
APOSTLES THECLA
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 6 Stichera of the holy protomartyr, in Tone VIII:
Spec. Mel.: “O Lord, even though at the tribunal ...”:

O Lord, * though Thecla was befriended by Thee in Thy love, * standing noetically in the highest before Thy throne, she yet marvels at Thine incomparable majesty * which hath been manifested in Thy love for mankind, ** that Thou mayest save our souls. (Twice)

O Lord, * though Thecla was involuntarily separated from her teacher Paul, * yet during her suffering, stripped of her garments, * she had Thee abiding with her, and was covered with Thy glory; ** and crowned by Thy hand, she defendeth our souls. (Twice)

O Lord, * though Thecla made haste to the bound Apostle Paul, * yet she rejected the bond of attachment to earthly things, * and with the chain of the might of Thy love * she bound herself fast to Thee, ** the Savior of our souls.

O Lord, * though Thy pure protomartyr was committed to the fire, * yet she was not consumed therein, having Thee as a bedewer of the flames; * and, preserved by the hand of Thee, the Savior of our souls, ** she remained unconsumed amid many wild beasts.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

In thine athletic struggles thou didst trample the enemy underfoot, O all-blessed Thecla, and having set at naught his wiles as a struggler, thou didst flee from Thamyras and betroth thyself to Christ thy true Love. O converser with Paul and fellow sufferer with Stephen, as thou among women hast boldness, O protomartyr of Christ, by thy supplications deliver from misfortunes those who keep thine all-festive memory.

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

Spec. Mel.: “Having set all aside ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: **A** sword pierced thy heart, * O most pure Lady, * as Symeon said, * when thou didst behold Him Who shone forth from thee ineffably, * condemned by the iniquitous * and lifted up upon the Cross, * tasting vinegar and gall, * His side pierced, * His hands and feet run through with nails; * and, lamenting, thou didst exclaim, crying out maternally: * “What is this new mystery, ** O my Child most sweet?”

On the Aposticha, the Stichera from the Oktoechos, and Glory ..., the composition of
Anatolius, in Tone VIII:

The assault of the lions didst thou trample down, and thou didst put Thamyris to shame, O much suffering protomartyr; and thou didst follow after thy Bridegroom, crying out: I have fled to the fragrance of Thy myrrh, O Christ! Wherefore, seeking out Paul, thou didst receive a gift from heaven and wast given a crown by God, the Judge of the contest; and thou prayest unceasingly, that forgiveness of sins be given to those who with faith keep thy sacred memory.

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

Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: “**W**hat is this sight which I see, * which mine eyes behold, O Master? * How is it that Thou Who dost sustain all creation, * art lifted up upon the Tree and diest, * granting life unto all? * thus said the Theotokos weeping, * upon seeing God and man * Who had shone forth ineffably from her ** hanging upon the Cross.

Troparion of the holy protomartyr, in Tone IV:

Taught by the words of Paul, * O Thecla, bride of God, * and confirmed through faith by Peter, * O divinely called one, * thou wast shown to be the protomartyr and first sufferer among women, * entering the flame as it were a place abloom with flowers. * The wild beasts and bulls stood in awe of thee, * for thou didst arm thyself with the Cross. ** Wherefore, O all-praised one, entreat Christ, that our souls be saved.

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, without their martyrica; and the canon of the holy protomartyr, with 6 Troparia, the acrostic whereof is: “Let the protomartyr be divinely glorified”: The composition of John the Monk, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us sing unto the Lord, * who led His people through the Red Sea: * for He alone hath gloriously been glorified.

The sound of the tongue is unable to recount the all-glorious sufferings of the protomartyr, for it falleth short of fitting praise.

The most prideful superstitions of the tyrant ceased, for in Christ women have piously prevailed like men against him.

Instructed in the Gospel by thine ineffable words, O all-blessed Paul, the virgin betrothed herself to Christ.

Theotokion: The Virgin gaveth birth unto Thee, O Christ, the life-bearing Cluster of grapes, Who pourest forth the sweetness of universal salvation.

ODE III

Irmos: O Lord, thou art the confirmation of those who flee to Thee, * Thou art the Light of those in darkness, * and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

O thy love which passeth understanding, O most honored one, whereby, having united thyself in the Spirit, thou didst bind thyself to Paul in Christ!

The mind was unable to wound thee who wast wounded with the desire of the Spirit, O delight of mortals.

Having rejected all fleshly attachments, thou wast not softened by the conversations of thy mother, O all-praised spiritual athlete.

Theotokion: Thou wast the correction of our first mother Eve, O Theotokos, having given birth unto the Author of life for the world.

Kontakion of the holy protomartyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “As first-fruits ...”:

In the beauty of thy virginity thou didst shine forth, * and wast adorned with the crown of martyrdom; * as one most glorious, O virgin, thou didst entrust thyself to the Apostle Paul, * and didst transform the flame of the fire into dew; * and by thy prayers, O thou who wast the first among women to suffer, ** thou didst quell the raging of the bull.

Sessional Hymn of the holy protomartyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “Of the Wisdom ...”:

Transforming thy womanhood into manliness through the virtues and the love of Christ, by both thou didst become a dwelling place of God; for, having diminished the gloom of the passions by fasting, by martyrdom, thou wast shown to be the boast of endurance of pangs. Wherefore, thou shinest forth with a twofold radiance upon the world like a beacon, illumining all with rays of the Spirit, O all-praised protomartyr, entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto those who with love honor thy holy memory. **(Twice)**

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

All we, the generations of mankind, * call thee blessed, * in that thou art the Virgin who alone among women * hast given birth without seed unto God in the flesh; * for the fire of the Godhead made its abode within thee, * and thou didst feed the Creator and Lord * with milk as an infant. * Wherefore, we, the race of mankind and of angels, * glorify thy birthgiving, * and together we cry out to thee: * Entreat Christ God to grant forgiveness of sins ** unto those who with faith worship thine all-holy Offspring.

Stavrotheotokion: Upon beholding the Lamb, Shepherd and Redeemer * upon the Cross, * the ewe-lamb exclaimed weeping, bitterly lamenting, and crying aloud: * “The world rejoiceth, having received deliverance through Thee, * but my womb doth burn, beholding Thy crucifixion, * which Thou hast endured in Thy merciful loving-kindness. * O long-suffering Lord, * Thou abyss and inexhaustible well-spring of mercy, * take pity, and grant forgiveness of sins ** unto those who hymn Thy divine sufferings with faith!”

ODE IV

Irmos: **O Lord, I have heard the mystery of Thy dispensation; * I have considered Thy works, * and I have glorified Thy Divinity.**

Paul, arranging thy marriage, joined thee, O most honored Thecla, who hadst been betrothed to Thamyras, to the heavenly Bridegroom, as one undefiled.

Thou wast brought to the love of piety by the words of Paul, O martyr, spurning the words of Thamyras as foolishness.

By the sprinkling of the divine Blood the race of Adam hath been blessed; and Eve rejoiceth, seeing the deceitful serpent humbled by women.

Loving piety, the protomartyr cast away all the beautiful things of life: riches, family, beauty, and the pleasures of a betrothed.

Theotokion: **A**ll we, the enlightened, know thee to be the Theotokos, O all-pure one; for thou, O Ever-virgin, hast given birth to the Sun of righteousness.

ODE V

Irmos: **Rising early we cry to Thee, O Lord; * save us, for Thou art our God, * and we know none other besides Thee.**

With most grievous suffering thou didst struggle in the arena, O all-blessed Thecla, and wast counted worthy of honors.

The wicked serpent hath been laid waste, for the virgin learned obedience by divine sufferings.

By divine boldness hath thy shame been overcome, for the fire at the heart of the Trinity set thee aflame.

Theotokion: O Mary, unwedded Theotokos, make vain the hopes of our enemies and gladden those who hymn thee.

ODE VI

Irmos: I will pour out my prayer unto the Lord, * and to Him will I proclaim my grief; * for my soul is filled with evils, * and my life unto Hades hath drawn nigh, * and like Jonah I pray unto Thee: * Raise me up from corruption, O God.

Having fortified the weakness of her nature with the might of the Cross, and repudiated youthful adornment with divine love, at night the maiden took courage and ran forth, seeking the fragrant teachings of Him Who was her Desired One.

With love, of her own will, the right glorious protomartyr Thecla supra-naturally left her bridal chambers to dwell in a dungeon with malefactors; for her desire for the Creator overcame her desire for habitations.

Drinking in the words of Paul in prison as in a divine meadow, the martyr kissed the chains of her divine teacher; and she grew spiritually, truly bringing forth most comely fruit for the Master.

Theotokion: Choosing thee from among the beautiful valleys of the world as a rose, a most comely lily, a sweet-scented fragrance, O Maiden, the Creator made His abode within thy womb; and, having been born, He hath filled all things with a sweet savor.

Kontakion of the holy protomartyr, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “Seeking the highest ...”:

Having wounded thy heart with the love of Christ, * O good virgin, * thou didst spurn a transient betrothal as of no account; * and didst brave the fire, shutting the mouths of the wild beasts. * And, saved from them, O Thecla, * first among women to suffer, ** thou didst take care to seek out Paul.

Ikos: Having learned the path of truth from Paul, thou didst follow after him without wavering, O most wondrous one, and having abandoned thine own people as strangers, with manly mind and in manly guise thou didst follow a stranger. Wherefore, the Master hath shown thee forth as the first to suffer among women contenders in the world, wherein thou didst remain, O Thecla, first among women to suffer, going about the ends thereof in search of Paul.

ODE VII

Irmos: **The Children of Judaea, * who of old came to dwell in Babylon, * trampled underfoot the flame of the furnace * through their faith in the Trinity, * as they sang: ‘O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.’**

Like a prisoner thou wast bound to Paul with unbreakable bonds by love, O all-blessed one, piously crying out with faith and chanting with him: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thou didst stand with Paul before the unjust tribunal, O good virgin, and moved by love of the Master, thou didst cry out in awe, rejecting what was unseemly: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thou gavest thy body over to the furnace for the sake of divine love, O martyr, and by the power of Him Whom thou didst desire thou didst remain unconsumed, crying aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The storm cloud, dousing the flame with rain and hail, rightly consumed the mindless ones and saved the martyr, who chanted thy hymn: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: **T**hou wast the rod that sprouted forth from the root of Jesse, O most blessed one, putting forth the Fruit of salvation for those who with faith cry out to thy Son: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: **The King of heaven, * Who is glorified by the hosts of angels, * let us praise and supremely exalt throughout all ages.**

Strange was thy thought; for thou, O virgin martyr, made thine abode in a grave as in Eden, hymning Christ throughout all ages.

Unable to endure seeing the magnificence and splendor of the beauty of thy virginity be dimmed, thou didst will to die and thus live throughout all ages.

Having united thyself to Christ the life-creating and supra-natural Bridegroom, O protomartyr, thou wast pleased that wild beasts be the preservers of thy virginity.

Having shed thy garment of corruption, O beautifully clad athlete of Christ, thou didst pass onto the life which ageeth not, throughout all ages.

Theotokion: **I**n a manner transcending nature thou hast given birth unto God the Word, the Creator and Savior, O Virgin; wherefore, we honor thee, O pure one, throughout the ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: **With never ceasing praises we magnify thee, * the Mother of God Most High, * who art higher than the most pure hosts, * and who beyond comprehension knew not wedlock, * yet hath truly given birth to God.**

Who doth not marvel at thine invincibility, O protomartyr? For, having subdued the passions, the noetic beasts, to the will of thy soul, thou wast not afraid of the unrestrained assaults of wild beasts, but remained incorrupt in their midst.

At the command of God, the hard and impassible rock split apart for thee, O God-bearing martyr who wast sealed by the laver of regeneration as a blessed bride, and it received thee like a chamber as thou didst flee.

Heal thou the wounds of my soul, O protomartyr; grant peace to the world, bestowing victories over heresies and schisms to all true Orthodox hierarchs, and bring peace to the Churches by thy prayers.

Theotokion: **With** unceasing hymns all we, the faithful, glorify thee, the most glorious and all-holy Theotokos, and we hymn thee as her who gaveth birth unto the Lord of all, unto the salvation of those who praise thee.

Exapostilarion of the holy protomartyr:

Let us praise Thecla, the equal of the apostles and first woman to suffer, the glory of women, the instructor of spiritual athletes, who opened for all the way of martyrdom.

Theotokion: **With** thy mighty protection preserve all of us, thy servants, unharmed by the assaults of the enemies, O pure one; for thee alone do we have as a refuge in our needs.

On the Praises, 4 Stichera, the composition of Anatolius, two in Tone II:

Having Christ God as thy Bridegroom in the heavens, O Thecla first to suffer, thou didst reject a transitory betrothed bridegroom; for, wisely paying no heed to the enticements of thy mother, thou didst follow Paul, taking the sign of the Cross upon thy shoulders, fearing not the fire. The savagery of the wild beasts thou didst transform into meekness, and didst slay Phocas by the immersion of holy baptism in Christ, do thou, who valiantly shone forth in divine sufferings, cease not to entreat Christ unceasingly on behalf of those who with faith keep thy most precious memory.

Having offered thyself for the bidding of the Almighty, and forsaken earthly love, strengthened as the protomartyr of Christ, thou hast arrayed thyself in the light of everlasting life, and thereby discovered the entrance to the blessed bridal chamber of eternal life wherein the flock of holy women rest. With them pray thou for our souls, O Thecla, equal of the apostles.

And two in Tone IV: **Form** a choir, O ye who love the martyrs, for the time of struggles hath arrived, the annual commemoration of the protomartyr, which exhorteth all to the glorification of God. For Thecla, first martyr among women, having finished the course of suffering, hath been revealed to be the first crown-bearer, who prayeth with boldness on behalf of our souls.

Thy superhuman suffering, O protomartyr of Christ, not only astonished the nations, but also amazed the savage beasts. Flames were not considered flames by thee, O good virgin Thecla, for the sake of Christ thy Bridegroom; and, suffering for His sake, thou didst rejoice. And, cut off from the world, that thou mayest receive the blessedness of heaven, thou dost pray with boldness on behalf of our souls.

Glory ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone I:

The struggle of the contest lieth before us, let us join chorus, O ye people, and look upon the most glorious things accomplished therein: for the good virgin Thecla, the bride of God, the unblemished ewe-lamb, hath presented herself for sacrifice, following Christ God Who sacrificed Himself for our sake. Wherefore, with faith in the Trinity she destroyed ungodliness, and, rejoicing with the angels, she beseecheth the Savior to save our souls.

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

Spec. Mel.: “O all-praised martyrs ...”:

‘A sword hath pierced me, O my Son,’ said the Virgin upon seeing Christ hung upon the Tree, ‘my heart hath been rent O Lord, as Simeon once foretold to me. But arise, I pray Thee, O immortal One, and glorify Thy Mother and handmaiden.’

On the Aposticha, the Stichera from the Oktoechos, and Glory ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone II:

Come, ye who love the martyrs, and in hymns let us honor the protomartyr Thecla, the boast of women; for with the power of the Cross she trampled down the adverse foe, and, receiving the victory, hath been crowned as is meet. Wherefore, the much suffering one prayeth that they that keep her memory with faith and love be delivered from misfortunes and the judgment to come.

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

Spec. Mel.: “When from the Tree ...”:

Stavrotheotokion: Having endured many pangs during the crucifixion of thy Son and God, * O most pure one, * thou didst groan, weeping and crying aloud: * “Woe is me, O my sweet Child! * How is it that thou sufferest unjustly, * desiring to deliver the mortal descendents of Adam?” * Wherefore, O most pure Virgin, * we entreat thee with faith: ** Render Him merciful unto us!

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from the Oktoechos, and 3 from ODE III of the canon of the holy protomartyr.

O thy love which passeth understanding, O most honored one, whereby, having united thyself in the Spirit, thou didst bind thyself to Paul in Christ!

The mind was unable to wound thee who wast wounded with the desire of the Spirit, O delight of mortals.

Having rejected all fleshly attachments, thou wast not softened by the conversations of thy mother, O all-praised spiritual athlete.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast the correction of our first mother Eve, O Theotokos, having given birth unto the Author of life for the world.

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Taught by the words of Paul, * O Thecla, bride of God, * and confirmed through faith by Peter, * O divinely called one, * thou wast shown to be the protomartyr and first sufferer among women, * entering the flame as it were a place abloom with flowers. * The wild beasts and bulls stood in awe of thee, * for thou didst arm thyself with the Cross. ** Wherefore, O all-praised one, entreat Christ, that our souls be saved.

ODE III, Kontakion of the holy protomartyr, in Tone VIII:

In the beauty of thy virginity thou didst shine forth, * and wast adorned with the crown of martyrdom; * as one most glorious, O virgin, thou didst entrust thyself to the Apostle Paul, * and didst transform the flame of the fire into dew; * and by thy prayers, O thou who wast the first among women to suffer, ** thou didst quell the raging of the bull.

ODE VI, Kontakion of the holy protomartyr, in Tone II:

Having wounded thy heart with the love of Christ, * O good virgin, * thou didst spurn a transient betrothal as of no account; * and didst brave the fire, shutting the mouths of the wild beasts. * And, saved from them, O Thecla, * first among women to suffer, ** thou didst take care to seek out Paul.

Prokeimenon: Wondrous is God in His saints, * the God of Israel.

Verse: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the wellsprings of Israel.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY (3:10-15)

Timothy my child; thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the

Lord delivered me: Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Alleluia, in Tone I: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Verse: And He brought me out of the pit of misery, and from the mire of clay.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (25:1-13).

The Lord spake a parable saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.