

FOURTH SUNDAY IN GREAT LENT
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN OF THE LADDER
VESPERS:

On “Lord I have cried ...,” 10 Stichera: 7 Resurrection Stichera.

And 3 Stichera from the Triodion, in Tone VIII;

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

O holy father John, * truly didst thou carry upon thy lips the praises of God, * having studied with exceeding diligence * the divinely inspired Scriptures O all-wise one * thou didst enrich thyself with the gifts of grace, * and become a blessed one, ** vanquishing all the counsels of the ungodly.

O most glorious father John, * thou didst cleanse thy soul with the fountain of thy tears, * and through the keeping of all-night vigil * thou didst gain God’s mercy, * raising thyself on high O blessed one, * to the love of Him and of His beauty; * and as is meet thou dost take delight and ever rejoice, * with thy fellow strugglers, ** O divinely wise father.

O venerable father John, * through faith thou didst lift up thy mind on high to God; * dead to the never-waning turmoil of this world, * thou didst take up thy Cross and follow Him, * Who seeth all things, * bringing into subjection * the unruliness of thy body * through ascetic discipline, ** by the power of the Divine Spirit.

Glory ..., in Tone V:

O holy father, hearing the voice of the Gospel of the Lord, * and having forsaken the riches and glory of this world; * thou didst cry out unto all: * “Love God, and ye shall find eternal grace, * esteem nothing higher than His love, * that, when He cometh in His glory, * ye may find rest with all the saints.” ** by whose prayers, O Christ, do Thou protect and save our souls.

Both now ..., Dogmatic Theotokion, in the Tone of the week.

Then “O Joyous Light ...”:

The Prokeimenon: “The Lord is King ...,” with its verses.

The Resurrection Aposticha, in the Tone of the week. Then:

Glory of the venerable one ..., in Tone II:

Let us offer honor unto John, * an angel upon the earth and a man of God in the heavens, * adornment of the whole world, * joy of the good and boast of virtuous ascetics. * For planted in the house of God * he hath blossomed forth with holiness, * and like a cedar in the desert * he hath increased the flock of Christ ** in ascetic sanctity and righteousness.

Both now ..., in Tone II:

O new wonder greater than all the wonders of old! * For who hath ever known a mother to give birth without having known a man, * and to bear on her arm Him Who sustaineth all creation? * Yet it was the will of God to be born. * O most pure one, who carried Him as an infant in Thine embrace * and before Whom thou hast a mother's boldness: * cease not to pray on behalf of those who honor thee, ** that He have compassion and save our souls.

“Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart ...,” Trisagion. Then, in Tone IV:

O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, * O Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; * blessed art thou among women, * and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, * for thou didst bear the Savior of our souls. (Thrice)

Blessed be the Name of the Lord, and the rest.

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Resurrection Troparion, (Twice)

Glory ..., Troparion of the venerable one in Tone I:

A dweller in the wilderness and an angel in the body! * Thou wast manifest a wonderworker, O John our Godbearing Father! * Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer: * healing the infirm and the souls of those who flee to thee with faith. * Glory to Him Who hath given thee strength! * Glory to Him Who hath crowned thee! ** Glory to Him Who through thee worketh healings for all!

Both now ..., in Tone I:

When Gabriel announced to thee, “Rejoice!”, O Virgin, * the Master of all became incarnate within thee, the holy tabernacle, * at his cry, as the righteous David said. Thou wast shown to be more spacious than the heavens, * having borne thy Creator. * Glory to Him Who made His abode within thee! * Glory to Him Who came forth from thee! ** Glory to Him Who hath set us free by thy birthgiving.

After the 1st and 2nd readings from the Psalter, The Sessional Hymns of the Resurrection, in the Tone of the week:

Then the Resurrectional Verses: (THE EVLOGITARIA)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, * teach me Thy statutes; and the rest.

Then the small Litany and the Sessional Hymn, in the Tone of the week.

The Hymns of Ascent, and Prokeimenon, in the Tone of the week: Let every breath ..., The Sunday Resurrection Gospel.

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ ...,

Psalm 50. Then the following Hymns of compunction, in Tone VIII:

Glory ..., **T**he gates of repentance, do Thou open unto me, O Giver of Life, * for early in the morning my spirit seeketh Thy holy temple, * bearing the temple of my body all defiled. * But as One who art compassionate * cleanse it by Thy loving-kindness and mercy.

Both now ..., **G**uide me on the paths of salvation, O Theotokos: * for I have polluted my soul with shameful deeds * and wasted all my life in slothfulness. * but by thine intercessions * do thou deliver me from all impurity.

In Tone VI:

Have mercy upon me, O God, * according to Thy great mercy: * and according to the multitude of Thy compassion * blot out my transgressions.

In Tone VIII: **A**s I the wretched one ponder the multitude of evil deeds I have done, * I tremble for fear of the dread day of judgment. * But trusting in Thy compassionate mercy, * like David do I cry unto Thee: * “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.”

After which: “**O** God, save Thy people ...,” and the canons:

ODE I

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: Unto God the Savior ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

O Christ, I have become like the man who fell among thieves, and grievously beaten, was left barely alive O Savior; and more than he, I am also grievously wounded with my sins.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Stripped of all Thy wealth, he cried out lamenting: “O Savior, I am gravely wounded; leave me not to the thieves.” Likewise I also pray to Thee: “Merciful Lord, save me.”

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Do Thou heal me who am noetically deadened by the scourging of sin, from the unrighteous thieves, my wicked thoughts, O Christ Savior; save me since Thou art plenteous in mercy.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: **O** thou who didst inexplicably give birth to the Wisdom and Word of the Father, grant healing to my grievously wounded soul, and assuage the infirmity of my heart.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: Having passed through the water as upon dry land ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Ascending from the sorrow of things material, O holy John, thou didst dwell in the immaterial noetic light: by thine intercessions to the Lord, grant me this light.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Suckled on the sweetness of abstinence, thou didst cast away the bitterness of sensuality; and so, father, thou hast granted us a pleasure sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

Glory..., Having ascended to the heights of the virtues, scorning as worthless, sensual pleasures, thou hast appeared to thy flock as the sweetness of salvation, O venerable father.

Both now ..., O thou who ineffably gave birth to the Word and Wisdom of the Father, heal thou the harsh wounds of my soul and assuage the infirmity of my heart.

Katavasia in Tone IV: I shall open my mouth, * and be filled with the Spirit, * and utter discourse to the Queen and Mother; * and be seen radiantly keeping festival, * joyfully praising her wonders.

ODE III

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: Do Thou establish us O God our Savior ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

I have wickedly journeyed on the path of life, O Christ, and been sorely wounded by thieves through my passions: but I beseech Thee, raise me up.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Thieves have robbed my mind and, wounded by my sins, leaving me barely alive: but do Thou heal me, O Lord.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

I have been stripped bare of Thy commandments by the passions O Christ Savior, and I have been scourged by sensual pleasures, but do Thou pour upon me Thy mercy.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: Without ceasing Pray, O pure one, unto Him who came forth from thy womb, that those who sing thy praises may be delivered from the wiles of the evil one.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: Thou art the strengthening of all who come to Thee ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

With the fiery coal of thine asceticism, O saint, thou hast burnt up the thorns of the passions, warming all those who follow the monastic life.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

The aroma of the sanctifying myrrh of thine ascetic struggles, O venerable father, Hath filled all with the odor of the spiritual fragrance of God.

Glory..., Attentively learning the laws of ascetic struggle, thou didst burn up the passions, as though another army of Pharaoh, by the flow of thy tears.

Both now ..., Do thou put a stop the restless tumult of my thoughts, O pure one, and guide me, O Mother of God, to thy Son.

Katavasia: O Theotokos, thou living and plentiful fount, * establish in spiritual fellowship those who sing hymns to thee, * and in thy divine glory * grant them crowns of glory.

Kontakion of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

Truly hath the Lord placed thee * in the firmament * like an immovable star of abstinence * shedding its light upon all creation, ** O father John our teacher.

Ikos: Truly, O father, thou hast made thyself into a temple of God, adorned through thy divine virtues with faith, hope and true love, as if with gold shining from afar; thou hast explained the laws of God, and practiced abstinence as a if a bodiless one; having acquired wisdom, courage, chastity and humility, thou hast been raised on high, illumined with unceasing prayer, thou hast attained unto the tabernacles of heaven, O father John our teacher.

Sessional Hymn, in Tone V:

Having Thy Most-pure Cross as a weapon of salvation, O Savior, we cry to Thee: “O Thou Who willingly didst suffer for our sake, save us, O God of all, since Thou art plenteous in mercy.”

Sessional Hymn of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

Glory ..., Having ascended to the Heavens, resplendent with virtues and holiness, thou hast properly entered into the boundless depth of the contemplation of God. Having defeated all the snares of the demons, and protecting mankind from their wickedness, O John - ladder of the virtues - thou dost ever intercede on behalf of thy servants, that they be saved.

Both now ..., He Who is enthroned upon the cherubim and Who dwelleth in the bosom of the Father, hath sat incarnate in thy bosom, O Lady, as upon

His holy throne. For as God He is the ruler of all nations, and with understanding we now sing unto Him; beseech Him O pure one, on behalf of thy servants that they be saved.

ODE IV

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: I heard the rumor of Thy plan ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Thieves have despoiled me of my godly actions and left me wounded and in pangs.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

My unstable thoughts have stripped me bare of Thy commandments, O Savior, and I have been scourged by my transgressions.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

The Levite, when he saw me wounded, passed me by, O Savior; but do Thou save me.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: Regally do we glorify thee O unwedded Theotokos, and we the faithful flee to thy safe haven for refuge.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy plan ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Thou art a fragrant flowered meadow and a living paradise of the virtues, in which abstinence doth blossom; and with which thou dost nourish all who honor thee.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

As a lawgiver for ascetics, and a most meek rule for monastics, thou art truly like Moses and David, O father, wherefore we bless thee.

Glory..., Planted by the waters of abstinence, thou hast been revealed O blessed one, to be a vine blossoming with, and bearing, the grapes of piety.

Both now ..., Within time, O Mother of God, thou didst bear for us Him Who hath shone forth timelessly from the Father. Entreat Him to save those who sing thy praises.

Katavasia: He who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, * Jesus the true God, * is come in a swift cloud * and with His sinless hands he hath saved those who cry: * Glory to Thy power, O Christ.

ODE V

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: Having arisen early I cry unto Thee O Lord ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

O Jesus, bind the wounds of my soul, as of old the Samaritan did to him that fell among thieves, and heal me from my pain, I pray Thee, O my Christ.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Sickened by the wounds of my transgressions, I lay helpless, O my Christ, naked and bereft of the divine virtues; but I beseech Thee, do Thou save me.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

When the priest and the Levite saw me, they could not help me, but passed by on the other side. But since Thou art compassionate Thou hast granted me salvation and saved me.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: I beseech Thee O Lord, Turn not away from me, wretched as I am, for my mind is painfully scourged by noetic thieves, but do Thou have compassion upon me O Savior, by the prayers of her who gave birth to Thee.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: A strange darkness hath overcome me ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

O blessed father, thou didst quench all the passions with the dew of thine ascetic struggles, abundantly aflame with love and faith thou wast a lamp of abstinence, a light of dispassion, and a child of the day.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

With thy divine husbandry, O father, thou didst tend to the grapes of faith; and gathering them into the winepress thou hast pressed them out by thine ascetic labors; making glad the heart of thy flock.

Glory..., Having well withstood the assaults and the wounds of thine enemies, thou wast revealed to be a pillar of patience, strengthening thy flock thou hast guided them with thy blessed staff, nourishing them on the waters of abstinence, O blessed one.

Both now ..., As spoken by thine own lips, we emulate thee, O all-pure one, and call thee blessed. For the Lord hath indeed done great things unto thee and hath magnified thee as the true Mother of God, born from thy womb.

Katavasia: All creation stands in awe of thy divine glory; * for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, * didst contain within thy womb the God of all, * and gave birth to the timeless Son, * bestowing peace, upon all who hymn thee.

ODE VI

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: An Abyss hath consumed me ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

I have wasted the blessed life given me with passions, O Master, and grievously scourged in every part by my transgressions, I turn back to Thee for refuge and pray: "Have compassion upon me."

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Thieves have seized my wealth and left me as one dead, having scourged my mind with the passions. But do Thou have compassion upon me and save me, O Lord.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Unable to bear the sight of my pain and wounds, the Levite passed me by; but do Thou Thyself O Compassionate One, pour on me the oil of Thy great mercy.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: As the bush unconsumed by fire, as the mountain and living ladder, as the heavenly gate, we worthily glorify thee, Mary most glorious, the praise of the Orthodox.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Thou didst receive within thy soul the divine wealth of the Spirit; unblemished prayer, purity, modesty, constant watchfulness, the labors of abstinence; by which thou hast become a temple of God.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

O wise one, thou didst pass by material things as worthless, and having raised thy mind on high through noetic prayer; by the perfection of thy life thou hast manifest thyself as an heir of peaceful repose in the highest.

Glory..., **T**hou didst truly extinguish the fiery darts of thine enemies by thine ascetic struggles, and having kindled the fire of faith, thou didst burn up the boastful unbelief of heresy.

Both now ..., **T**he majesty of the Most High hath shone forth from Zion; through an ineffable union He hath assumed flesh from thee, O undefiled one, and shed light upon the world.

Katavasia: Celebrating the divine and solemn feast * of the Mother of God * O ye divinely wise, * let us come, clapping our hands, * and glorify God who was born of her.

SYNAXARION READING

Verse: Thou dwellest no longer at thine earthly diocese O John,

Verse: But thou dost always delight in the vision of Him Who overseeth all.

On this day, the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, we commemorate our venerable Father among the saints, St. John of Sinai, the author of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.

No one knows the birthplace or parentage of our venerable Father John of Sinai. In his youth, at the age of sixteen, he came to the wilderness of Sinai and dwelt under the guidance of Abba Martyrius. When Abba Martyrius tonsured our venerable Father John at the age of twenty, he took him and went to that pillar of the wilderness, Abba John the Sabbaite in the wilderness of Gouda where he had with him his disciple Stephen the Cappadocian. When the Sabbaite elder saw them, he arose and took water, poured it into a small basin, washed the feet of the disciple (the young John) and kissed his hand; but he did not wash the feet of Abba Martyrius his superior. Abba Stephen was scandalized by the situation. After the departure of Abba Martyrius and his disciple, Abba John noticed that his own disciple was greatly perplexed and said to him, "Why are you so troubled? Believe me, I do not know who the boy is, but today I received the

abbot of Sinai and washed his feet.” After forty years, he did indeed become the abbot according to the prophecy of the elder. After the passing of his spiritual father, St. John continued alone in the wilderness in a cave in Wadi-Thola. He traveled from time to time, going at least once as far as Alexandria. He records in *The Ladder* his visit to a large monastic community there and the marvels of repentance, obedience, and humility which he observed. In his humility, he counted our venerable George the Wonderworker of Arselaou as his master. In all, he spent some forty years in solitude and stillness. He guided the monks who dwelt in that desert since he was a most excellent and nurturing spiritual father – for in those days there were innumerable ascetics living in cells all through the mountains and valleys of Sinai. From time to time, he received visitors from farther away. At one point, some other monks, prompted to jealousy by the adversary who hates all good, complained of Abba John’s fame and teaching. In response, he humbly kept strict silence for over a year, until the same fathers who had complained came, asking him to speak again for the benefit of all. After he had spent forty years in the wilderness, the monks of Sinai asked him to become abbot of the great monastery built by the emperor Justinian beside the Burning Bush of Moses, the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine. In obedience to the fathers, he left his blessed solitude to take up the responsibilities of abbot. It is told that on the very day on which he assumed the office of abbot, there came a group of about six hundred pilgrims. When they were seated, our venerable Father John saw someone in the crowd with short hair and wearing a Jewish tunic. This person was going about like someone with authority, directing the cooks, the stewards, the storekeepers, and other workers. After the people left, when the servers all sat down to eat, they sought everywhere for the one who had been going about supervising, but did not find him. Then the servant of God, our venerable Father John, said, “Let him go. The lord Moses did nothing strange in this same place where he served before and which belongs to him.” O, the wonder! It had been the Holy Prophet and Lawgiver Moses who had served the guests. At the request of Abba John, abbot of Raith near the shore of the Red Sea, our venerable father wrote his wonderful book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, in which he sets out the whole of Christian life as a divine ascent of thirty rungs to Christ. This book has been a treasure, a pearl beyond price, to this day. It is useful not only to monastics but to all devout Christians. He also wrote, for Abba John, a shorter exhortation, “To the Shepherd,” in which he set out the stature and work of the father and shepherd of souls who must guide, not so much by words but by the light of holiness in which he lives. St. John was a true physician of souls and had great spiritual insight into men's behavior. He made detailed observations of the symptoms of men's sin-sick souls, diagnosed their

spiritual diseases, and prescribed the appropriate medicine for their recovery and salvation. He showed how one can ascend the “ladder of the virtues” step by step and reach the Promised Land, fleeing the Egypt of the passions. Yet, his success was due only to his own life of constant watchfulness, fasting, vigils, and prayer. The monastic community he shepherded continues to this day beside the Burning Bush, and his teachings guide and direct monastics throughout the world. During Great Lent, *The Ladder* is read aloud in monasteries during meals so the monastics may receive his edifying spiritual counsels for their souls’ sustenance, as they simultaneously receive physical nourishment for their bodies. Today, the cave in which he dwelt in the wilderness of Sinai I can still be seen, but his resting place is unknown except to the angels. He fell asleep in the Lord in the seventh century. St. John is also commemorated on March 30, the day of his repose.

O Christ our God, through the intercessions
of our venerable Father John of The Ladder,
have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

ODE VII

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:
The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: The highly exalted Lord of our fathers ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Thieves fell upon me, wretch that I am, and left me with wounds as one dead; wherefore I pray unto Thee: O God come Thyself and visit me.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

My mind, ceaselessly robbed by my thoughts, hath pierced me through with the passions, and because of the multitude of my transgressions, left me as one dead. But do Thou O Savior, grant me healing.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Having seen me ailing with painful wounds, the Levite could not bear to look upon me, thinking my wounds incurable, and passed me by O my Savior, but do Thou Thyself grant me healing

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: **H**aving taken flesh from the Virgin, Thou hast saved me, in Thy compassion pouring upon my wounds Thy rich mercy, O Christ, wherefore I glorify Thee.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: Having gone down to Babylon from Judea ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Into the fair meadows of the Kingdom on high, Thou hast lead thy flock to pasture, O father, and with the rod of true dogma thou hast driven away the wild beasts of heresy; chanting: “O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Thou hast entered on high, into the heavenly bridal chamber of Christ the King, clothed in a garment worthy of Him that hath called thee; and seated therein, thou dost cry aloud: “O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Glory... Thou art a river of abstinence unpolluted by sin O father; purging the thoughts and cleansing the filth of those, who sing with faith, “O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Both now ... The Lord of all came forth from thy womb, taking flesh from thee, O Virgin. Wherefore with true Orthodox faith we honor thee as the Theotokos, and cry aloud to thy Son: “O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Katavasia: Refusing to worship created things * in place of the Creator, * the divinely wise youths bravely trampled down the threatening fire * and rejoicing they sang aloud: * O supremely hymned Lord and God of our Fathers, Blessed art Thou.

The Kontakion and Ikos of the Resurrection in the Tone of the week.

ODE VIII

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: The Youths in the fiery furnace ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

From the noetic thieves of my thoughts, O Savior, I have been robbed, and from the wounds of my transgressions, my life hath wasted away, from whence I have been stripped of the divine image of Thee O God, Who lovest mankind, but do Thou have compassion upon me.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Thou didst come down from on high to the earth, O Savior, and have compassion upon me, and as I lay wholly wounded by the scourging of sin O Compassionate One; Thou hast poured the oil of Thy mercy upon me, O Christ.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

For my sake, O Master and Savior, Thou hast given Thy soul and body over to deliver me, and save me, who lay incurably wounded by the sword of my sins, since Thou art Compassionate.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: **T**ranscending all understanding hast thou given birth to the Lord, God-man and Word, yet remaining a virgin; wherefore, O Virgin, with all creation we bless and supremely exalt thee throughout all ages.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: **The King of glory ...,**

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

An image and living pillar of abstinence art thou shown to be in truth O father, wherefore we honor thy memory O John.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

The multitudes of monastics rejoice, and the assembly of venerable saints and righteous dance with gladness: for thou hast justly received a crown with them.

Refrain: Let us bless Father, Son, Holy Spirit, the Lord.

Adorned with the virtues, thou hast entered into the ineffable glory of the noetic bridle-chamber singing hymns in praise of Christ throughout the ages.

Both now ..., Reject us not, O Virgin, for we are in need of thy help; and we sing in praise of thee and supremely exalt thee throughout all ages.

Stichera: **We** praise, bless and worship the Lord, chanting and supremely exalting Him throughout all ages.

Katavasia: **The Offspring of the Theotokos * saved the holy children in the furnace. * He who was then prefigured hath now been born on earth, * and He gathereth all creation to hymn thee: * all ye works praise ye the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.**

And then we chant the Hymn of the most holy Theotokos (the Magnificat)

ODE IX

The appointed canons from the Oktoechos. Then:

The first canon from the Triodion, in Tone V:

Irmos: **O** Isaiah, dance now and be glad! ...,

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

I have knowingly not kept Thy commandments O Lord, and following the passionate impulses of sensual pleasure, I have been stripped of grace, and cast out naked. Wherefore I beseech Thee O Savior, do Thou save me

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

The Levite could not cleanse my wounds, but as one who hath suffered with me, Thou didst come to me O good One, and pouring upon me the mercy of Thy compassions; like the best of physicians, Thou hast healed me.

Refrain: Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.

Since Thou art the compassionate One, Thou hast been compassionate to me O Christ, and saved me, who wast grievously wounded by thieves O Savior; by giving Thy soul and body as the two dinars, in payment for my redemption.

Refrain: Most Holy Theotokos save us.

Theotokion: Thy birth-giving transcends understanding, O Mother of God, for thou didst conceive without knowing a man, and gave birth while remaining a virgin, having given birth to God, Whom magnifying, we call thee blessed, O Virgin.

Of the venerable one, in Tone VI

Irmos: With all peoples let us magnify the Pure One ...,

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

A physician of those sick through sin, O blessed one of God, thou art manifest as a slayer and expeller of evil spirits; wherefore we call thee blessed.

Refrain: Venerable father John, Pray to God for us.

Leaving the earth wherein corruption dwelleth, thou hast gone to live, O father, in the land of the meek, and with them thou dost rejoice in the sweet blessings of God.

Glory..., Today is the day of solemn festivity, for the entire flock of monastics hath been called to assemble as a spiritual choir, and liturgizing, partake of eternal life.

Both now ..., Having taken up His abode within thee, O all-immaculate One, He who hath overthrown the murderer who maliciously brought about the fall of our first parents, hath been born and saved us all.

Katavasia: Let every mortal born on earth, * radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy; * and let the host of the angelic powers * celebrate and honor the holy feast of the Mother of God, * and let them cry aloud: * Rejoice! O all-blessed Theotokos, * thou pure Ever-Virgin.

The small litany:

Then, “Holy is our God ...”: (Thrice)

Exapostilarion for the Resurrection Gospel of the week, then:

Glory ..., Exapostilarion of the venerable one, in Tone III;

Thou didst shun worldly ease as enfeebling, * and withering thy flesh with fasting, * thou didst renew the strength of thy soul, O venerable one, * gloriously enriching thyself with heavenly glory, ** wherefore cease not to intercede on our behalf, O John.

Both now ..., in the same Tone;

Saved by thee, O Lady, we nobly confess Thee to be the very Theotokos, * for inexpressibly Thou didst bear God, * Who hath destroyed death by the Cross * and called to Himself the assemblies of venerable saints, ** wherefore we, with them, offer praises to Thee, O Virgin.

On the Aposticha, the 8 Resurrection Stichera. In the Tone of the week,
with the 7th and 8th verses:

7th Verse: I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, * I will tell of all Thy wonders.

8th Verse: I will be glad and rejoice in Thee, I will chant unto Thy name, O Most High.

Then, another from the Triodion, in Tone I:

9th Verse: Arise, O Lord my God, let Thy hands be lifted high; * forget not Thy paupers to the end.

Come, let us work in the mystical vineyard, * bringing forth fruits of repentance therein; * let us not labor for the sake of food and drink, * but through prayer and fasting let us increase the virtues. * And the Lord of the vineyard, pleased by our labor, will pay us the dinar, * with which He hath redeemed our souls from the debt of sin, ** for He alone is rich in mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone I:

Come, let us work in the mystical vineyard, * making the fruit of repentance grow within it; * let us not labor for the sake of food and drink, * but through prayer and fasting let us gain the virtues. * And the Lord of the vineyard, pleased by our labor, will provide the payment, * whereby He doth redeem our souls from the debt of sin, ** for He alone is abundantly merciful.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

Thou art most blessed, O Virgin Theotokos, * for through Him who took flesh from thee, Hades hath been captured, * Adam recalled, the curse slain, Eve set free, * death put to death, and we have been given life. * Therefore in praise we cry: ** Blessed art thou, O Christ our God, who hast been thus well-pleased, glory be to thee.

Then the Great Doxology and after it the Resurrection Troparion:

Before the 1st Hour: Glory ..., Both now ..., Gospel Sticheron for the week.

AT LITURGY

Typika, and the Beatitudes: 8 from the Oktoechos, in the tone of the week.

Order of Troparia & Kontakia for a temple dedicated to a Saint/s:

Troparion of the Resurrection:

Troparion of the Temple:

Troparion of the venerable one, in Tone I:

A dweller in the wilderness and an angel in the body! * Thou wast manifest a wonderworker, O John our Godbearing Father! * Thou didst receive heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer: * healing the infirm and the souls of those who flee to thee with faith. * Glory to Him Who hath given thee strength! * Glory to Him Who hath crowned thee! ** Glory to Him Who through thee worketh healings for all!

Kontakion of the Resurrection:

Kontakion of the Temple:

Glory ..., Kontakion of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

Truly hath the Lord placed thee * in the firmament * like an immovable star of abstinence * shedding its light upon all creation, ** O father John our teacher.

Both now ..., in Tone VI:

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, * O mediation unto the Creator unfailing, * disdain not the suppliant voices of sinners, * but be thou quick, O good one, to help us who in faith cry unto thee; * hasten to intercession and speed thou to make supplication, ** thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

Prokeimenon and Verse in the Resurrection Tone for the week.

Prokeimenon of the venerable one in Tone VII: The saints shall boast in glory, * and they shall rejoice upon their beds.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (DAY) (6:13 – 20)

Brethren: when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,

confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS (SAINT) (5:9 – 19)

Brethren: the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Alleluia and Verse in the Resurrection Tone of the week:

Alleluia from the Triodion, in Tone II:

Verse: They that are planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God they shall blossom forth.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK (DAY) (9:17-31)

At that time: one of the multitude said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said

with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it. For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW (SAINT) (4:25 - 5:12)

At that time: there followed Jesus great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:

Communion Hymn: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest.

Another: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.

VESPERS ON SUNDAY EVENING

(There is no chanting of the Psalter)

On “Lord I have cried ...,” 10 Stichera: 4 penitential Stichera, in the Tone of the week, and then the following 3 Stichera from the Triodion:

Two by Joseph, in Tone III:

O ye faithful, let us take upon ourselves great labors * in this season of abstinence, * that we may obtain great glory, * that through the mercy of our great God ** we may be delivered from the flames of Gehenna.

Now that we have passed the midpoint of the Fast, * let us manifest within ourselves the beginning of a godly life, * and let us hasten eagerly towards our journey’s end; * virtuous living, ** that we may receive the delight that never groweth old.

One by Theodore, in Tone VII:

Having passed the middle point of the Fast, * let us proceed with joy to that which remaineth, * anointing our souls with the oil of almsgiving; * that we be deemed worthy to worship the divine Passion of Christ our God, ** and arrive at His holy and fearful Resurrection.

Then 3 Stichera from the Menaion;

Glory ..., Both now ..., the Theotokion from the Menaion.

Entrance with the censer, “O joyous Light ...”:

Great Prokeimenon, in Tone VIII:

Prokeimenon: Turn not Thy countenance away from Thy servant, for I am afflicted; quickly hearken unto me. * Attend unto my soul and deliver it;

Verse 1: May Thy salvation, O God, be quick to help me.

Verse 2: Let beggars behold it and be glad.

Verse 3: Seek after God, and your soul shall live.

And then once more, Turn not Thy countenance away ...,

At this point the priest (in the Altar) removeth his Phelonion and changeth his Epitrachelion to one of a dark color (black or dark purple); The covers on the Icon-stands and the other coverings in the church are also changed.

After “Vouchsafe O Lord ...”:

Litany: Let us complete ...,

Note: from this point on, the choir chanteth the responses according to the penitential Lenten melody.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera in Tone VII:

Having planted His vineyard and called the laborers, the Savior is close at hand. Come, all ye who have striven to keep the Fast, and let us enjoy our reward; for the Giver is rich and merciful. After laboring a little, let us receive His mercy upon our souls.

Verse: Unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes, unto Thee that dwellest in heaven. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid look unto the hands of her mistress, so do our eyes look unto the Lord our God, * until He take pity on us.

(Repeat): **H**aving planted His vineyard ...,

Verse: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for greatly are we filled with abasement. Greatly hath our soul been filled therewith; let reproach come upon them that prosper, * and abasement on the proud.

Adam fell among thieving thoughts: his mind was robbed, his soul wounded, and he lay naked without help. Neither the priest who was before the Law attended to him; nor did the Levite who came after the Law look upon him. Thou alone didst help him, O God, Thou who camest not from Samaria but from the Theotokos: O Lord glory be to Thee.

Of the holy martyrs, in Tone VI:

Thy martyrs, O Lord, * denied Thee not, nor forsook Thy commandments: ** by their intercessions have mercy on us.

Glory from the Menaion, if there is one, otherwise:

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

Like the Archangel, * let us the faithful hymn the bridal-chamber of heaven, * the portal truly sealed: * Rejoice, for whose sake hath budded forth unto us Christ the Savior of all, * the Bestower of life and God! * With thine arm O Sovereign Lady * cast down the tyrants, our godless foes, * O most pure one, ** O thou hope of Christians!

“Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart ...,” Trisagion. Then:

In Tone V:

O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, O Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls. (Prostration)

Glory ...,

O Baptist of Christ, be mindful of us all, that we may be delivered from our iniquities, for unto thee is given the grace to pray on behalf of us all. (Prostration)

Both now ...,

Pray for us, holy apostles and all ye saints, that we may be delivered from perils and afflictions: for ye are our fervent supplicants before the Savior. (Prostration)

We take refuge beneath thy tender mercy O Theotokos: despise not our supplications in distress: but deliver us from perils, for thou alone art pure and blessed. (No prostration)

Lord Have Mercy (40 Times)

Glory ..., Both now ...,

More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the word, the very Theotokos thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord father (master) bless!

Priest: He that is blessed, Christ our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. **O** Heavenly King, strengthen Orthodox Christians, establish the Faith, subdue the nations, give peace to the world, keep well this city (or habitation, or town); settle our departed fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous, and receive us in penitence and confession, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Then the Prayer of St Ephraim (once only)

Priest: O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. (Prostration)

But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. (Prostration)

Yea, O Lord King, grant me to see my own failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. (Prostration)

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ God our hope, glory be to Thee

Choir: Glory ..., Both now ..., Amen, Lord, have mercy (Thrice), father
(master) bless.

Priest: (The dismissal)