

THE 19th DAY OF THE MONTH OF APRIL
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN
OF THE ANCIENT CAVE
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these Stichera, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

O venerable and right wondrous father John, wounded by the divine desire of Christ God Who for thy sake willingly became a wanderer, and clothed Himself in flesh from the Virgin, thou didst reach a strange land, and utterly estrange thyself to all the sweet things of the world, O wise and most blessed father, and didst live as a stranger, acquiring the virtues: standing whole nights in prayer and the contemplation of death, thou didst restrain the passions by thine abstinence, showing thyself to be an emulator of those who fasted before thee, and with them thou hast been glorified.

O venerable and most glorious father John, having been trained in the fold of the godly Chariton, thou didst draw forth grace like a sponge and didst pour it forth, emulating his divine ways; and having spent thy life in stillness, thou wast deemed worthy of honored ordination, becoming a worthy priest, ever offering sacrifice. And like an unblemished lamb, purified by divine effulgence and enlightened in mind, thou wast borne up in mind to mystic visions, to excellent beatitude.

O most blessed father John, strengthened by the power of the Trinity, thou didst avoid all the harm of heresy, through vision and divine activity didst cleave unto and attain the divine glory which is the ultimate of all desires, O wise and blessed one, and didst truly and worthily receive it after thy repose, rejoicing, shining and standing before God with the angelic choirs. Wherefore, be thou mindful of those who celebrate thy memory as is meet, O right wondrous one.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone V:

Alas, O wretched soul! * What answer wilt thou have to give to the Judge * at that hour when the thrones will be set in judgment * and the Judge descendeth from the heavens, * with myriads of angels? * When seated upon the judgment seat * to judge His unprofitable servants likened unto me, * what answer shalt thou give then? * What wilt thou bring unto Him? * Truly nothing, having defiled thy mind and body. * Wherefore, fall down before the Virgin, and cry without ceasing, ** that she grant thee abundant forgiveness of sins!

Stavrotheotokion: **W**hen thou didst behold hanging upon the Tree, * the planted Cluster of grapes * Whom, like a vine, thou didst bring forth, * with His divine side pierced by a spear, * thou didst exclaim crying aloud O most pure one: * "What is this, O my Son and God? * How is it that Thou Who dost heal all infirmities and

sufferings, * hath undergone suffering, * though Thou art dispassionate according to Thy divine nature? * How have the thankless people thus rewarded Thee for Thy benefactions, O Benefactor?". * By His sufferings pray thou * that I may ever be free from sufferings, ** that I may glorify thee.

AT MATINS

Canon of the venerable one, 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.

Strengthened from thy youth with hope in God thou didst hasten to the good God, O blessed John, fortifying thyself with the highest ascetic feats of monasticism.

Full of rich and radiant grace, and living in laudable places, thou didst honorably appoint ascents leading to the virtues, O most blessed one.

Instructed by the might of the Spirit, having hastened to the fold of the God-bearing Chariton, and abiding therein, thou didst become a sacred minister radiant in purity.

Theotokion: Through thee, O joyous and all-pure one, Christ, the Sun of righteousness, hath appeared to us and illumined with light those who before sat in the fortresses of darkness.

ODE III

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

Having mortified the wisdom of thy flesh with exemplary asceticism, O father John, thou didst draw nigh to the life-creating Spirit. (Twice)

Divine and radiant effulgence manifestly dwelt in splendor within thy heart, O blessed father John.

Theotokion: Thou alone, O Mother of God, wast the mediatrix of good things transcending nature for those on earth; wherefore, we cry out to thee: Rejoice!

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Having wounded thy soul with divine desire, O blessed one, thou didst take thyself away, forsaking riches, food and splendor, and didst most honorably live a life of non-acquisition in foreign lands; and thou didst wound thy body with the pangs of abstinence, and, courageously living in stillness, didst attain the perfection of the virtues, O venerable one. Wherefore, we cry out to thee with faith: Entreat Christ God, that He grant forgiveness of sins unto those who with love honor thy holy memory.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone VIII:

All we, the generations of mankind, * call thee blessed, * in that thou art the Virgin who alone among women * gavest 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 thy most 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: For the sake of love for Thine image, * O compassionate One, * Thou didst ascend the cross * and the nations melted away. * For Thou, O Lover of mankind, * art my strength and my praise.

Reared in a land illumined with godly splendor, and enlightened by radiant effulgence, O divinely wise father, thou didst live in virtue and abstinence.

Having forsaken thy homeland, thy kinfolk and friends, O divinely wise and blessed one, thou didst cleave unto Christ with great desire, taking up thy cross.

Having died to all visible things through the Cause of life, O most wise John, and having lived in abstinence, thou didst depart unto Him.

Theotokion: He Who supra-naturally made His abode within thy God-receiving womb, O Virgin, by divine power kept thee a virgin even after birthgiving.

ODE V

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

Having acquired a pure mind through stillness, O father, thou didst escape the snares of the enemy by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Twice)

Thou didst live in the grace of God, in wisdom and doctrine, O divinely manifest and most blessed holy one, becoming a hierarch.

Theotokion: All generations piously bless thee, O most pure one, for thou didst truly give birth to the Blessed One in a manner transcending nature and all telling.

ODE VI

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

As a lover of the Wisdom of God, thou wast crowned by Him with a wreath of the virtues, O divinely inspired one, becoming in all ways the disciple of the light-bearing Chariton. (Twice)

Thou didst set thy feet upon the rock of Christ, ascending the virtues by thine activity, O divinely wise father, making ascents in thy heart with divine understanding.

Theotokion: **By** thy birth giving have we been freed from the curse of our first mother Eve; for, giving birth to Christ, O Virgin Mother, thou didst pour forth in its place blessing upon all.

ODE VII

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

Clothed in divine power as in vesture, O most blessed one, thou wast able to flee all the perils of heresy, crying aloud: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord! (Twice)

The Lord, Who became a stranger upon the earth for our sake, in thy wandering, O blessed one, manifestly preserved thee who cried aloud: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Theotokion: **Rejoice,** O hallowed and divine habitation of the Most High! For through thee, O Theotokos, hath joy been given to those who cry: Blessed art thou among women, O all-immaculate Sovereign Lady!

ODE VIII

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

Comely in body and soul, and in thy piety, O venerable one, thou wast an instrument of divine understanding, a devotee of the commandments and a flute of pure hymnody, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord! (Twice)

O venerable and blessed one, thou hast passed over to immortal life and blessedness without end, and hast been deemed worthy to receive joy incorruptible, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **Having** become incorrupt through thy divine birthgiving, O most pure one, we have shaken off the dust of mortality; for thou, O pure Lady, hast given birth to the true, natural and transcendent Life. Wherefore, we all call thee blessed, O Mary Bride of God.

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 separated natures; * therefore rejoicing we magnify thee, * O Theotokos.

Thou didst achieve an all-blessed end through the struggle of asceticism, O sacred father John, and, departing unto Christ, after death thou didst make thine abode in the life free of suffering and pain. (**Twice**)

Thou hast been deemed worthy to dwell in the land of the meek, O venerable and blessed father, for thou wast an emulator of God-bearing men of inner stillness; and with them thou hast manifestly received delight.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Bride of God, in giving birth to Christ thou hast poured forth upon us a well-spring of immortality, whereby we are purified of all the defilement of sin.