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READER'S TYPIKA ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020

(29th Sunday after Pentecost)

***The Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, when we commemorate Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King, and James the Brother of the Lord;
The Proto-Martyr Stephen the Archdeacon***

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

Reader: Amen.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (*Thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Leader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

All: Amen.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

THE FIRST ANTIPHON: PSALM 102

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all that He hath done for thee, Who is gracious unto all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thine infirmities, Who redeemeth thy life from corruption, Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion, Who fulfilleth thy desire with good things; thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. The Lord performeth deeds of mercy, and executeth judgement for all them that are wronged. He hath made His ways known unto Moses, unto the sons of Israel the things that He hath willed. Compassionate and merciful is the Lord, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy; not unto the end will He be angered, neither unto eternity will He be wroth. Not according to our iniquities hath He dealt with us, neither according to our sins hath He rewarded us. For according to the height of heaven from the earth, the Lord hath made His mercy to prevail over

them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us. Like as a father hath compassion upon his sons, so hath the Lord had compassion upon them that fear Him; for He knoweth whereof we are made, He hath remembered that we are dust. As for man, his days are as the grass; as a flower of the field, so shall he blossom forth. For when the wind is passed over it, then it shall be gone, and no longer will it know the place thereof. But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity, even unto eternity, upon them that fear Him. And His righteousness is upon sons of sons, upon them that keep His testament and remember His commandments to do them. The Lord in heaven hath prepared His throne, and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, all ye His angels, mighty in strength, that perform His word, to hear the voice of His words. Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, His ministers that do His will. Bless the Lord, all ye His works, in every place of His dominion.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

And again: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name; blessed art Thou, O Lord.

THE SECOND ANTIPHON: PSALM 145

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord in my life, I will chant unto my God for as long as I have my be-ing. Trust ye not in princes, in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return unto his earth. In that day all his thoughts shall perish. Blessed is he of whom the God of Jacob is his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, Who hath made heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is therein, Who keepeth truth unto eternity, Who executeth judgement for the wronged, Who giveth food unto the hungry. The Lord looseth the fettered; the Lord maketh wise the blind; the Lord setteth aright the fallen; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord preserveth the proselytes. He shall adopt for His own the orphan and widow, and the way of sinners shall He destroy. The Lord shall be king unto eternity; thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE HYMN OF JUSTINIAN

Choir: Only-begotten Son and Word of God, who art im-mortal, who for our salvation willed to be incarnate of the Holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, and without change became man; and wast crucified, O Christ our God, and trampled down death by death; who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit: save us.

THE BEATITUDES IN TONE FOUR

In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

For the Resurrection in Tone Three

Verse 12: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Through a tree, Adam was deprived of his home in Paradise; while through the wood of the Cross, the thief went there to dwell. For the one by tasting set aside the commandment of the Maker, while the other, crucified with Him, confessed the hidden God crying aloud: Remember me, in Thy Kingdom.

Verse 11: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Lifted upon the Cross, Thou O Lord as God, hast both destroyed the power of death and blotted out the handwriting against us. Do Thou Who alone lovest mankind, grant us the repentance of the thief as we serve Thee with faith, O Christ our God, and cry to Thee: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom.

Verse 10: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Crucified and rising from the tomb in power on the third day, with Thyself hast Thou, only Immortal, raised Adam, the first-formed man. Make me also worthy, O Lord, to turn to repentance from my whole heart and with warm faith ever to cry to Thee: Remember me, O Saviour, in Thy Kingdom.

Verse 9: Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Thou hast torn to pieces on the Cross, the handwriting against us and counted among the dead, Thou hast bound yonder tyrant, delivering all from the bonds of hell by Thy Resurrection. Through it we have been enlightened and cry aloud to Thee, Lord Who lovest mankind: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom.

For the Feast¹ in Tone One

Verse 8: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

He that was made in the image of God, fell by transgression into utter corruption; but after he had lost the divine and better life, the wise Artificer doth fashion him anew; for He hath been glorified.

Verse 7: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Beholding man perishing, whom He had made with His own hands, the Creator bowed the Heavens and came down; and becoming incarnate in truth, He took on the whole of man's essence from the divine and pure Virgin; for He hath been glorified.

Verse 6: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Plainly did the bush that was not consumed prefigure // The sanctified womb that hath borne the Divine Word; // He, our God, is mingled with the form of us mortals, // To loose the bitter curse set on Eve's hapless belly // In the days of old. Him do we mortals glorify.

Verse 5: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Guided by a star, the Magi plainly saw Thee, // The Word before the sun, Who earnest to destroy sin; // And as Thou didst lie in a poor and lowly cavern, // Wrapped in swaddling clothes, with great joy they beheld Thee, // The Compassionate, both our Lord and a mortal.

For the Saints² in Tone Four

Verse 4: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

As the choirs of Angels beheld the terrible mystery of Thy childbirth, O Lord, they wondrously cried out: Glory to God in the highest; for He is now born upon earth.

Verse 3: Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in the heavens.

Thou sittest upon the throne of Thy Prophet David, as Thou didst swear, O Lord, coming forth as the fruit of his loins. As for James, Thou didst commit the throne of the Church unto him, O Christ.

Verse 2: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

¹ These Troparia are from the 1st Ode of both Matins Canons of the Feast (Troparia 1-2 from 1st Canon; Troparia 1-2 from 2nd Canon, composed in Iambic mode).

² These Troparia are from the 6th Ode of the Matins Canon of Saints David and James (Troparia 1, 3, 5, and the Theotokion), cf. St. Sabbas' Typikon.

David was shown forth a king and a marvellous Prophet, and an ancestor of the divine Incarnation. As for James the disciple, he was shown to be the first bishop.

Verse 1: Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

We pray thee, O Theotokos, who knewest not wedlock: Make earnest entreaty for thy servants' sake with Him that was incarnate of thee, for we know thee to be our only protection.

THE SUNDAY EISODIKON

Verse: O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Choir: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to thee: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Apolytikia:

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR³

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone to the world the light of wisdom! For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a star to adore Thee, the Sun of righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

APOLYTIKION OF SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

O Joseph, proclaim the wonders to David, the ancestor of God. Thou hast seen a Virgin great with child; thou hast given glory with the shepherds; thou hast worshipped with the Magi; and thou hast been instructed through an Angel. Entreat Christ God to save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. STEPHEN IN TONE FOUR

*(**Be quick to anticipate**)*

The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head * because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred Saints; * for when thou hadst censured the Jews' madness, thou sawest * Christ thy Savior standing at the right hand of the Father. * O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE IN TONE ONE

*(**The soldiers standing guard**)*

When Christ God had been born for our sakes from the Virgin, thou faith-fully didst follow Him, keeping His statutes and heeding His sacred laws, O august Mary Magdalene. Hence, as we today observe thy holy remembrance, we receive the loosing of our sins and transgressions through thy holy prayer(s) for us.

THE TRISAGION HYMN

Holy God, Holy mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

³ This translation matches the melody the St. Mary Magdalene choir is most familiar with.

THE APOSTOLOS & THE GOSPEL

PROKEIMENON IN TONE 8

Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. (*Ps. 18:4*) {twice}

Verse: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of His hands. (*Ps. 18:1*)

Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

APOSTOLOS FOR ST. STEPHEN:

Reader: The reading is from the Acts of the Apostles §17 (6:8-7:5, 47-60).

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

And the high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child.

"But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What house will you build for Me', says the Lord, 'or what is the place of My rest? Did not My hand make all these things?'

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

ALLELUIA, IN TONE 1

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 1: The heavens shall confess Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy truth in the congregation of saints. (*Ps. 88:5*)

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 2: God Who is glorified in the council of the saints is great and terrible towards all that are round about Him. (*Ps. 88:7*)

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

GOSPEL FOR THE SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY:

Reader: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew §4 (2:13-23)

Choir: Glory the Thee O Lord, Glory to Thee.

Reader: When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Choir: Glory the Thee O Lord, Glory to Thee.

Then we sing the following, in tone 6

Choir: Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

- Remember us, O Master, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.
- Remember us, O Holy One, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

The heavenly choir praiseth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Verse: Come unto Him, and be enlightened and your faces shall not be ashamed.

The heavenly choir praiseth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

The choir of Holy angels and archangels, with all the heavenly hosts praiseth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

THE SYMBOL OF FAITH

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets;

And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

Leader: Remit, pardon, forgive, O God, our offenses, both voluntary and involuntary, in deed and word, in knowledge and ignorance, by day and by night, in mind and thought; forgive us all things, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

All: Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Leader: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

All: Amen.

Kontakia:

KONTAKION OF ST. STEPHEN IN TONE THREE

*(**On this day the Virgin**)*

Yesterday the Master came, * to be with us in the body; * and today His faithful slave * departeth out of the body; * yesterday the King was born in * the flesh for our sakes; * and today the servant suffer-eth death by stoning; * and for His sake is perfected * the first of Martyrs, * Stephen the truly divine.

KONTAKION OF THE SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

*(**On this day the Virgin**)*

Godly David on this day * is filled with gladness of spirit; * Joseph also joineth James * in offering glory and praises. * They rejoice, for as Christ's kinsmen, * they have received crowns: * and they praise the One ineffably born upon earth * as they cry out with a great voice: * O Lord of mercy, * save them that honour Thy Name.

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE THREE

*(**The original melody**)*

Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Transcendent in essence; the earth offereth the cave to the unapproachable One; the angels with the shepherds glorify Him; and the Magi with the star travel on their way; for a new child hath been born for our sakes, God before the ages.

Leader: Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

O All-Holy Trinity, the consubstantial dominion, the indivisible Kingdom, and cause of every Good: Show Thy good will even unto me a sinner; make steadfast my heart and grant it understanding, and take away mine every defilement; enlighten my mind that I may glorify, hymn, worship, and say:

Choir: One is Holy, One is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

PSALM 33

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth. In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my tribulations. Come unto Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his tribulations. The angel of the Lord will encamp round about them that fear Him, and will deliver them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that hopeth in Him. O fear the Lord, all ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him. Rich men have turned poor and gone hungry; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing. Come ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is there that desireth life, who loveth to see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are opened unto their supplication. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, utterly to destroy the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and He will save the humble of spirit. Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all. The Lord keepeth all their bones, not one of them shall be broken. The death of sinners is evil, and they that hate the righteous shall do wrong. The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants, and none of them will do wrong that hope in Him.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS⁴

It is truly meet and right to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever blessed and all-blameless, and the Mother of our God. More honourable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, thou who without corruption bearest God the Word and art truly Theotokos: We magnify thee.

READING(S)

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR SAVIOUR

On the Sunday that falls on or immediately after the twenty-sixth of this month, we make commemoration of Saints Joseph, the Betrothed of the Virgin; David, the Prophet and King; and

⁴ The Arabic Typikon has the usual Hymn. Alternatively (cf. St. Sabbas Typikon), we can sing the Refrain & Irmos from 9th Ode of 2nd Canon of the Feast, in tone 1: **Magi and shepherds came to worship Christ Who was born in the city of Bethlehem. Verily it is easier for us to endure silence since there is no dread danger therefrom for us. But because of our strong desire, O Virgin, and Mother of sameness, to indite well-balanced songs of praise, this becometh indeed onerous to us. Wherefore, grant us power to equal our natural inclination.**

James, the Brother of God. When there is no Sunday within this period, we celebrate this commemoration on the 26th.

Joseph, the Betrothed: Saint Joseph (whose name means "one who increases") was the son of Jacob, and the son-in-law - and hence, as it were, the son - of Eli (who was also called Eliakim or Joachim), who was the father of Mary the Virgin (Matt. 1:16; Luke 3:23). He was of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, an inhabitant of Nazareth, a carpenter by Trade, and advanced in age when, by God's good will, he was betrothed to the Virgin, that he might minister to the great mystery of God's dispensation in the flesh by protecting her, providing for her, and being known as her husband so that she, being a virgin, would not suffer reproach when she was found to be with child. Joseph had been married before his betrothal to our Lady; they who are called Jesus' "brethren and sisters" (Matt. 13:55-56) are the children of Joseph by his first marriage. From Scripture, we know that Saint Joseph lived at least until the Twelfth year after the birth of Christ (Luke 2:41-52); according to the tradition of the Fathers, he reposed before the beginning of the public ministry of Christ.

David, the Prophet and King: The child of God and ancestor of God, David, the great Prophet after Moses, sprang from the tribe of Judah. He was the son of Jesse, and was born in Bethlehem (whence it is called the City of David), in the year 1085 before Christ. While yet a youth, at the command of God he was anointed secretly by the Prophet Samuel to be the second King of the Israelites, while Saul - who had already been deprived of divine grace - was yet living. In the thirtieth year of his life, when Saul had been slain in battle, David was raised to the dignity of King, first, by his own tribe, and then by all the Israelite people, and he reigned for forty years. Having lived seventy years, he reposed in 1015 before Christ, having proclaimed beforehand that his son Solomon was to be the successor to the throne.

The sacred history has recorded not only the grace of the Spirit that dwelt in him from his youth, his heroic exploits in war, and his great piety towards God, but also his transgressions and failings as a man. Yet his repentance was greater than his transgressions, and his love for God fervent and exemplary; so highly did God honour this man, that when his son Solomon sinned, the Lord told him that He would not rend the kingdom in his lifetime "for David thy father's sake" (III Kings 12:12). Of The Kings of Israel, Jesus the Son of Sirach testifies, "All, except David and Hezekias and Josias, were defective" (Ecclus. 49:4). The name David means "beloved."

His melodious Psalter is the foundation of all the services of the Church; there is not one service that is not filled with Psalms and psalmic verses. It was the means whereby old Israel praised God, and was used by the Apostles and the Lord Himself. It is so imbued with the spirit of prayer that the monastic fathers of all ages have used it as their trainer and teacher for their inner life of converse with God. Besides eloquently portraying every state and emotion of the soul before her Maker, the Psalter is filled with prophecies of the coming of Christ. It foretells His Incarnation, "He bowed the heavens and came down" (Psalm 17:9), His Baptism in the Jordan, "The waters saw Thee, O God, The waters saw Thee and were afraid" (76:15), His Crucifixion in its details, "They have pierced My hands and My feet They have parted My garments amongst themselves, and for My vesture have they cast lots" (21:16, 18). "For My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (68:26), His descent into Hades, "For Thou wilt not abandon My soul in Hades, nor wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption" (15:10) and Resurrection, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered" (67:1). His Ascension, "God is gone up in jubilation" (46:5), and so forth.

James, the Brother of God: According to some, this Saint was a son of Joseph the Betrothed, born of the wife that the latter had before he was betrothed to the Ever-virgin. Hence he was the brother of the Lord, Who was also thought to be the son of Joseph (Matt. 13: 55). But some say that he was a nephew of Joseph, and the son of his brother Cleopas, who was also called Alphaeus and Mary his wife, who was the first cousin of the Theotokos. But even according to this genealogy, he was still called, according to the idiom of the Scriptures, the Lord's brother because of their kinship.

This Iakovos is called the Less (Mark 15:4) by the Evangelists to distinguish him from Iakovos, the son of Zebedee, who was called the Great. He became the first Bishop of Jerusalem, elevated to this episcopal rank by the Apostles, according to Eusebius (Eccl. Hist., Book II: 23), and was called Obliah, that is, the Just, because of his great holiness and righteousness. Having ascended the crest of the Temple on the day of the Passover at the prompting of all, he bore testimony from there concerning his belief in Jesus, and he proclaimed with a great voice that Jesus sits at the right hand of the great power of God and shall come again upon the clouds of heaven. On hearing this testimony, many of those present cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David." But the Scribes and Pharisees cried, "So, even the just one hath been led astray," and at the command of Ananias the high priest, the Apostle was cast down headlong from thence, then was stoned, and while he prayed for his slayers, his head was crushed by the wooden club wielded by a certain scribe. The first of the Catholic (General) Epistles written to the Jews in the Diaspora who believed in Christ was written by this Iakovos. [From tyoos.org]

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THE HOLY FIRST MARTYR AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN

The Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen was the eldest of the seven deacons, appointed by the Apostles themselves, and therefore he is called "archdeacon." He was the first Christian martyr, and he suffered for Christ when he was about thirty. In the words of Asterias, he was "the starting point of the martyrs, the instructor of suffering for Christ, the foundation of righteous confession, since Stephen was the first to shed his blood for the Gospel."

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Saint Stephen preached Christianity and defeated Jewish teachers of the Law in debate. The Jews maligned Saint Stephen, saying that he had uttered blasphemy against God and against Moses. Saint Stephen came before the Sanhedrin and the High Priest to answer these charges. He gave a fiery speech, in which he recounted the history of the Jewish nation, and denounced the Jews for persecuting the prophets, and also for executing the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ (Acts ch. 7).

During his speech, Saint Stephen suddenly saw the heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. The Jews shouted and covered their ears, and rushed at him. They dragged him out of the city and stoned him, but the holy martyr prayed for his murderers. Far off on the heights stood the Mother of God with the holy Apostle John the Theologian, and She prayed fervently for the martyr. Before his death Saint Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Then he joyfully gave up his pure soul to Christ.

The body of the holy Protomartyr Stephen, left to be eaten by beasts, was secretly taken up by the Jewish teacher Gamaliel and his son Habib, who buried Stephen on his estate. They both believed in Christ, and later received holy Baptism.

Saint Stephen is also commemorated on August 2 (Translation of his relics) and on September 15 (Uncovering of his relics in the year 415). [From oca.org]

OUR RIGHTEOUS FATHER THEODORE THE BRANDED,
BROTHER OF SAINT THEOPHANES THE HYMNOGRAPHER.

Saint Theodore the Confessor, and his brother Theophanes (October 11) were born in Jerusalem of Christian parents. From early childhood Theodore shunned childish amusements and loved to attend church services. With his younger brother Theophanes (October 11), he was sent to the Lavra of Saint Sava to be educated by a pious priest. Both brothers became monks, and Saint Theodore was ordained to the holy priesthood.

The iconoclast emperor Leo V the Armenian (813-820) expelled and replaced the pious ruler Michael I Rhangabe (811-813). In the beginning, Leo concealed his heretical views, but later declared himself an iconoclast. The Patriarch of Jerusalem sent the two brothers to Constantinople to defend the holy icons. Theodore refuted Leo's arguments, proving the falseness of his beliefs. Leo ordered that both brothers be beaten mercilessly, and then had them sent into exile, forbidding anyone to help them in any way.

Under the subsequent emperors, Michael II (820-829), and particularly under the iconoclast Theophilus (829-842), both brothers returned from exile. Again they were urged to accept iconoclasm, but they bravely endured all the tortures. They were sent into exile once more, but later returned. This time they were subjected to fierce torture, and finally, their faces were branded with the verses of a poem which mocked the holy confessors. Therefore, the brothers were called "the Branded."

The city prefect asked Saint Theodore to take communion with the iconoclasts just once, promising him freedom if he did. But the holy martyr replied, "Your proposal is the same as saying: 'Let me cut off your head once, and then you may go wherever you wish.'"

After torture the holy brothers were banished to Apamea in Bithynia, where Saint Theodore died around the year 840. Saint Theophanes survived until the end of the iconoclast heresy, and died as Bishop of Nicea. Saint Theophanes was author of many writings in defense of Orthodoxy. The relics of Saint Theodore were transferred to Chalcedon, where they worked many healings. [From oca.org]

THE LITTLE DISMISSAL

The Leader bows toward the icon of Christ on the iconostasis, saying:

Leader: Glory to thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. O Lord, bless.

Leader: O Thou Who was born in a cave and lay in a manger for our salvation, and rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; of the Holy Myrrh-Bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalene, protector of this community; of the holy and righteous Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King, and James the Brother of God; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Proto-martyr Stephen the archdeacon; and Venerable-confessor Theodore the Branded, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us, and save us, for Thou art good and lovest mankind.

Then, facing the icon of Christ, on the iconostasis, the Leader says:

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

All: Amen.