

## ON THURSDAY MORNING

### AT MATINS

*After the 1st reading from the Psalter, Kathismata of the Apostles.*

*Tone 5. Τὸν συνάναρχον Λόγον.*

All we faithful, let us praise as eye-witnesses of the Word and servants of Christ<sup>1</sup> the wise Apostles in spiritual songs and hymns; for they insistently intercede with Christ on behalf of us who hymn their sacred memory and worship their relics.

Let us harmoniously praise the Apostles as those who preached the sure and orthodox teaching of the Lord, drove out the fog of heresies and made spiritual illumination, the grace of doctrines shine forth in the world; and who implore that our souls may be saved.

Glory. Both now. *Theotokion. Same melody.*

Bride who knew not wedlock and ever virgin, we praise you with the godly eye-witnesses<sup>2</sup>; because in you the Mighty One has done great things,<sup>3</sup> your Son and God, who was from eternity from the Father, who dwelt in your womb and was well-pleased to be born that he might save our race from error.

*After the 2nd reading, others. Τὸν συνάναρχον Λόγον.*

Let us praise the Apostles in hymns as eye-witnesses<sup>4</sup> and godlike heralds of the Word, as clearly spiritual fishers of the nations, because they brought us to knowledge of Christ, delivering the human race from error and made it worthy of the Kingdom.

Disciples of the Saviour, godlike Apostles, who sowed the saving word<sup>5</sup> to the ends of the earth, and shone on those who were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death<sup>6</sup>, by your

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 1:2.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:2.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 1:49.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 1:2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Luke 8:11.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 106:10, Isaias 9:1, Luke 1:79.

intercessions, O all-wise, enlighten my soul darkened by the blackness of the passions.

Glory. Both now. **Theotokion. Same melody.**

Immaculate Virgin, who are the protection of those who in you have gained hopes from the soul, free us from temptations and troubles and dire dangers, O Pure one, and with the Apostles intercede with your Son that all who hymn you may be saved.

**After the 3rd reading, others.** *Κύριε, τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ πάθους σου.* Lord, those who lacked wisdom<sup>7</sup> put to shame the lovers of wisdom by proclaiming the mystery of your incarnation; fishermen stopped the mouths of orators and became the wise Teachers of the nations, who enlightened the ends of the earth with the light of divine knowledge; through them give us your great mercy.

**Of the Martyrs. Model melody.** *Κύριε, τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ πάθους σου.* Lord, the Champions filled with the desire for the cup of your suffering abandoned all the pleasure of life and have become companions of the Angels. At their entreaties grant our souls forgiveness of sins and your great mercy.

Glory. Both now. **Theotokion.** *Τὸν συνάναρχον Λόγον.* Show to your servant your rapid protection and help and mercy; and calm the waves of vain thoughts, pure Mother of God, and raise up my fallen soul; for I know that you, O Virgin, have power to do whatever you will.

**Canon of the holy Apostles.**<sup>8</sup>

**Ode 1. Tone 5. Irmos.**

Christ, who brings wars to nothing with uplifted arm, shook horse and rider into the Red Sea; but Israel he saved as they sang a song of victor.

**Troparia**

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<sup>7</sup> ἄσοφοι Cf. St John Chrysostom, *In Rom.* [PG 60:527 ], Ὡσπερ γὰρ πνεῦμα σοφίας ἐστὶ, καθ' ὃ σοφοὶ οἱ ἄσοφοι ἐγίνοντο, καὶ δηλοῦται τοῦτο ἀπὸ τῆς διδασκαλίας.

<sup>8</sup> Like the other canons for the Apostles this one is anonymous and without an acrostic. The Irmi are those used for Sunday Matins.

Godly, glorious Apostles, enriched at its first bestowal<sup>9</sup> by the light-bestowing<sup>10</sup> radiance of the One who deigned in the flesh to converse with mortals, dispel all the darkness of my soul.

Stretching the divine bow, he sent you out, Apostles,<sup>11</sup> like arrows, so smashing the arrows of Beliar and healing the wounds of believers.

With Wisdom itself, Apostles, as your teacher you made wise all the ends of the earth. And so enlighten me by driving off all the wickedness of the foe.

### Theotokion

Only blessed one, graced by God, who grace the human race with blessings, O All-pure, with the godly Apostles implore Christ to have mercy on us.

### Canon of St Nicolas, of which the acrostic is:

**I offer you a fifth song, Nicolas. Joseph<sup>12</sup>**

By faith and love made a friend of God, you fulfilled all his all-holy wishes, through which you became holy in every way<sup>13</sup>, God-bearing Father Nicolas.

Battered by circumstances and afflictions, having you as our champion with the Compassionate, we take refuge in you, blest Saint. Give us your hand to save us from every constraint.

Christ anointed you as High Priest of Myra, fragrant<sup>14</sup> with the fragrance of wonders. Therefore we implore you, Nicolas, rescue us from the foul stench of sin.

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<sup>9</sup> A Dionysian word, found in *De Hierarchia Caelesti*.

<sup>10</sup> Another word Dionysian only otherwise attested in *De Hierarchia Ecclesiastica*.

<sup>11</sup> The play on ἀπέστειλεν Ἀπόστολοι cannot be reproduced in English.

<sup>12</sup> Irmī not included. An iambic trimeter, excluding the signature. Ode 8 has five troparia, because it has a Triadikon as well as a Theotokion. Ode 9 has five, because the name JOSEPH, which forms the acrostic, has five letters in Greek

<sup>13</sup> κατὰ πάντα. The same phrase that occurs in the anaphora of St John Chrysostom.

<sup>14</sup> A word play on the name of Myra.

### Theotokion.

Of old the choir of Prophets called you God's mountain and gate that none may pass, O Virgin. Therefore we implore you, Virgin Mother, open for us the gates of repentance.

### Ode 3. Irmos.

You fixed the earth on nothing by your command, and raised it though ungovernably dragged down; establish your Church on the unshakeable rock of your commandments, O Christ, alone good and lover of humankind.

### Troparia

The One, who by the abundance of goodness made flesh poor, enriched you who had become poor for him, glorious Apostles, as you enlighten the ends of the earth by divine and sacred knowledge.

I was wounded by the poisoned bite of the serpent and I have gained a wounded heart. Therefore I cry out to you, O Christ, who was wounded for me, 'At the prayers of your Apostles, I pray, heal me and save me!'

In the net of your intercessions, All-blest Apostles, draw me up from the deep of the enemy's evil, the tempest of thoughts and soul-slaying passions, and bring me, saved, to the God of all things.

### Theotokion.

Having received the heavenly Rain, with the Apostles implore him to stop the rains of my passions, dry up the ocean of my sin and save me who sincerely glorify you.

### Of the Saint. The same Irmos.

You blunted the arrows of the evil one, Venerable Saint, by the resistance<sup>15</sup> of your godly toils; but by your intercessions guard me from his wickedness and abuse, great and wise Nicolas.

Having displayed an angel's life on earth, now with the Angels you stand in holiness before the throne of the Trinity asking for us

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<sup>15</sup> A rare use of the plural of ἀντιτυπία.

release from our sins and temptations, Father and Hierarch Nicolas.

Drive away the dark clouds of my mind by your light-bearing prayers, Father Nicolas; abate the tempest of the passions; pilot me, Father, to the harbour of dispassion, I implore, that I may glorify you in praise.

#### Theotokion.

You stand at Christ's right hand as a Queen truly 'arrayed in tasselled gold'<sup>16</sup>, Maiden graced by God, by your prayers and mediation gaining for us the Kingdom of heaven.

#### Ode 4. Irmos.

Avvakoum, prophetically foreseeing your divine self-emptying, O Christ, he cried out in awe, 'You have come for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed ones'<sup>17</sup>.

#### Troparia.

The Door, Jesus our God, having opened<sup>18</sup> up his knowledge to his Apostles, opened a door for all the nations by their teachings.

Son of God, you declared your Apostles to be sons of the heavenly Father by participation.<sup>19</sup> At their intercessions make us all sons of light.

Apostles, who are going to sit in glory with the Judge and King, rescue me from the dread and fearful judgement.

#### Theotokion.

Ark of the divine sanctification, sanctify my soul, lead my thought to light, by ever imploring Christ with the Apostles that I may be saved.

#### Of the Saint. The same Irmos.

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<sup>16</sup> Psalm 44,14.

<sup>17</sup> Avvak. 3,13 with perfect instead of aorist. There is a play on Χριστός and χριστοί.

<sup>18</sup> This verb, καθυπανοιγνύμι, appears to be a *hapax* in Greek.

<sup>19</sup> μέθεξις. The theological use of this word not common in the Fathers, except in Cyril of Alexandria. It is not infrequent in the liturgical hymns.

You took the things to come in exchange for those that pass. Make us too worthy of them by your prayers, rescuing us, Nicolas, from all life's trials.

Holy Nicolas, who once presided over Myra, make fragrant<sup>20</sup> all the senses of my heart, by your prayers driving foul-smelling passions from it at every moment.

Smashing the machinations of the foe, dispel with total destruction, Nicolas, our foes both visible and invisible who continually make war on us.

#### Theotokion.

Holy Mother of God, help me, who am continually overwhelmed by the pleasures of the body, and ever lie groaning on a bed of idleness.

#### Ode 5. Irmos.

To you, clothed with light as a garment, I rise early and cry out, 'Enlighten my darkened soul, O Christ, for you alone are compassionate'.

#### Troparia.

The Spirit's orators,<sup>21</sup> the wise Apostles, in the upper room received the holy Spirit in the form of fire when it came fearsomely upon them.

Christ sent you out as chosen arrows to smash the arrows of wickedness. Therefore heal me, who have been wounded by the arrows of the enemy.

Apostles, who turned the earth from impiety, heal my mind ruined by faults by the dew of healings.<sup>22</sup>

#### Theotokion.

Do not condemn me, do not cast me away from your presence, she who gave birth to you in holiness implores you, Most Merciful, with the company of the Apostles.

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<sup>20</sup> μύρισον. A play on 'Myra'.

<sup>21</sup> This word, πνευματοῤῥήτορες, is only otherwise attested in the 13th century writer Nicetas Choniates.

<sup>22</sup> It is impossible to preserve the play on two meanings of καταστρέφω.

### Of the Saint. The same Irmos.

You broke down wooden idols, holy Nicolas, revealed the counsels of the heretics to be impotent, snatched away those being led out to death.

From infancy you rose to the Lord at dawn, Venerable Father, and became all radiant of the light that poured from there. Therefore drive away the clouds from my soul.

We implore you at this hour, Father Nicolas, be in the midst of all who call on you, granting us our requests that bring salvation.

### Theotokion.

The Incomprehensible, O graced by God, when he took a body was contained in you, delivering mortals from the affliction that surrounds them.<sup>23</sup>

### Ode 6. The Irmos.

Calm the raging sea of the passions, O Master Christ, with its soul-destroying surge, and lead me up from corruption as you are compassionate.

### Troparia.

You put an end to the rottenness of evil which pastured the souls of the nations, Lover of humankind, with the salt of the teachings of your sacred Apostles.

Make an end to the depth of my evils, my Master Christ; give me your hand, Lover of humankind, save me at the entreaties of your sacred Apostles.

Judge most just,<sup>24</sup> on the day of dread judgement deliver me from the fearful condemnation at the prayers of the Apostles.

### Theotokion.

Count me, brought to despair by the multitude of my iniquities, worthy of salvation, Lord, at the prayers of the Disciples and your Mother.

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<sup>23</sup> It is difficult to represent the play on περιοχή, 'container' and περιεχούσης, 'surround'.

<sup>24</sup> The refrain of St Romanos' kontakion on the Last Judgement, but not found elsewhere in the earlier Fathers.

**Of the Saint. The same Irmos.**

By your prayers, Nicolas, make your Master merciful to all who honour you, that he may grant us release from faults.

Deliver from diseases, life's stumbling blocks, trials and afflictions those who have gained you, Nicolas, as an intercessor with the Lord.

Christ, our Master, revealed you as the best of physicians; therefore heal the diseases, Nicolas, of those who devoutly approach you.

**Theotokion.**

Without husband, pure Mother of God, you bore a child; and so with faith I implore you, drive out sloth from my soul.

**Ode 7. Irmos.**

The highly exalted Lord of our Fathers quenched the flame, refreshed the Youths with dew as they sang harmoniously, 'O God, blessed are you!'

**Troparia.**

The highly exalted Lord of our Fathers highly exalted you, Disciples of Christ who saw God, and broke in pieces the enemy's power.

Wash away, Apostles, by your entreaties the stain of my wickedness with streams of compunction, teaching me to cry out, 'O God, blessed are you!'

With the fire of God's Spirit you burned up the brushwood of every vanity; therefore, Disciples of God's Word, rescue me from the flames of Gehenna.

**Theotokion.**

Righting of Adam's fall, by your intercessions, O Virgin, and those of the godly Apostles, raise me who have fallen into pits of evil.

**Of the Saint. Same Irmos.**

As you are wholly dedicated to God, Nicholas wise in God, save me wholly, who am daily wretchedly ensnared by life's passions.

Lantern shining with God's radiance<sup>25</sup>, make radiant my soul, ever darkened by the blackness of passions, and grant that I may journey honourably on the road of life.

By your prayers, Nicolas, block the most wicked mouth that is wide open against me, and deliver me from visible and invisible enemies.

#### Theotokion.

From you, Mother of God, cloud all made of light, there shone for us the Sun that knows no evening, Christ our God, to enlighten those in the darkness of ignorance.

#### Ode 8. Irmos.

The Youths in the furnace, weaving a dance of all creation for you, the Maker of all, sang out, 'All you works of the Lord, praise the Lord, and highly exalt him to all the ages!'

#### Troparia.

You unfurled the rational clouds of the Apostles, O Word, that rain down on us showers of all-wise and godly teachings, and water us to the ages.

You fairest pillars of the Church, who carry it on doctrines of faith, make firm the unstable house of my soul by your divine skill, Apostles who saw God.

Groan, my soul, and draw from your whole heart channels of tears as you cry out, 'Only Compassionate, save, have pity on me at the acceptable prayers of your Disciples.

#### Theotokion.

Chosen Sion, city of the King, make me a city of the city above, as with the godly Disciples you intercede, O Virgin, with your Son who is beyond time.

#### Of the Saint. The same Irmos.

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<sup>25</sup> This adjective, *θεαυγῆς*, is unattested in both L & S and Lampe. It is found twice in Theodore the Studite, once in a letter to the Pope, whom he describes as being *τινὰ λυχνίαν θεαυγῆ*, and once in a poem. St Theodore uses the corresponding verb, which is otherwise unattested, in a poem, *ὅπου θεαυγεῖ τὸ τρισήλιον κράτος, / ἔνθα τρυφῶσι τῶν δικαίων τὰ στίφη*.

Having become chief Hierarch of Myra, Nicolas, make the senses of my soul fragrant<sup>26</sup>, that I may flee the foul stench of the passions, and receive the grace of the Advocate.<sup>27</sup>

With the streams from your holy tongue you put a stop to the blasphemous streams of Arius' words; therefore I cry to you, 'Dry up the flow of my passions by your prayers, Nicolas all-blessed.

Rescue us by your prayers from sins, from the wickedness of demons, capture by enemies, the evil slanders of all, that we may praise you as our deliverer.

### Triadikon.

As with faith unceasingly glorify the one Godhead in Trinity, let us shout aloud, 'Father and Word and all-holy Spirit, we praise you to all the ages'.

### Theotokion.

God, who for our sake put on flesh from you, shows you, O Virgin, to be the pure, unblemished, protection of all our race; therefore we believers loudly sing your praise.

### Ode 9. The Irmos.

O Isaias, dance! The Virgin was with child, and she has borne a Son, Emmanuel, both God and man; and Orient is his name; whom we magnify, as we call the Virgin blessed.<sup>28</sup>

### Troparia.

By the radiance of divine virtues you were spiritually revealed as starry heavens, with Christ in your midst like a sun, and you renewed the fullness of the earth, wise Apostles, therefore we call you blessed.

Bearing the marks of Christ in your godly body like an all-fair<sup>29</sup> adornment, wise Apostles, by your intercessions with the Lord heal my soul, worn down by the arrows of the demons.

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<sup>26</sup> A play on the name 'Myra'.

<sup>27</sup> For a number of reasons I think this is the least unsatisfactory translation of Παράκλητος.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Luke 1:47-48, the biblical canticle linked to the 9th Ode.

As I lie in the lowest pit of sin and with my soul burdened by the slumber of dreadful sloth, save me, O Word, through your Disciples, as you raised Lazarus.

**Theotokion.**

Direct the ways of my soul to the paths of your unerring commandments, O Word of God, as you have the pure and immaculate one who gave you birth, and your all-wise Apostles imploring you.

**Of the Saint. Same Irmos.**

Called a Hierarch inspired by God, you kept<sup>30</sup> all Christ's commandments, and so you have become a godly guardian for the faithful, Father Nicolas, protecting them from all abuse and oppression.

As you once nourished your city when it lacked bread, as a good shepherd, venerable Father Nicolas, so too nourish with spiritual bread my soul, fortunate to have you as protector.

Venerable Shepherd, we entreat you, the great sun of Christ's Church, that is fixed on high, with shining lamps of light banish the darkness of sin from our souls.

The glorious day of Christ's Coming is at hand, as it written<sup>31</sup>. Sterile soul, cast off sloth and fervently cry out to Christ, 'Lord, save me at Nicolas' entreaties!'

**Theotokion.**

The Prophet saw you as a shining lampstand, bearing Christ the spiritual lamp, through whom we, who lay in the darkness of evils, have been enlightened, O Mother of God, as we call you blessed.

**Aposticha of Lauds, of the Apostles.**

Disciples of the Saviour, when you had become eye-witnesses<sup>32</sup> of mysteries you proclaimed the One who is not seen and who has no

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<sup>29</sup> Πανευπρεπής. A very rare adjective, some half dozen times. The only pre-Christian occurrence seems to be in the *Testament of Abraham*.

<sup>30</sup> ἐφύλαξας, with a play on the following φύλαξ, 'guardian'.

<sup>31</sup> James 5:8.

beginning, saying, 'In the beginning was the Word'<sup>33</sup>. You were not created before the Angels, you did not learn from men, but from the wisdom from on high. And so as you have freedom to speak, intercede on behalf of our souls.

Let us praise harmoniously in songs the Apostles of the Lord; for clothed with the panoply of the Cross they destroyed the error of idols and were declared crowned victors; at their intercessions, O God, have mercy on us.

### Of the Martyrs.

As they were being tortured the Saints rejoiced and cried out: These are contracts for us with the Master;<sup>34</sup> for instead of the stripes which assail the body, he will place on us a garment of light<sup>35</sup> at the resurrection; instead of prison cells there will be

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<sup>32</sup> Luke 1:2.

<sup>33</sup> John 1:1.

<sup>34</sup> The word is taken from the world of business and means a 'contract', a 'transaction'. In the Bible the word only occurs at Isaias 58:6 (LXX) and 1 Macc. 13:42, both times in the plural. The source of its metaphorical use here of the sufferings of the martyrs may be a passage from St Basil's encomium on St Gordius, "Ὅσω γὰρ ἂν ἐπιτείνητε τὰ δεινὰ, τοσούτῳ μείζονά μοι τὴν ἀντίδοσιν προξενεῖτε. Συναλλάγματα ἡμῖν ἐστὶ ταῦτα πρὸς τὸν Δεσπότην. [PG 31:501]

<sup>35</sup> There is an interesting Rabbinic tradition that some texts of Genesis 3:21 read 'garments of light', not 'garments of skin'. The two words in Hebrew sound almost the same. The *Midrash Rabbah* says, 'In R. Meir's Torah it was found written, 'Garments of light: this refers to Adam's garments, which were like a torch. Isaac the Elder said: They were as smooth as a finger-nail and as beautiful as a jewel. R. Johanan said: They were like the fine linen garments which come from Bethshean'. Fr Andrei Tregubov finds the a similar tradition in Orthodoxy. He writes, 'In the Bible the light is the first creation of God, the ultimate symbol of his uncreated Glory: He who made heaven and earth covers himself "with light as with a garment" (Ps. 104). In the very center of Creation Adam and Eve were made in the image and likeness of God. "They were both naked, and were not ashamed" because being the image of God they were filled with his glory, and like him they were adorned with the garments of light.' St Ephrem the Syrian refers to this idea in his *St Ephrem the Syrian refers to this idea in his Hymns on Virginity*, 16, 'Christ came to find Adam who had gone astray,/ He came to return him to Eden in the garment of light'.

Paradise; and instead of condemnation with malefactors, life with the Angels. At their prayers, Lord, save our souls.

Glory. Both now. **Theotokion.**

You who were chosen beforehand, hearken to our voice, and grant our souls our requests; deliver us from passions and pains through the Apostles; as Mother of God you can do all things.

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