

**Wednesday Stichera
First Week**

Tone 8

While fasting physically, brethren,
Let us also fast spiritually.
Let us loose every knot of iniquity;
Let us tear up every unrighteous bond;
Let us distribute bread to the hungry,
And welcome into our homes
Those who have no roof over their heads //
So that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God!

Fame and praise befits the saints!
For they bowed their necks beneath the sword
For Your sake, Who bowed the heavens and came down.
They shed blood for You, Who emtied Yourself
And took the form of a servant!
By emulating Your poverty, they too humbled themselves even unto death.
By their prayers, have mercy on us, O God //
According to the abundance of Your great mercies!

Tone 2

Jesus, the spiritually radiant sun
Has sent you into the world as shining flashes of lightning,
Apostles and eye-witnesses of God!
By the rays of your divine doctrines,
The error of darkness was swept away,
Enlightening those who were held in the gloom of ignorance. //
Entreat Him to grant us enlightenment and great mercy.

Elijah was enlightened through fasting;
He mounted the chariot of good works and was taken up to the heights of
heaven.
Emulate him, humble soul!
Abstain from every evil and jealousy,
From every fleeting pleasure,
So that you might be cleansed of corrupting disease;
The fires of Gehenna, //
Crying to Christ: "O Lord, glory to You!"

Tone 5

Divine apostles,

Fervent intercessors for the world,

Defenders of the orthodox.

You have authority to entreat Christ our God with boldness.

We entreat you to pray for us, honourable ones,

That we might spend the good time of fasting in joyousness,

And receive the grace of the consubstantial Trinity. //

Pray for our souls, great and glorious preachers!

4 stichera from the Menaion in the Tone of the week

Glory...now and ever...

Theotokion from the Octoechos in the proper Tone

Wednesday Stichera
Second Week

Tone 1

Having undertaken the spiritual fast, O brethren,
Let us speak no lies with our tongues,
Nor give each other a cause for scandal.
But illumining the light of our souls through repentance,
Let us cry to Christ with tears: //
Remit our falls in sin, O Lover of mankind.

Martyrs, worthy of praise,
The earth did not cover you,
But heaven received you,
Opening to you the gates of paradise,
Where you dwell, delighting in the Tree of Life. //
Entreat Christ to grant our souls peace and great mercy!

Tone 3

Through the prayers of your divine apostles, O Lord,
Enable us to perform a proper fast, with compunction of mind.
That, being saved by You, we may glorify You, //
Gracious and merciful God.

Your coming will be great and fearful, O Lord,
When You will come in righteous judgement.
Do not condemn me, though I stand condemned,
But spare me as the compassionate God, //
Through the acceptable prayers of Your apostles.

Tone 6

Apostles of Christ,
The lights of those born on earth,
And treasuries for the world of the knowledge of God.
Through your prayers deliver from temptation those who praise you.
Enable us to pass the time of fasting in peace, as children,
So that having attained the passions of Christ, //
With boldness we may offer songs of praise to our God.

4 stichera from the Menaion

Glory...now and ever... Theotokion from the Octoechos in the proper tone

Wednesday Stichera
Third Week

Tone 4

I have blindly squandered my father's riches.
I am now empty, living in a land of evil men.
In my foolishness, I have become like the senseless beasts
And am now stripped of every divine grace.
But turning back I cry to You:
Merciful and compassionate Father, I have sinned; //
Receive me in repentance, O God, and have mercy on me! (*twice*)

O martyrs of the Lord:
Living sacrifices and reasonable offerings;
Perfect incense burnt to God;
Sheep that know God and are known by Him,
Into whose fold the wolves cannot break! //
Pray that we may be led with You to rest beside the still waters.

Tone 6

Apostles, eye-witnesses of God,
Rays of light from the spiritual sun,
Pray that light may be granted to our souls;
Deliver us from the gloomy darkness of the passions
And ask that we may see the day of salvation!
By your prayers and intercessions, cleanse our hearts wounded by the evil one.
Saved by faith, we shall honour you forever, //
By preaching the truth, for you preserve the world!

Like the prodigal son,
I have journeyed into a far country of wickedness.
I have wasted in evil the wealth You gave me, compassionate Father.
I am starved of good deeds
And clothed in the shame of my transgression,
For I have been stripped bare of divine grace.
I cry out to You: I have sinned!
Yet I know Your loving kindness;
Accept me as one of Your hired servants, O merciful Christ, //
At the prayers of the apostles who loved You.

Apostles of the lord,
Lights, benefactors, and saviours of the world:
As the heavens, you declare the glory of God!
You are adorned with the stars of your miracles
And wonders of healing!
Intercede fervently before the Lord for us
That our prayers may be accepted as pure and sweet-smelling incense;
That we may all be accounted worthy
To venerate the life-giving Cross
And to behold it with fear.
Send down on us, then, Your mercy, O Saviour, //
As the lover of mankind.

4 stichera from the Menaion

Glory...now and ever...

Theotokion form the Octoechos in the proper tone

Wednesday Stichera
Fourth Week

Tone 4

The fast, the means of receiving blessings,
Has now led us half-way through its course,
Pleasing God with the days that are past
And proposing purposeful tasks for the days ahead,
For the increase of blessings produces a greater number of good deeds!
Therefore, let us cry to Christ, the Giver of all blessings:
You fasted and endure the cross for our sake:
Enable us to partake uncondemned of Your divine Pascha,
To lead our lives in peace, //
Worthily glorifying You with the Father and the Spirit.

Tone 5

Those who thirst for spiritual blessings
Perform their good deeds in secret,
Not noising them abroad in markets,
But cherishing and keeping them in their hearts.
He Who sees all that is done in secret
Will reward us for our abstinence.
Let us fulfill the fast without sad faces,
But ceaselessly praying in the depths of our hearts:
Our Father, in heaven,
Lead us not into temptation, //
But deliver us from the evil one!

Your souls filled with unquenchable love,
You endured the most terrible sufferings without denying Christ,
And cast down the tyrant's pride.
You who kept the faith unchanged and unharmed
Have gone to dwell in heaven.
Since you have boldness before the Lord, //
Pray that He may grant us great mercy!

Tone 1

Let us cleanse our souls with the water of the fast.
Let us draw near to the precious and pure Cross of the Lord,
Venerating it in faith and drawing divine enlightenment;
Even now obtaining eternal salvation, //
Peace, and great mercy.

Cross, boast of apostles,
Surrounded by principalities, powers, and archangels!
Save those who bow before you from all harm,
And enable us to fulfill well the divine course of abstinence; //
To attain to the saving day, by which we are saved!

Tone 7

Today, as we bow before the Cross of the Lord, let us cry:
Rejoice, tree of life, the tormentor of Hades!
Rejoice, joy of the world, the destroyer of corruption!
Rejoice, power which drives out demons!
Rejoice, confirmation of the faithful, invincible weapon! //
Preserve and sanctify those who kiss you.

4 stikhera from the Menaion

Glory...now and ever...

Tone 8

Today the Unapproachable by nature approaches me,
And frees me from passions by enduring the passion.
The Light of the blind is spat upon by sinful men,
And gives His back to scourging for the sake of the captives.
When the pure virgin mother beheld Him on the cross, she cried out in pain:
“Woe to me! What is this You have done, O my Child!
Your beauty was fairer than that of any man, yet you appear lifeless,
With no form or comeliness.
Woe to me, my Light.
I cannot bear to look upon You sleeping.
My being is wounded, for a sword has pierced my heart!
But I praise Your passion;
I bow before Your compassion! //
O Long-suffering Lord, glory to You!”

Wednesday Stichera
Fifth Week

Reader: Let the sinners together fall into their own nets; let me alone pass through.

Tone 8

I have fallen among the thieves of my own thoughts in my wretchedness.
My mind has been despoiled, and I have been cruelly beaten.
My whole soul is wounded;
Stripped of the virtues, I lie naked on the highway of life.
Seeing me in bitter pain and thinking my wounds incurable
The priest turned away and would not look at me.
Unable to endure my soul-destroying agony,
The Levite saw me and passed by on the other side.
But You, O Christ my God, were pleased to come
Not from Samaria but from the flesh of Mary.
Grant me healing and pour out Your great mercy on me //
As the lover of mankind.

Reader: I cry with my voice to the Lord; with my voice I make supplication to the Lord.

I have fallen among the thieves...

Reader: I pour out my complaint before Him; I proclaim my sadness before Him.

Fame and praise befits the saints,
For they bowed their necks beneath the sword
For Your sake, Who bowed the heavens and came down.
They shed their blood for You,
For You emptied Yourself and took the form of a servant.
By emulating Your poverty they too humbled themselves even unto death.
By their prayers have mercy on us, O God, //
According to the abundance of Your great mercies.

Reader: When my spirit departs from me, You know my way.

O Lord, You have made Your holy disciples into living heavens.
By their intercessions deliver me from the evils of the earth.
By abstinence raise my thoughts to the understanding of Your passion, //
For You are the merciful lover of mankind.

Reader: In the path where I walk, they have hidden a trap for me.

The time of the fast helps us all to do the works of God.
Let us weep, then, with our whole heart and cry to the Saviour:
Through Your disciples, O Lord of great mercies, //
Save us who with reverent fear praise Your great love for mankind.

Reader: I look to the right and watch, but there is none who knows me.

Apostles, worthy of all praise,
Intercessors for the world,
Physicians of the sick and protectors of health,
Guard us as we pass through the time of the fast:
May we remain at peace with each other by the grace of God!
Preserve our minds untroubled by passions,
That we may all sing a hymn of praise //
To the risen and victorious Christ!

Reader: No refuge remains for me, no man cares for my soul.

Tone 4

I have spent my life with publicans and harlots:
In old age, will I be able to repent of my many sins?
I cry to You, the Maker and Healer of all: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: I cry to You, O Lord; I say, You are my hope, my portion in the land of the living.

I am afflicted with indifference as I wallow in filth!
Wounded by the devil, I have defiled my divine image.
But You convert the heedless and heal the sick: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low.

I have become a stumbling-block to people;
Formed from clay, I have remained of the earth.
I was wed by Your commandments,
Yet I have transgressed them, and defiled my bed.
You fashioned me from the earth: do not despise Your creation: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.

Obsessed with flesh, I have forgotten the soul;
Created to be a mocker of devils, instead I am a captive of lusts.
But as You put the demons to flight, //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Your name.

Since I have sinned by my own choice more than all people,
I am forsaken and helpless.
I have become the enemy of my soul,
Possessed by the carnal thoughts that darken me.
Light of those in darkness and guide of the lost, //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: The righteous will surround me, for You will deal bountifully with me.

“My soul shall live and praise the Lord,” says the prophet.
Seek me, Your lost sheep, and number me among Your flock.
Grant me a time to repent, that I may cry to You: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice!

I have sinned, Christ my God, I have sinned!
I have forsaken Your statutes.
Be merciful to me, Benefactor, that escaping the darkness,
I may see with my inner eyes, and cry to You in fear: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

Wild beasts surround me!
Master, snatch me from them!
You desire that all people be saved
And come to the knowledge of the truth;
Creator, save me with all of them. //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You.

My Benefactor, Deliverer, and Saviour,
Become my healing and do not cast me away!
Look upon me as I lie in my transgressions
And raise me up by Your almighty power.
Then I will confess Your deeds and cry to You: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: For Your name's sake I have waited for You, O Lord. My soul has waited upon Your word. My soul has hoped on the Lord.

Like the foolish servant,
I have hidden the talent that was given to me,
And I buried it in the ground;
I have been condemned as useless,
And no longer dare ask You for forgiveness!
But in Your mercy, have compassion on me that I may cry: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: From the morning watch until the night, from the morning watch let Israel hope on the Lord.

When the woman with an issue of blood touched the hem of Your garment,
You dried up the source of her sufferings!
And if I approach You with unwavering faith,
I will receive forgiveness of my sins.
Accept me as You accepted her, and heal my infirmity! //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

Lord, You created heaven and earth by Your word:
When You shall sit upon the throne of judgement,
Then we shall all stand in Your presence and confess our sins to You.
Before that day comes, accept me in repentance! //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!

Look upon me with a compassionate eye,
And be merciful to me, O only Saviour!
Grant springs of healing water to my poor and wretched soul:
Wash me clean from the filth of my actions that I may sing: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

The devil has prepared his weapons
And hastens to ensnare my humble soul.
Merciful Lord, he has made me a stranger
To the light of knowledge of Your countenance.
Save me from his snares in Your mighty strength: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: To You I lift up my eyes, O You Who are enthroned in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till He have mercy on us.

I am completely enslaved by the passions;
I have forsaken the law and the Holy Scriptures.
Heal me completely, loving Benefactor,
Since for my sake You became as I am.
Turn me back, merciful destroyer of passions. //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Have mercy upon us, O Lord! Have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Too long our soul has been sated with the scorn of those who are at ease, the contempt of the proud.

The harlot washed Your pure and precious feet with her tears,
Proclaiming to all that they should come to You
And receive remission of their sins!
Grant me her faith, O Saviour, that I may cry to You: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

For my sake You made Yourself poor,
And became a child in the flesh,
Cleanse my soul of all filth and grant me Your mercy, O Christ;
Wash away the dirt and make me whole. //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

Master, strengthen my soul,
That it may run to You and always serve You,
For You are my guardian and protector; my defence and aid.
Enable me, O Word of God, to cry to You with boldness: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

Be our invincible rampart,
Saviour Jesus, our merciful God!
We have fallen into deceitful ways and actions:
Raise up Your creature, Benefactor,
And in Your compassion reconcile us to Yourself. //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

I have become the prodigal son;
I have wasted my wealth and now I die from hunger!
I seek refuge beneath Your protection, loving Father:
Receive me as You received him.
Make me worthy to partake of Your banquet that I may cry to You: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

In envy, the author of evil drove the first-created man from paradise,
But the thief was granted paradise again
When he cried on the cross: "Remember me!"
In faith and fear, I too cry out to You: Remember me! //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

Stretch out Your hand to me as You did to Peter, O God!
Lift me out of the deep and grant me grace and mercy
Through the prayers of Your all pure mother who bore You without seed
And of all the saints! //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Reader: Glory to You, our God, glory to You!

You are the lamb Who takes away my sins:
Receive me each day as I sing to You.
Into Your hands I commend my entire being, soul and body,
And as my duty, I cry out to You night and day: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Glory...

How ineffable is Your mercy, O gracious Lord!
You are long-suffering and almighty in love!
Do not cast me away from Your face
That with thanksgiving and joy I may sing to You: //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Now and ever... (Theotokion)

Ineffable condescension!
Strange and wondrous birth!
How does the Virgin carry You as a child in her arms,
For You are her Creator and God!
Benefactor, as You consented to take flesh from her, //
Save me before I utterly perish, O Lord!

Wednesday Stichera
Weeks of Palms

Tone 5

I am rich in passions,
And clothed in the deceitful robe of hypocrisy.
I rejoice in the sins of self-indulgence.
There is no limit to my lack of love.
I neglect my spiritual understanding
That lies at the gate of repentance.
Make me, O Lord, like Lazarus, poor in sin,
That I may not be tormented in the unquenchable fire,
Praying in vain for a finger to be dipped in water
To relieve my burning tongue.
But make me dwell in the bosom of Abraham, //
As the lover of mankind.

Your souls filled with unquenchable love,
You endured the most terrible sufferings without denying Christ,
And cast down the tyrant's pride.
You who kept the faith unchanged and unharmed
Have gone to dwell in heaven.
Since you have boldness before the Lord, //
Pray that He may grant us great mercy!

Jesus as You walked in the flesh,
On the other side of the Jordan,
You said to Your companions:
My friend Lazarus is already dead,
And now has been committed to the tomb.
And so for your sakes, I rejoice, my friends,
For by this you shall learn that I know all things.
For I am God, inseparable from the Father,
Though in My visible appearance I am man.
Let us go, then, to bring him back to life,
That death may feel the defeat and complete destruction I bring upon it, //
Granting the world great mercy.

Faithful, let us follow the example of Martha and Mary:
Let us send our acts of righteousness to intercede before the Lord,
That He may come to raise up from the dead our spiritual understanding
Which lies insensible within the tomb of negligence,
Lacking all feeling of the fear of God,
And deprived of living action.
Let us cry: O merciful Lord, as once by Your dread authority
You raised up Your friend Lazarus, //
So now give life to us all, and grant us Your great mercy!

Tone 6

Lazarus has now been two days in the tomb.
He sees the dead from all the ages.
He beholds strange sights of terror,
A countless multitude, prisoners of Hades.
His sisters lament bitterly, beholding his tomb.
But Christ comes to bring his friend to life,
That a single hymn of praise may be offered up by all with one accord: //
O Saviour, blessed are You! Have mercy on us!

4 stichera from the Menaion

Glory...now and ever...

Theotokion from the Octoechos in the tone of the week

Great and Holy Wednesday Stichera

Tone 1

A harlot recognized You as God, O Son of the Virgin.
With tears equal to her past deeds, she besought You weeping:
Loose my debt as I have loosed my hair.
Love the woman who, though justly hated, loves You.
Then with the publicans will I proclaim You, ///
Benefactor and lover of mankind.

The harlot mingled precious myrrh with her tears.
She poured it on Your most pure feet and kissed them.
At once You justified her.
You suffered for our sakes: ///
Forgive us also, and save us.

As the sinful woman was bringing her offering of myrrh,
The disciple was scheming with lawless men.
She rejoiced in pouring out her precious gift.
He hastened to sell the precious one.
She recognized the Master, but Judas parted from Him.
She was set free, but Judas was enslaved to the enemy.
How terrible is slothfulness!
How great her repentance!
O Saviour, You suffered for our sakes: ///
Grant us also repentance, and save us.

O, the wretchedness of Judas!
He saw the harlot kiss the footsteps of Christ,
But deceitfully he contemplated the kiss of betrayal.
She loosed her hair while he bound himself with wrath.
He offered the stench of wickedness instead of myrrh,
For envy cannot distinguish value.
O, the wretchedness of Judas! ///
Deliver our souls from this, O God.

Tone 2

The sinful woman ran to buy the precious myrrh
With which to anoint her Saviour.
She cried to the merchant: "Give me myrrh, ///
That I may anoint Him Who has cleansed all my sins."

Tone 6

The woman who was engulfed in sin
Found You a haven of salvation.
She poured out myrrh with her tears and cried to You:
Behold the One Who brings repentance to sinners!
Rescue me from the tempest of sin, O Master, ///
Through Your great mercy.

Today Christ comes to the house of the Pharisee.
A sinful woman crawls to His feet and cries:
"Look at me who am engulfed in sin,
In despair because of my evil deeds.
But in Your goodness do not despise me.
Grant me forgiveness of my evil deeds, O Lord, ///
And save me."

The harlot spread out her hair to You, O Master;
Judas spread out his hands to lawless men:
She in order to receive forgiveness;
He in order to receive some silver.
We cry to You, for You were sold for us and yet set us free: ///
O Lord, glory to You!

The corrupt and filthy woman
Drew near to You, O Saviour.
She poured out her tears on Your feet
And thus announced Your passion.
How can I gaze on You, O Master?
Yet You came to save the harlot.
Raise me from the depths, for I am dead in sin,
As You raised Lazarus from the tomb after four days.
Accept me in my misery, O Lord, ///
And save me.

Despairing for her life, and despaired of for her deeds,
The woman came bearing myrrh to You and cried:
"O Son of the Virgin,
Though I am a harlot, do not cast me aside.
Joy of the angels, do not despise my tears.
As You did not reject me as a sinner, ///
Accept me now as a penitent, in Your great mercy."

Glory...now and ever... (The Hymn of Cassia) Tone 8

The woman had fallen into many sins, O Lord,
Yet when she perceived Your divinity,
She joined the ranks of the myrrh-bearing women.
In tears she brought You myrrh before Your burial.
She cried: "Woe is me!
For I live in the night of licentiousness,
Shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin.
But accept the fountain of my tears,
As You gathered the waters of the sea into clouds.
Bow down Your ear to the sighing of my heart,
As You bowed the heavens in Your ineffable condescension.
Once Eve heard Your footsteps in paradise in the cool of the day,
And in fear she ran and hid herself.
But now I will tenderly embrace those pure feet
And wipe them with the hair of my head.
Who can measure the multitude of my sins,
Or the depth of Your judgements,
O Saviour of my soul? ///
Do not despise Your servant in Your immeasurable mercy!"