

**Vespers Propers on the Afternoon of
The Third Sunday of the Great Fast
March 8, 2015**

The forty holy martyrs of Sebaste in Armenia. They were comrades, not in blood, but in faith and obedience to the will of their heavenly Father. At the time of the emperor Licinius, after binding and savage tortures, they were ordered to pass the night naked at the coldest time of winter in a swamp in the open air. They consummated their martyrdom by the breaking of their legs at crucifixion. (320)

*All page references are to **The Order of Vespers on Sunday Afternoons in the Great Fast***

"O Lord, I have cried" in Tone 8 (p. 52). The Penitential Stichera are not used; instead, sing the following.


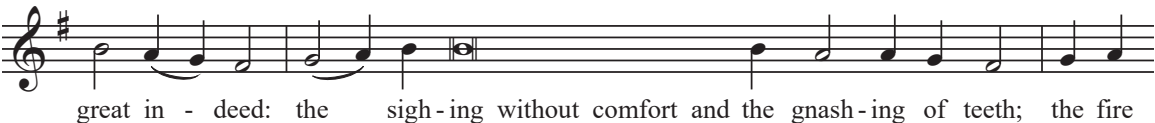
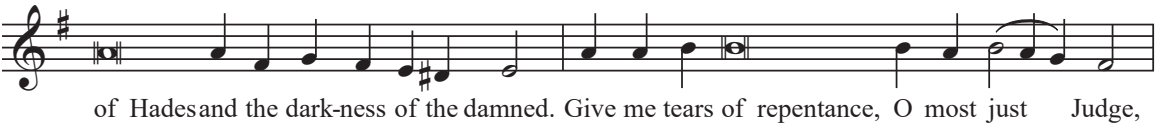

Tone 8

(on 10)

Cantor: 

Bring my soul out of this pris-on and then I shall praise your name.

Stichera of the third Sunday of the Great Fast - Tone 8 samohlasen


I have sinned against you with-out meas-ure, and my pun-ish-ment will be

great in - deed: the sigh-ing without comfort and the gnash-ing of teeth; the fire

of Hades and the dark-ness of the damned. Give me tears of repentance, O most just Judge,

that, by fast-ing, I may obtain forgive-ness of my sins as I cry to you, O

Christ my Lord: Have mer - cy on me, in your great good - ness.

(on 9)

Cantor: A - round me the just will assem-ble be-cause of your good-ness to me.

All repeat: "I have sinned against you without measure..."

(on 8)

Cantor: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!

⑧

Come, O Word, up-on the moun - tain where my sins have made me wan - der,

seek me out and call me back to you; chase the e - vil thoughts far

from me and bring me back to life, for I am giv-en o - ver to death. *Tone 3*

So pu - ri - fy me through fast - ing, that I may cry out to you in unending

tears, O Christ my Lord: Have mer - cy on me, in your great good - ness.

During the third hour of the night, the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs. Suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm. All the guards were asleep, except for Aglaius, who was keeping watch. Looking at the lake he saw that a radiant crown had appeared over the head of each martyr. Aglaius counted thirty-nine crowns and realized that the soldier who fled had lost his crown.

Aggias then woke up the other guards, took off his uniform and said to them, "I too am a Christian," and he joined the martyrs. Standing in the water he prayed, "Lord God, I believe in You, in Whom these soldiers believe. Add me to their number, and make me worthy to suffer with Your servants." Then a fortieth crown appeared over his head.

In the morning, the torturers saw with surprise that the martyrs were still alive, and their guard Aggias was glorifying Christ together with them. They led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. During this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son to persevere until death.

They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him on the ground. His mother then picked up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton drew his last breath, his mother put him on the cart with the bodies of his fellow sufferers. The bodies of the saints were tossed in the fire, and their charred bones were thrown into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up.

Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, and commanded him to bury their remains. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the relics of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honor.

The names of the forty martyrs are: Cyrion (or Quirio), Candidus, Domnus, Hesychius, Heraclius, Smaragdus, Eunocius (Or Eunicus), Valens, Vivianus, Claudius, Priscus, Theodulus, Euty chius, John, Xanthius, Helianus, Sisinius, Aggias, Aetius, Flavius, Acacius, Ecdicius, Lysimachus, Alexander, Elias, Gorgonius, Theophilus, Dometian, Gaius, Leontuis, Athanasius, Cyril, Sacerdon, Nicholas, Valerius, Philoctimon, Severian, Chudion, Aglaius, and Meliton.

(from oca.org)

The Story of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste

In the year 313 Saint Constantine the Great issued an edict granting Christians religious freedom, and officially recognizing Christianity as equal with paganism under the law. But his co-ruler Licinius was a pagan, and he decided to stamp out Christianity in his part of the Empire. As Licinius prepared his army to fight Constantine, he decided to remove Christians from his army, fearing mutiny.

One of the military commanders of that time in the Armenian city of Sebaste was Agricola, a zealous champion of idolatry. Under his command was a company of forty Cappadocians, brave soldiers who had distinguished themselves in many battles. When these Christian soldiers refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, Agricola locked them up in prison. The soldiers occupied themselves with prayer and psalmody, and during the night they heard a voice saying, "Persevere until the end, then you shall be saved."


On the following morning, the soldiers were again taken to Agricola. This time the pagan tried flattery. He began to praise their valor, their youth and strength, and once more he urged them to renounce Christ and thereby win themselves the respect and favor of their emperor.

Seven days later, the renowned judge Licinius arrived at Sebaste and put the soldiers on trial. The saints steadfastly answered, "Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God." Licinius then ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs. But the stones missed the saints and returned to strike those who had thrown them. One stone thrown by Licinius hit Agricola in the face, smashing his teeth. The torturers realized that the saints were guarded by some invisible power. In prison, the soldiers spent the night in prayer and again they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (John 11:25). Be brave and fear not, for you shall obtain imperishable crowns."

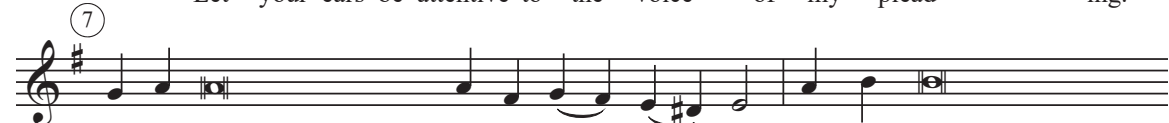
On the following day the judge repeated the interrogation in front of the torturer, but the soldiers remained unyielding.

It was winter, and there was a severe frost. They lined up the holy soldiers, threw them into a lake near the city, and set a guard to prevent them from coming out of the water. In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bath-house was set up on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, one of the soldiers made a dash for the bath-house, but no sooner had he stepped over the threshold, then he fell down dead.

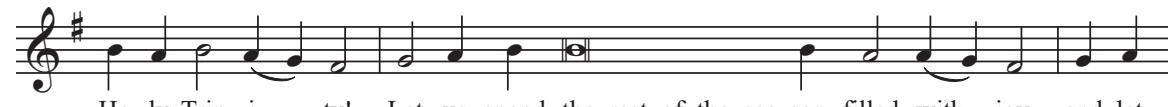
(on 7)

Cantor: 

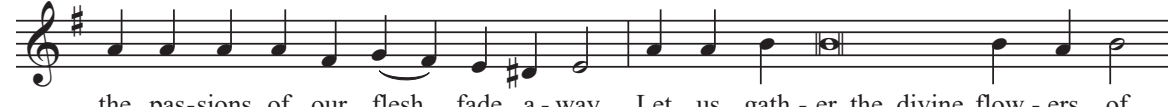
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my plead - - ing.



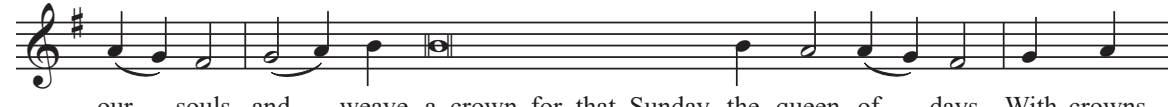
As we begin the third week of this ho - ly Fast, O faith - ful, let us praise the



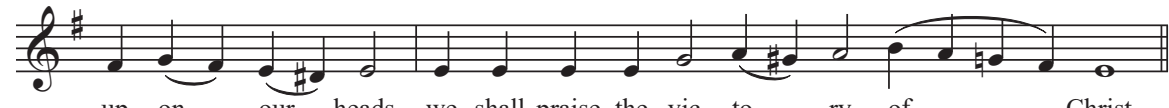
Ho - ly Trin - i - ty! Let us spend the rest of the sea - son filled with joy, and let



the pas - sions of our flesh fade a - way. Let us gath - er the di - vine flow - ers of

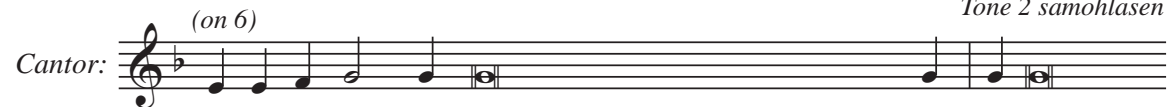


our souls and weave a crown for that Sunday, the queen of days. With crowns

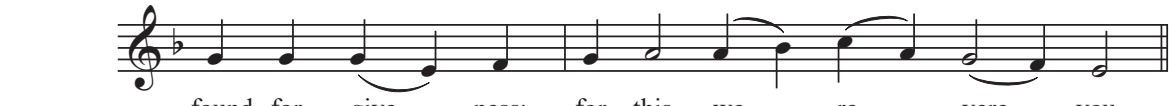


up - on our heads, we shall praise the vic - to - ry of Christ.

(on 6) *Tone 2 samohlasen*

Cantor: 

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive? But with you is



found for - give - ness: for this we re - vere you.

Stichera of the Forty Martyrs - *Tone 2 samohlasen*



Brave - ly en - dur - ing the pres - ent hap - pen - ings and re - joic - ing in things

hoped for, the ho - ly mar - tyrs said to each oth - er: We have not stripped

our-selves of a gar - ment, but we have put off the old per - son.

The win - ter is bitter but Par - a - dise is sweet. Al - though the chill is painful, it

be - comes sweet en - joy - ment. Let us not bow down, O cap - tains.

We suf - fer a lit - tle at pres - ent that we may re - ceive the crowns of

vic - try from Christ, since he is God and the Sav - ior of our souls.

(on 5)

My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord, more than watch - man for day - break.

All repeat "Bravely enduring..."

(on 4)

Cantor:

Let the watch - man count on daybreak and Is - ra - el on the Lord.

Then the Litany of Fervent Supplication is taken, and three prostrations are made in silence. (The Prayer of Saint Ephrem is **not** said.)

The Lenten dismissal is replaced with the festal dismissal:

Deacon: Wisdom!

Response: Give the blessing.

Priest: Blessed is Christ our God, the One-Who-Is, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen. O God, strengthen the true faith, forever and ever.

Priest: O most holy Theotokos, save us!

Response: More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

Priest: Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope; glory to you!

Response: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen. Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy. Give the blessing!

Priest: May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; through the prayers of (Name), (patron of the church) and of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste, and of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response:

A - - - - - men.

Glo - ry to him who heals us through you!

Cantor:

Glo-ry to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir - it,
now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

Festal theotokion - Tone 1

O ho - ly Tab - er - na - cle, Gabriel cried out to you: Re-joice, O Vir - gin,
full of grace: the Lord of All be - came in - car - nate of you,
as the right - eous Da - vid had fore - told. In bear - ing your Cre - a - tor,
you have shown yourself to surpass the vastness of the heav - ens. We there - fore
cry out: Glo - ry to him who dwelt in you! Glo - ry to him who came forth
from you. Glo - ry to him who has set us free through your life - giv - ing birth.

Throw - ing off their gar - ments and go - ing in - to the lake with - out trem - bling,
the ho - ly mar - tyrs said to each oth - er: Since we have lost Par - a - dise,
let us not care for a cor - rup - ti - ble gar - ment to - day. Hav - ing once
been clothed in corrup - tion through the ser - pent, let us now beseech res - ur - rec - tion
for all. Let us de - spise the i - cy destroying cold and scorn the flesh,
that we may re - ceive the crowns of vic - t'ry from Christ for he is God and the
Sav - ior of our souls.

(on 3)

Cantor:

Be - cause with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemp - tion, Is - ra - el
in - deed he will re - deem from all its in - i - qui - ty.

All repeat "Throwing off..."

(on 2)

Cantor: 

Praise the Lord, all you na - tions; ac-claim him all you peo - ples!



Look-ing up-on the tor-tures as pleas - ures and has-ten-ing towards the icy



lake as towards the heat, the ho - ly mar - tyrs said to each oth - er:



Let us stand fear-less in the win - ter sea - son that we may es-cape



the dread-ful fire of Ha - des. Let a foot be burnt that it may re-joyce for-ev-er;



let a hand be lost that it may be lift-ed towards the Lord; let us not spare



the dy-ing na - ture. Let us now ac-cept death that we may re-ceive crowns of



vic - t'ry from Christ, for he is God and the Sav - ior of our souls.

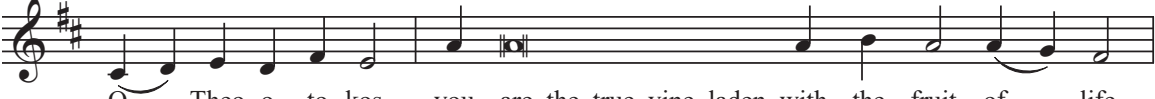
(on 1)

Cantor: 

Strong is the love of the Lord for us; he is faith-ful for - ev - er.

All repeat "Looking upon the tortures..."


Theotokion - Tone 6 samohlasen



O Theo-o - to-kos, you are the true vine laden with the fruit of life.



There-fore, we im-plore you, O La - dy, to in-tercede together with the apos-tles




and the saints so that we may ob - tain mer - cy for our souls.


The service continues with the Prayer of St. Simeon on page 13.

After the Trisagion Prayers and Our Father, the usual Lenten troparia, conclusion and dismissal (pp. 16-23) are not used, because of the feast. Instead, the following troparia are sung in place of the usual Lenten dismissal troparia:


Troparion of the Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebaste - Tone 1



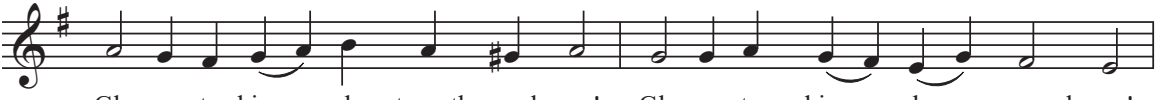
O for-ty sol-diers of Christ and honora-ble mar - tyrs, you went through fire and



wa - ter, O might-y war - riors, and have come to live with the an - gels.



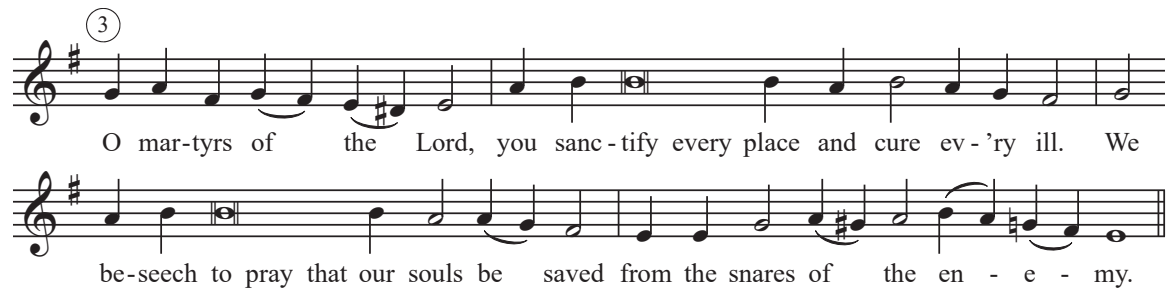
Join them in pray - ing to Christ for those who praise you.



Glo-ry to him who strength-ened you! Glo-ry to him who crowned you!

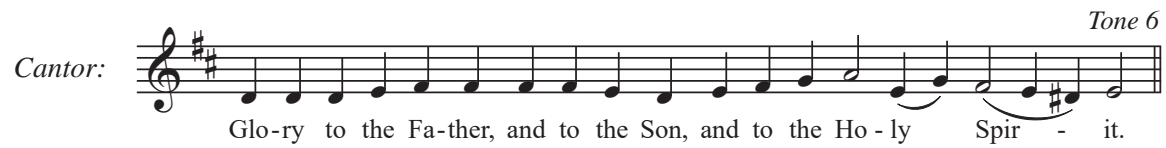


full is our soul with the scorn of the rich, with the proud man's dis-dain.



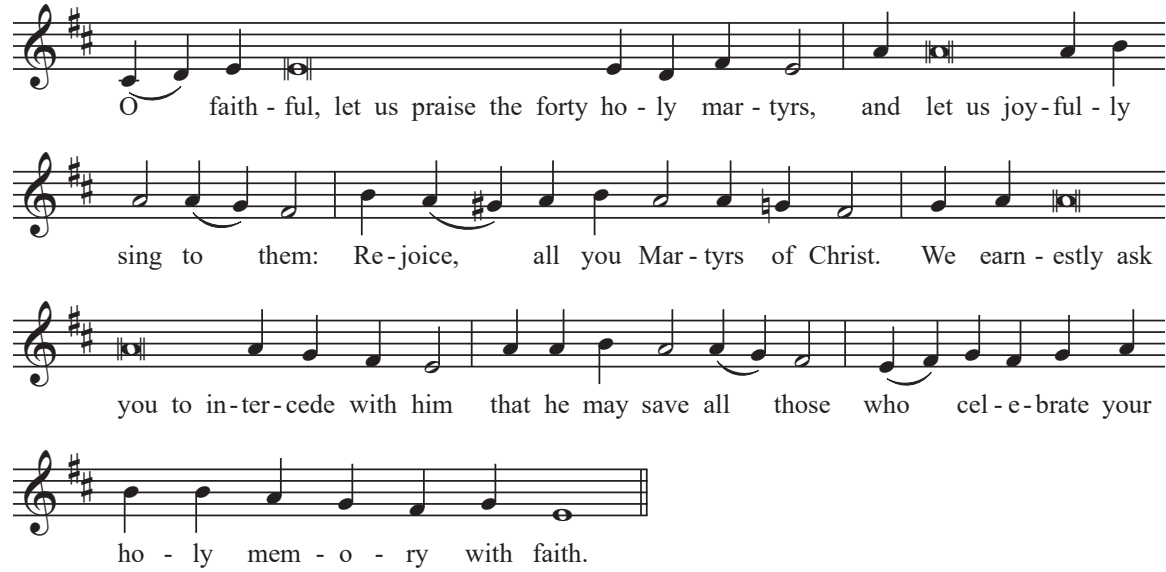
3
O mar-tyrs of the Lord, you sanc-tify every place and cure ev-'ry ill. We
be-seech to pray that our souls be saved from the snares of the en - e - my.

Tone 6



Cantor: Glo-ry to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir - it.

Doxastikon of the Martyrs - Tone 6 samohlasen



O faith-ful, let us praise the forty ho-ly mar-tyrs, and let us joy-ful-ly
sing to them: Re-joyce, all you Mar-tyrs of Christ. We earn-estly ask
you to in-ter-cede with him that he may save all those who cel-e-brate your
ho-ly mem-o-ry with faith.



Cantor: Now and ev-er and for-ev-er. A - men.



Cantor: Glo-ry to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir - it.

Doxastikon of the Martyrs - Tone 2 samohlasen

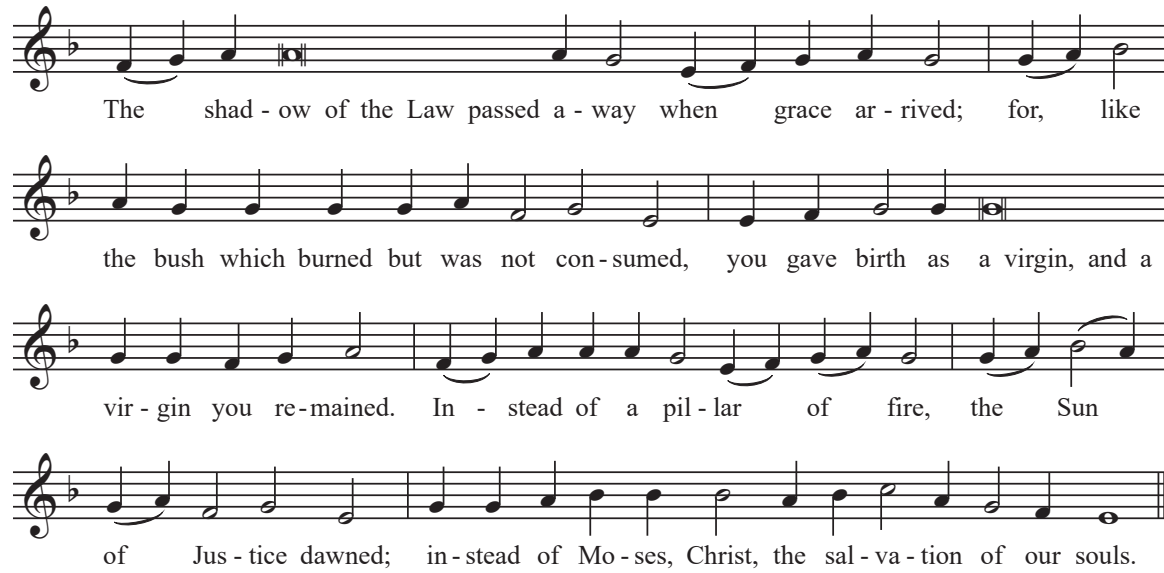


Brave-ly en-dur-ing the pres-ent hap-pen-ings and re-joic-ing in things
hoped for, the ho-ly mar-tyrs said to each oth-er: We have not stripped
our-selves of a gar-ment, but we have put off the old per-son.
The win-ter is bitter but Par-a-dise is sweet. Al-though the chill is painful, it
be-comes sweet en-joy-ment. Let us not bow down, O cap-tains.
We suf-fer a lit-tle at pres-ent that we may re-ceive the crowns of
vic-t'ry from Christ, since he is God and the Sav-ior of our souls.



Cantor: Now and ev-er and for-ev-er. A - men.

Dogmatikon - Tone 2 samohlasen



The shad - ow of the Law passed a - way when grace ar - rived; for, like
 the bush which burned but was not con - sumed, you gave birth as a vir - gin, and a
 vir - gin you re - mained. In - stead of a pil - lar of fire, the Sun
 of Jus - tice dawned; in - stead of Mo - ses, Christ, the sal - va - tion of our souls.

The service continues on page 9.

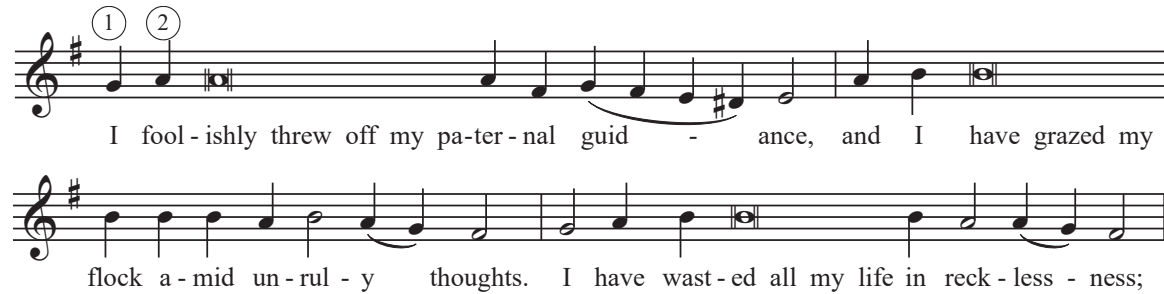
Prokeimenon for the Second Sunday, p.10, followed by the Readings for the Martyrs:

- Isaiah 43:9-14 (EOT 303)
- Wisdom 3: 1-9 (EOT 315)
- Wisdom 5:15 - 6:3 (EOT 303)

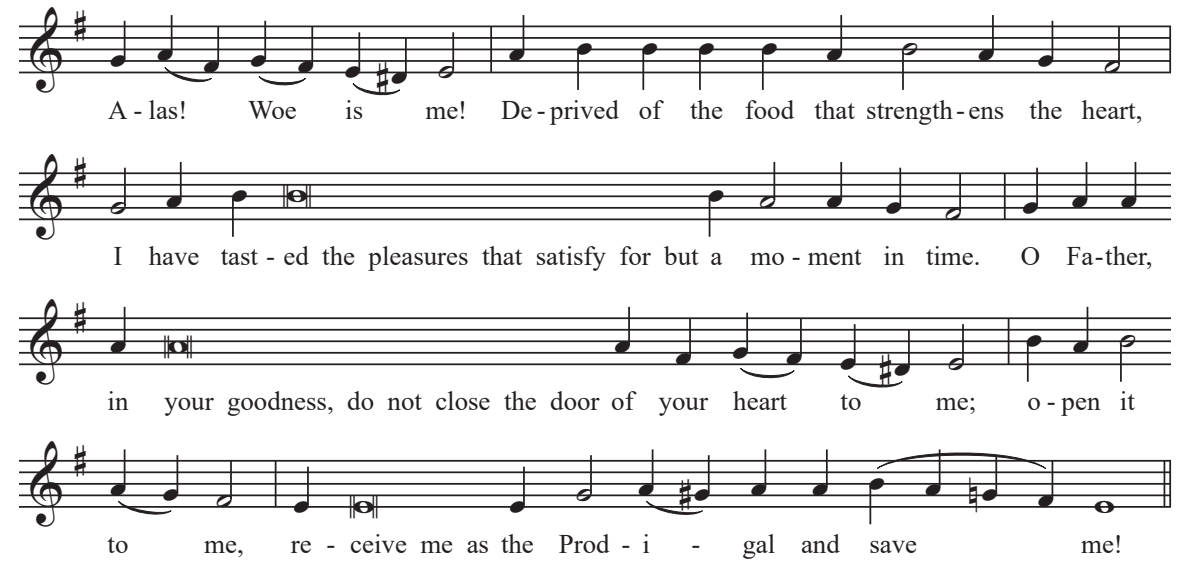
The service continues with the Hymn of Glorification on page 11.

Aposticha

Aposticha of the second Sunday of the Great Fast - Tone 8 samohlasen

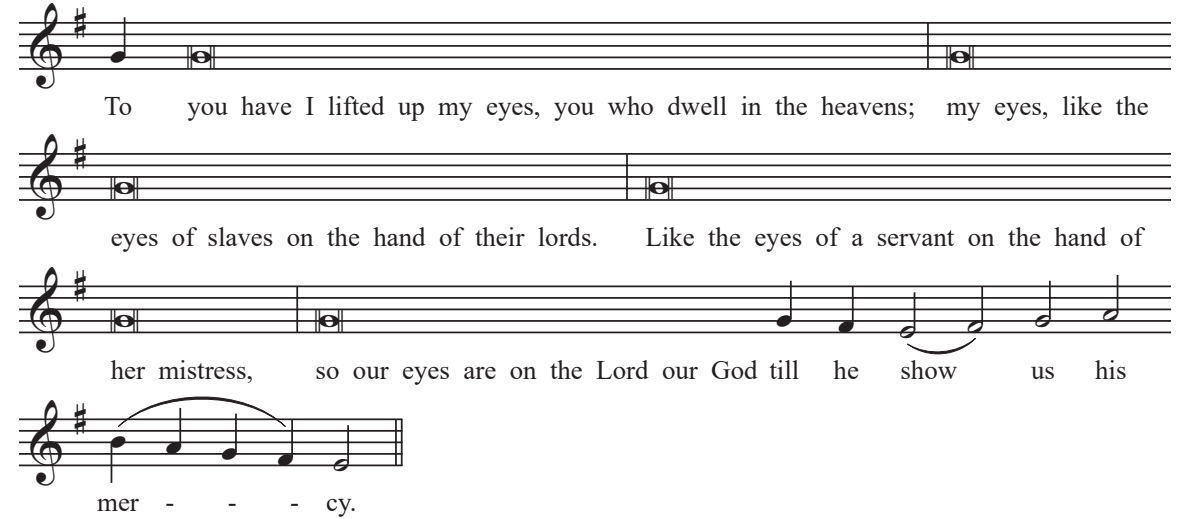


I fool - ishly threw off my pa - ter - nal guid - ance, and I have grazed my
 flock a - mid un - rul - y thoughts. I have wast - ed all my life in reck - less - ness;



A - las! Woe is me! De - prived of the food that strength - ens the heart,
 I have tast - ed the pleasures that satisfy for but a mo - ment in time. O Fa - ther,
 in your goodness, do not close the door of your heart to me; o - pen it
 to me, re - ceive me as the Prod - i - gal and save me!

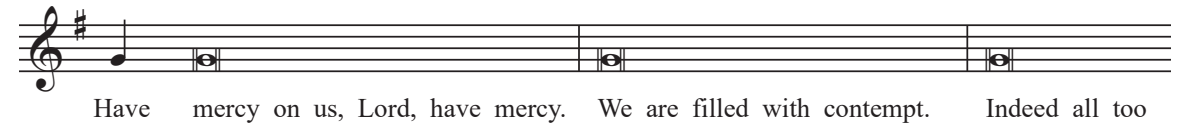
Cantor



To you have I lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in the heavens; my eyes, like the
 eyes of slaves on the hand of their lords. Like the eyes of a servant on the hand of
 her mistress, so our eyes are on the Lord our God till he show us his
 mer - - - cy.

All repeat, "I foolishly threw off my paternal guidance..."

Cantor



Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy. We are filled with contempt. Indeed all too