

March 27

**Fourth Week of Great Lent;
Commemoration of the the venerable Martyr
Matrona of Thessalonica
(5th Class)**

PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY

Stichera for the Fast (Tone 4)

10. The Fast that brings us blessings has now run half its course. It has helped us to receive God's grace in the days that are past, and it will bring us further benefit in the days still to come. For by continuing in what is right, we attain yet greater gifts. We therefore cry to Christ, the Giver of all good: "O You who, for our sake fasted and endured the Cross, make us worthy to share without condemnation in Your divine Passover. May we spend our lives in peace and rightly glorify You with the Father and the Spirit!"

(Tone 5)

9. Those who do the works of righteousness in secret and receive a spiritual return do not proclaim these deeds in the middle of the street, but rather keep them in their hearts, He who sees the secret deeds of all will grant us the reward of our self-control. Let us complete the Fast without putting on a gloomy face, but praying in the inner chamber of our souls. Let us say: "Our Father, who art in Heaven, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, we pray."
8. In your unshakable resolve, you never denied Christ, O holy martyrs, as you endured the most terrible torments. You triumphed over the arrogance of the tyrants and kept the faith, whole and entire, as you passed from earth to Heaven. By the confidence you have in the

presence of God, pray that He grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

(Tone 1)

7. Let us all wash our souls in the waters of the Fast; and approaching the precious and honored Cross of the Lord, let us venerate it with love. Let us draw from it divine enlightenment, reaping the fruit of eternal salvation, peace and great mercy.
6. O Cross, glory of the Apostles, attended by principalities, powers and archangels, keep safe from all harm those who venerate you. Grant that we may pass through the course of the Fast in a holy way, and reach the day of salvation when we, too, shall be saved."

(Tone 7)

5. Today as we venerate the Cross of the Lord, let us cry out: "Hail, O Tree of Life, victor over Hades! Hail, joy of the world and slayer of corruption! Hail, O power which drives out demons! Hail, strong support of the faithful, weapon that cannot be broken! Guard and sanctify those who honor you.

For Matrona (Tone 4)

4. You opposed the courage of your noble convictions to the grumblings of the Hebrews and their cruel boldness, for you contemplated in advance the coming goods, when joy would remain forever without change. You found endless happiness when you passed from earth to the heavenly banquet, O glorious martyr Matrona.
3. You opposed the courage... *(Repeat)*
2. Adorned with the jewels of the wounds of your struggles, you were allowed to contemplate the royal splendor, the delightful beauty of your Bridegroom. You were worthy to approach the Source of all good,

receiving immortal renown as the fruit of divine happiness in the hereafter.

1. Neither the yoke which you carried as a slave, nor your feminine nature, nor hunger nor scourging could keep you from imitating the steadfastness of the martyrs, O glorious Matrona. Rather you generously endured your torments. Thus you have found the heavenly dwelling of the Bridegroom and the crown of graces which adorns you in the presence of the Creator.
- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Theotokion (Tone 8)

Today the One who is unapproachable in Essence becomes approachable for me and suffers His Passion, delivering me from the passions. He who restores light to the blind is spat upon by the mouths of the transgressors. He surrenders His back to scourging for the sake of those who are held captive. When the pure Virgin, His Mother, saw Him upon the Cross, she cried aloud in pain: "Alas, my Child! What have You done? You are fairer in beauty than all the children of men. But now You appear without life or form, having neither shape nor beauty. Alas, my Light! I cannot bear to look upon You sleeping on the Tree. I am wounded inwardly, and a harsh sword has pierced my heart. I sing the praises of Your Passion. I venerate Your merciful kindness. O long-suffering Lord, glory to you!"

Entrance with the censer. "O Joyful Light..."

PROKIMENON [Ps 71] (Tone 4)

Blessed is the Lord God of Israel who alone works wonders!

- v. O God, give Your sense of justice to the King and Your righteousness to the King's Son!

1.) *Genesis 9:18 - 10:1*

The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These three were the sons of Noah, and from them the whole earth was peopled. Now Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of the wine, he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness, and he told his two brothers outside about it. Shem and Japheth, however, took a robe, and holding it on their backs, they walked backward and covered their father's nakedness; since their faces were turned the other way, they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah woke up from his drunkenness and learned what his youngest son had done to him, he said: "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers." He also said: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem! Let Canaan be his slave. May God expand Japheth, so that he dwells among the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. The whole lifetime of Noah was nine hundred and fifty years; then he died. These are the generations of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, to whom sons were born after the flood.

PROKIMENON [Ps 72] (*Tone 4*)

But it is good for me to cleave to God, to put my hope in the Lord.

v. How good is God to Israel, to the upright of heart.

2.) *Proverbs 12:23 - 13:10*

A shrewd man conceals his knowledge, but the hearts of fools gush forth folly. The diligent hand will govern, but the slothful will be enslaved. Anxiety in a man's heart depresses it, but a kindly word makes it glad. The just man surpasses his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

The slothful man catches not his prey, but the wealth of the diligent man is great. In the path of justice there is life, but the abominable way leads to death. A wise son loves correction, but the senseless one heeds no rebuke. From the fruit of his words a man eats good things, but the treacherous one perishes before his time. He who guards his mouth protects his life; to open wide one's lips brings downfall. The soul of the sluggard craves in vain, but the diligent soul is amply satisfied. Anything deceitful the just man hates, but the wicked brings shame and disgrace. Virtue guards one who walks honestly, but the downfall of the wicked is sin. One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth. A man's riches serve as ransom for his life, but the poor man heeds no rebuke. The light of the just shines gaily, but the lamp of the wicked goes out. The stupid man sows discord by his insolence, but with those who take counsel is wisdom.