

Month of December

THE 19TH DAY

Commemoration of the Holy Hierarch Boniface the Merciful,
Bishop of Ferentum in Tuscany

(This service is designed to be combined with that of the Martyr Boniface)

At Vespers

On "Lord, I have cried...", 6 stichera: 3 of the Martyr Boniface (see in the Menaion), and 3 of the Holy Hierarch Boniface, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs..."—

Meek and lowly of heart on earth, O wondrous Boniface, in heaven thou intercedest with great boldness before the throne of glory, entreating mercy from the Judge of all for us who with faith call on thine aid; for having run the good race of the virtues and triumphed in thy trials, thou hast received from Christ the crown of victory.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath the Lord perfected praise, as saith the Psalmist; and his words found fulfillment in the child Boniface, who, rebuked for giving all the food of his household to the needy, prayed to Christ most earnestly. And, lo! by the power of the Almighty the stores were wondrously replenished in a moment.

Christ the Redeemer gave His life to ransom our souls from sin and death; and, following His precepts, Boniface, His servant, gave all his substance to relieve the sufferings of the poor and to feed the hungry. Wherefore, in heaven he hath received the power to pray for all who call upon his name, obtaining from God peace and great mercy. *Glory...: Idiomelon, in the same tone—*

All Italy boasteth in thy glory, O saint of God; and Tuscany exulteth exceedingly in thy memory. For therein thou wast like a lily sprung up amid thorns, bearing witness to the beauty of paradise. And, lo! the sweet fragrance of thy manifold virtues filleth the souls of us Christians, moving us to give glory unto Christ, Who hath given us such a high priest, who beggeth forgiveness for our sins and transgressions.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign..."—

Beholding Christ, Who loveth mankind, crucified, O all-pure one, His side pierced by a spear, thou didst cry aloud, weeping: "What is this, O my Son? How hath the ungrateful people rewarded Thee for the good Thou didst do them? And dost Thou hasten to leave me childless, O most Beloved? I marvel, O Compassionate One, at Thy voluntary crucifixion!"

Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone I—

Come, all ye who love the saints of God! Come and join chorus together, fashioning praises into wreaths wherewith to crown the honored head of the merciful Boniface! For, having armed himself with faith in Christ, he bravely entered upon the contest of the virtues, by his meekness utterly casting down the pride of the enemy of our race, and by his patience trampling down all the passions. Wherefore, having become a model and example for hierarchs, he prayeth now in behalf of our souls.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven..."—

Standing before the Cross of thy Son and God, and beholding His long-suffering,

weeping, thou didst say, O pure Mother: “Woe is me, O my Child most sweet! What are these things which Thou dost suffer unjustly, O Word of God, that Thou mightest save humanity?”

Troparion of the saint, in Tone I—

From thy childhood, O venerable hierarch, thou didst love Christ the Master above all; and, desiring to serve Him alone, thou wast ever mindful His teaching, that he who serveth the poor and needy serveth God Almighty. Wherefore, having acquired true charity through meekness and humility, thou dost work wondrous miracles for the faithful; for which cause we cry unto thee: Save us by thine entreaties, O Boniface, namesake of goodly deeds.

At Matins

At “God is the Lord...”, the troparion of the martyr, twice; Glory..., that of the holy hierarch; Now & ever..., theotokion.

One canon from the Octoechos, with 6 troparia, including the irmos; canon of the martyr, with 4 troparia (see in the Menaion); and that of the holy hierarch, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is “We hymn Boniface, the doer of good deeds”, in Tone VIII—

Ode I

Irmos: Let us chant unto God, Who delivered Israel from the bitter bondage of Pharaoh, and guided them with the pillar of fire and the cloud of light, for He hath been glorified.

Wisdom and eloquence do Thou grant me, Thy lowly servant, O Christ, that, filled with Thy grace, as a lamp with oil, I may glorify Boniface who glorified Thee.

Ever didst thou cherish as the treasure of thy soul, O divinely wise hierarch Boniface, the saving precept of Jesus Christ: Give unto every man that asketh of thee.

How great is thy reward in heaven, O merciful one! For, having distributed thy raiment among those clad in rags, thou art now arrayed in the splendor of holiness.

Theotokion: Ye slaves to sin, suffering in thrall to unseemly passions, cast off the bondage of the noetic Pharaoh, and follow the most pure Theotokos, our most glorious Directress.

Ode III

Irmos: O Savior, Thou art my confirmation, my refuge and power! Make firm my wavering heart in the fear of Thee, for there is none as holy as Thou, our God.

Making thy heart firm in Christ the Savior, O Boniface, by His power thou didst wondrously increase thy wine, crying: There is none as holy as Thou, our God!

"None is as holy as Thou, O Christ, Who didst change water into wine at Cana, and hast now wrought a marvelous wonder over mine own wine!" cried the saint.

Boniface, filled with the Spirit, was affronted by a fool, who even before the meal had been blessed, set his ape to capering; and the saint sadly foretold his doom.

Theotokion: O Mistress, thou refuge of Christians, shelter us beneath thy protecting veil, like as a hen shieldeth her chicks; for after God there is none as holy as thou.

Kontakion of the martyr (see in the Menaion, after Ode VI)

Sessional hymn of the Martyr (see in the Menaion, after Ode III)

Glory...: Sessional hymn of the holy hierarch, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Having been

lifted up... "—

Treating the world and all things therein as naught, O Boniface, thou didst heed the Master's teachings and didst struggle most zealously in meekness and humble-mindedness. Wherefore, thou hast received recompense a hundredfold and the reward of the life that groweth not old, O glorious hierarch..

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or stavrotheotokion (see both in the Menaion, after Ode III)

Ode IV

Irmos: With divine vision the prophet perceived Thee, O Word, Who wast to become incarnate of the Theotokos alone, the mountain overshadowed; and with fear he glorified Thy power.

"Now do I behold a miracle like that which was wrought in Thy temple, O Lord, when a little oil burned for many days!" the holy one cried aloud, seeing the increase of his vintage.

In Egypt, worms and locusts fell upon the crops, that Pharaoh might know the power of the true God; but thou, O saint, didst set at naught the rapacity of such creatures by thy faith in Him.

Feeding upon the fruits of the holy one's garden, ravenous worms devoured his substance with greed unabated; but he expelled them by the power of Him Who is most glorious.

Theotokion: Astray in the trackless wilderness of temptations, beset on every side by the beasts of the soul-corrupting passions, let us hasten to Mary, the mountain overshadowed by grace divine.

Ode V

Irmos: Grant us peace, O Lord our God. O Lord our God, take us for Thy possession. O Lord, we know none other than Thee; we call upon Thy name.

Christ filled thy soul with ineffable peace, O most blessed one, and for thy faith and virtues He hearkeneth when thou callest upon His name.

Every possession didst thou treat as naught, O merciful one, and love of material things had no hold upon thy heart, for the poor were thy treasure.

Take pity upon us, O holy hierarch, and beseech the Lord to grant us His peace, for we have none other God than He, by Whose name we are called.

Theotokion: How will our souls, vexed and troubled day and night, find peace, O Lady? But ease thou our trials and tribulations, for we call upon thy name.

Ode VI

Irmos: As Thou didst deliver Thy prophet from the whale, O our Savior, deliver me also from the multitude of my transgressions.

Emulating Elijah and the widow's cruse of oil, Boniface caused a little bottle of wine to last throughout a lengthy journey.

Deliver us from the fiery lake, from the torments of Tartarus and Gehenna, from the worm that sleepeth not, O saint of God.

O holy hierarch, namesake of good works, lift from us the weight of our transgressions, that we may glorify our Savior.

Theotokion: Ever encompassed by bestial temptations, O Queen, we cry out to thee, as did Jonah from the belly of the whale: Deliver us!

Kontakion of the holy hierarch, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin..."—

Following the precepts of Christ the Savior, Who multiplied loaves and fishes to

feed the hungry, in the purity of thy soul thou didst do likewise, O Boniface, wondrously feeding the poor, therein imitating thy Master, the preëternal God.

Ikos: Full of pity and compassion for the needy, Boniface showed himself worthy to be called merciful, for like Christ our God he hath compassion for all. Wherefore, mindful that we are impoverished in the virtues, let us fervently beseech him to obtain heavenly riches for us through his supplications, and to fill our starving hearts with the words of salvation; and let us cry aloud to him: O divinely wise hierarch, as of old thou didst clothe the naked and feed the hungry, so do thou nurture our souls, imitating thy Master, the preëternal God.

Ode VII

Irmos: Quenching the most destructive power of the Chaldæan furnace, the youths cried out to the Creator, Who had descended in the form of an Angel: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Rebuked by thy mother when thou gavest away all her food, O saint, thou didst fill her with awe when, thou having prayed to the Lord, she found her larder full, crying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

O the care of the merciful Boniface! For, pitying his mother's poverty, he rebuked the fox that was devouring her hens; and in joy she cried aloud: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Foul greed and the hateful furnace of the passions could not burn the heart of the holy Boniface, for within him dwelt Christ the Word, the Angel of great Counsel, the blessed and praised God of our fathers.

Theotokion: Glorifying thee, the Queen of the angels, O Mary, we cry out with fervor: Free us from the flames of the passions, that we may chant to thy Son: Blessed and praised art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Ode VIII

Irmos: Him Who was begotten of the Father before time began, and became incarnate of His Mother in latter days, do ye hymn, O priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O ye priests, cry aloud in exaltation, praising our incarnate God Who in His love for mankind hath given us so holy an intercessor! Ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O ye people, lift up your voices in gladness, knowing that the holy Boniface ever prayeth to God for us sinners! O priests, hymn ye the only-begotten Son of the heavenly Father!

Distressed by their plight, the saint meted out to the poor gold coins of his kinsman; and when rebuked by the covetous one, he received gold of the Theotokos and repaid the alms.

Theotokion: Descending into the immaculate womb of the Virgin, the only-begotten Son of the unoriginate Father took flesh of her for our sake. O ye people, exalt her supremely for all ages!

Ode IX

Irmos: Every ear trembleth to hear of the ineffable condescension of God, for the Most High willingly came down even to the flesh, becoming man through the Virgin's womb. Wherefore, we, the faithful, magnify the all-pure Theotokos.

Every ear is filled with awe when it heareth of the mighty works God hath deigned to work through thee because of thy humility and meekness, O wonderworker; and gathering together for thy memorial, we magnify thee.

Entering into the glory of thy Lord in the heavens, O Boniface, thy face shining with the splendor of divine grace, never cease to make entreaty most earnestly in behalf of all those who with faith celebrate thy holy memory.

Descending to our lowly state in His boundless condescension, the Word of God clothed Himself in flesh through the Virgin's womb. Him do thou continually magnify, O saint, as thou standest with the angels at His throne on high.

Theotokion: Standing in glory at the right hand of the Most High, thy Son and Lord, O all-pure Theotokos, thou dost worship Him incarnate, Who took flesh of thee that He might save man. Wherefore, we all magnify thee, the Virgin Mother of God.

Exapostilarion of the holy hierarch: Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women..."—

Hearken, ye Christians, to the sound of rejoicing! The angels sing forth in jubilation, for the soul of Boniface, the holy hierarch of their Lord and King, hath ascended to heaven and with them joineth chorus, glorifying the Trinity, the Author of all creation.

Theotokion—

Divinely wise virgins, standing round about thee like queens by birth, O Mary Theotokos, are brought as brides before thy Son, the King of all, O all-pure one. Him do thou entreat in our behalf, O Virgin Mother and Maiden.

Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon of the holy hierarch, in Tone II—

Be glad, ye who love the Lord Jesus! Rejoice, O holy hierarchs! Lift up your voices, O ye righteous! Hold festival, ye venerable! And leap up in spirit, O great Gregory, beholding the divine exaltation of the lowly Boniface of whose life thou didst write, for he is wondrous in holiness and with great boldness entreateth the King of kings!

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree..."—

Enduring many pangs at the crucifixion of thy Son and God, O all-pure one, thou didst groan, weeping and exclaiming: "Woe is me, O my sweet Child! How is it that Thou dost suffer unjustly, desiring to deliver mortals born of Adam?" Wherefore, O all-pure Virgin, we beseech thee with faith: Render Him merciful unto us.

At Liturgy

Prokimenon, in Tone I—

My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

Epistle to the Corinthians §151

Brethren: The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of

tongues: but all these worketh that One and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

Alleluia, in Tone II —

Stichos: Give heed, O my people, to my law; incline your ear unto the words of my mouth.

Stichos: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter dark sayings which have been from the beginning.

Gospel according to John §36

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: “I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he who is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.”

Communion Verse —

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.