

Month of April

THE 11TH DAY

Commemoration of Our Venerable Father Guthlac the Anchorite, Wonderworker of Crowland

At Vespers

On "Lord, I have cried...", these stichera, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign..."—

Thou gavest a wondrous portent, O Lord, at the hour of Thy favored one's birth; for great multitudes of the faithful witnessed Thine almighty hand stretching down from the heights of heaven and pointing to the house wherein Thy chosen one was born, betokening the God-pleasing life he was to live in this vale of tears.

Thou didst know Thy chosen one, O Lord, while he was yet in the womb, as Thou knewest Jeremiah and the Baptist. And, bespeaking his future victory, in the holy font he was given a prophetic name; for "Guthlac" signifieth "the reward of war", and he would battle the noetic foe to receive his reward from the very hand that foretold his greatness.

Though the noble Guthlac won many victories on the field of battle, yet were such earthly triumphs but dust and ashes to his soul, and he fled the allurements of the world, finding refuge in the monastery at Repton, where he set himself to acquire holy obedience and to gain true humility, exercising himself in ascetic feats until he had achieved dispassion of soul.

Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone I—

Looking to the example of the great Anthony, the luminary of the Egyptian desert, and taking the Apostle Bartholomew as his protector, Guthlac resolved to seek salvation in stillness of soul amid impassable fens devoid of human habitation; wherefore, he betook himself to an isle in the fastness of the marshes, where in solitude he arrayed himself in all the virtues as in armor, and with the sword of the Spirit waged spiritual battle against the invisible foe, vanquishing them by the grace of God which dwelt in him.

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 Thou dost suffer unjustly, O Word of God, that Thou mightest save humanity?"

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

A city set on a hill cannot be hid from the eyes of men, and even impenetrable marshes could not conceal the venerable Guthlac, for the glory of his holiness spread far and wide: wherefore, princes and nobles braved the fens to seek his counsel, and they who desired salvation besought him fervently to accept them as disciples. And so were laid the foundations of the great Monastery of Crowland, which in latter times became a mighty refuge for those who fled the beguilements of this world.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "On the third day..."—

Seeing Thee crucified, O Christ, she who gave Thee birth cried aloud: "What is this strange mystery which I behold, O my Son? How is it that Thou diest, suspended in

the flesh on the Tree, O Bestower of life?”

Troparion of the saint, in Tone V—

Dwelling from thy youth amid trackless and watery wastes, O divinely wise father, with holy zeal thou didst strive to follow the commandments of Christ. Wherefore, the ranks of angels were amazed, beholding thee, a man of flesh and blood, contending valiantly against the passions, O all-wise one, and prevailing over all the hordes of the demons. On earth thou wast a peer of the angels, and in heaven thou art ever an intercessor for mankind. O venerable Guthlac, entreat Christ God, that He save our souls.

At Matins

At “God is the Lord...”, the troparion of the saint, twice; Glory..., Now & ever...: Theotokion.

Canon of the saint, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is “The grace of Guthlac floodeth our souls”, in Tone VIII—

Ode I

Irmos: Having traversed the water as though it were dry land, and escaped the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried aloud: Let us chant unto our Deliverer and God!

Though my sins are as the sands of the sea, reject not mine intention, O my Deliverer and God, that I may chant the praises of Thy wondrous saint.

Having traversed the stormy waters of life unscathed by the billows of demonic temptations, O Guthlac, thou didst reach the calm haven of God's paradise.

Even in the midst of a watery fen thou didst find dry land whereon to live, O holy one; and thy spirit had Christ as a rock whereon to cling amidst the flood.

Theotokion: Glory ineffable is thy due, O Virgin Theotokos, for by thy mediation we have escaped slavery to the evil one, O pure Mother of our Deliverer and God.

Ode III

Irmos: Number me among the mighty of Thy people, O Lord, girding me about with power; break Thou the bows of the adversary, and uplift the horn of my poverty.

Reckoning the wonders of Thy saint is a task beyond hope, like as numbering the stars of the sky, O Lord, for in him Thy graces were multiplied beyond number.

Accounted as mighty among the choir of Thy holy ones, girded about with Thy might, O Savior Christ, Guthlac valiantly broke the bows of the demonic adversaries.

Choirs of saints and angels welcomed the most blessed Guthlac into heaven when, having vanquished the noetic foe, his soul was borne aloft to the courts of his Lord.

Theotokion: Ever pure, all-immaculate, utterly without stain of sin or blemish of iniquity art thou, O Mother of the Most High; wherefore, we uplift our voices to thee in praise.

Sessional hymn, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: “Thy tomb, O Savior...”—

Forsaking all worldly temptations, thou madest thine abode in the wilderness, earnestly following Him Who called thee; and thou didst lay waste to thy body in labors and fasting. Wherefore, Christ made thee a sure guide to His kingdom, O blessed Guthlac

Glory..., Now & ever...: Theotokion—

O pure Virgin Theotokos, Bride of God, only intercessor and protection of the

faithful: From misfortunes, tribulations and grievous circumstances deliver all who set their hope on thee, O Maiden, and save our souls by thy divine supplications.

Stavrotheotokion—

The unblemished Ewe-lamb, seeing her Lamb and Shepherd hanging dead upon the Tree, exclaimed, weeping and crying out maternally: “How can I bear Thine ineffable condescension and voluntary suffering, O my Son, mine all-good God?”

Ode IV

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine all-pure advent, O Christ, the Prophet Habbakuk cried out to Thee with trembling: I heard report of Thee, and I was afraid; I understood Thy works, and was filled with awe, O Lord!

O Christ our Lord, we have heard report of Thy holy one, and are filled with trembling, for his mighty feats of asceticism fill even the angels with awe; wherefore, have pity on us through his intercessions.

Foreknowing the future greatness of Guthlac, His faithful servant, the Most High extended His almighty hand, shining with radiance, from the heights of heaven, indicating the place where His favored one was born.

Giving up passing honors and military glory, the wondrous Guthlac forsook the world and all its pomp and fleeting fame, and withdrew to a monastery, there to strive for the virtues of chastity and obedience.

Theotokion: Unto thee do we ever turn in time of affliction, O Maiden, Bride of God, and when tribulations and vexations befall us it is to thee that we lift up our voices, and, in supplication, beseech thine aid.

Ode V

Irmos: Out of the night of ignorance the day of divine knowledge dawneth in the light of Thy countenance, O Christ. May Thy praise shine forth in our hearts like the light of the morn.

The fens hid thine ascetic struggles from the eyes of the profane, O venerable father, but the angels, beholding them, were filled with awe, for they shone as with the light of morn.

Hidden amid the brackish wastes, where heron and eel abound, thou didst battle against demonic hordes, which besieged thee without pity, as they had the venerable Anthony of old.

Let us never cease to bless the blessed Guthlac who, true to his name, hath received a truly heavenly reward for his never-ending warfare against Satan and his vile minions.

Theotokion: All created beings—the bodiless denizens of heaven and the creatures of earth—exult in thee, O all-immaculate Theotokos; for in thee hath creation been restored to its pristine purity.

Ode VI

Irmos: As Thou didst deliver the prophet from the uttermost abyss, O Christ God, in that Thou lovest mankind deliver me from my sins, and direct my life, I beseech Thee.

Come, let us now praise our God, for at His divine direction waters burst forth in the wilderness, to conceal the great feats of His holy one from the eyes of the sinful.

Falling ever into the abyss of despondency, we cry out in despair, O Thou Who lovest mankind: Through the prayers of the holy Guthlac, deliver us from our many sins!

Lead up our life from corruption, O venerable one, and, extending unto us thy

mighty helping hand, raise us up from the uttermost abyss of our manifold iniquities.

Theotokion: On thee alone, after God, do we set out hope O Virgin Maiden; in thee alone do we place our trust, for by thy birthgiving thou deliverest us from the curse of our forebears.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII—

Thou didst shine forth over the fens like a star of great radiance, O blessed one, having made thine abode amid impassable wastes; for, taking thy yoke upon thy shoulders, by ascetic feats and spiritual toil thou didst put down the uprisings of the flesh, and having reached perfection of soul didst therein attain true love for God and neighbor. Wherefore, we cry out to thee: By thine entreaties turn thy people to their ancient piety, O wise one, that all the faithful may cry to thee: Rejoice, O venerable father Guthlac!

Ikos: What words suffice to praise thy struggles and warfare against the demons, O venerable one? What tongue of men or angels can describe the wonders wrought by the Almighty through thee, His servant? For having acquired heavenly knowledge through humility of mind, by grace thou didst ascend in mind and soul from glory to glory. And though thou wast a man by nature, yet wast thou shown to be a citizen of the Jerusalem on high; for thou didst live in the flesh on earth, yet thy sojourn was angelic; and though frail of body thou wast a tower, unshaken by the passions. Wherefore, all of us, the faithful, praise and magnify thee with faith, crying out: Rejoice, O venerable father Guthlac!

Ode VII

Irmos: O Lord, make us imitators of Thy three children, opposing sin and trampling the fire of the passions underfoot, and chanting: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Over all the passions of mind and flesh didst thou gain the mastery by ascetic toil, O venerable Guthlac, crying out to thy Master: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Disciples sought thee out, even in thy watery refuge, O saint of God, and besought thee to teach them to chant as is meet: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Even though thou didst hide thyself in trackless wastes, thy light could not be hid as thou didst chant unceasingly to thy Lord: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Thou art the hope of the hopeless, O Lady, who hast trampled the head of the lying serpent underfoot, crying out to thy Son: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Ode VIII

Irmos: The Lord Who was glorified on the holy mountain, and by the fire in the bush revealed to Moses the mystery of the Ever-virgin, hymn ye and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

High praise becometh Repton, for there did Guthlac submit to monastic discipline, and thence was he inspired to seek solitude, therein to struggle against the tempting of the demons

Odorous marshes surrounded the Isle of Crowland, but by enduring their stench the venerable Guthlac verily attained unto the sweet fragrance of the divine garden of paradise

Understanding that his life was at an end, Guthlac sent for his sister, the holy Pega, that she might bury him, and, receiving the Holy Mysteries, gave up his pure soul to his Redeemer.

Triadicon: Reverence and worship do we offer unto the All-holy Trinity, the indivisible Godhead, Who reigneth over all, of Whom we chant: Hymn ye and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: Save me by thy mediation, O Mistress, who art glorified by all on earth and in the heavenly spheres, who exult in thy Son, chanting: Hymn ye and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Ode IX

Irmos: With gladness we all cry out to the Virgin: Rejoice, O Mary, Bride of God who art full of grace! With oneness of mind we, the faithful, magnify thee as the Mother of God!

O the many miracles wrought by the child of grace in the Isle of Crowland! Him do we, the faithful, unceasingly magnify with joy as the favored one of the Most High.

Unto thee was sent a radiant angel, O blessed one, who imparted to thee the great gift of prophecy, so that thou knewest events of the future as though there were present.

Like Adam, the first-created man, thou didst receive from God dominion over wild beasts and the fowl of the air, and even inanimate things obeyed thy will, O holy Guthlac!

Theotokion: Striving by our own poor efforts to shake off the bitter toils of sin, we fail utterly; but when we cry out for aid to the Virgin Mary we are delivered from bondage!

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "Heaven with stars..."—

In token of the resurrection of the Savior, the holy one lay long in the grave, yet was untouched by decay; and it became a fount of miracles for all who had recourse to it with faith.

Theotokion—

With thy mighty protection, O pure one, preserve all thy servants unharmed by the assaults of the enemy; for thee alone have we acquired as a refuge amid our necessities.

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

Throughout the darkness of the passing centuries the deifying light of God shone forth in Crowland, issuing forth from the sacred relics of Guthlac, His servant, guiding the lost to the peaceful dwelling-place of grace. And now, though the holy remains have long since been taken from us by the ungodly, the memory of the saint is radiant still, illumining the souls of the faithful and filling them with the warmth of the Spirit which abode in him.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel. : "Thy martyrs..."—

"O my Child, I cannot bear to see Thee in repose upon the Tree, Who grantest vigilance unto all, that Thou mayest impart divine and saving vigilance to him who of old fell into the sleep of destruction because of the fruit of disobedience!" cried the weeping Virgin, whom we magnify.

At Liturgy

Prokimenon, in Tone VII—

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

Epistle to the Galatians, § 213

(Gal. 5: 22-6:2)

Brethren: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Alleluia, in Tone VI—

Stichos: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Stichos: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

Gospel according to Luke, § 24

(Lk. 6: 17-23)

At that time, Jesus stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him: for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all. And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said: "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."

Communion verse—

In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.