

Month of December
THE 31ST DAY
AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Martina of Rome

N.B.: *TO AVOID IT FALLING ON THE LEAVE-TAKING OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST, THE FEAST OF THE MARTYR MARTINA SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO SOME OTHER DAY WITHIN THE AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY (THOUGH TO DO SO THE HYMNS OF ONE OR MORE SAINTS MUST ALSO BE TRANSFERRED), OR TO ANOTHER DAY DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE SUPERIOR OR THE ECCLESIAARCH. THE SERVICE AS SET FORTH BELOW PRESUPPOSES THAT THE FEAST OF THE MARTYR WILL BE CELEBRATED ON EITHER DECEMBER 27TH, 28TH, 29TH OR 30TH.*

AMONG THE ROMAN, THE FEAST OF THIS MARTYR IS ASSIGNED TO THE 30TH OF JANUARY, THOUGH IT WAS PREVIOUSLY CELEBRATED BY THEM ON THE 20TH OF THAT MONTH. HOWEVER, AMONG THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS OF BYZANTINE ITALY (MAGNA GRÆCA), HER FEAST IS ASSIGNED (IN THE SYNAXARIA) TO THE 31ST OF DECEMBER.

At Vespers

On “Lord, I have cried...”, 6 stichera: 3 of the feast, from the Menaion; and 3 of the martyr, in Tone VI: Spec. Mel.: “Having set aside...”—

With gladness thou didst bear witness before the tribunal of the ungodly, O martyr Martina, proclaiming the truth of Christ, and denouncing the delusion of idolatry; wherefore, thou didst manfully withstand cruel tortures; and putting the tyrant to shame, didst betroth thyself to Christ, standing before Whom, ever pray for those who celebrate thy memory with faith.

Exult now, O blessed martyr, who didst offer thy sufferings unto Him Who died for us upon the Cross, taking away the sins of the world! Rejoice, O wellspring of grace, pouring forth wondrous healings upon the afflicted! Be glad in the Lord, O thou who hast inherited a dwelling-place with the angels of heaven. Beseech Christ, O Martina, that He grant us great mercy.

Beholding Martina suffering in the flesh for the sake of the one true God, the hosts of heaven cried aloud: “Behold, even maidens of gentle birth and tender years now glorify the Lord on earth!” And they who witnessed her sufferings were utterly amazed, crying: “O the wonder, that a child doth manfully endure the pangs of martyrdom, boldly confessing the God of the Christians!”

Glory...: Idiomelon of the martyr, in Tone III—

Long lay the sacred temple of the holy Martina in ruins, the haunt of bats and owls; but in the depths of its hidden crypt her sacred body lay forgotten by men, yet ever known to God. But when the broken remains of her church were cleared away, the martyr's precious relics shone forth with grace unabated by the passage of time, and they perform wondrous healings still, in witness to the favor that the saint hath won from Christ. Wherefore, the faithful honor her with faith and love unfeigned.

Now & ever...: Idiomelon of the feast, from the Menaion.

Aposticha stichera of the feast, from the Menaion; and Glory...: Idiomelon of the saint, in Tone VIII—

Spurning thy great wealth, rich estates and high station, O Martina, thou didst love God above all, and cleaving unto Him alone, thou didst reject all earthly suitors; wherefore, thou didst liken thyself the merchant of the Gospel, exchanging all thy substance for Christ, the Jewel of great price, Whom do thou ever beseech, that He take pity and save our souls.

Now & ever...:Idiomelon of the feast, from the Menaion.

Troparion of the saint, in Tone IV—

With most fitting hymnody let us honor the holy martyr Martina; for she destroyed the snares of the enemy, and was delivered therefrom like a sweet-voiced lark by her faith and witness, and the intercession of the angels.

Now & ever...:Troparion of the feast, from the Menaion.

At Matins

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

After the kathismata of the Psalter, the sessional hymns of the feast, from the Menaion.

Canon of the feast, with 8 troparia, including the irmos; and that of the saint, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is “I hymn Martina, the bride of Christ”, the composition of Bartholomew the Younger, 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!

As thou dwellest now with the choirs of angels, by thine immortal Bridegroom, enlighten us who celebrate thy holy memory with faith, O bride of Christ.

O Martina who art full of wisdom, the streams of thy most pure blood quenched the burning of error; wherefore, thou dost rejoice, dwelling on high.

Invested with the power of the Creator, O martyr of Christ, thou didst break asunder the idol of Apollo, the namesake of perdition, and didst put to shame the demon that dwelt therein.

Theotokion: Once, on the mountain, Moses beheld the bush that burned yet was not consumed, O Virgin. Wherefore, I beseech thee: By thine entreaties deliver me from the unquenchable fire.

Ode III

Irmos: O Lord, Fashioner of the vault of heaven and Creator of the Church: establish me in Thy love, O summit of desire, confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind.

O glorious martyr of Christ, those who at the impious command dared to smite thee were themselves beaten by the angels of the Lord at the command of God; and, stricken with awe, they forsook their error and united themselves to Christ.

Beholding his god shattered, O martyr of Christ, the tyrant who worshiped idols of stone commanded that thy body be cut in pieces; but, exuding milk, it poureth forth divers miracles.

To attain divine glory, O Lord, the twice venerable martyr, condemned to a cruel death on Holy Wednesday, freely suffered all manner of tortures, and, uplifted upon crosses, was pierced by a sword.

Theotokion: The divine Word of the Father became incarnate in thy womb, O most pure one, and was born of thee. Entreat Him, in that He is good, that He deliver from mindless acts us who fervently glorify thee.

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

Clad in the virtues as in fair raiment, thy martyr's robe dyed in thy blood, O martyred virgin, thou didst receive from thy Bridegroom a never-fading wreath as a token of victory for all thou didst suffer for His sake; and thou dost shine forth upon the faithful wonders of healing.

Ikos: Thy heart afire from childhood with ardent love for Christ, thou didst hasten to thy Savior like a deer athirst for springs of living water, O honored maiden; and having preserved thy virginity incorrupt amid thy sufferings, thou didst arrive, clad in raiment befitting a wedding feast, at the bridal chamber of thy Lord and Master, bearing thy lamp, the wreath of triumph upon thy brow as a token of victory for all thou didst suffer for His sake, O Martina; and thou dost shine forth

upon the faithful wonders of healing.

Sessional hymn of the martyr, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before..."—

Clothed in a robe dyed in thine own blood, O martyr, enrolled in the foremost ranks of the choirs of the angels, thou standest before Christ thy Lord. Beseech Him without ceasing in behalf of all of us who celebrate thy holy memory with love, that we may be delivered from many perils and misfortunes.

Or this sessional hymn, in Tone IV : Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled..."—

From childhood thou didst imbue thy soul with godly virtues, betrothing thyself to thy Redeemer, O glorious Martina; and, preserving thy purity, thou didst adorn thy sufferings with rays of grace; wherefore, thou didst revile the ungodliness of idolatry, bravely enduring divers torments, for which we celebrate thine all-holy memory with faith, O martyr of Christ.

Glory..., Now & ever...: Sessional hymn of the feast (see in Menaion).

Ode IV

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy dispensation; I have understood Thy works, and have glorified Thy divinity.

Enlivened by the divine power of the Almighty, O glorious martyr, thou didst break the false idols asunder and didst fell all the delusion of error.

Though like a pitiful sparrow, O martyr, yet didst thou with mighty power overthrow the proud tyrant, who boasted that he would destroy the earth and the sea.

The ungodly Alexander raged against thee, O martyr, and tortured thee cruelly; and binding thee to a stake, he had thee cut in pieces with many blades.

Theotokion: I beseech thee, O Mother of God, who gavest birth unto Christ, the Bestower of light and Savior of all, to enlighten me, who am benighted by many sins.

Ode V

Irmos: Enlighten us with Thy commandments, O Lord, and with Thine upraised arm grant us Thy peace, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Loving Christ, the Sun Who shone forth from the Virgin, thou, O holy martyr, didst dispel the gloomy darkness of false idols.

The mindless ones enclosed thee in a temple of the idols, O venerable one; but, possessed of an upright spirit, thou didst break to pieces the idol in that place.

While thou wast imprisoned, at the behest of God the angels who

stood round about the holy throne, O venerable one, looked upon the executioners with dismay.

Theotokion: As Mother of the Lord of all creation, O Virgin, grant me the power to gain the mastery over my carnal passions, lest I become a slave thereto.

Ode VI

Irmos: The abyss of my sins and the tempest of my transgressions discomfit me and thrust me down into the depths of violent despondency; but stretch forth Thy mighty arm unto me, as Thou didst to Peter, and save me, O my Guide.

The ungodly ones cast thee to a lion, O martyr, to slay thee who didst yearn for life everlasting; but the God Who once tamed lions in the pit, now also rendereth one gentle for thee.

To attain Thine ineffable glory, O Christ, the martyr steadfastly endured many torments: bound to four staves, she was beaten without mercy, while she cried aloud: O Thou Who lovest mankind, grant me strength.

O Martina, holy martyr of Christ, the ungodly son of the wicked tyrant Satan, attributing to magic the wonders wrought by thee, had the plaits of hair shorn from thy most holy head.

Theotokion: O Virgin Queen, thou gavest birth to the Word of God Who before the ages was bodiless, but in thee became incarnate. I pray thee: Enlighten me who am benighted by many carnal passions.

Kontakion & ikos of the Nativity of Christ.

Ode VII

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the youths who had come forth from Judæa trod down the flame of the furnace with their faith in the Trinity, chanting: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Full of exceeding venomous anger, the ungodly one sought to have thee flogged with scourges of twelve weighted thongs, O glorious martyr, but God put him to shame, for the angels of the Lord punished the executioners right mightily.

The God of our fathers, Who delivered the three children from the furnace, hath now caused dew to descend upon thee when wast cast into a fiery furnace, while He rightly burned up the tormentors who had unjustly cast thee into it.

Truly beautiful art thou, O martyr; and clad in a purple robe dyed in thine own blood, thou standest in full splendor beside thy Bridegroom, chanting gloriously: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: O most holy Theotokos, thou gavest birth unto God, yet didst remain a virgin after giving birth, as thou wast before birthing. Wherefore, as thou art wholly clothed in abstinence and purity, O Virgin, I have thee alone as my fervent protection.

Ode VIII

Irmos: Trampling down the fire and flame in the furnace, the divinely eloquent youths did chant: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

At thine entreaties, God sent fire down from heaven, which devoured the temple and priests of the idols as thou didst chant unto Him: O ye works, praise ye the Lord!

With the streams of thy blood, O martyr, thou didst extinguish the whole pyre of iniquity, as thou didst chant unto the Lord: O ye works, bless ye the Lord!

Like a rabid dog the ungodly persecutor tore at his own flesh after thy death, O Martina, and thus rendered up his soul utterly.

Theotokion: O Virgin Mother of God, move thy Son to pity for me on the terrible day [of judgment], for I now chant unto Him: O ye works, bless ye the Lord!

Ode IX

Irmos: Thou didst transcend the laws of nature, conceiving the Creator and Lord, and didst become a portal of salvation for the world. Wherefore, we magnify thee unceasingly, O Theotokos.

O all-praised Martina, thy tormentors, who cut off thy glorious head, which exudeth the sweet fragrance of nard, paid for their crime with a swift death at the command of thy divine Bridegroom.

Christ hath now brought thee into the pure bridal chamber of heaven, O glorious martyr, where, together with the five wise virgins thou exultest with joy. Pray thou for all of us who chant hymns of praise to thee.

Through the intercessions of Thy holy martyr, O Word and consubstantial Son of God, Who art full of goodness, grant that we, who with faith worship Thy divine power, may be granted forgiveness of our sins.

Theotokion: In giving birth to the Lord of all the world, O Virgin Theotokos, thou didst transcend the laws of nature, and becamest the portal of salvation for all; wherefore, without ceasing we magnify thee with hymns.

Exapostilarion of the martyr: Spec. Mel.: “Hearken, ye women...”—

Like a rose of goodly beauty, from a pious root thou didst spring

forth, as red as the blood thou didst shed amid the pangs of thy contest, O Martina. And, perfuming the Church with sweet fragrance, drive the stench of sin from those who celebrate thy memory with love.

Glory..., Now & ever...: Exapostilarion of the feast—

Aposticha sitchera of the feast, from the Menaion; and Glory...: Idiomelon of the martyr, in Tone V—

When sentence of death was pronounced upon thee, O blessed martyr Martina, thou didst rejoice exceedingly; and slain in accordance with the most iniquitous edict of the ungodly emperor, thou didst gladly offer thyself to God as a fitting sacrifice. Wherefore, joining chorus with the wise virgins on high, thou art filled to repletion with the supernal radiance of Christ the King of all.

Now & ever...: Idiomelon of the feast, from the Menaion.

At Liturgy

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from the appointed ode of the canon of the feast, and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the martyr.

Prokimenon of the feast, and that of the martyr, in Tone IV—

Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Epistle to the Galatians, §208

Brethren: Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Alleluia of the feast, and that of the martyr, in Tone I—

Stichos: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Gospel according to Luke, §33

At that time: one of the Pharisees desired Jesus that He would eat with him. And He went down into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping,

and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying: "This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is who toucheth Him; for she is a sinner." And Jesus answering said unto him: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." And he said: "Master, say on." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" Simon answered and said: "I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most." And He said unto him: "Thou hast rightly judged." And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." And He said unto her: "Thy sins are forgiven." And they who sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves: "Who is this Who forgiveth sins also?" And He said to the woman: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Communion Verse—

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

The canon and the first sessional hymn of this service were composed by the venerable Bartholomew the Younger (+ ca. 1050). All other hymns to the martyr have been composed by the reader Isaac Lambertsen.