

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS
MARTYRS MENODORA, METRODORA AND NYMPHODORA

September 10

The Holy Virgins Menodora, Nymphodora, and Metrodora (305-311), were sisters from Bithynia (Asia Minor). Distinguished for their special piety, they wanted to preserve their virginity and avoid worldly associations. They chose a solitary place for themselves in the wilderness and spent their lives in deeds of fasting and prayer. Reports of the holy life of the virgins soon spread, since healings of the sick began to occur through their prayers. The Bithynia region was governed at that time by a man named Frontonus, who ordered that the sisters be arrested and brought before him. At first he tried to persuade them to renounce Christ, promising great honors and rewards. But the holy sisters steadfastly confessed their faith before him, rejecting all his suggestions. They told him that they did not value the temporal things of this world, and that they were prepared to die for their Heavenly Bridegroom, for death would be their gateway to eternal life. Flying into a rage, the governor took out his wrath on St Menodora, the eldest sister. She was stripped of her clothes and beaten by four men, while a herald urged her to offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint bravely endured the torments and cried out, "Sacrifice? Can't you see that I am offering myself as a sacrifice to my God?" Then they renewed their torments with even greater severity. Then the martyr cried out, " Lord Jesus Christ, joy of my heart, my hope, receive my soul in peace." With these words she gave up her soul to God, and went to her Heavenly Bridegroom. Four days later, they brought the two younger sisters Metrodora and Nymphodora to the court. They showed them the battered body of their older sister to frighten them. The virgins wept over her, but remained steadfast. Then St Metrodora was tortured. She died, crying out to her beloved Lord Jesus Christ with her last breath. Then they turned to the third sister, Nymphodora. Before her lay the bruised bodies of her sisters. Frontonus hoped that this sight would intimidate the young virgin. Pretending that he was charmed by her youth and beauty, he urged her to worship the pagan gods, promising great rewards and honors. St Nymphodora scoffed at his words, and shared the fate of her older sisters. She was tortured and beaten to death with iron rods. The bodies of the holy martyrs were to be burned in a fire, but a heavy rain extinguished the blazing fire, and lightning struck down Frontonus and his servant. Christians took up the bodies of the holy sisters and reverently buried them at the so-called Warm Springs at Pythias (Bithynia). Part of the relics of the holy martyrs are preserved on Mt. Athos in the Protection cathedral of the St Panteleimon Russian monastery, and the hand of St Metrodora is on the Holy Mountain in the monastery of the Pantocrator.

GREAT VESPERS

***LORD I CALL:** Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 5 (spiral bound Vespers book), followed by three for the feast and three for the martyrs*

Feast, tone 8:

Most glorious wonder!

Today the unwedded Mother of God
springs forth from a childless and barren womb,
as a stem bearing a flower,
coming from the righteous Joachim and Anna.
Therefore the councils of the Prophets and the whole assembly of
the Patriarchs,//
rejoice at her nativity!

Today David rejoices and Jesse dances!

Levi is magnified and the righteous Joachim leaps in spirit!

The barrenness of Anna is openly loosed by your birth, O pure
Mary.

The company of Angels and all mortals//
call your divine womb blessed, O unwedded One.

Rejoice, union of earth with heaven!

Rejoice, temple of the Lord!

Rejoice, unwedded Mother!

You have most gloriously loosed Anna's barrenness
and by your birth have given remission of sins to mortals.

Rejoice, all-immaculate one!

Rejoice, divine temple!//

Rejoice, tabernacle in which our Creator and Lord made His
dwelling place!

Martyrs, tone 4:

You arrayed yourselves in garments dyed purple with your own
blood.

In your beauty, O virgin maidens and martyrs,
you united yourselves spiritually to Christ,

our all-beautiful God Who preserves your virginity undefiled
in the eternal bridal chamber of incorruption;
in the mansions of Heaven,//
in a chamber not made by hands.

In imperfect bodies, yet with a perfect mind,
by the power of the Spirit, O glorious ones,
you conquered the ancient serpent, the source of evil,
and showed his power to be impotent.
Therefore you have received crowns of victory,
O Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora,//
champions of the Trinity!

Your limbs were twisted and thrown on the fire,
you were torn with iron hooks,
you were hanged upon a tree and beheaded by the sword.
You did not deny Christ, O all-praised athletes.
Therefore you have received the crown of victory,
O Menodora, Metrodora and Nymphodora,//
champions of the Trinity!

GLORY, feast, tone 2:

What is this sound of feasting we hear?
Joachim and Anna mystically celebrate, saying:
“Rejoice with us today, O Adam and Eve;
for if by your transgression you closed the gate of Paradise to those
of old,
we have now been given a glorious fruit,//
Mary, the child of God, who opens its entrance to us all!”

***NOW AND EVER, the Dogmatikon in tone 5 (spiral
bound Vespers book)***

***APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 5 (spiral
bound Vespers book)***

GLORY...NOW AND EVER... Feast, tone 2:

She who was foreordained Queen of all
and the habitation of God,
has come forth today from the barren womb of joyful Anna.

She is the divine sanctuary of the eternal Essence;
shameless hell has been trampled down through her,
and Eve with all her line is established secure in life.
It is fitting and right that we should cry aloud to her://
“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your
womb!”

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit,
Born for our salvation from the Virgin;
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
To endure death,
And to raise the dead
By His glorious Resurrection.

Martyrs, tone 1

Let all who rejoice at their triumph honor those three virgin martyrs,
Who are united to God as sisters
And who pour forth fair streams of grace:
Menodora, Metrodora, and Nymphodora,
Who were in all things courageous;
They ever pray to the Trinity for us.

Feast, tone 4

Your Nativity, O Virgin,
Has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!
The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,
Has shone from you, O Theotokos!
By annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.//
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

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