

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2023
AFTERFEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS
Martyr Sophia and her three daughters:
Faith, Hope and Love

September 17

The Holy Martyrs Vera, Nada and Lubov (Faith, Hope and Love), and their mother Sophia.

They lived and suffered in Rome in the time of the Emperor Hadrian. The wise Sophia (as her name - Sophia - wisdom, indicates) was left a widow and, as a Christian, steeped herself and her daughters in the Christian faith. At the time that Hadrian's persecuting hand stretched out over the virtuous house of Sophia, Vera was twelve, Nada ten and Lubov nine. The four of them were brought before the Emperor, with their arms entwined 'like a woven wreath', humbly but firmly confessing their faith in Christ the Lord and refusing to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. At the moment of their passion, the mother urged her valiant daughters to endure to the end: 'Your heavenly Lover, Jesus Christ, is eternal health, inexpressible beauty and life eternal. When your bodies are slain by torture, He will clothe you in incorruption and the wounds on your bodies will shine in heaven like the stars.' The torturers inflicted harsh torture on Vera, Nada and Lubov one by one. They beat them, stabbed them and threw them into fire and boiling pitch, and finally beheaded them one after the other. Sophia took the dead bodies of her daughters out of the town and buried them, and stayed by their grave in prayer for three days and nights, then gave her soul to God, hastening to the heavenly company where the blessed souls of her daughters awaited her.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 6 (spiral bound Vespers book), followed by three for the Feast and three for the Martyrs

Feast, tone 1:

The Cross is exalted;
the demons are driven away.
The thief opens the gates of Paradise;
death is slain and openly despised, as Christ is magnified.
Therefore, rejoice, all those born on earth, //
for the curse has been lifted.

Come, all who love God,
beholding the exaltation of the precious Cross,
let us magnify it together,
giving glory to the one Deliverer and God as we cry aloud:
"As You were crucified on the wood of the Cross, //
do not turn from us who pray to You!"

In days of old, Moses changed bitterness into sweetness.
He delivered Israel, prophetically inscribing the image of the Cross.
As we, the faithful, ever make the sign of the Cross mystically in
our hearts, //
we are saved by its might.

Martyrs, tone 4:

The virgin maidens, bound to one another by the law of nature,
manifestly made stronger by love of the Creator,
loosed the bonds of deception with faith!
They manfully trampled the Enemy
and were radiantly adorned with fair crowns of victory. //
Now they rejoice, dwelling in the heavenly bridal chamber.

The all-praised Faith and glorious Love
together with divinely wise Hope,
revealed themselves to be namesakes of the most splendid virtues!
As athletes, they overthrew the evil one
who had deceived our First Mother with guile.
Now they are deified and dwell in Paradise //
where they fervently pray for us all.

Faith, Hope and Love, the daughters of Sophia,
sought with faith the beauty of the Bridegroom.
They united themselves to Him, adorning themselves with divine
wounds;
they despised the fire, manifold tortures and a shameful death.//
Through their prayers, O Lord, free us from evils!

GLORY... feast, tone 1:

The Tree of true life was planted in the place of the skull,
and upon it, eternal King, You have worked salvation in the midst
of the earth.

Exalted today, it sanctifies the ends of the world.

Angels in heaven greatly rejoice,

and men upon earth make glad,

crying aloud with David and saying:

“Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His footstool,//

for He is holy and grants the world great mercy!”

***NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 6 (spiral
bound Vespers book)***

***APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 6 (spiral
bound Vespers book)***

GLORY...NOW AND EVER...for the Feast, tone 1:

Prefiguring Your Cross, O Christ,

the Patriarch Jacob, when blessing his descendants,

laid his hands crosswise upon their heads.

And today, O Savior, as we exalt Your Cross, we cry:

“Give victory to the Orthodox Christians, as You did to

Constantine!”

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb;

the guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by Thy grave,

seeking Thy most pure Body.

Thou didst capture hell,

not being tempted by it.

Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.

O Lord who didst rise from the dead: glory to Thee.

Martyrs, tone 5

You blossomed in the courts of the Lord

as a fruitful olive tree,

holy martyr Sophia;

In your contest you offered to Christ the sweet fruit of your womb,

your daughters Faith, Hope, and Love.

Together with them intercede for us all.

Feast, tone 1

O Lord, save Your people,

And bless Your heritage.

Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians

Over their adversaries;

And by virtue of Your Cross,

Preserve Your habitation.

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