

21ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (6th of Luke) —Tone 4

Martyr Anastasia the Roman. Ven. Abramius the Recluse.

Vespers

At "Lord, I Call", sing the stichera verses (4) of the Resurrection in Tone 4.

Then the following stichera (3) for Martyr Anastasia in Tone 4
Thou didst bear the torturing of thy body with patience, O greatly-suffering Anastasia. Thou wast maimed and burned before thy unjust death, receiving the crown of victory. Now thou dost dwell in the heavenly bridal-chambers.

Thou art manifested to those who celebrate thy memory as a treasure of virginity, an enclosed paradise, a holy offering, and a sacred wall. Thou art a living icon, a bride of Christ, a model for those who lead the ascetic life, the adornment of martyrs and a fountain springing with waters of healing, O all-praised Anastasia.

Come, let us all zealously praise in songs the adornment of martyrs, the flowering of virgins and greatest jewel of monastics: the greatly-suffering Anastasia, the boast of Rome, a most pleasing and undefiled sacrifice, an unshakable foundation of piety, for she has struggled most gloriously in the contest!

Then these stichera (3) for Venerable Abramius in Tone 8

O godly-minded Father Abramius, being an imitator of Abraham in the spirit, thou didst become an exile in thy native land. Denying thyself the desires of the flesh, and shutting thy body within a tiny hut, thou didst make thy mind take wing to Heaven, whose citizenship thou didst clearly gain.

O venerable Father Abramius, bearing his name, thou didst possess a soul like Abraham's; strengthened by divine faith thou didst endure temptations; through love thou wast united to God; adorned with the brilliance of virtues thou didst inherit the Promised Land. Therefore we joyfully celebrate thy memory.

O venerable Father Abramius, thou didst draw up and bring into the saving presence of God the woman who had been seduced by the deceptions of the serpent, and had slipped into the pit of destruction. All were astounded at her repentance, and devoutly glorified the Lord, Who is supremely good.

After “Glory to the Father ... now and ever...” sing the Dogmatic in Tone 4

The Prophet David was Father to God through you, O Virgin. He foretold in songs the One Who worked wonders in you: “At Your right hand stands the Queen,” Your Mother, the mediatrix of life. For wishing to renew His fallen image made corrupt in passion, God, without human father, was freely born of her, lifted the lost sheep to His shoulders, and brought it to His Father, joining it to the heavenly pow’rs.// Christ, Who has great and rich mercy, has saved the world, O Theotokos.

At the Aposticha, sing the verses of the Resurrection in Tone 4.

After “Glory to the Father ... now and ever...” sing the Resurrectional Theotokion, Tone 4

Look on the entreaties of your servants, O Blameless One! Stop all of the terrible attacks against us, freeing us from ev’ry affliction, for we have only you as our sure and firm anchor! Do not let us be put to shame, O Lady, for we call on you for our intercession! Hasten to pray for those who call in faith: “Rejoice, O Lady, Help of all:// the Joy, Shelter and Salvation of our souls!”

Resurrectional Troparion, Tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!”

Troparion, Tone 4 (Martyr Anastasia)

Your lamb Anastasia calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice: “I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure suffering. In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You, and I died so that I might live with You. Accept me as a pure sacrifice, for I

have offered myself in love!"// Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful!

Troparion, Tone 8 (Venerable Abramius)

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Father, for you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore your spirit, venerable Abramius, rejoices with the Angels.

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos



The Martyr Anastasia the Roman lost her parents in infancy, and was then taken to be reared by the abbess of a women’s monastery, named Sophia. She raised Anastasia in fervent faith, in the fear of God and obedience.

The persecution against Christians by the emperor Decius (249-251) began at that time. The city administrator, Probus, on the orders of the emperor commanded that Anastasia be brought to him. Blessed by her abbess to suffer for Christ, the young martyr Anastasia humbly came out to meet the armed soldiers. Seeing her youth and beauty, Probus first attempted flattery to make her deny Christ.

“Why waste your youth, deprived of pleasure? What is there to gain by enduring tortures and death for the Crucified? Worship our gods, marry a handsome husband, and live in glory and honor.”

The saint steadfastly replied, “My spouse, my riches, my life and my happiness are my Lord Jesus Christ, and you will not turn me away from Him by your deceit!”

Probus subjected Anastasia to fierce tortures. The holy martyr bravely endured them, glorifying and praising the Lord. In anger the torturers cut out her tongue.

The people, seeing the inhuman and disgusting treatment of the saint, became indignant, and the ruler was compelled to end the

tortures by beheading the martyr. In this manner, Saint Anastasia received the crown of martyrdom.

The body of the saint was thrown out beyond the city to be eaten by wild animals, but the Lord did not permit her holy relics to be dishonored. At the command of a holy angel, Abbess Sophia went to find Saint Anastasia's mutilated body. With the help of two Christians, she buried it in the earth.



Saint Abramius the Hermit and Blessed Maria, his niece of Mesopotamia, lived the ascetic life in the village of Chidan, near the city of Edessa. They were contemporaries and fellow countrymen of Saint Ephraim the Syrian (January 28), who afterwards wrote about their life.

Saint Abramius began his difficult exploit of the solitary life in the prime of youth. He left his parents' home and settled in a desolate wilderness place, far from worldly enticements, and he spent his days in unceasing prayer. After the death of his parents, the saint refused his inheritance and requested his relatives to give it away to the poor. By his strict ascetic life, fasting, and love for mankind, Abramius attracted to him many seeking after spiritual enlightenment, prayer and blessing.

Soon his faith was put to a serious test, as he was appointed presbyter in one of the pagan villages of Mesopotamia. For three years, and sparing no efforts, the saint toiled over the enlightenment of the pagans. He tore down a pagan temple and built a church. Humbly enduring derision and even beatings from obstinate idol-worshippers, he entreated the Lord, "Look down, O Master, upon Your servant, hear my prayer. Strengthen me and set Your servants free from diabolical snares, and grant them to know You, the one true God." The zealous pastor was granted the happiness to see the culmination of his righteous efforts: the pagans came to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Saint Abramius baptized them himself.

Having fulfilled his priestly duty, Abramius again withdrew into his wilderness, where he continued to glorify God, and doing His holy will. The devil, put to shame by the deeds of Saint Abramius, tried to entrap him with proud thoughts. Once at midnight, when Saint Abramius was at prayer in his cell, suddenly a light shone and a voice was heard, "Blessed are you, Abramius, for no other man has done my will as you have!" Confuting the wiles of the enemy, the saint said: "I am a sinful man, but I trust in the help and grace of my God. I do not fear you, and your illusions do not scare me." Then he ordered the devil to depart, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Another time, the devil appeared before the saint in the form of a youth, lit a candle and began to sing Psalm 118/119, "Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." Perceiving that this also was a demonic temptation, the Elder crossed himself and asked, "If you know that the blameless are blessed, then why trouble them?"

The tempter answered, “I provoke them in order to conquer them and turn them away from every good deed.” To this the saint replied, “You gain victory over those who, like yourself, have fallen away from God. You are forced to vanish, like smoke in the wind, from before the face of those who love God.” After these words the devil vanished. Thus Saint Abramius defeated the Enemy, being strengthened by divine grace. After fifty years of ascetic life, he peacefully fell asleep in the Lord.

Saint Abramius’s niece, the Nun Maria, grew up being edified by his spiritual instruction. Her father died when she was seven, and so she was raised by her saintly uncle. But the Enemy of the race of man tried to turn her from the true path. At twenty-seven years of age she fell into sin with a man. Thoroughly ashamed, she left her cell, went to another city and began to live in a brothel. Two years later, when he learned of this, Saint Abramius clad himself in soldier’s garb, so that he should not be recognized, and he went to the city to find his niece. Pretending to be one of her “clients,” he revealed his identity once they were alone. With many tears and exhortations, he brought her to repentance and took her back to her cell.

Saint Maria returned to her cell and spent the rest of her days in prayer and tears of repentance. The Lord forgave her and even granted her the gift of healing the sick. She died five years after Saint Abramius.