



**Saint Barlaam the Martyr,  
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on November 19.**

**A**N obscure country life, which the martyr had led from his childhood in a village near Antioch, in manual labor, which he sanctified by an heroic spirit and the practice of Orthodox piety, prepared him for the crown of martyrdom. Saint Barlaam contested during the persecution under Diocletian.

Though he was a stranger to every other language but his mother-tongue, and to all learning, except the evangelical precepts, he was an overmatch for the pride and tyranny of the masters of this world. His zealous confession of Christ provoked the persecutors who detained him a long time in the dungeons of Antioch before he was brought to trial. While being rigorously confined he recalled the Psalter, “By day the Lord will command His mercy, and by night His ode shall be with me, my prayer unto the God of my life” (Ps. 41: 9 LXX).

When he was summoned to trial, the judge laughed at his rustic language and mien; but in spite of his prepossessions and rage, could not but admire exceedingly Barlaam’s greatness of soul, his virtue, and his meek constancy which even gathered strength during his long imprisonment. He was cruelly scourged; but no sigh, no word of complaint was extorted from him. He was then hoisted on the rack, and his bones in many parts dislocated. Amidst these torments, such was the joy which was painted in his countenance, that one would have judged he had been seated at some delicious

banquet, or on a throne. The prefect threatened him with death and displayed to him swords and axes freshly stained with the blood of martyrs. Barlaam looked at them without being daunted in the least. Without words, his meek and composed countenance spoke a language which discountenanced his persecutors.

Barlaam was once again imprisoned by the judge, who, ashamed of being vanquished by an illiterate peasant, now flattered himself that he had invented a way to trick Barlaam into offering sacrifice to the demons against his will. Barlaam was placed before an altar with burning coals on it being made ready for sacrifice. His hand was forcibly held over the flames, and incense with live coals was laid upon it so that, if he were to shake the coals off his hand, he might be said to have offered sacrifice by throwing the incense into the fire upon the altar.

The saint, wary of the scandal and the very shadow of the crime, though by throwing the fire out of his hand, he could not reasonably be regarded as having meant to offer sacrifice, kept his hand steady while the coals burnt through all the way through it, and so, with the incense, dropped onto the pagan altar.

At such an example of fortitude, the taunts and scoffs of the unbelievers were turned into admiration.

The Lord, soon after this victory, called the Saint to Himself and bestowed upon him the unfading crown of martyrdom and eternal glory. [Ed. Virtual Parish]

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## VESPERS

*Selected Hymns  
from The Menaion*

*Of the Martyr. Fourth Tone. As one valiant*

**T**HOU wast stronger than hardened brass, \* more than iron in mightiness, firmer than a statue, O ven'erable Barlaam; \* for each of these yieldeth in the fire and melteth by force thereof, \* and it swiftly doth dissolve; but thy firm and unyielding hand, \* stretched out over fire, \* very wondrously yielded not, but overcame the burning of the live coals, \* O all-wise Martyr of Christ our God.

**A**S though thou wert a priest in truth, \* wholly standing before our God, \* thou, O blest Barlaam, rightly drewest nigh to Him \* not with the blood of another, but with thy very own, \* and with thy martyric hand \* thou didst bring incense sweet of smell \* as an offering \* not to demon's delusions, but to Christ, the Saviour, Lord, and Sovereign Master, \* the King that reigneth eternally.

**A**S the priest who doth offer up, \* and the lamb which is offered up, \* so do we address thee with joy and great delight; \* for thou wast both, O all-famed Barlaam; for thou didst present thyself, \* through the fire of bitter pains, as a spotless and undefiled \* whole-burnt sacrifice \* unto God, Whom do thou implore to save all them that reverence and honour \* thy celebrated memorial.

Glory; both now. *Theotokion*

**O**PURE Virgin most graced of God, \* as the splendid and luminous \* palace of the Master, and as the shining cloud \* of that divine light that dawned forth as the day from thy holy womb, \* do thou guide our soul and mind \* with thy light, O all-blameless Maid; \* utterly destroy \* all the stumbling blocks laid by the deceiver; and make firm our understanding \* by thine entreaties in our behalf.

## **MATINS**

*Selected Hymns  
from the Menaion*

### **THE CANON OF THE MARTYR**

*A Composition of Theophanes  
Fourth Tone. I will sing unto Thee*

**O**BARLAAM, as thou shinest all about with the bright beams of thy contest, preserve by thine intercessions us who honour thy memorial.

**L**ET the marvellous Barlaam be honoured in song, for he put out the fire of godlessness with the God-inspired fire of the true worship of God.

**T**HOU hast fought for piety's sake, O crowned Barlaam, and art now fitly honoured with a crown of glory by the right hand of the Almighty.

**T**HE Master gave thee strength against manifold torments, O all-blessed Martyr, whereby thou overcamest the wanton pride of the godless.

*Theotokion*

**O**VIRGIN, thou wast shown to be the ladder reaching to Heaven whereby the Word dwelt among us, which Jacob thy forefather foresaw in ancient times.

ODE THREE

*Of the Martyr. The bow of the mighty.*

**T**HE entire bond of thy flesh and the joints of thy limbs were sundered, but the tenor of thy soul was preserved unbroken.

**M**IGHTILY didst thou endure the violence of them that harrowed the flesh of thy sides, O all-renowned Martyr, firmly exhibiting the most vigorous endurance.

**W**HO can worthily extol with praises thy firmness and steadfastness and the undaunted disposition of thy mind, O all-blessed Barlaam?

*Theotokion*

**R**UINOUS death was checked when the enhypostatic Life appeared from thy womb in the flesh unto men, O all-pure Bride of God.

*Heirmos*

**T**HE bow of the mighty is become weak, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power; wherefore my heart is established in the Lord.

SESSIONAL HYMN

Glory. *Of the Martyr. Fourth Tone*

*Thou Who wast raised up*

**A**S Christ's undaunted and most valorous soldier, \* as His invincible and true trophy-bearer, \* and as the boast of athletes, O most glorious, \* thou from Heaven hast received \* the unwithering laurel; \* now thou dancest ceaselessly \* with the Angels in gladness. \* By thine entreaties, save those who extol \* thy godly contest with faith, O divine Barlaam.

Both now. *Theotokion*

**O** THEOTOKOS, we shall not cease from speaking \* of all thy mighty acts, all we the unworthy ones; \* for if thou hadst not stood to intercede for us, \* who would have delivered us \* from such numerous dangers? \* Who would have preserved us all \* until now in true freedom? \* O Lady, we shall not turn away from thee; \* for thou dost always save thy servants from all manner of grief.

ODE FOUR

*Of the Martyr. Thy virtue hath covered the heavens*

**T**HRUSTING away from the idle talk of the rhetoricians and accepting the teachings of the Apostles, O glorious Barlaam, thou becamest a true witness and Martyr of the truth.

**H**AVING a volition more vehement than fire, thou dost hurl down the tyrant's madness, crying out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

**F**OR the sake of Christ thou withstoodest fire and torments even unto death, O stout-hearted Martyr, chanting with a great voice: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

**P**OSSESSING the utmost zeal, thou didst trample down error, O all-blessed Barlaam, and with a godly mind thou didst chant: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

*Theotokion*

**I**NCARNATE of the Virgin, He Who is incorporeal came unto men; let us therefore cry with faith: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

ODE FIVE

*Of the Martyr. O Thou Who hadst caused the light to dawn*

**H**E that became an imitator of the sufferings of Christ, and a Martyr, doth sing: Glory to Thee, glory to Thee, O Jesus, Son of God.

**G**REAT is the reward of thy patience, and the crown of victory hath been plaited for thee who dost sing: Glory to Thee O Jesus, Son of God.

**T**HOU didst fix the arrows of thy words deep in the enemies' hearts, O Barlaam, crying out: Glory to Thee, glory to Thee, O Jesus, Son of God.

*Theotokion*

**G**OD Transcendent, Who by His will created the universe, is fashioned from thee like unto us, O all-pure Virgin.

ODE SIX

*Of the Martyr. When the Prophet Jonas*

**L**ET the faces of the demons be smitten by thy burnt right hand, but let the hearts of the faithful leap for joy, and let the choirs of the bodiless hosts beam brightly with jubilation.

**T**he elect Assembly of the First-born, clad with light, is made radiant as it seeth the trophies of thy goodly struggles and the triumphs and rewards of thy contests.

**A**RISE, O skilled painters of the Martyr's icon, and make it brilliant with your art, manifestly portraying therein the Judge of the contest.

*Theotokion*

**O**UR foremother rejoiceth in thee, O all-blameless Mother of God; for through thy giving of birth, she is freed from the ancient curse and the bitter condemnation of death.

*Heirmos*

**W**HEN the Prophet Jonas prefigured Thy three-day burial, he cried out in supplication from within the sea-monster: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, Thou King of Hosts.

SYNAXARION

✠ On the nineteenth of this month we commemorate the holy Martyr Barlaam of Antioch.

*Verses*

Enduring, O Barlaam, the fire with the incense,  
Thou becamest fragrant incense unto the Master.

By his holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us.

ODE SEVEN

*Of the Martyr. O God of our Fathers*

**A**S an invincible Martyr, with the Martyr's choir thou hast been vouchsafed to cry with great voice to Christ: Blessed is the God of our Fathers.

**T**HOU hast brightly entered with torches into the divine bridechamber, O Great Martyr Barlaam, crying out to Christ: Blessed is the God of our Fathers.

**P**OSSESSING a right hand mightier than fire, thou standest at the right hand of thy Master, crying out: Blessed is the God of our Fathers.

*Theotokion*

**R**EDEEMED through thine all-immaculate giving of birth, we the faithful sing thy praise, unceasingly crying out: Blessed, O pure Virgin, is the Fruit of thy womb.

ODE EIGHT

*Of the Martyr. O ye priests*

**T**HOU didst destroy the whole panoply of the foe, O admirable Barlaam; thou burnest up idolatrous illusion, crying out: Thee do we supremely exalt, O Christ, unto the ages.

**T**HOU standest before Christ majestically made fair; and wearing a purple robe dyed in martyric blood, O all-celebrated athlete, thou dost sing the praises of the Master unto the ages.

**B**lazing with the fire of piety, thou didst burn up every demonic phantasy like thorns, crying out: Praise and supremely exalt Christ unto the ages.

*Theotokion*

**T**HOSE who faithfully bless thee are blessed of the Lord, O all-blameless Lady; for thou gavest birth to the Master that blesseth creation. Him we supremely exalt unto all the ages.

*Heirmos*

**O**YE priests, bless God, Who preserved the Hebrew Children in the furnace of fire in Babylon, and supremely exalt Him, O ye people, unto all the ages.

ODE NINE

*Of the Martyr. When Christ, the chief corner-stone*

**T**HE greatness of thy struggles exceedeth the compass of human praise; only Christ the Master knoweth how to glorify thee with divine splendor. Earnestly beseech Him for them that laud thee with faith.

**F**ULLY offering thyself to the Lord as a living sacrifice, thou becamest a full inheritor and partaker of His kingdom; and now in exultation thou reignest with Him, O all-renowned Barlaam.

**F**OR Thy love's sake, O saviour, the divine Martyr resisted unto blood and death, through sword, fire, and torments; in return he received the immortality that cometh from Thee, O Friend of man.

*Theotokion*

**W**ITH joy I put thee forward as my salvation and the protectress of my whole life, O protection of the world and Virgin Mother of God; for inasmuch as thou gavest birth to God, thou art mighty to save them that sing thy praise.

*Heirmos*

**W**HEN Christ, the chief corner-stone not cut by the hand of man, was cut from thee, the unhewn mountain, O Virgin, He joined together the separated natures. Wherefore we magnify thee with rejoicing, O Theotokos.



OUR ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ WHO SHOWS US THE WAY.

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