

March 9th – Forty Martyrs of Sebaste

At Vespers

The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah (43:9-14)

Thus saith the Lord: All the nations are gathered together, and princes shall be gathered out of them: who will declare these things? or who will declare to you things from the beginning? let them bring forth their witnesses, and be justified; and let them hear, and declare the truth. Be ye My witnesses, and I too am a witness, saith the Lord God, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know, and believe Me, and understand that I am: before Me there was no other God, and after Me there shall be none. I am God; and beside Me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved; I have reproached, and there was no strange god among you: ye are My witnesses, and I am the Lord God, even from the beginning I am; and there is none that can deliver out of My hands: I will work, and who shall turn it back? Thus saith the Lord God that redeemeth you, the Holy One of Israel.

The Reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon (5:1-9)

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself. As gold in the furnace hath He tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. They who put their trust in Him shall understand the truth: and such as be faithful in love shall abide with Him: for grace and mercy is to His saints, and He hath care for His elect.

The Reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon (5:15-6:3)

The righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with His right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them. He shall take to Him His jealousy for complete armour, and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies. He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgement instead of an helmet. He shall take holiness for an invincible shield. His severe wrath shall He sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with Him against the unwise. Then shall the right aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds, as from a well drawn bow, shall they fly to the mark. And hailstones full of wrath shall be cast as out of a stone bow, and the water of the sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them, and like a storm shall blow them away: thus iniquity shall lay waste the whole earth, and ill dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the mighty. Hear therefore, O ye kings, and understand; learn, ye that be judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations. For power is given you of the Lord, and sovereignty from the Highest.