

Month of January

THE 26TH DAY

Commemoration of Our Venerable Mother Bathildis, Queen & Regent of the Frankish Kingdoms, Foundress of the Royal Convent of Chelles

Note: The venerable Bathildis reposed on the 30th of January; but to avoid the coincidence of her commemoration with the feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs, her feast is transferred for convenience to the 26th of January, (as here set forth) or to some other date deemed appropriate by the rector or the ecclesiarch. The service provided below is intended to be celebrated in conjunction with that of the venerable Xenophon and his blessed family, from the Menaion.

At Vespers

On "Lord, I have cried...", 6 stichera: 3 of the venerable Xenophon (see in the Menaion), and 3 of the venerable Bathildis, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "O all-praised martyrs..."—

O all-praised Bathildis, though carried away captive from thy native land and sold as a slave, despondency never touched thy pure heart, but with steadfastness of soul and virtue thou didst live the Christian life without complaint, beseeching Christ for His mercy.

The eyes of the king were drawn to thy modest demeanor and the grave dignity of thy comportment, and he took thee to be his lawful spouse and queen, O venerable Bathildis; and in this exalted station thou didst help all in need, beseeching Christ for His mercy.

Spurning the vanity of worldly pomp, and yearning to embrace thy Lord and Bridegroom, O Bathildis, thou didst set aside thy queenly crown and robes, and didst depart unto the Convent of Chelles, thy true homeland on earth, beseeching Christ for His mercy.

Glory...: Idiomelon of the venerable Bathildis, in Tone VIII—

Sound forth the clarions of piety, O ye faithful; for the righteous Bathildis, the queen of the Franks, hath entered with glory into the mansions on high, escorted by the saints whom she cared for in this life, and welcomed by the hosts of the angels! And with fulsome voices recount ye the multitude of her many virtues: how she was kind-hearted, sober, and prudent in all her works; how she kept her tongue from evil and her lips from speaking guile, wishing evil unto none; how she fled worldly honors, seeking instead heavenly reward; how in her solicitude she was a mother to princes, a daughter to priests, a sister to monastics, a tutor to the young in reverence, a wise counselor to elders, and a fountain of alms for the poor. And as she desired to serve Christ in every way, so let us ever strive to imitate her godly conduct, that with her we may worthily glorify the most worshipful Trinity our God.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder..."—

The unblemished heifer, beholding her Calf nailed of His own will to the Tree, cried out, lamenting piteously: "Woe is me, O my Child most beloved! How hath the thankless assembly of the Jews rewarded Thee, desiring to leave me bereft of Thee, my Child most beloved?"

Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon of the venerable Bathildis, in Tone II—

Come, ye Christian people, on this most glorious day, and lift up your voices in praise to the most righteous queen, the glorious Bathildis, the flower of the Saxons and boast of the Franks, the fragrant memory of whose piety is borne to us upon the winds of time, like incense of sweet savor offered up before the throne of God, Who in His boundless loving-kindness hath provided us wretched sinners with such a kind-hearted intercessor and advocate.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree..."—

Beholding Thee nailed to the tree of the Cross, O Jesus, she who knew not wedlock said, weeping: "O my sweet Child, wherefore hast Thou forsaken me who alone gave birth to Thee, O unapproachable Light of the all-unoriginate Father? Haste Thou and glorify Thyself, that they who glorify Thy divine sufferings may receive divine glory!"

Troparion of the venerable Xenophon and his family (see in the Menaion)

Glory...: Troparion of the venerable Bathildis, in Tone VI—

Let us honor today Bathildis the blessed, the divinely wise queen and boast of the Orthodox, for though frail of body she was strong in spirit, the grace of God imparting strength to her soul. Wherefore, let us imitate her zeal for the Lord Who hath glorified her, and beseech her with tears to ask Him to grant salvation to our souls.

Now & ever...: Theotokion.

At Matins

At "God is the Lord...", the troparion of the venerable ones, twice; Glory..., that of the venerable Bathildis; Now & ever...: Theotokion.

One canon from the Octoechos, with 6 troparia, including the irmos; the canon of the venerable ones, with 4 troparia; and that of the venerable Bathildis, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is "A slave, she became queen, and then a saint", in Tone III—

Ode I

Irmos: Let us sing unto Christ the Savior, Who delivered Israel from slavery and overwhelmed Pharaoh in the sea, for He hath been glorified forever.

Arise, ye Christians, and in exultation sing to Christ our Savior, for He delivered from slavery the righteous Bathildis, who doth glorify Him forever!

Seeking the freedom that is in Christ the Savior, Bathildis served Him humbly, mindful that in loving her neighbor she showed forth love for God.

Loving God above all else, the righteous Bathildis ministered meekly unto all, for she kept the commandment of Christ to love her neighbor as herself.

Theotokion: As thou didst flee from the tyrant into Egypt with Jesus, thy Son, O Virgin, thou art glorified forever by those who have been delivered from sin by Him.

Ode III

Irmos: O Thou Who didst set the earth upon its foundation and establish the heavens with might, make steadfast all of us who praise Thee with faith.

Virtue did the holy Bathildis add to her great faith; wherefore, divine knowledge was granted her for her surpassing humble-mindedness.

Every storm of temptation did the venerable one withstand, for she had built the

house of her soul firmly upon the foundation of the Faith.

Seeking no advancement in the world, the blessed one hid herself to escape marriage; yet she meekly assented to do the will of God.

Theotokion: Heaven trembled, beholding thine ineffable humility, O Theotokos, when thou didst assent to conceive the Word of God in thy pure womb.

The kontakion of the venerable Xenophon and his family which appeareth in the Menaion after Ode III is omitted. The kontakion & ikos of those saints which appear in the Menaion after Ode VI are chanted here.

Sessional hymn of the venerable Xenophon and his family (see in the Menaion)

Glory...: Sessional hymn of the venerable Bathildis, in the same tone (VIII) & melody ("Of the Wisdom...")—

Zealous for righteousness, the wondrous Bathildis strove mightily to uproot the tares of simony from the Church of God, and with the scythe of the Spirit she mowed down the baneful slaughter of the newborn that was rife among the Franks; wherefore, as an upholder of the goodness of the Almighty, she standeth with boldness at His tribunal on high, in her supplications asking mercy for all who approach her with tears of contrition and compunctionate prayers.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or stavrotheotokion (see both in the Menaion)

Ode IV

Irmos: Of what wast thou in awe, O Habakkuk? To whom dost thou exclaim and cry out: "God cometh from Thæman"? The Word hath become flesh and dwelt with us; and we have seen Him. In praise we cry out to our wondrous God, for He hath been glorified!

Ever desiring the spiritual advancement of her people, and seeking to lead them to the light of Christ, Bathildis founded and endowed many convents and monasteries, that prayers might be ever offered throughout the lands of the Franks unto God Who is ever glorified.

By her great care for the faith and piety of the Franks was the blessed queen guided to appoint venerable and holy leaders for the monastic houses she founded: Bertilla to Chelles and Theofredus to Corbie, who served God well, in that He hath been glorified.

Ever mindful of the needs of the poor, the wondrous Bathildis removed her own precious cincture and gave it to the brethren, that from the proceeds of its sale they might provide goodly alms for the sustenance of strangers and paupers, following the precepts of the Gospel.

Theotokion: Choirs of angels stand in awe before thee, O all-pure one, and cry with trembling: "How hath the Word become flesh and dwelt among men? How can it be that we behold with noetic eyes God Who is beyond all essence, yet hath assumed visible form? Glory be to Him!"

Ode V

Irmos: Rising at dawn out of the night, my spirit crieth out to Thee an unceasing hymn, O Christ; for Thou art the true and never-waning Light which enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world.

Abounding in love, the pious Bathildis fulfilled the law of God most cheerfully, for so great was her generosity that her left hand knew not what her right was giving, as the Gospel commandeth.

Magnanimous in all things, the venerable one did not forget the tombs of the holy apostles; for she sent rich gifts to Old Rome, that the places of their sepulture might be fittingly adorned.

Early and late, and at every time, the blessed Queen Bathildis offered up unceasing hymns unto God, the never-waning Light Who enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world.

Theotokion: Quitting the dark night of despond, I rise up, casting off the spiritual gloom that enshroudeth me, waking unto Christ, thy Son, the everlasting Light, O all-immaculate and all-holy Theotokos.

Ode VI

Irmos: Lead me up from corruption, O Lord my God! Jonah cried; and I cry out to Thee: Deliver me from the abyss of my many evils, O Savior, and guide me to Thy light, I pray!

Untiring in her charity to the poor, and caring ever for the afflicted and oppressed, the pious queen, full of the knoweldge of God, delivered multitudes from many evils.

Escaping the jaws of the primordial beast, Bathildis cried out in compunction: Deliver me from the abyss of my many evils, O Savior, and guide me to Thy light, I pray!

Exalted far above the corruption of her court, Bathildis cried out in pity: Deliver the Franks from the abyss of many evils, O Savior, and guide them to Thy light, I pray!

Neither death nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, O blessed one, were able to separate thee from the love of Christ Jesus our Savior, Who ever guided thee to His light.

Theotokion: All my life have I been sunk in a slough of corruption, O Lady, and like as the prophet cried from the belly of the sea monster, so do I cry: Guide me to the light, I pray!

Kontakion of the venerable Bathildis, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared..."—

France is rendered glorious today by the holiness of the venerable Bathildis; and with it we cry: Rejoice, O our queen, thou boast of all the Orthodox!

Ikos: Discerning with spiritual sight the true nature of the Franks, and understanding the inner workings of their hearts, the divinely wise Bathildis said: "O the loving-kindness of the Almighty! O His great care for His creatures! How can I, a lowly handmaid and bondswoman, take part in the high affairs of kingdoms and rulers? How can I hope to do His will, who desire but to save my own sinful soul? But grant me prudence, O Savior, that I may govern Thy people with wisdom, as the righteous Deborah judged Israel of old." Wherefore, with hymns of praise we magnify her, the glory of France and boast of all the Orthodox.

Ode VII

Irmos: Proud was the tyrant; yet he was as a plaything for the children; for, trampling underfoot the flame heated sevenfold, they chanted: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Not in jewels and vain adornments didst thou delight, O blessed queen, but in feeding the poor and clothing the naked, chanting: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Desiring to further the kingdom of God in this world, Bathildis made rich gift of lands and forests, that monastics might freely chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

They who died without means didst thou bury at thine own expense for love of

the God of the living and the dead, O saint, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Having become through my sins a plaything of the demons, I am fit only for fiery Gehenna, O Lady; but with thee I fain would chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Ode VIII

Irmos: O ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord, Who appeared in the form of an Angel and cooled the children in the midst of the burning furnace.

Ever caring for those who lead the angelic life, the holy one founded houses wherein they might chant: O ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!

No Christian was sold within the Frankish realms while Bathildis ruled, and she ransomed captives, crying: O ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!

Against all impiety did the holy one stand; wherefore, when a bishop was unjustly slain, she retired to pray: O ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!

Theotokion: Saved by the Angel of great Counsel, Who came to save men from death and sin, O Lady, I cry with joy: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Ode IX

Irmos: O ye faithful, in oneness of mind let us magnify with hymns the Mother of the Light, the haven of salvation for our souls, who remained a virgin after giving birth.

At Chelles she who once held sway over kings and realms humbled herself, performing the meanest of tasks, that she might gain rich reward in the heavens.

In the monastic fold the great Bathildis, who once stood as its shepherdess, became as a lamb of its flock, a denizen of that haven of salvation for many.

Naught hindered the passage of the saint into heaven, for a vision which many beheld foretold her ascent into the realm of light, for which we ever magnify her.

Theotokion: The power of the Most High overshadowed thee, O Virgin Mother, and the divine Word descended into thy womb, whence He issued forth, preserving thy virginity.

Exapostilarion of the venerable Xenophon and his family (see in the Menaion)

Glory...: Exapostilarion of the venerable Bathildis, in the same melody ("Heaven with stars...")—

Though wielding regal power and arrayed in royal vesture, O Bathildis, thou didst ever maintain thy modesty, acting mercifully and walking humbly with thy God.

Theotokion (see in the Menaion)

Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon of the venerable Bathildis, in Tone I—

Dying as she lived in this world, the venerable one hath left to us who honor her a rule of faith and model of piety: for her humility, patience and gentleness, her great love and boundless mercy, her prudent vigilance and pure confession of the Orthodox Faith, are an example for many, for which cause she hath received as her due reward the crown that Christ Jesus, the Judge of the contest, reserved for her from of old. Wherefore, standing with the angels in the presence of the Lord, she rejoiceth eternally among the ranks of the saints, in the everlasting joy for which she longed.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel. : "Joy of the ranks of heaven..."—

Standing before the Cross of thy Son and God, and witnessing His long-suffering,

O pure Mother, weeping, thou didst say: “Woe is me, O my most sweet Child! How is it that Thou endurest these things unjustly inflicted upon Thee, O Word of God, that Thou mightest save mankind?”

At Liturgy

Prokimenon, in Tone IV—

Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

Epistle to the Galatians, §208

Brethren: Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Alleluia, in Tone I—

Stichos: The salvation of the righteous is from the Lord, and He is their defender in time of affliction.

Stichos: All the day long the righteous showeth mercy, and lendeth, and his seed shall be unto blessing.

Gospel according to Matthew, § 104

The Lord said this parable: “The kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise: ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying: ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying: ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said: ‘Verily I say unto you, I know you not.’ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

Communion Verse—

In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.