The forty holy martyrs of Sebaste in Armenia. They were comrades, not in blood, but in faith and obedience to the will of their heavenly Father. At the time of the emperor Licinius, after binding and savage tortures, they were ordered to pass the night naked at the coldest time of winter in a swamp in the open air. They consummated their martyrdom by the breaking of their legs at crucifixion. (320)


Antiphonal psalms for Wednesday. 8. Then the beginning of Psalm 140 is sung in Tone 1:

Psalm 140 - Tone 1 samohlasen

Followed by the recited verses of the Lamp-lighting Psalms, pp. 19-21.
Let the watch-man count on day-break and Is-ra-el on the Lord.

If we would fast in spirit we must not tell lies with our tongue nor give cause for scandal or take offense. Rather, through repentance, let us brighten the lamp of our soul. With tears, let us cry out to Christ: Remit our sins, for you love us all.

Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption, Is-ra-el indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

The choir of the Forty passes through the flames; the divine-ly chosen
assembl-y shines with the ra-diance of their sa-cred suf-fer-ings, mak-ing the Fast
re-splen-dent by sanc-ti-fy-ing and en-light-en-ing our souls.

Cantor:

Praise the Lord, all you na-tions; ac-claim him all you peo-ple!

O Christ our God, the Mar-tyrs con-sid-ered the lake to be as par-a-dise,
and win-ter as the heat of day. Thoughts of the ty-rant's threats did not fright-en them.

Brave-ly they did not fear the in-crease of tor-tures,
for they ac-quired the Cross as a weap-on, and with it they van-quished the foe in might,
for which they re-ceived crowns of grace.

Cantor:

Strong is the love of the Lord for us; he is faith-ful for-ev-er.
Who does not remember in hymns the choir of Forty Martyrs?

They boldly went into the waters of the lake. Held fast by the ice, they sang to the Lord: Receive us in the rivers, O Lover of us all!

We have borne the burden of the winter and the bitterness of the cold: our feet are dyed in our own blood! O God, lead us to your eternal mansions to be warmed in the bosom of the Patriarch Abraham.

Cantor: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Dogmatikon - Tone 2 samohlasen

The shadow of the Law passed away when grace arrived; for, like
the bush which burned but was not consumed, you gave birth as a virgin, and a

virgin you remained. Instead of a pillar of fire, the Sun of Justice dawned; instead of Moses, Christ, the salvation of our souls.

The service continues with the Hymn of the Evening, “O Joyful Light,” on page 22.

For Wednesday in the second week of the Great Fast:

Prokeimenon I - Tone 6 (Psalm 31: 11, 1)

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones;

be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones!

Verse: Blessed are they whose trespasses are forgiven.

Reading: Proverbs 5: 15 - 6:3
After the Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian, there are readings in honor of the Forty Martyrs.

Prokeimenon for the Forty Holy Martyrs - Tone 5 (Psalm 11:8,2)

You, O Lord, will keep us and preserve us forever, forever from this generation.

Verse: Save me, O Lord, for the righteous have vanished.

Epistle: Hebrews 12:1-10 (Epistle book, p. 233)

Alleluia - Tone 4 (Psalm 64:1-2,10)

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

Verse: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; sing praise to his name, give to him glorious praise.
Verse: For you, O God, have tested us, you have tried us as silver is tried.

Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16
Communion Hymns:

For the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (Ps. 33:9; music on p. 43):
Taste and see that the Lord is good. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

And for the Forty Martyrs (Ps. 32:1):

Re-joice in the Lord, you right-ous ones; praise from
the up-right is fit-ting. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

Al-le-lu-ia!