

## Vespers of Great and Holy Friday

*The service books indicate that Vespers should begin in late afternoon. Before the service begins, the Shroud is placed on the altar. Vested in epitrachelion, the priest begins:*

PRIEST: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

READER: Amen. Glory to Thee, O God; glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of blessings, and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! (3)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O most-holy Trinity: have mercy on us.  
O Lord: cleanse us from our sins. O Master: pardon our transgressions. O Holy One: visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

PRIEST: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

READER: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship God our King!

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God!

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

*As Psalm 104 is chanted, the priest stands in front of the holy doors, and quietly reads the Prayers of Light.*

### Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great! Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment,



who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent, who hast laid the beams of Thy chambers on the waters, who makest the clouds Thy chariot, who ridest on the wings of the wind, who makest the winds Thy messengers, fire and flame Thy ministers.

Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken, Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment;

the waters stood above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled; at the sound of Thy thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which Thou didst appoint for them.

Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass so that they might not again cover the earth.

Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst.

By them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From Thy lofty abode Thou waterest the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy work.

Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and

bread to strengthen man's heart. The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted.

In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers.

Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. Thou makest darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

When the sun rises they get them away, and lie down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great.

There go the ships, and Leviathan which Thou didst form to sport in it. These all look to Thee, to give them their food in due season.

When Thou givest to them, they gather it up; when Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good things. When Thou hidest Thy face, they are dismayed; when Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When Thou



sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and  
Thou renewest the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the  
Lord rejoice in His works, who looks on the earth  
and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and  
they smoke!

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing  
praise to my God while I have being.

May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice  
in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the  
earth, and let the wicked be no more!

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

The sun knows its time for setting. Thou makest  
darkness, and it is night.

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom  
hast Thou made them all!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy  
Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.  
Amen.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God. (3)

### The Great Litany

PRIEST: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the peace from above and for the salva-  
tion of our souls, let us pray to the Lord

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the peace of the whole world, for the  
welfare of the holy churches of God, and  
for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For this holy house and for those who enter  
with faith, reverence, and the fear of God,  
let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For His Beatitude, our Metropolitan  
\_\_\_\_\_, and for His (Eminence, Grace)  
our (Archbishop, Bishop) \_\_\_\_\_, for  
the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in  
Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let  
us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the President of our country, for all  
civil authorities, and for the armed forces,  
let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For this city, for every city and country,  
and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us  
pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.



PRIEST: For seasonable weather, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For travelers by land, by sea, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

*As the choir sings the Psalms of the "Lord, I Call," the priest censes the whole church.*

CHOIR: *(Tone One)*

**Lord, I call upon Thee; hear me!**

**Hear me, O Lord!**

**Lord, I call upon Thee; hear me!**

**Receive the voice of my prayer  
when I call upon Thee.**

**Hear me, O Lord!**

**Let my prayer arise  
in Thy sight as incense,  
and let the lifting up of my hands  
be an evening sacrifice.**

**Hear me, O Lord!**

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord,  
keep watch over the door of my lips!

Incline not my heart to any evil,

to busy myself with wicked deeds in company  
with men who work iniquity, and let me not  
partake of their delights!

Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness,  
but let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head  
for my prayer is continually against their wicked  
deeds.

When they are given over to those who shall  
condemn them, then they shall learn that the  
word of the Lord is true.

As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land,  
so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of  
Sheol.



But my eyes are toward Thee, O Lord God;  
in Thee I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless!  
Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me,  
and from the snares of evildoers!  
Let the wicked together fall into their own nets,  
while I escape.  
I cry with my voice to the Lord,  
with my voice I make supplication to the Lord,  
I pour out my trouble before Him.  
When my spirit departs from me,  
Thou knowest my way!  
In the path where I walk  
they have hidden a trap for me.  
I look to the right and watch,  
but there is none who takes notice of me;  
no refuge remains to me,  
no man cares for me.  
I cry to Thee, O Lord;  
I say Thou art my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living.  
Give heed to my cry;  
for I am brought very low!  
Deliver me from my persecutors;  
for they are too strong for me!  
Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks  
to Thy name.  
The righteous will surround me, for Thou wilt deal  
bountifully with me.  
Lord, hear my voice.  
Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord.

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my  
supplications.

VERSE: If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities,  
Lord, who could stand? But there is  
forgiveness with Thee.

CHOIR: *(Tone 1)*

**All creation was changed by fear  
when it saw Thee hanging on the cross, O Christ!  
The sun was darkened,  
and the foundations of the earth were shaken.  
All things suffered with the Creator of all.  
O Lord, who didst willingly endure this for us,  
glory to Thee!**

VERSE: For Thy Name's sake I wait for Thee, O  
Lord; my soul has waited for Thy word; my  
soul has hoped on the Lord.

CHOIR: *(repeat)* **All creation was changed . . .**

VERSE: From the morning watch until night, from  
the morning watch, let Israel hope on the  
Lord.

CHOIR: *(Tone 2)*

**An impious and transgressing people —  
Why do they imagine vain things?  
Why do they condemn to death the Life of all?  
O great wonder!  
The Creator of the world is betrayed into the hands  
of lawless men.  
He who loves mankind is lifted up upon the wood,  
that He might free those bound in hell, who cry:  
O long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee!**



VERSE: For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption and He will deliver Israel from all His iniquities.

CHOIR: Today the blameless Virgin saw Thee suspended upon the cross, O Word. She mourned within herself and was sorely pierced in her heart. She groaned in agony from the depth of her soul. Exhausted from tearing her hair and cheeks and beating her breast, she cried out lamenting: "Woe is me, O my divine child! Woe is me, O light of the world! Why hast Thou departed from my eyes, O Lamb of God?" Then the bodiless hosts were seized with trembling and cried: "O Incomprehensible Lord, glory to Thee!"

VERSE: Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him all peoples!

CHOIR: When she who bore Thee without seed saw Thee suspended upon the Tree, O Christ, the Creator and God of all, she cried bitterly: "Where is the beauty of Thy form, O my Son? I cannot bear to see Thee unjustly crucified. Hasten and arise, that I too may see Thy resurrection from the dead on the third day!

VERSE: For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

CHOIR: *(Tone 6)*  
Today the Master of creation stands before Pilate. Today the Creator of all is condemned to die on the cross.

Of His own will, He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. He who fed His people with manna in the desert is transfixed with nails.

His side is pierced, and a sponge of vinegar touches His lips.

The Redeemer of the world is slapped on the face. The Maker of all is mocked by His own servants. How great is the Master's love for mankind!

For those who crucified Him, He prayed to His *Father saying:*

"Forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do."

VERSE: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

CHOIR: See how the lawless assembly condemns the King of creation to death.

They are not ashamed, even when He reminds them of His mighty works:

"My people, what have I done to you?

Have I not filled Judea with miracles?

Have I not raised the dead by my word alone?

Have I not healed every sickness and disease?

How have you repaid me?

*(Continued on next page)*



Why have you abandoned me?  
In return for healing, you give me blows;  
In return for life, you put me to death.  
You hang your Benefactor on the cross, as an  
evildoer;

Your Lawgiver, as a transgressor;  
The King of all, as one condemned.”  
O long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee!

VERSE: Now and ever, and unto ages of ages.  
Amen.

CHOIR: We see a strange and fearful mystery  
accomplished today.

He whom none may touch is seized.

He who looses Adam from the curse is bound.

He who tries the hearts of men is unjustly brought  
to trial.

He who closed the abyss is shut in prison.

He before whom the hosts of heaven stand with  
trembling stands before Pilate.

The Creator is struck by the hand of His creature.

He who comes to judge the living and the dead is  
condemned to the cross.

The Conqueror of hell is enclosed in a tomb.

O Thou, who hast endured all these things in Thy  
tender love,

Thou hast saved all men from the curse,

O long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee!

*As the “now and ever . . .” is sung, the holy doors are  
opened. The Entrance is made with the Book of the  
Gospels.*

PRIEST: Wisdom! Let us attend!

CHOIR: O Gladsome Light of the holy Glory of the  
immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed —  
Jesus Christ! Now that we have come to the  
setting of the sun and behold the light of  
evening, we praise God: Father, Son, and  
Holy Spirit — for meet it is at all times to  
worship Thee with voices of praise, O Son  
of God and Giver of Life. Therefore all the  
world doth glorify Thee!

*The priest goes to the high place, and blesses the people:*

PRIEST: Let us attend! Peace be unto all! Wisdom!

THE PROKEIMENON (*Tone 4*)

**They divide my garments among them,/ and for my  
raiment they cast lots. (*Psalm 22*)**

VERSE: My God, my God, look upon me! Why  
hast Thou forsaken me?

PRIEST: Wisdom!

READER: The Reading from the book of Exodus.  
(*Exodus 33:11-23*)

PRIEST: Let us attend.

*The holy doors are closed for the Reading.*

READER:

The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man  
speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the  
camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, did not  
depart from the tent. And Moses said to the Lord,  
“See, Thou sayest to me, ‘Lead this people forth,’  
but Thou has not shown me whom Thou wilt send



with me. Yet Thou hast said, 'I know you, by name, and you have found favor in my sight.' If then I have found favor in Thy sight, reveal Thyself to me, that I may see Thee clearly, and may find favor in Thy sight, and that I may know that this great nation is Thy people." And the Lord said, "I myself will go with you, and I will give you rest." And Moses said to the Lord, "If Thou Thyself wilt not go with me, do not carry me up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in Thy sight, I and Thy people? Is it not in Thy going with us, so that both I and Thy people will be glorified beyond all the nations on earth?" And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." And Moses said, "Show Thyself to me." And the Lord said, "I will make all my glory pass before you, and I will proclaim before you my Name, the Lord, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." And God said: "You cannot see my face, for no man shall see my face and live." And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen by you."

PRIEST: Wisdom!

*The holy doors are opened for the Prokeimenon.*

THE PROKEIMENON (*Tone 4*):

**Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me;/ fight against those who fight against me.** (*Psalm 35*)

VERSE: They rewarded me evil for good; my soul is forlorn.

PRIEST: Wisdom!

READER: The reading from the book of Job.  
(*Job 42:12-17*)

PRIEST: Let us attend.

*The holy doors are closed for the Readings.*

READER:

And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning, and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first daughter, Day, and the name of the second, Cassia, and the name of the third, Amalthea's Horn. And in all the land there were no women so fair as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. And Job lived after his affliction a hundred and seventy years, and all the years he lived were two hundred and forty, and Job saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. And Job died an old man, and full of days, and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will raise.

PRIEST: Wisdom!



READER: The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.  
(Isaiah 52:13-54:1)

PRIEST: Let us attend.

READER:

Thus says the Lord: Behold, my servant shall prosper; He shall be exalted and lifted up, and be glorified exceedingly. Many were aghast at the sight of Thee; Thy appearance was marred beyond human semblance; Thy form lost all the likeness of a man. Many nations recoil at the sight of Him, and kings shut their mouths, for they see what they have never been told, and things unheard before fill their thoughts. O Lord, who has believed what we have heard; and to whom has the power of the Lord been revealed? As a child He grew up before the Lord, like a young plant, and like a root in a parched land. He had no majesty or comeliness, that we should look at Him, and no beauty, that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men turn their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our sins, and carried our sorrows, yet we counted Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep had gone astray; we had turned every one to his own way, and the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was

afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth. He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb that before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation, He was taken away without justice; who shall declare His generation? For His life was taken up from the earth; because of the sins of my people He was led to death. He was assigned a grave with the wicked and with a rich man in His death, though He practiced no iniquity and there was no deceit in His mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him in infirmity: if He lays down His life for sin, He will see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord will prosper in His hand. He will see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; by His knowledge, my righteous servant shall justify many and He will bear their iniquities. Therefore I shall give Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the spoils of the strong, because He delivered His soul to death, and was numbered among the transgressors, and He has borne the sins of many, and was delivered to death for their transgressions. Rejoice, O barren one, who did not bear, break forth into singing and cry aloud you that have not been in travail, for the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who has a husband, says the Lord.

*The holy doors are now opened for the Prokeimenon and Epistle Reading.*

PRIEST: Wisdom!

THE PROKEIMENON (Tone 6)



**They have laid me in the depths of the pit,/ in the regions dark and deep. (Psalm 88)**

VERSE: O Lord God of my salvation, I call for help by day; I cry out in the night before Thee.

PRIEST: Wisdom!

READER: The reading from the first Epistle of the holy apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

*(I Corinthians 1:18-2:2)*

PRIEST: Let us attend.

READER:

Brethren: the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise men? Where is the the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth;

but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

*During the singing of the Alleluia, the priest makes the customary censuring.*

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia (Tone 1, Psalm 69)**

VERSES: Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.

They gave me gall for food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see.  
*The priest proclaims the Gospel facing the people, in the usual way.*

PRIEST: Wisdom! Attend! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel! Peace be unto all!

CHOIR: And to your spirit.

PRIEST: The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.



*The Reading is a composite consisting of:*

*Matthew 27:1-38, Luke 23:39-43, Matthew 27:39-54,  
John 19:31-37, Matthew 27:55-61.*

CHOIR: Glory to Thy passion, O Lord.

PRIEST:

At that time all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor.

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "You have said so." But

when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified."

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it



yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

As they were marching out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do

you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.



And behold the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God."

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth — that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee,

ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

CHOIR: Glory to Thy long-suffering, O Lord!

PRIEST: Let us say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say:

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray Thee hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great goodness, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: Again we pray for His Beatitude, our Metropolitan \_\_\_\_\_, and His (Eminence, Grace, our (Archbishop, Bishop) \_\_\_\_\_, for priests, deacons, and all other clergy; and for all our brethren in Christ.



CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: Again we pray for the President of our country, for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable holy Orthodox patriarchs; and for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy house; and for all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God \_\_\_\_\_, and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable house; for those who labor and those who sing; and for all people here present, who await Thy great and rich mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (3)

PRIEST: For Thou art a merciful God, and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the

Holy spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

READER: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified be Thy name forever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes! Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy commandments! Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy precepts!

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever; O despise not the works of Thy hands! To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*The priest, vested in epitrachilion, comes before the holy doors for the litany.*

### **The Litany of Fervent Supplication**

PRIEST: Let us complete our evening prayer to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.



PRIEST: That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: Grant it, O Lord.

PRIEST: An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: Grant it, O Lord.

PRIEST: Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: Grant it, O Lord.

PRIEST: All things that are good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: Grant it, O Lord.

PRIEST: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: Grant it, O Lord.

PRIEST: A Christian ending to our life: painless, blameless, and peaceful, and a good defense before the dread judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

CHOIR: Grant it, O Lord.

PRIEST: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all

the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

CHOIR: To Thee, O Lord.

PRIEST: For Thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

PRIEST: Peace be unto all.

CHOIR: And to your spirit.

PRIEST: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

CHOIR: To Thee, O Lord.

### **The Prayer at the Bowing of the Heads**

PRIEST: O Lord our God, who didst bow the heavens and come down for the salvation of the human race, look upon Thy servants and upon Thine inheritance, for to Thee, the awesome judge who lovest mankind, have Thy servants bowed their heads and bent their necks; not expecting help from men, but hoping in Thy mercy and looking for Thy salvation. Protect them at all times, especially in this present evening and in the coming night, from every enemy, from every adverse work of the devil, from vain thoughts, and from evil imaginations. Blessed and most glorified be the majesty of Thy Kingdom: of the



Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now  
and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

*As the Aposticha are sung, the priest puts on all  
his vestments.*

### The Aposticha

CHOIR: *(Tone 2 — Special Melody)*

Joseph of Arimathea took Thee down from the tree,  
the Life of all, cold in death.

Bathing Thee with sweet and costly myrrh,  
he gently covered Thee with finest linen  
and with sorrow and tender love in his heart,  
he embraced Thy most pure Body.

Trembling at this awesome sight,  
he cried out to Thee, O Christ:  
glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of man!

VERSE: The Lord is King! He is robed in majesty!

CHOIR: When Thou, the Redeemer of all, wast  
placed in a tomb,

all hell's powers quaked in fear.

Its bars were broken, its gates were smashed!

Its mighty reign was brought to an end,  
for the dead came forth alive from their tombs,  
casting off the bonds of their captivity.

Adam was filled with joy!

He gratefully cried out to Thee, O Christ:

Glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of man!

VERSE: He has established the world so that it shall  
never be moved.

CHOIR: **In the flesh Thou wast willingly enclosed in  
the tomb,**

**who art boundless and infinite in Thy divinity,  
Thou didst close the chambers of death, O Christ.  
Thou hast emptied all the palaces of hell.**

**Thou hast honored this sabbath with Thy blessing,  
glory and splendor!**

VERSE: Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord,  
forevermore.

CHOIR: **The powers of heaven shook with fear,  
when they saw Thine ineffable forbearance.**

**They beheld Thee slandered by lawless men,  
mocked as a deceiver by transgressors.**

**They beheld the stone that closed Thy tomb  
sealed by the same hands that pierced Thy side,  
but they knew that Thy death would be our life,  
and joyfully they cried out to Thee, O Christ:**

**Glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of Man!**

*The priest, now fully vested, opens the holy doors. As the  
following verse is sung, he goes around the altar three  
times, censing the Shroud, which lies on the Altar Table.*

VERSE: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto  
ages of ages. Amen.



**CHOIR:** *(Tone 5)* Joseph together with Nicodemus  
took Thee down from the tree,  
who clothest Thyself with light as with a garment.  
He gazed on Thy Body—dead, naked and unburied—  
and in grief and tender compassion he lamented:  
Woe is me, my sweetest Jesus!  
A short while ago, the sun beheld Thee hanging on  
the cross,  
and it hid itself in darkness.  
The earth quaked with fear at the sight.  
The veil of the temple was torn in two.  
Lo, now I see Thee willingly submit to death for  
my sake.  
How shall I bury Thee, O my God?  
How can I wrap Thee in a shroud?  
How can I touch Thy most pure Body with my  
hands?  
What songs can I sing for Thy Exodus, O  
Compassionate One?  
I magnify Thy Passion.  
I glorify Thy burial  
and Thy holy Resurrection,  
crying: O Lord, glory to Thee!  
*And immediately the Prayer of St. Simeon:*  
Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,  
according to Thy word,  
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,  
which Thou hast prepared before the face of all  
peoples:  
a light to enlighten the Gentiles,  
and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

**READER:** Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal,  
have mercy on us! (3)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto  
ages of ages. Amen.

O Most-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us! O  
Lord, cleanse us from our sins! O Master,  
pardon our transgressions! O Holy One,  
visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy  
Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto  
ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed  
be Thy Name! Thy Kingdom come! Thy  
will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread, and  
forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive  
those who trespass against us; and lead us  
not into temptation, but deliver us from  
evil.

**PRIEST:** For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, of the Father, and of the  
Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever,  
and unto ages of ages.

**CHOIR:** Amen.



As the choir begins to sing the Troparion, the priest takes the Book of the Gospels while the other clergy, or members of the laity, take the Shroud, which they hold above his head. They go around the right and behind the altar, and out of the sanctuary through the north door. The Shroud is preceded with processional candles and incense. The procession goes to the center of the church, where there stands a table decorated with flowers. Here the Shroud is placed, and on top of it, the Gospel book. The priest censes around it three times.

### The Troparion

**CHOIR:** The noble Joseph,  
when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from  
the tree,  
wrapped it in fine linen,  
and anointed it with spices,  
and placed it in a new tomb.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.  
Amen.

The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said:  
Myrrh is fitting for the dead,  
but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption.

Very slowly

BULGARIAN CHANT

The No - ble Jo -

seph

when he had ta - ken down

Thy Most Pure Bo - dy



from the Tree

wrapped it in fine linen

and anointed it

with spices and placed it in a new tomb.

Glo - ry to the Fa - ther, and

to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spi - rit.

Now and e - ver and un - to

a ges of a ges, A - men.



The an - gel came to the myrrh - bear - ing

wo - men at the tomb and

said: Myrrh is fit -

-ting for

the dead, but Christ has

shown Him - self a stran -

ger to co - rup - tion.



## The Dismissal

PRIEST: Wisdom!

CHOIR: Father, bless.

PRIEST: Christ our God, the Existing One, is blessed, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen. Preserve, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages.

PRIEST: Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

CHOIR: More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you!

PRIEST: Glory to Thee, O Christ, our God and our hope, glory to Thee!

CHOIR: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy. (3)

Father, bless.

PRIEST: May He who endured fearful suffering, the life-creating Cross, and voluntary burial in the flesh for us men and for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most pure Mother, of the holy,

glorious, and all-laudable Apostles, of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

CHOIR: Amen.

*The Shroud is then venerated by priest and people, each by making three prostrations: two before kissing the Shroud, and one after.*

*The choir then sings the following hymn\**

*(Tone Five)*

CHOIR: Come, let us bless Joseph of eternal memory, who came by night to Pilate and begged for the Life of all:

{ "Give me this Stranger,  
who from His youth has been received as a  
stranger in this world.

Give me this Stranger,  
who has no place to lay His head:  
Give me this Stranger  
Whom an evil disciple betrayed to death.

{ Give me this Stranger,  
the refuge of the poor and weary.

*\*Bracketed material occurs in the Greek usage but not in the slavic.*



Give me this Stranger,  
whom His Mother saw hanging upon the cross,  
and with a mother's sorrow cried, weeping:  
'Woe is me, O my Child,  
Light of my eyes and Beloved of my bosom,  
for what Simeon foretold in the temple now has  
come to pass:  
a sword has pierced my heart;  
but change my grief to gladness by Thy  
resurrection.'"

We worship Thy Passion, O Christ!  
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ!  
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ!  
and Thy Holy Resurrection.