

Vespers of Great and Holy Friday

(Reader's service - for use when there is no priest)

Reader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things, 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. *(x3)*

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

O Most-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; O Lord, blot out our sins; O Master, pardon our iniquities; O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(x3)*

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

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *(x12)*

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

O come let us worship God our King.

O come let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

Psalm 103

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever.

The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid. The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth.

He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice.

He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.

He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad. Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening.

How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein.

All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being. May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! 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 the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. *(x3)*

Lord, have mercy. *(x12)*

Lord, I Call (Tone 1)

People: 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!

Reader: Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips. Incline not my heart unto words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins. With men that work iniquity; and I will not join with their chosen. The righteous man will chasten me with mercy and reprove me; as for the oil of the sinner, let it not anoint my head. For yet more is my prayer in the presence of their pleasures; swallowed up near by the rock have their judges been. They shall hear my words, for they be sweetened; as a clod of earth is broken upon the earth, so have their bones been scattered nigh unto hades.

For unto Thee, O Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes, in Thee have I hoped; take not my soul away. Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity. The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone until I pass by. With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication. I will pour out before Him my supplication, mine affliction before Him will I declare. When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths. In this way wherein I have walked they hid for me a snare. I looked upon my right hand, and beheld, and there was none that did know me. Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul. I have cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion art Thou in the land of the living. Attend unto my supplication, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from them that persecute me, for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison that I may confess Thy name. The righteous shall wait patiently for me until Thou shalt reward me. Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

People: *(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!

Reader: For Thy name's sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited patiently for Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

People: *(Repeat 'All creation was changed by fear...')*

Reader: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord.

People: *(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!

Reader: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

People: *(Tone 2)* 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 has Thou departed from my eyes, O Lamb of God? Then the bodiless hosts were seized with trembling and cried: “O Incomprehensive Lord, glory to Thee!”

Reader: O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye peoples.

People: *(Tone 2)* 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!

Reader: For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, and the truth of the Lord abideth for ever.

People: *(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.”

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

People: *(Tone 6)* 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 I have 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? Why have you abandoned me? In return for healing, you give me blows; In return for life, you put me to death. You hand 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!

Reader: Now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

People: *(Tone 6)* 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. Oh 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!

O Gladsome Light

People: 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!

Prokeimenon and First O.T. Reading

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the fourth tone: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Reader: Who have schemed unrighteousness in their hearts all the day long!

People: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Reader: They divide my garments among them

People: and for my raiment they cast lots.

Reader: The Reading from the book of Exodus

[Exodus 33:11-23]

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

Then Moses said to the Lord, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.”

And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.”

So the Lord said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.”

And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”

Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

Prokeimenon and Second and Third O.T. Readings

Reader: The Prokeimenon is in the fourth tone: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me.

People: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me.

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

People: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me.

Reader: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me;

People: Fight against those who fight against me.

Reader: The reading from the book of Job

[Job 42:12-17]

Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.

Reader: The reading from the prophecy of Isaiah

[Isaiah 52:13 - 54:1]

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;¹ So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes^[q] we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment,

And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

“Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman,” says the Lord.

Prokeimenon and Epistle Reading

Reader: The Prokeimenon is in the sixth tone: They have laid me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

People: They have laid me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

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

People: They have laid me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Reader: They have laid me in the depths of the pit,

People: in the regions dark and deep.

Reader: The reading from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians

[I Corinthians 1:18 - 2:2]

For the message of the cross is foolishness 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 bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Reader: The Alleluia in the sixth tone: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

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

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see.

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Gospel Reading

Reader: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Reader: *[Matthew 27:1-38. Tonsured readers or subdeacons may chant the Gospel; others should read using a normal speaking voice.]*

When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!" Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." And they consulted together 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 was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say." And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

They said, "Barabbas!"

Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

"They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots."

Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

[Luke 23:39-43]

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

[Matthew 27:39-54]

And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

[John 19:31-37]

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain 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. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was 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 immediately blood and water came out.

And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

[Matthew 27:55-61]

And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

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

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*x12*)

Vouchsafe, O Lord

Reader: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages. Amen. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master, grant me understanding of Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes. O Lord, Thy mercy endureth for ever; disdain not the works of Thy hands. Unto Thee is due praise, unto Thee is due song, unto Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*x3*)

Aposticha

People: (*Tone 2*) 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 sorry 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!

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

People: (*Tone 2*) 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!

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

People: (*Tone 2*) The powers of heaven shook with fear, When they saw Thine ineffable forbearance. Thy 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 O Thee, O Christ: Glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of Man!

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

People: *(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!

Prayer of St. Symeon

Reader: Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou has prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *(x3)*

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

O Most-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; O Lord, blot out our sins; O Master, pardon our iniquities; O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(x3)*

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

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Troparia

People: (*Tone 2*) The noble Joseph When he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the tree, Wrapped it in fine lined, And anointed it with spices, And placed it in a new tomb.

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

People: (*Tone 2*) 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.

Dismissal

People: O Christ, bless!

Reader: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us!

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

Reader: Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

People: 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!

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

People: 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. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. O Christ, bless!

Reader: 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.