

Vespers of Ascension

(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.

(From Ascension until the Eve of Pentecost we neither sing "Christ is Risen!" nor pray "O Heavenly King...", but continue directly to the Trisagion prayers)

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

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, 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, now and ever, and unto 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)**

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 ages of ages. Amen.

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

Lord, have mercy. *(x12)*

Blessed Is The Man

People: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Salvation belongs to the Lord! Thy blessing be upon Thy people!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

Reader: Lord, have mercy. *(x3)*

Lord, I Call (Tone 6)

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.

Tone 6 (from the Pentecostarion)

People: The Lord has ascended into heaven that He might send the Comforter into the world. The heavens prepared His throne, and the clouds His mount. Angels marvel to see a Man high above them. The Father receives Him Whom He holds, co-eternal, in His bosom. The Holy Spirit commands all His Angels: "Lift up your gates, ye princes!" All ye nations, clap your hands: for Christ has gone up to where He was before!"

Reader: The righteous shall wait patiently for me until Thou shalt reward me.

People: *(Repeat 'The Lord has ascended into heaven...')*

Reader: Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice.

People: The Cherubim were amazed at Thine Ascension, O Lord, beholding Thee, the God Who dost sit enthroned upon them, ascending upon the clouds; and we glorify Thee, for Thy mercy is good. Glory to Thee!

Reader: Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

People: *(Repeat 'The Cherubim were amazed...')*

Reader: If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

People: Beholding Thine Ascension on the holy mountain, O Christ, Thou brightness of the Father's glory, we hymn the radiant appearance of Thy countenance; we worship Thy sufferings, we honor Thy Resurrection, as we glorify Thy glorious Ascension. Have mercy on us!

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 'Beholding Thine Ascension...')*

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

People: Lord, when Thine Apostles saw Thee carried up on the clouds, they were filled with despondency, O Christ the Giver of life: with wailing and tears they lamented and said: “Master, do not leave as orphans, us Thy servants whom through pity Thou hast loved in Thy compassion; but, as Thou didst promise, send us Thine all-holy Spirit to enlighten our souls!”

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: *(Repeat 'Lord, when Thine Apostles saw Thee...')*

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

People: Lord, when Thou hadst fulfilled the mystery of Thy dispensation, Thou didst take Thy Disciples with Thee up onto the Mount of Olives; and behold! Thou didst pass through the firmament of heaven. For my sake Thou didst become poor like me, and didst return to the place from which Thou wast never parted: send forth Thine all-holy Holy Spirit to illumine our souls!

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

People: *(Repeat 'Lord, when Thou hadst fulfilled the mystery...')*

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

Tone 6 (from the Pentecostarion)

People: Not parted from the Father’s bosom, O sweetest Jesus, and having lived among those on earth as man, today Thou hast been taken up in glory from the Mount of Olives, and in Thy compassion exalting our fallen nature, Thou hast seated it with the Father. Therefore the heavenly ranks of the Bodiless Powers were amazed at the wonder, and beside themselves with fear; and seized with trembling, they magnified Thy love for mankind. With them, we on earth also give glory for Thy condescension to us and Thine Ascension from us; and we supplicate Thee, saying: “At Thine Ascension Thou didst fill with boundless joy the Disciples and the Theotokos who bore Thee; by their prayers make us also worthy of the joy of Thine elect through Thy great mercy!”

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

Reader: The prokeimenon in the fifth tone:

O God, in Thy name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me!

People: O God, in Thy name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me!

Reader: Hear my prayer, O God; hearken unto the words of my mouth.

People: O God, in Thy name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me!

Reader: O God, in Thy name save me.

People: And in Thy strength do Thou judge me!

Old Testament Readings

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

[Isaiah 2:2-3]

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

[Isaiah 62:10-63:3, 7-9]

Thus saith the Lord: “Go through and enter my gates; prepare My way and make it a way for my people. Cast the stones out of the way; lift up an ensign for the nations. For behold, the Lord has made it to be heard even to the ends of the earth. Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your Savior comes, having His reward with Him, and His work before Him.’ And they shall call them, The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord.” And you shall be called, A City Sought Out, and Not Forsaken. Who is that comes from Edom, his garment red, from Bosrah? Beautiful in his apparel, he cried out with great strength, “I speak of righteousness and a judgment of salvation!” Why are your garments red, and your apparel like his that treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the nations no one was with Me.”

I remember the mercy of the Lord, the virtues of the Lord according to all that He has granted us. The Lord is a good judge to the House of Israel; He deals with us according to His mercies, and according to the abundance of His righteousness. And He said, “Is it not My people? Children that will not be rejected? And He became to them salvation out of all their afflictions. Not a mediator, nor an angel, but the Lord Himself saved them, because He loved them and spared them; He Himself redeemed them and accepted them, and lifted them up all the days of the age.

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Zechariah.

[Zechariah 14:1, 4, 8-11]

Thus saith the Lord: “Behold, the days of the Lord shall come, and His feet shall stand in those days on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem toward the east. And in those days living water shall come forth out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; and so shall it be in the harvest time and in the spring. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in those days there shall be one Lord. His name shall be one, encompassing all the earth, and the wilderness, from Geba to Rimmon, opposite the crest of Jerusalem. And she shall be lifted up, and abide in her place; from the gates of Benjamin to the place of the former gates, and to the gate of the corners, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king’s winepresses, they shall dwell in her. And no longer shall there be a curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell securely.”

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

Tone 2 (from the Pentecostarion)

People: Thou wast born, as Thou Thyself didst will, and didst appear as Thou Thyself didst desire; Thou didst suffer in the flesh, O our God, and didst rise from the dead, having trampled on death. Thou wast taken up in glory, filling all things, and Thou didst send us the Divine Spirit, that we may praise and glorify Thy Godhead.

Reader: O clap your hands, all ye peoples. Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

People: As Thou wast taken up, O Christ, from the Mount of Olives, the Powers saw it and cried to one another: "Who is this?" And they were told: "This is He Who is Strong and Mighty, this is He Who is mighty in war, this is truly the King of Glory." "And why are His garments crimson?" "He has come from Bosor, that is, from the flesh." But as God Thou didst sit down at the right hand of Majesty and hast sent us the Holy Spirit to guide and save our souls.

Reader: God has gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet!

People: Thou didst ascend in glory from the Mount of Olives, O Christ our God, in the presence of Thy Disciples, and didst sit down at the right hand of the Father, Thou Who in Thy Godhead dost fill the universe; and Thou didst send unto them the Holy Spirit, Who enlightens and strengthens and sanctifies our souls.

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

Tone 6 (from the Pentecostarion)

People: God hath gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet, to raise up Adam's fallen image, and send the Comforter Spirit, to sanctify our souls.

Prayer of St. Symeon

People: 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.

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

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, 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, now and ever, and unto 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.

Troparion

People: Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, granting joy to Thy Disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing, they were assured that Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world!

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 in glory ascended from us into heaven and sat at the right hand of the God and Father, 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.