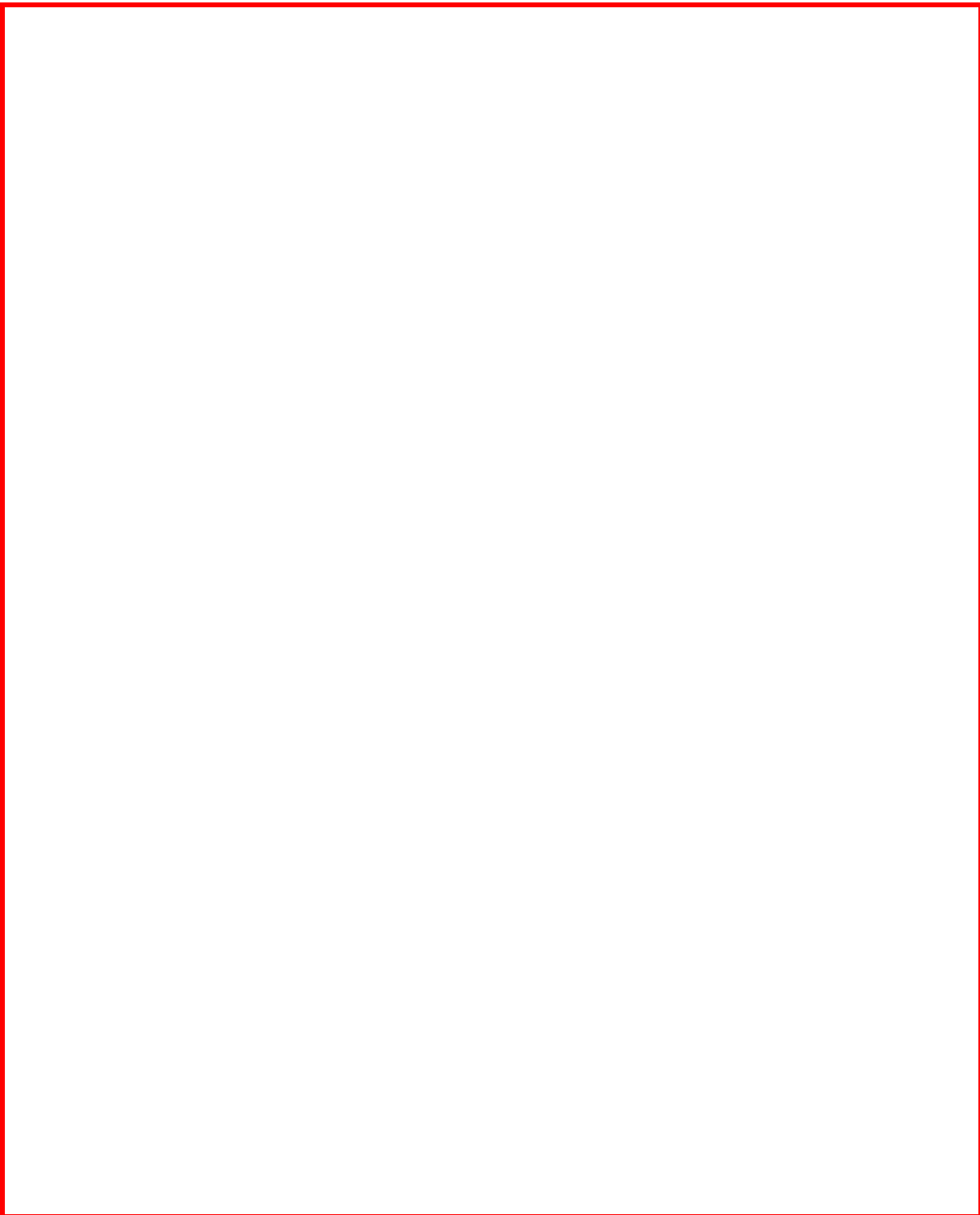


# Great Vespers on Holy Friday



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*Before the start of Great Vespers, the Crucifix is removed from the center of the church, and in its place we arrange a tomb. Around the tomb are placed candlelabra with unlit candles. The holy epitaphion (plashchanitsa) is placed upon the holy table, over the antimimension, with the head of Christ to the priest's left as he faces the holy table. The holy Gospel is placed on the epitaphion. A processional candlestick or lamp is placed in front of the epitaphion.*

*The priest, in epitrachelion, opens the curtain. He comes out before the holy doors and begins,*

**Priest:** Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Reader: Amen.

Glory to thee, our 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.

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. **(thrice)**

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 the evil one.

**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.

*The priest quietly reads the **Prayers of Light**, with head uncovered.*

Lord, have mercy. **(twelve times)**

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.

### **Psalm 103**

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 Your 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. **(thrice)**

*If no deacon is serving, the priest remains before the holy doors to say the **Great Litany**.*

### **Great Litany**

**Deacon:** In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Choir:** R. Lord, have mercy. *(And so after each of the following petitions.)*

**Deacon:** For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord. R.

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. R.

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

For our Metropolitan N., for our Bishop [or Archbishop] N., for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, and for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord. R.

For this country, its President [or the title of the highest civil authority], for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord. R.

For this city, for every city and countryside, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord. R.

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

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. R.

That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord. R.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by thy grace. R.

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.

*The deacon (or priest, if no deacon is serving) does a full censuring of the Church.*

## **Psalm 140**

### **First Tone**

**Choir:** 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 a watch, O Lord, over my mouth, and a door of restraint before my lips. Incline not my heart unto evil words, to imagine excuses for sins with men who work wickedness; yea, I will have no doings with their elect. The righteous shall chasten me with mercy, and reprove me, but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head, for my prayer is yet more against their good favor. Their judges were swallowed up close by the rock; they will hear my words, for they have prevailed. As a clod of earth is broken upon the ground, so were their bones strewn beside hell. For unto thee, Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes; in thee have I put my trust; O take not my soul away. Keep me from the snare that they have laid for me, and from the traps of them that do wickedness. The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone, until I have gone by.

## **Psalm 141**

I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make supplication. I will pour out my petition before him; I will declare before him my trouble. When my spirit would falter within me, then thou knewest my paths; in this way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked upon my right hand and saw, and there was no man that would know me; I had no place to flee unto, and there was no one looking

out for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, thou art my hope; thou art my portion in the land of the living. Consider my petition, for I am brought very low; O deliver me from my persecutors, for they have become too strong for me. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto thy name. The righteous await me, until thou shalt requite me. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.

Let thine ears be attentive unto the voice of my supplication.

**Choir:** The whole creation was changed by fear, when it saw thee, O Christ, hanging on the Cross. The sun was darkened and the foundations of the earth were shaken; all things suffered with the Creator of all. Of thine own will thou hast endured this for our sakes: O Lord, glory to thee.

**Reader:** For thy Name's sake have I waited for thee, O Lord, my soul hath waited for thy word; my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

**Choir:** The whole creation was changed by fear...

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

### Second Tone

**Choir:** Why does the impious and transgressing people imagine vain things? Why have they condemned to death the Life of all? O mighty wonder! The Creator of the world is delivered into the hands of lawless men, and he who loves mankind is raised upon the Cross, that he may free the prisoners in hell, who cry: O longsuffering Lord, glory to thee.

**Reader:** For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

**Choir:** Today the most pure Virgin saw thee hanging on the Cross, O Word; and with a mother's love she wept and bitterly her heart was wounded. She groaned in anguish from the depth of her soul, and in her grief she struck her face and tore her hair.

And, beating her breast, she cried lamenting: "Woe is me, my divine Child! Woe is me, thou Light of the world! Why dost thou vanish from my sight, O Lamb of God?"

Then the hosts of angels were seized with trembling, and they said: "O Lord beyond our understanding, glory to thee."

### Psalm 116

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

**Choir:** Seeing thee hanging on the Cross, O Christ the Creator and God of all, bitterly thy Virgin Mother cried: “O my Son, where is the beauty of thy form? I cannot bear to look upon thee crucified unjustly. Make haste, then, to arise, that I too may see thy Resurrection on the third day from the dead.”

**Reader:** For his merciful kindness is ever more and more towards us, and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.

### Sixth Tone

**Choir:** Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate; today the Maker of all things is given up to the Cross, and of his own will he is led as a lamb to the slaughter. He who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails; his side is pierced, and a sponge with vinegar touches his lips. The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face, and the Creator 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 in their wickedness they know not what they do.”

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

**Choir:** See how the lawless synagogue has condemned to death the King of the Creation! They were not ashamed when he recalled his blessings, saying: “O my people, what have I done unto you? Have I not filled Judaea with miracles? Have I not raised the dead by my word alone? Have I not healed every sickness and disease? How then have ye repaid me? Why have ye forgotten me? In return for healing, ye have given me blows; in return for life, ye are putting me to death. Ye hang upon the Cross your Benefactor as an evildoer, your Lawgiver as a transgressor of the Law, the King of all as one condemned.” O longsuffering Lord, glory to thee.

**Reader:** Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Choir:** A dread and marvellous mystery we see come to pass this day. He whom none may touch is seized; he who looses Adam from the curse is bound. He who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial. He who closed the abyss is shut in prison. He before whom the powers 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 Destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb. O thou who dost endure all these things in thy tender love, who hast saved all men from the curse, O longsuffering Lord, glory to thee.

**Little Entrance**



*During the singing of the sticheron at Now and ever..., the holy doors are opened and the Entrance is made with the Gospel.*

**Deacon:** Let us pray to the Lord.

**Priest:** *(silently)* In the evening and in the morning and at noonday we praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks to thee, and we pray unto thee, O Master of all, Lord who lovest mankind: Direct thou our prayer as incense before thee, and incline not our hearts unto words or thoughts of evil, but deliver us from all who seek after our souls. For unto thee, Lord, O Lord, lift we up our eyes, and in thee have we hoped. Put us not to shame, O our God. 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. Amen.

**Deacon:** Bless, master, the holy entrance.

**Priest:** Blessed is the entrance of thy saints, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

**Deacon:** Wisdom. Let us attend.

### **O Gladsome Light**

**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.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

**Priest:** Peace be unto all.

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The Prokeimenon in the fourth tone. They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

### **Prokeimenon**

#### **Fourth Tone**

**Choir:** They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

**Reader:** O God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me?

**Choir:** They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

**Reader:** They parted my garments among them.

**Choir:** And cast lots upon my vesture. The holy doors are closed.

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The reading from Exodus.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

### **Exodus 33:11–23**

**Reader:** The Lord spoke to Moses, as if one should speak to his friend; and he returned to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, departed not from the Tabernacle. And Moses said to the Lord, “Behold, thou didst command me to lead forth this people, but thou hast not showed me whom thou wilt send with me; but thou hast said to me, ‘I know thee above all, and thou hast found favor with me.’ If, then, I have found grace in thy sight, reveal thyself to me, that I may see thee clearly, that I may find grace in thy sight, and that I may know that this great nation is thy people.” And the Lord said to him, “I myself will go before thee, and I will give thee rest.” And Moses said to him, “If thou thyself dost not go with us, bring me not up from here. And how shall it be surely known that both I and thy people have found grace with thee, except thou go with us? So both I and thy people shall be glorified beyond all the nations, as many as are upon the earth.” And the Lord said to Moses, “This word also, which thou hast spoken, I will do; for thou hast found grace before me, and I know thee above all.” And Moses said, “Show me thy glory.” And the Lord said to Moses, “I will go before thee with my glory, and I will call out my name, ‘the Lord’ before thee; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” And again he said, “Thou shalt not be able to see my face, for man shall not see my face and live.”

And again the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by me; thou shalt stand upon the rock. And when my glory shall pass by, then I will put thee in a cleft of the rock; and I will cover thee with mine hand, until I pass by. And I will take away mine hand, and then thou shalt see my backside; but my face shall not appear to thee.”

*The holy doors are opened.*

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The Prokeimenon in the fourth tone. Judge them, O Lord, that wrong me: fight against them that fight against me.

**Prokeimenon**

**Fourth Tone**

**Choir:** Judge them, O Lord, that wrong me: fight against them that fight against me.

**Reader:** They rewarded me evil for good.

**Choir:** Judge them, O Lord, that wrong me: fight against them that fight against me.

**Reader:** Judge them, O Lord, that wrong me.

**Choir:** Fight against them that fight against me.

*The holy doors are closed.*

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The reading from Job.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

### **Job 42:12–17**

**Reader:** The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than the former; and his live-stock were fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she-asses of the pastures. And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters. And he called the first Day, the second Cassia, and the third Amaltheia's Horn. And there were not found under heaven any like in magnificence to Job's daughters. And their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. Job lived after his affliction a hundred and seventy years; all the years he lived were two-hundred and forty-eight. And Job saw his sons and his sons' sons, even unto the fourth generation. And Job died, an old man—full of days, and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up. This man is described in the Syriac Book as living in the land of Ausitis on the borders of Idumea and Arabia.

And his name before was Jobab. And having taken an Arabian wife, he begot a son whose name was Ennon. And he was the son of Zareh, his father, a son of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth from Abraham.

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The reading is from the prophecy of Isaiah.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

### **Isaiah 52:13–54:1**

**Reader:** Thus says the Lord, "Behold, my servant shall understand, and he shall be exalted and glorified exceedingly. As many shall be amazed at thee, so shall thy face be without glory among men, and thy glory not honored among the sons of men.

Thus shall many nations wonder about him; and kings shall stop their mouths. For they to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see; and they that heard not shall consider. O Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? We have brought a report like a child before him; he is like a root in thirsty ground, he hath no form or glory. And we have seen him; and he had no form or comeliness. But his form was dishonorable, inferior beyond all the sons of men: a man in misfortunes, and acquainted with the bearing of infirmities; for his face was turned away, and he was dishonored and esteemed not. He beareth our sins and is afflicted for us, and we have accounted him as one in pain, as one in misfortunes sent from God, and in torment. But he was wounded for our sins, and tortured for our transgressions; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we were healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; every man hath strayed from his way; and the Lord gave him up for our sins. And he, because he was tormented, openeth not his mouth; he was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth; because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death. And I will give the wicked for his burial, and the rich for his death; for he hath done no iniquity, nor was there deceit in his mouth. The Lord also desires to purge him from afflictions. If thou art given up for sins, thy soul shall see a long-lived seed.

The Lord also desireth with his own hand to take away travail from his soul, to show him the light, and to form him with understanding; to justify the righteous one who serveth many well. And he shall bear their sins. Therefore, he shall inherit many things, and he shall divide the spoils of the mighty, because his soul was delivered to death and he was numbered with the transgressors. And he bore the sins of many, and was delivered up for their iniquities. Rejoice, O barren one that bore not; break forth and cry aloud, thou that travailed not in childbirth; for many more are the children of the desolate one, than of her that has a husband.

*The holy doors are opened.*

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The Prokeimenon in the sixth tone. They laid me in the lowest pit: in dark places and in the shadow of death.

**Prokeimenon**

**Sixth Tone**

**Choir:** They laid me in the lowest pit: in dark places and in the shadow of death.

**Reader:** O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee.

**Choir:** They laid me in the lowest pit: in dark places and in the shadow of death.

**Reader:** They laid me in the lowest pit.

**Choir:** In dark places and in the shadow of death.

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Reader:** The first epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

### 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:2; §125

**Reader:** Brethren, the message of the Cross is foolishness to them that perish, but unto 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 world? Hath 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 the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which 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 ye see your calling, brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised, God hath chosen, yea, 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 are you in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, “He that 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 unto you the testimony of God. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ—and him crucified.

**Priest:** Peace be unto thee, reader.

**Reader:** And to thy spirit.

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

## First Tone

**Reader:** The Alleluia in the first tone. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Save me, O God: for the waters are come in, even unto my soul.

**Choir:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Reader:** They gave me gall to eat: and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

**Choir:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Reader:** Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not.

**Choir:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Deacon:** And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

**Deacon:** Wisdom. Stand upright. Let us hear the holy Gospel.

**Priest:** Peace be unto all.

**Choir:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** The reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**Choir:** Glory to thy passion, O Lord.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

**Matthew 27:1–38; Luke 23:39–43; Matthew 27:39–54;**

**John 19:31–37; Matthew 27:55–61**

**Priest:** At that time, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel 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, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.” And they said, “What is that to us? see thou to that.” And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, “It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.” And they took counsel, and bought with them the potters’ field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, “The field of blood,” unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did

value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said unto him, "Thou sayest." And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?" And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them,

"Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" They said, "Barabbas." Pilate saith unto them, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" They all say unto him, "Let him be crucified." And the governor said, "Why, what evil hath he done?" But they cried out the more, saying, "Let him be crucified." When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." Then answered all the people, and said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon 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!" And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, "They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." And sitting down they watched him there; and set up over his head his accusation written, "This Is Jesus The King Of The Jews."

Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." But the other answering rebuked him, saying,

"Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." And he said unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be 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.'" The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying,

"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is to say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, "This man calleth for Elias." And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God." The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." And again another scripture saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced." And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the



mother of Zebedees children. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

**Choir:** Glory to thy longsuffering, O Lord.

*After the reading of the Holy Gospel, the holy doors are closed, and the deacon comes out before them (or, if no deacon is serving, the priest says the following Litany from before the holy table).*

### **Augmented Litany**

**Deacon:** Let us say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** O Lord almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great goodness, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

**Choir:** R. Lord, have mercy. **(thrice)** *(And so after each of the following petitions.)*

**Deacon:** Again we pray for our Metropolitan N., for our Bishop [or Archbishop] N., and for all our brethren in Christ. R.

Again we pray for this country, its President (or title of the highest civil authority), for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces. R.

Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable holy Orthodox Patriarchs; and for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church (or holy monastery); [for NN.,] 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. R.

Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God, [NN., and for] the brethren of this holy temple, and for the pardon and remission of their sins. R.

Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable temple; for those who labor and those who sing; and for all the people here present, who await thy great and rich mercy. R.

**Priest:** For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee do we send up 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, that we may be kept this evening without sin. Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is 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 statutes. Blessed art thou, O Holy One: enlighten me with thy statutes.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever; despise not the works of thy hands. To thee is due praise; to thee is due a song; to thee is due glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **The Evening Litany**

**Deacon:** Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy.

**Deacon:** Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy.

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

**Choir:** R. Grant this, O Lord. *(And so after each of the following petitions.)*

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

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

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

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

A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and a good defence before the dread Judgment Seat of Christ, let us ask. R.

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 do we send up 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 thy spirit.

**Deacon:** Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

**Choir:** To thee, O Lord.

**Priest:** O Lord our God, who didst bow the heavens and come down for the salvation of mankind: Look upon thy servants and thine inheritance; for unto thee, the fearful Judge who yet lovest mankind, have thy servants bowed their heads and submissively inclined their necks, awaiting not help from men but entreating thy mercy and looking confidently for thy salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil and from vain thoughts and from evil imaginations.

Blessed and glorified be the might 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.

*The deacon returns to the altar.*

*The **main celebrant alone now fully vests as for the Divine Liturgy.** Any concelebrating priests wear the epitrachelion, cuffs, and phelonion.*

### **Aposticha**

#### **Second Tone**

**Choir:** Down from the Tree Joseph of Arimathaea took thee dead, who art the Life of all, and he wrapped thee, O Christ, in a linen cloth with spices. Moved in his heart by love, he kissed thy most pure body with his lips; yet, drawing back in fear, he cried to thee rejoicing: "Glory to thy self-abasement, O thou who lovest mankind."

**Reader:** The Lord is King: he is robed in majesty.

**Choir:** When thou, the Redeemer of all, wast laid for the sake of all in a new tomb, hell was brought to scorn and, seeing thee, drew back in fear. The bars were broken and the gates were shattered, the tombs were opened and the dead arose. Then

Adam in thanksgiving and rejoicing cried to thee: “Glory to thy self-abasement, O thou who lovest mankind.”

**Reader:** For he hath made the world so sure that it shall not be moved.

**Choir:** In the flesh thou wast of thine own will enclosed within the tomb, yet in thy divine nature thou dost remain uncircumscribed and limitless. Thou hast shut up the treasury of hell, O Christ, and emptied all his palaces. Thou hast honored this Sabbath with thy divine blessing, with thy glory and thy radiance.

**Reader:** Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, unto length of days.

**Choir:** The powers of heaven beheld thee, O Christ, falsely accused by lawless men as a deceiver, and they saw the stone before thy tomb sealed by the hands which had pierced thy most pure side; and they were filled with fear at thine ineffable forbearance. Yet, rejoicing at our salvation, they cried aloud to thee: “Glory to thy self-abasement, O thou who lovest mankind.”

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

*The holy doors are opened. The main celebrant and the deacon cense around the holy table three times. The people light their candles.*

### **Fifth Tone**

**Choir:** Joseph with Nicodemus took thee down from the Tree, who deckest thyself with light as with a garment; and looking upon thee dead, stripped, and without burial, in his grief and tender compassion he lamented, saying: “Woe is me, my sweetest Jesus! When but a little while ago the sun saw thee hanging on the Cross, it wrapped itself in darkness: the earth quaked with fear and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. And now I see thee for my sake submitting of thine own will to death. How shall I bury thee, my God? How shall I wrap thee in a winding sheet? How shall I touch thy most pure body with my hands? What song at thy departure shall I sing to thee, O compassionate Saviour? I magnify thy sufferings; I sing the praises of thy burial and thy Resurrection, crying: O Lord, glory to thee.”

**Reader:** 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 people: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

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

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. **(thrice)**

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 the evil one.

**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.

*All the clergy and servers make three prostrations towards the holy table. The epitaphion is taken up by the priest. Concelebrating priests or pious laymen assist the priest in holding the epitaphion above the priest's head. The priest holds the holy Gospel. Going by the south side of the altar, the epitaphion is preceded by processional candles, fans, and by the deacon with the incense. They process around the altar by way of the high place and exit the north deacon's door, the feet of Christ pointing forward. When the epitaphion is placed on the tomb, the head of Christ is to the north (left as one faces the altar), and the feet point south (right).*

*A folded aer is placed on the center of the Body of Christ, and the small Gospel is then placed upon it (the wounds are exposed for veneration; only the hands and feet are kissed). The priest and deacon cense, going around three times. After the censuring, they make two prostrations, kiss the feet and hands of our Lord, and make a third prostration.*

*If not already done, the celebrant may then sprinkle the epitaphion with rose water and scatter flowers over it.*

## Troparion

### Second Tone

**Choir:** Noble Joseph, taking down thy most pure body from the Tree, wrapped it in clean linen with sweet spices, and he laid 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 stood by the tomb, and to the women bearing spices he cried aloud: "Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown himself a stranger to corruption."

*A homily is now given. The clergy remain before the tomb for the dismissal.*

**Deacon:** Wisdom.

**Choir:** Father bless.

**Priest:** Blessed be He Who Is, Christ our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

**Choir:** Amen. Confirm, O God, the holy Orthodox faith of 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 corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**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. **(thrice)**

Father bless.

**Priest:** May he who for us men and for our salvation endured in the flesh the dread passion, the life-giving Cross and voluntary burial, Christ our true God, through the prayers of his most pure Mother, and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for he is good and loves mankind.

**Choir:** Amen.

*The epitaphion is then venerated by the clergy and by all the faithful, each making three great prostrations to the ground, two before kissing the epitaphion and one after. The holy doors and curtain are closed.*

*By custom, the choir now sings the following while the people venerate the epitaphion:*

### **Fifth Tone**

**Choir:** Come and let us bless Joseph of everlasting memory, who came to Pilate by night and begged for the Life of all: “Give me this stranger, who has no place to lay his head. Give me this stranger, whom his evil disciple delivered to death. Give me this stranger, whom his Mother saw hanging on the Cross, and with a mother’s sorrow she cried weeping: ‘Woe is me, my Child! Woe is me, Light of mine eyes and beloved fruit of my womb! For what Simeon foretold in the temple is come to pass today: a sword pierces my heart, but do thou change my grief to gladness by thy Resurrection.’”

We venerate thy passion, O Christ.

We venerate thy passion, O Christ.

We venerate thy passion, O Christ, and thy holy Resurrection.

*Immediately, we begin Small Compline. After the Creed, the priest reads the Canon of the Crucifixion of our Lord in the corresponding section of the Triodion, read in front, and slightly to the side, of the tomb, so there is room for the faithful to continue venerating the epitaphion. In place of ending the canon with It is truly meet..., we instead repeat the irmos of the ninth ode: No man is able to see God... The kontakion is Come, and let us all sing the praises... as at Royal Hours.*

*Readers are appointed from the parish to keep watch at the tomb, reading from the Psalter.*



**SAINT NICHOLAS**  
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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