

Vespers for Great & Holy Friday As a Reader Service

This service is read at 3pm on Friday

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

Reader: 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 dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. **Thrice.**

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. **Thrice.**

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.

Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

Lord have mercy. **Twelve Times.**

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

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, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. *Thrice.*

Choir: Lord, have mercy. *Twelve Times*

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

Choir: Amen.

Reader: In the **1st Tone:** Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me.

Choir: Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me. * Harken unto me, O Lord. * Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me; * attend to the voice of my supplication, * when I cry unto Thee. * Harken unto me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be set forth * as incense before Thee, * the lifting up of my hands * as an evening sacrifice. * Harken unto 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.

**[6] If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? *
For with Thee there is forgiveness.**

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 Thy own will thou hast endured this for our sakes: //

O Lord, glory to Thee.

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

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 Thy own will thou hast endured this for our sakes: //
O Lord, glory to Thee.

[4] From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch * let Israel hope in the Lord.

Tone 2: 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 long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee.

[3] For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; * and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

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."

[2] O praise the Lord, all ye nations; * praise Him, all ye peoples.

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."

[1] For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, * and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

Tone 6: 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."

Glory... Same Tone: 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 long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee.

Both now...Same Tone:

A dread and marvelous mystery we 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 closes the abyss in shut in prison. /
He before whom the powers of heaven stand with trembling, /
stands before Pilate; /
the Creator of all 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 long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee.

Senior Reader: O Gladsome Light.

Choir: O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father, O Jesus Christ: Having come to the setting of the sun, having beheld the evening light, we praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: God. Meet it is for Thee at all times to be praised with gladsome voices, O Son of God, Giver of life. Wherefore, the world doth glorify Thee.

Reader: The Prokimenon in the 4th Tone: They have parted my garments amongst themselves, and for my vesture have they cast lots.

Choir: They have parted my garments amongst themselves, and for my vesture have they cast lots.

Reader: O God, My God, look upon Me: why hast Thou forsaken Me?

Choir: They have parted my garments amongst themselves, and for my vesture have they cast lots.

Reader: They have parted my garments amongst themselves.

Choir: And for my vesture have they cast lots.

Reader: The Reading is from Exodus [33:11-23].

The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as if one should speak unto his friend: and he turned again into the camp: but his attendant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Lead up this people: but Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me; and Thou hast said unto me, I know thee above all, and thou hast favor in My sight. If then I have found favor in Thy sight, reveal Thyself unto me, that I may evidently see Thee, that I may find favor in Thy sight, and that I may know that this nation is Thy people. And He saith, I Myself will go before thee, and I will give thee rest. And he saith unto Him, If Thou go not up with us Thyself, lead me not up hence. And wherein shall it be surely known, that I have found favor with Thee, both I and Thy people except only if Thou go with us? So shall we be glorified, both I and Thy people, beyond all the nations, as many as are upon the earth. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also for thee that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found favor before Me, and I know thee above all others. And he saith, Shew me Thine own glory. And he said, I will pass by before thee in My glory, and I will call by My name, LORD, before thee; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have pity on whom I will have pity. And He said, Thou shalt not be able to see My face: for there shall no man see My face, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me: thou shalt stand upon the rock; and whensoever My glory passeth by, then I will put thee into a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand, until I shall have passed by. And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not appear unto thee.

Reader: The Prokimenon in the **4th Tone:** Judge them, O Lord, that do me injustice; war against them that war against me.

Choir: Judge them, O Lord, that do me injustice; war against them that war against me.

Reader: They rewarded Me evil for good.

Choir: Judge them, O Lord, that do me injustice; war against them that war against me.

Reader: Judge them, O Lord, that do me injustice.

Choir: War against them that war against me.

Reader: The Reading is from Job [42:12-17]

The Lord blessed the latter end of Job, more than the beginning: and his cattle were fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, a thousand she asses of the pastures. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. And he called the first Day, and the second Cassia, and the third, Amalthia's Horn. And in all the world were there not found in comparison with the daughters of Job fairer than they: and their father gave them an inheritance among their brethren. And Job lived after his affliction an hundred and seventy years: and all the years that he lived were two hundred and forty: and Job saw his sons, and his son's sons, the fourth generation. And Job died, an old man full of days: and it is written that he will rise again with those whom God raiseth up. This man is described in the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausitis, on the borders of Edom and Arabia: and his name before was Jobab; And having taken an Arabian wife, he begat a son whose name was Ennon: and he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorra, so that he was the fifth from Abraham.

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah [52:13-54:1]:

Thus saith the Lord: Behold, My servant shall understand, and be exalted, and glorified exceedingly. As many shall be amazed at Thee, so shall Thy face be without glory from men, and Thy glory from the sons of men. Thus shall many nations wonder at Him; and kings shall keep their mouths shut: for they to whom no report was brought concerning Him, shall see; and they who have not heard, shall consider. O Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? We brought a report as of a child before Him; He is as a root in a thirsty land: He has no form nor comeliness; and we saw Him, but He had no form nor beauty. But His form was ignoble, and inferior to that of the children of men; He was a man of suffering, and acquainted with the bearing of sickness, for His face is turned from us, He was dishonored, and not esteemed. He bears our sins, and is pained for us: yet we accounted Him to be in trouble, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we were healed. All we as sheep have gone astray; every one has gone astray in his way; and the Lord gave Him up for our sins. And He, because of His affliction, openeth not His mouth: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer 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 practiced no iniquity, nor craft with His mouth. The Lord also is pleased to purge

Him from His wounds; if ye can give an offering for sin, your soul shall see a long-lived seed: the Lord also is pleased to take away from the travail of His soul, to show Him light, and to form Him with understanding; to justify the just one who serves many well; and He shall bear their sins. Therefore He shall inherit many, and he shall divide the spoils of the mighty; because His soul was delivered to death: and He was numbered among the transgressors; and He bore the sins of many, and was delivered because of their iniquities. Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that dost not travail: for more are the children of the desolate than of her that has a husband.

Reader: The Prokimenon in the **6th Tone:** They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and the shadow of death.

Choir: They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and the shadow of death.

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

Choir: They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and the shadow of death.

Reader: They laid me in the lowest pit.

Choir: In darkness and the shadow of death.

Reader: The Reading from the First Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians [1:18-2:2].

Brethren: the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will 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 after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, 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. Because

the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how 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 base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

Reader: Alleluia in the **1st Tone:** Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

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

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

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

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Gospel

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

Choir: Glory to Thy Passion, O Lord, glory to thee.

[Matthew 27:1-38; Luke 23:39-43; Matthew 27:39-54; John 19:31-37; Matthew 27:55-61]

Senior Reader: 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 potter's 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 Elijah. 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. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: 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, glory to Thee.

Lord, have mercy. *Twelve Times.*

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

Choir: Amen.

Choir: Amen.

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, give me understanding of Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes.

O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the work of Thy hands. To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to 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.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. *Twelve Times.*

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

The Aposticha

Tone 2 [spec. mel.: “When from the Tree”]:

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."

*The Lord is King * He is clothed with majesty.*

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."

*For He established the world * which shall not be shaken.*

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.

Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.*

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."

Glory... Both now... Tone 5:

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 short 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 Savior? /
I magnify Thy sufferings; /
I sing the praises of Thy Burial and Thy Resurrection, //
crying: O Lord, glory to Thee!"

The prayer of St. Symeon:

Choir: Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *Thrice.*

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. *Thrice.*

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.

Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Choir: Amen.

The Dismissal Troparia

Tone 2: The Noble Joseph, /
taking Thy most pure body down from the Tree /
and having wrapped it in pure linen and spices, //
laid it in a new tomb.

Glory... Both now... Tone 2:

Unto the myrrh-bearing women /
did the angel cry out as he stood by the grave: /
Myrrh is meet for the dead, //
but Christ hath proved a stranger to corruption.

During this time, if one is available, the Epitaphios, is placed in the middle of the Temple, or prayer room, in a place where it can be venerated.

The Dismissal

Choir: Establish, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith of Orthodox Christians unto the ages of ages.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim; who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

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

Lord have mercy. ***Thrice.***

O Lord, bless.

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, of _____ (*The Patron of the Temple*), and all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Choir: Amen.

After the Dismissal the faithful come up to venerate the Epitaphios, while the choir sings:

Tone 5: 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, O my Child! /
Woe is me, Light of mine eyes and beloved fruit of my womb! /
For what Symeon 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!

The Many Years

Our Great Lord and Father Kyrill, /
the Most-holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; /
our Lord the Very Most Reverend Metropolitan Hilarion; /
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, /
our Lord the Most Reverend Archbishop Peter; /
the brotherhood of this holy temple, and all Orthodox Christians: //
preserve, O Lord, for many years.

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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