

SERVICE-BOOK FOR CLERGY



VESPERS

Metropolitan Cantor Institute
Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh
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This book was prepared by the Metropolitan Cantor Institute of the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, for the use of its priests and deacons in the celebration of Vespers.

The texts here were prepared by the Inter-Eparchial Liturgical Commission, but should be considered unofficial and provisional until such time as an official texts for Vespers is promulgated by the Council of Hierarchs.

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GENERAL NORMS

In the rubrics, the following have been employed as technical terms:

- **“To incense”** means to swing the censer with three strokes. Thus to incense three times means to make nine strokes.
- **“To intone”** is to chant a text simply and with raised voice. This term is employed for doxologies and for many other parts proper to the priest or the deacon.
- **“To bow”** means to incline the head at the shoulders while making the sign of the cross without extending the hand to the knees or to the ground either before or after the sign of the cross.
- **“To make a great bow or prostration”** means to make the sign of the cross, kneel, and then touch the forehead to the floor. Those who cannot make a full prostration may make a **profound bow**, touching the floor with the fingers and making the sign of the cross on themselves.

Whenever a priest celebrates Great Vespers in the absence of a deacon, the priest omits **“Reverend Father, bless the holy entrance”** at the Little Entrance.

If there are concelebrating priests, they come to the holy table at Psalm 140 for the Little Entrance. Each is vested in epitrachilion and phelonion. They process in the Little Entrance as at the Divine Liturgy. In the absence of a deacon, concelebrants may intone:

- The deacon’s exclamations before the readings.
- **“Bow your heads to the Lord.”** At the Litija, a concelebrant may also intone **“All-merciful Master.”**
- **“Let us pray to the Lord”** at the blessing of the bread, wheat, wine, and oil.
- **“Wisdom”** at the dismissal.

Regarding litanies, in the absence of a deacon:

- The Litany of Fervent Supplication, together with its doxology, may be intoned by a concelebrant.
- The Angel of Peace Litany may be intoned by a concelebrant. The prayer and doxology is to be prayed by the celebrant.
- At the Litija (when included), up to two concelebrating priests may each intone the petitions. One concelebrant may intone the first and third petitions, and another concelebrant may intone the second petition.

In the absence of a deacon:

- The celebrant intones the Litany of Peace.
- The celebrant performs the initial incensation.
- The celebrant opens and closes the holy doors.
- The celebrant carries the censer in the Little Entrance and incenses during “**O Joyful Light.**”
- The celebrant chants the verses at the Prokeimenon.
- The celebrant incenses the gifts on the tetrapod if there is Litija.

At the Litija (when included), the 12 times singing of “**Lord, have mercy**” that follows the second and third petitions may be sung in Greek or other languages to express the universality of the Church.

THE ORDER OF GREAT VESPERS

The priest vests in the epitrachilion. The deacon, having received the blessing from the celebrant, vests in the sticharion and orarion.

The celebrant leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. The deacon remains in the sanctuary. Standing in his place before the holy doors, the celebrant makes three small bows, saying nothing. Then he intones:

Celebrant: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever. [*or if Divine Liturgy is to follow: Blessed is the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.*]

Response: Amen.

If the Ninth Hour has immediately preceded Vespers, or if the Divine Liturgy will follow Vespers, continue with “Come, let us worship our King” on page 8.

Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.¹

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung in place of “Glory to you” and “Heavenly King.”

Celebrant: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.

Response: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.² (*Twice*)

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,³ have mercy on us. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.⁴

Celebrant: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen

Come, let us worship our King and God.

Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God.

Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus
Christ the King and our God.⁵

And the faithful begin Psalm 103 (“Bless the Lord, O my soul! Lord my God, how great you are.”)

During the singing of Psalm 103, the celebrant, remaining in his usual place before the holy doors, says the Vesper Prayers of Light quietly.

PRAYERS OF LIGHT

1. Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and rich in mercy,⁶ give ear to my prayer and attend to the sound of my plea.⁷ Show us a sign of your favor;⁸ guide us in your way so that we may walk in your truth.⁹ Gladden our hearts that we may fear your holy name, for you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God,¹⁰ and among the gods there is none like you,¹¹ O Lord. Powerful in mercy and gracious in strength, you help, comfort, and save all those who hope in your holy name.¹² For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

2. Lord, do not rebuke us in your anger, nor punish us in your wrath.¹³ Deal with us according to your kindness, O Physician and Healer of our souls. Guide us to the harbor of your will;¹⁴ enlighten the eyes of our minds¹⁵ that we may know your truth.¹⁶ Grant that we may spend what remains of this day and the rest of our life peacefully and sinlessly through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints. For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

3. Lord our God, remember us your sinful and useless servants¹⁷ as we call upon your holy and sublime name, and do not put us to shame for hoping in your mercy. Grant us instead, O Lord, all our petitions which lead to salvation, and make us worthy to love and to fear you with all our hearts¹⁸ and to do your will in everything. For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

4. You are praised by the holy powers with hymns that are never silent and in doxologies that never cease. Fill our mouth with your praise¹⁹ that we may ascribe majesty to your holy name. Through the intercession of the holy Theotokos

and of all the saints, give us a share and an inheritance²⁰ with those who fear you in truth and who keep your commandments. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

5. Blessed are you, Lord God almighty. You know the human mind, you know our needs long before we ask or recognize them. Therefore, O loving King, good in every way, allow us in your great mercy to call upon your holy name with a clear conscience,²¹ and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one²², and in your providence, arrange everything for our good. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

6. Lord, O Lord, you hold all things in your spotless hand; you are long-suffering toward all of us, and you repent over our evil deeds. Remember your mercy and your compassion.²³ Visit us²⁴ in your goodness and for the rest of this day enable us to flee from the many wiles of the evil one, and keep our life secure by the grace of your all-holy Spirit. Through the mercy and the loving-kindness of your only-begotten Son with

whom you are blessed, together with your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

7. Great and wonderful God,²⁵ you govern all things with indescribable goodness and rich providence. You have granted us the good things of this earth, and through the good things already bestowed on us, have given us a pledge of the promised kingdom. You have kept us away from every evil during the part of this day which has passed, even until the present moment; now allow us to complete the rest of the day without blame in the presence of your holy glory singing hymns to you, O God, who alone are good and love us all. For you are our God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Toward the end of Psalm 103, the deacon leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. He and the celebrant bow to each other. The deacon goes to his place at the ambon and the celebrant enters the sanctuary by way of the southern door. Then the deacon intones the Litany of Peace, including any special petitions.

LITANY OF PEACE

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

Response: Lord, have mercy.

(The same response is given to each of the following petitions:)

- For peace from on high and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.
- For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.
- For this holy church and for all who enter it with faith, reverence, and fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our holy father *(Name)*, Pope of Rome, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our most reverend Metropolitan *(Name)*, for our God-loving Bishop *(Name)*, for the venerable presbyterate, the diaconate in Christ, and all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our government and for all in the service of our country, let us pray to the Lord.

- For this city [*or*: For this holy monastery], for every city, community, and for the faithful living in them, let us pray to the Lord.
- For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who travel by sea, air, and land, for the sick, the suffering, the captive and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Special petitions may be inserted here.

- That we be delivered from all affliction, wrath, and need, let us pray to the Lord.
- Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.
- Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: To you, O Lord.

The celebrant, standing before the holy table, prays aloud:

Celebrant: Evening, morning, and at noon we praise you, we bless you, we thank you, and we pray to you, Master of All and loving Lord. Let our prayer rise like incense before you and do not let our hearts be turned to evil words or thoughts, but deliver us from all that might ensnare our souls. For to you Lord, O Lord, our eyes are turned and in you we hope; let us not be put to shame, O our God.

For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship,²⁶ now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

After the litany, the deacon enters the sanctuary through the southern door, and stands at the right hand of the celebrant.

The First Kathisma is sung unless it is a Vigil of a Feast of our Lord that falls on a Tuesday through Saturday, as indicated in the Typikon. Usually only selected verses from the first station are sung with refrain.

Blessed is the man, Alleluia,
who follows not the counsel of the wicked.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

For the Lord guards the way of the just
but the way of the wicked leads to doom.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Serve the Lord with awe and trembling,
pay him your homage.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Blessed are they who put their trust in God.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Arise, O Lord; save me, my God.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

O Lord of salvation, bless your people!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Now and ever and forever. Amen.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Then three times, with a bow each time:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Glory to you, O God!

After the First Kathisma, the following Small Litany may be intoned by the deacon, who leaves the sanctuary through the northern door to intone the litany at his usual place at the ambon. If there is no deacon, the priest intones this litany while standing before the holy table.

Deacon: Again and again, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: To you, O Lord.

The celebrant, standing before the holy table, prays aloud:

Celebrant: For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Response: Amen.

THE LAMP-LIGHTING PSALMS

When Psalm 140 begins, the deacon, having had the incense blessed by the celebrant, incenses the whole church as usual: the holy table on all four sides, the apsidal icon, the icon screen, the interior of the church, the faithful, and again the icons of Christ and the Theotokos. After returning to the sanctuary, he incenses the front of the holy table and the celebrant. Meanwhile, the server lights the candles.

The opening verses of Psalm 140 are sung according to the tone of the first sticheron:

Psalm 140:

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me.
Hear me, O Lord!

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me;
receive the voice of my prayer when I call upon you.
Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer ascend to you like incense
and the lifting up of my hands
like an evening sacrifice.
Hear me, O Lord!

The remaining verses are chanted alternately:

O Lord, set a guard before my mouth
and set a seal on the door of my lips.

Let not my heart be inclined to evil,
nor make excuse for the sins I commit.

Let me never share in sinners' feasting.

If a just man strikes or reproves me it is kindness
but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.
Let my prayer be ever against their malice.

The princes were thrown down
by the side of the rock;
then they understood that my words were kind.

As a millstone is shattered to pieces on the ground,
so their bones were strewn
at the mouth of the grave.

To you, Lord God, my eyes are turned;
in you I take refuge; spare my soul!

From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe;
keep me from the snares of those who do evil.

Let the wicked fall into the traps they have set
while I pursue my way unharmed.

Psalm 141:

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,
with all my voice I entreat the Lord.

I pour out my trouble before him;
I tell him all my distress
while my spirit faints within me.

But you, O Lord, know my path.
On the way where I shall walk
they have hidden a snare to entrap me.

Look on my right and see:
there is no one who takes my part.

I have no means of escape,
not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord.
I have said: “You are my refuge,
all I have in the land of the living.”

Listen, then, to my cry
for I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me
for they are stronger than I.

10. Bring my soul out of this prison
and then I shall praise your name.
9. Around me the just will assemble
because of your goodness to me.

Psalm 129:

8. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice!
7. Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.
6. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord,
who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you.
5. My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.

4. Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.
3. Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

Psalm 116:

2. Praise the Lord, all you nations,
acclaim him all you peoples!
1. Strong is the love of the Lord for us;
he is faithful forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Toward the end of the Lamp-lighting Psalms, the celebrant vests in the phelonion. When the “Glory” is sung at the end of the Stichera at the Lamp-Lighting Psalms, the deacon opens the holy doors and receives the censer from the server. The celebrant blesses the incense. The Little Entrance is then made with the censer. They pass to the right and back of the holy table and leave the sanctuary through the northern door.

PRAYER OF THE ENTRANCE

At the holy doors, the deacon stands at the celebrant's right. Facing north, he says to the celebrant:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

The celebrant says quietly:

Celebrant: Good and loving King, who have blessed all things, we fervently implore you with contrite heart and humble spirit²⁷ to bless our comings and goings.²⁸ For your coming and going, and your dwelling among us are blessed, O Christ our true God, always, now and ever and forever. Amen.

When the prayer is concluded, the deacon, holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand and pointing to the east, quietly says to the celebrant:

Deacon: Reverend Father, bless the holy entrance.

The celebrant, blessing, quietly says:

Celebrant: + Blessed is the entrance into your holy of holies,²⁹ always, now and ever and forever.

At the conclusion of the stichera, the deacon faces the holy table, and, lifting the censer a little and making the sign of the cross with it, intones:

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

As the faithful sing “O Joyful Light” the deacon bows, incenses the holy doors, and enters the sanctuary, and the celebrant follows him. The deacon then incenses the holy table on all four sides and then the faithful. After returning to the sanctuary, he incenses the front of the holy table and the celebrant.

Meanwhile, the faithful chant:

O Joyful Light of the holy glory of the Father Immortal, the heavenly, holy, blessed One, O Jesus Christ, now that we have reached the setting of the sun, and see the evening light, we sing to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is fitting at all times to raise a song of praise in measured melody to you, O Son of God, the Giver of Life. Therefore, the universe sings your glory.



THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

Remaining before the holy table, the celebrant and the deacon turn to the faithful and introduce the Prokeimenon. They face the faithful, the celebrant with his hands crossed upon his chest, until the Prokeimenon has been completed.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Celebrant: + **Peace be to all.**

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

The faithful sing the Prokeimenon. The deacon (or the celebrant, if there is no deacon) chants the verse(s).

On Saturday Evening:

Tone 6 (Psalm 92:1,2,5) The Lord reigns, he is clothed in majesty.

Verse: Robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.

Verse: The world he made firm, not to be moved.

Verse: Holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time.

On Sunday Evening:

Tone 8 (Psalm 133:1) Come, bless the Lord, all you who serve the Lord.

Verse: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

On Monday Evening:

Tone 4 (Psalm 4:4,2) The Lord hears me whenever I call him.

Verse: When I call, answer me, O God of Justice.

On Tuesday Evening:

Tone 1 (Psalm 22:6,1,2) Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

Verse: The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want; fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

On Wednesday Evening:

Tone 5 (Psalm 53:3,4) O God, save me by your name, by your power uphold my cause.

Verse: O God, hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth.

On Thursday Evening:

Tone 6 (Psalm 120:2,1) My help shall come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Verse: I lift up my eyes to the mountains, from where shall come my help.

On Friday Evening:

Tone 7 (Psalm 58:10,2) You, O God, are my defender and your mercy goes before me.

Verse: Rescue me, O God, from my foes; protect me from those who attack me.

*On Cheesefare, 2nd Great Fast, and 4th Great Fast
Sunday Evening:*

Special Tone 8 (Psalm 68:18,19,30,33) Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly for I am in distress. Come close to my soul and redeem me.

Verse: Let your help, O God, lift me up.

Verse: The poor when they see it will be glad.

Verse: God-seeking hearts will revive.

*On 1st Great Fast, 3rd Great Fast, and 5th Great Fast
Sunday Evening:*

Special Tone 8 (Psalm 60:6,3,5,9) For you, O God, hear my prayer, grant me the heritage of those who fear you.

Verse: From the end of the earth I call to you; my heart is faint.

Verse: Let me dwell in your tent forever and hide in the shelter of your wings.

Verse: So I shall always praise your name.

*For Feasts of the Lord
(Exaltation of the Cross, Theophany,
Bright Monday, Ascension, Transfiguration):*

Tone 7 (Psalm 113:11,1,2,5) But our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he wills.

Verse: When Israel came forth from Egypt, Jacob's sons from an alien people.

Verse: Judah became the Lord's temple, Israel became his kingdom.

Verse: Why is it, O sea, that you fled; O Jordan, that you turned back?

*For Feasts of the Lord
(Nativity, Pascha, Thomas Sunday, Pentecost):*

Tone 7 (Psalm 76:14,15,11,12) What god is as great as our God? You are the God who works wonders.

Verse: You showed your power among the peoples.

Verse: I said: "This is what causes my grief; that the way of the Most High has changed."

Verse: I remember the deeds of the Lord, I remember your wonders of old.

READINGS

If there are readings, the celebrant, having made a small bow towards the holy table, goes to the chairs behind the holy table, saying nothing. (It is to be noted that a priest, even if he is a protosyncellus or syncellus, does not sit on the central throne, which is reserved for the bishop.)

Before each reading, the deacon, facing the faithful, intones:

Deacon: Wisdom!

The lector announces the title of the Reading:

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

The lector chants the Reading.

When the readings are finished, the celebrant blesses the lector(s), saying quietly:

Celebrant: + Peace be to you, reader(s).

The celebrant returns to the holy table.

The deacon leaves the sanctuary through the northern door and returns to his customary place at the ambon to intone the litany which follows.

If Vespers is to be celebrated together with the Divine Liturgy, then the following Small Litany is intoned by the deacon from his usual place at the ambon. If there is no deacon, the celebrant intones this litany while standing before the holy table.

Deacon: Again and again, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: To you, O Lord.

During the Litany, the celebrant quietly prays the Prayer of the Thrice-Holy Hymn. If there is no deacon, he may pray this prayer quietly with the prayers before the icon screen, or at the end of the Prayers of Light.

Celebrant: Holy God, dwelling in your heavenly sanctuary, praised by the seraphim with the thrice-holy hymn, glorified by the cherubim, and adored by all the heavenly powers, you brought all things from nonexistence into being. You created us in your own image and likeness and adorned us with all your gifts, giving wisdom and understanding to those who ask, not despising those who sin, but establishing

repentance for their salvation. You have allowed us, your humble and unworthy servants, to stand at this very hour before the glory of your holy altar to offer you due worship and praise. Accept, O Master, from the lips of us sinners, the thrice-holy hymn and visit us in your goodness. Forgive us every offense, voluntary and involuntary; sanctify us, soul and body; and grant that we may worship you in holiness all the days of our life, through the prayers of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have pleased you since time began.

The prayer is concluded aloud:

Celebrant: For you are holy, our God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever

Deacon: And forever.

Response: Amen.

The deacon returns to the sanctuary through the southern door, and the celebration of the Divine Liturgy continues with the singing of the Thrice-Holy Hymn.

LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

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

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- O Lord almighty, God of our Fathers, we pray you, hear and have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray you, hear and have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

- Again we pray for our holy father (*Name*), Pope of Rome, and for our most reverend Metropolitan (*Name*), for our God-loving Bishop (*Name*), [*if in a monastery:* our most venerable hieromonks, our Proto-archimandrite (*Name*), our Archimandrite (*Name*), our Proto-hegumen (*Name*), and our Hegumen (*Name*),] for those who serve and have served in this holy church, for our spiritual fathers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

- Again we pray for our government and for all in the service of our country.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

The deacon may intone special petitions here.

- Again we pray for the people here present who await your great and abundant mercy, for those who show us mercy, and for all Christians of the true faith.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

The celebrant intones:

Celebrant: For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

The deacon stands in front of the icon of Christ the Lord while the faithful sing:

Make us worthy, O Lord, to be kept sinless this evening. Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praiseworthy and glorious is your name forever. Amen. May your mercy, O Lord, be upon us who have placed our hope in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your commandments. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your commandments. Blessed are you, O Holy One; enlighten me with your commandments. O Lord, your mercy is forever; despise not the work of your hands. To you is due praise; to you is due a hymn; to you

is glory due, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

The deacon moves back to his customary place to intone the litany.

ANGEL OF PEACE LITANY

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

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- That this whole evening be perfect, holy, peaceful, and without sin, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- For an angel of peace, a faithful guide and guardian of our souls and bodies, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- For the pardon and remission of our sins and offenses, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- For what is good and beneficial to our souls and for peace in the world, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- That we may spend the rest of our life in peace and repentance, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- For a Christian, painless, unashamed, peaceful end of our life, and for a good account before the fearsome judgment-seat of Christ, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: To you, O Lord.

The celebrant prays aloud:

Celebrant: Great and most high God, you alone possess immortality and dwell in unapproachable light. You made all creation with wisdom,³⁰ dividing light from darkness,³¹

establishing the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night.³² You have allowed us sinners to approach your presence with thanksgiving³³ in this present hour and to offer you evening praise. O loving Lord, make our prayer ascend to you like incense³⁴ and accept it as a sweet fragrance.³⁵ Grant that we may spend the present evening and the coming night in peace; clothe us with the armor of light;³⁶ deliver us from the fears of the night and from everything that lurks about in darkness. Grant that the sleep you have given us to refresh our fatigue may be free from all illusions of the devil. Yes, O Master of All, Giver of good things, let us feel contrition as we lie on our beds³⁷ remembering your name throughout the night. Enlightened by meditation on your commands,³⁸ may we rise with gladdened soul³⁹ to give glory to your goodness, offering to your compassion prayers and supplications for our sins and those of all your people. Visit us with mercy through the intercession of the holy Theotokos.

For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

The celebrant turns to bless the faithful, intoning:

Celebrant: + Peace be to all.

Response: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads to the Lord.

Response: To you, O Lord.

The celebrant or concelebrant intones:

Celebrant or Concelebrant: Lord our God, you bowed the heavens⁴⁰ and came down for the salvation of the human race. Look upon your servants and upon your inheritance, for they have bowed their heads and bent their necks to you,⁴¹ the awesome judge who love us all. They do not expect human help, but await your mercy and long for your salvation. Protect them at all times, this evening and tonight, from every enemy, from all the devil's assaults, from vain thoughts, and evil imaginings.

May the might of your kingdom be blessed and glorified, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

If there is no Litija, Vespers continues with the singing of the Apostichera (see page 41).

LITIJA

The celebrant takes the hand cross, and the deacon the censer. Together with the faithful, the clergy process to the narthex. The celebrant leaves the sanctuary through the holy doors, and the deacon through the northern door. Concelebrating priests may join in this procession, each vested in epitrachilion and phelonion.

The Litija stichera are sung until the procession is complete, and then the doxasticheron is sung. Having received the blessing from the celebrant, the deacon incenses the icons in the narthex, the priest(s), and the faithful in the narthex. After the stichera, the deacon intones the Festal Litany:

Deacon: Save your people, O God, and bless your inheritance. Watch over your world in mercy and compassion. Exalt the strength of true Christians and send down upon us your abundant mercies. Through the prayers of our all-pure Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; by the power of the precious and life-creating cross; through the protection of the honorable and heavenly angelic powers; through the prayers of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner and baptist John; of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles [*or:* of the holy apostle (and evangelist) (*Name*) and of all the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles]; of our holy fathers, the great hierarchs and universal teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; of

our holy father Nicholas the Wonder-worker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia, of the holy equals to the apostles and teachers of the Slavs, Cyril and Methodius; of the holy equal to the apostles, the faithful great prince Vladimir; of the holy martyr Josaphat, bishop of Polotsk; of the blessed martyrs, Theodore, bishop of Mukačevo, Paul, bishop of Prešov, and Basil, bishop of Medila; of the holy, glorious, and victorious martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers Anthony and Theodosius of the Monastery of the Caves, and of all other venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the holy and just ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy *(Name/s of the patron/s of this church)*; of the holy *(Name/s)* whose memory we keep; and of all the saints; we beseech you, all-merciful Lord, hear the prayers of us sinners and have mercy on us.

Response: Lord, have mercy. *(Twelve times)*

- Again we pray for our holy father *(Name)*, Pope of Rome, for his health and salvation, and that the Lord God may hasten and assist him in everything; O Lord, hear and have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy. *(Twelve times)*

- Again we pray for our most reverend Metropolitan *(Name)*, for our God-loving Bishop *(Name)*, *[if in a monastery: our most venerable*

hieromonks, our Proto-archimandrite (*Name*), our Archimandrite (*Name*), our Proto-hegumen (*Name*), and our Hegumen (*Name*),] for our spiritual fathers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ, and for every Christian soul that is troubled and afflicted and in need of God's mercy and help; for the protection of this city [*or*: of this holy monastery] and those who dwell here; for the peace and serenity of the whole world; for the stability of the holy Churches of God; for the salvation and assistance of our fathers and brothers and sisters who labor and serve with diligence and fear of God; for those who are absent and those who are traveling; for the healing of those who are confined by illness; for the repose, blessed memory, remission, and forgiveness of sins of all our true-believing fathers and brothers and sisters who have gone before us; and for all our brothers and sisters who are present at these services, and for all who have served and now serve in this holy church [*or*: in this holy monastery]; let us say.

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

Celebrant: Hear us, O God our Savior, hope of the ends of the earth and of those far off at sea. Be merciful to us, O merciful Master, on account of our sins, and have mercy on us.

For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Celebrant: + Peace be to all.

Response: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads to the Lord.

Response: To you, O Lord.

Celebrant or Concelebrant: All-merciful Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, make our prayer acceptable; through the prayers of our all-pure Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary; by the power of the precious and life-creating cross; through the protection of the honorable and heavenly angelic powers; through the prayers of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner and baptist John; of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles [**or:** of the holy apostle (and evangelist) (**Name**) and of all the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles]; of our holy fathers, the great hierarchs and universal teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; of our holy father Nicholas the Wonder-worker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia, of the holy equals to the apostles and teachers of the Slavs, Cyril

and Methodius; of the holy equal to the apostles, the faithful great prince Vladimir; of the holy martyr Josaphat, bishop of Polotsk; of the blessed martyrs, Theodore, bishop of Mukačevo, Paul, bishop of Prešov, and Basil, bishop of Medila; of the holy, glorious, and victorious martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers Anthony and Theodosius of the Monastery of the Caves, and of all our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the holy and just ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy **(Name/s of the patron/s of this church)**; of the holy **(Name/s)** whose memory we keep; and of all the saints. Grant us remission of our faults; shelter us under the shadow of your wings; drive away from us every enemy and adversary; and make our life peaceful. Lord, have mercy on us and on your world, and save our souls, for you are good and love us all.

Response: Amen.

All then enter the nave of the church and sing the Apostichera. The clergy stand at the tetrapod, where the loaves, wheat, wine, and oil have been prepared.



APOSTICHERA

The Apostichera are sung according to the Typikon. The versicles proper to Saturday evening are:

Cantor: The Lord reigns, he is clothed in majesty.

Cantor: The world he made firm, not to be moved.

Cantor: Holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time.

Cantor: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, / now and ever and forever. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF HOLY SIMEON THE GOD-BEARER

Immediately after the Apostichera, the faithful sing:

Now you may dismiss your servant, O Lord, in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.⁴²

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,⁴³ have mercy on us. (*Three times*)

The faithful continue, chanting recitando:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.⁴⁴

Celebrant: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

The Troparia are then sung according to the Typikon.

If there is no Litija, Vespers concludes with the Dismissal (see page 46).

BLESSING OF BREAD

During the Troparia the deacon, having received the blessing of the celebrant, incenses around the tetrapod three times and then incenses the priest(s). He gives the censer to the server. He then intones:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

*The celebrant takes one loaf and blesses the other four with it. Having returned the loaf, he then intones the prayer of blessing. At the words, “**ble**s**s these loaves, wheat, wine, and oil,**” he points to each substance with his right hand.*

Celebrant: Lord Jesus Christ, our God, you blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and fed the five thousand. Likewise bless these loaves, wheat, wine, and oil, and multiply them in this city [*or:* in this holy monastery] and throughout your whole world. Sanctify your faithful who will partake of them. For you, yourself, bless and sanctify all things, O Christ our God, and we give glory to you, with your eternal Father, and your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Then the celebrant sings once and the faithful sing twice:

Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and forever.⁴⁵

After the blessing, the celebrant and the deacon, who carries the tray of loaves, wheat, wine, and oil, enter the sanctuary, both entering by way of the holy doors.

The faithful continue by chanting part of Psalm 33:

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;

in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.

I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

The angel of the Lord is encamped,
around those who revere him, to rescue them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him.

Revere the Lord, you his saints.
They lack nothing, those who revere him.

Strong lions suffer want and go hungry
but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing.

The celebrant turns to bless the faithful, intoning:

Celebrant: The blessing of the Lord be upon you
through his grace and loving kindness, always,
now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

DISMISSAL

The deacon leaves the sanctuary through the southern door and stands near the icon of Christ the Lord. Looking towards the faithful and elevating the orarion, he intones:

Deacon: **Wisdom!**

Response: Give the blessing.

Celebrant: **Blessed is Christ our God, the One-Who-Is, always, now and ever and forever.**

Response: Amen. O God, uphold the holy and true faith, forever and ever.

Celebrant: **Most Holy Theotokos, save us!**

Response: More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim; who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung in place of “More honorable.”

Response: Shine in splendor, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. O Zion, now dance and be glad; and you, pure Theotokos, rejoice in the resurrection of your Son.

Celebrant: **Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope,⁴⁶ glory to you.**

Response: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung in place of “Glory to the Father.”

Response: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.⁴⁷ Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

Facing the faithful, the celebrant intones the Prayer of Dismissal:

Celebrant: May Christ our true God, [*if it is Saturday evening, add: risen from the dead,*] have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the holy (*Name/s*), the patron[s] [*patroness*] of this church; of the holy (*Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is*); and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response: Amen.

The deacon enters the sanctuary through the southern door, and closes the holy doors. The celebrant and the deacon kiss the holy table and remove their vestments.

THE ORDER OF DAILY VESPERS

The priest vests in the epitrichilion.

The celebrant leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. Standing in his place before the holy doors, he makes three small bows, saying nothing. Then he intones:

Celebrant: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

If the Ninth Hour or Typika has immediately preceded Vespers, continue with “Come, let us worship our King.”

Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.⁴⁸

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung in place of “Glory to you” and “Heavenly King.”

Celebrant: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.

Response: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.⁴⁹ (*Twice*)

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,⁵⁰ have mercy on us. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.⁵¹

Celebrant: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen

Come, let us worship our King and God.

Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God.

Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus
Christ the King and our God.⁵²

And the faithful begin Psalm 103 (“Bless the Lord, O my soul; you are very great, O Lord my God.”)

During the singing of Psalm 103, the celebrant, remaining in his usual place before the holy doors, says the Vesper Prayers of Light quietly.

PRAYERS OF LIGHT

1. Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and rich in mercy,⁵³ give ear to my prayer and attend to the sound of my plea.⁵⁴ Show us a sign of your favor;⁵⁵ guide us in your way so that we may walk in your truth.⁵⁶ Gladden our hearts that we may fear your holy name, for you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God,⁵⁷ and among the gods there is none like you,⁵⁸ O Lord. Powerful in mercy and gracious in strength, you help, comfort, and save all those who hope in your holy name.⁵⁹ For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

2. Lord, do not rebuke us in your anger, nor punish us in your wrath.⁶⁰ Deal with us according to your kindness, O Physician and Healer of our souls. Guide us to the harbor of your will;⁶¹ enlighten the eyes of our minds⁶² that we may know your truth.⁶³ Grant that we may spend what remains of this day and the rest of our life peacefully and sinlessly through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints. For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

3. Lord our God, remember us your sinful and useless servants⁶⁴ as we call upon your holy and sublime name, and do not put us to shame for hoping in your mercy. Grant us instead, O Lord, all our petitions which lead to salvation, and make us worthy to love and to fear you with all our hearts⁶⁵ and to do your will in everything. For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

4. You are praised by the holy powers with hymns that are never silent and in doxologies that never cease. Fill our mouth with your praise⁶⁶ that we may ascribe majesty to your holy name.

Through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints, give us a share and an inheritance⁶⁷ with those who fear you in truth and who keep your commandments. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

5. Blessed are you, Lord God almighty. You know the human mind, you know our needs long before we ask or recognize them. Therefore, O loving King, good in every way, allow us in your great mercy to call upon your holy name with a clear conscience,⁶⁸ and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one⁶⁹, and in your providence, arrange everything for our good. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

6. Lord, O Lord, you hold all things in your spotless hand; you are long-suffering toward all of us, and you repent over our evil deeds. Remember your mercy and your compassion.⁷⁰ Visit us⁷¹ in your goodness and for the rest of this day enable us to flee from the many wiles of the evil one, and keep our life secure by the grace of your all-holy Spirit. Through the mercy and the

loving-kindness of your only-begotten Son with whom you are blessed, together with your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

7. Great and wonderful God,⁷² you govern all things with indescribable goodness and rich providence. You have granted us the good things of this earth, and through the good things already bestowed on us, have given us a pledge of the promised kingdom. You have kept us away from every evil during the part of this day which has passed, even until the present moment; now allow us to complete the rest of the day without blame in the presence of your holy glory singing hymns to you, O God, who alone are good and love us all. For you are our God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

At the conclusion of Psalm 103, the celebrant, remaining before the holy doors, intones the Litany of Peace, including any special petitions.

LITANY OF PEACE

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

Response: Lord, have mercy.

(The same response is given to each of the following petitions:)

- For peace from on high and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.
- For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.
- For this holy church and for all who enter it with faith, reverence, and fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our holy father (*Name*), Pope of Rome, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our most reverend Metropolitan (*Name*), for our God-loving Bishop (*Name*), for the venerable presbyterate, the diaconate in Christ, and all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our government and for all in the service of our country, let us pray to the Lord.
- For this city [*or*: For this holy monastery], for every city, community, and for the faithful living in them, let us pray to the Lord.

- For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who travel by sea, air, and land, for the sick, the suffering, the captive and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Special petitions may be inserted here.

- That we be delivered from all affliction, wrath, and need, let us pray to the Lord.
- Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.
- Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: To you, O Lord.

Celebrant: Evening, morning, and at noon we praise you, we bless you, we thank you, and we pray to you, Master of All and loving Lord. Let our prayer rise like incense before you and

do not let our hearts be turned to evil words or thoughts, but deliver us from all that might ensnare our souls. For to you Lord, O Lord, our eyes are turned and in you we hope; let us not be put to shame, O our God.

For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship,⁷³ now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

After the litany, the celebrant enters the sanctuary through the southern door.

The Kathisma may now be sung according to the Typikon. There is no Kathisma on Sunday evening.

After the Kathisma, the following Small Litany may be intoned:

- Again and again, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.
Response: Lord, have mercy.
- Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.
Response: Lord, have mercy.
- Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.
Response: To you, O Lord.

The celebrant, standing before the holy table, prays aloud:

Celebrant: For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

THE LAMP-LIGHTING PSALMS

When Psalm 140 begins, the celebrant incenses the whole church as usual: the holy table on all four sides, the apsidal icon, the icon screen, the interior of the church, the faithful, and again the icons of Christ and the Theotokos. After returning to the sanctuary, he incenses the front of the holy table. Meanwhile, the server lights the candles.

The opening verses of Psalm 140 are sung according to the tone of the first sticheron:

Psalm 140:

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me.
Hear me, O Lord!

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me;
receive the voice of my prayer when I call upon you.
Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer ascend to you like incense
and the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice.
Hear me, O Lord!

The remaining verses are chanted alternately:

O Lord, set a guard before my mouth
and set a seal on the door of my lips.

Let not my heart be inclined to evil,
nor make excuse for the sins I commit.

Let me never share in sinners' feasting.
If a just man strikes or reproves me it is kindness

but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.
Let my prayer be ever against their malice.

The princes were thrown down
by the side of the rock;
then they understood that my words were kind.

As a millstone is shattered to pieces on the ground,
so their bones were strewn
at the mouth of the grave.

To you, Lord God, my eyes are turned;
in you I take refuge; spare my soul!

From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe;
keep me from the snares of those who do evil.

Let the wicked fall into the traps they have set
while I pursue my way unharmed.

Psalm 141:

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,
with all my voice I entreat the Lord.

I pour out my trouble before him;
I tell him all my distress
while my spirit faints within me.

But you, O Lord, know my path.
On the way where I shall walk
they have hidden a snare to entrap me.

Look on my right and see:
there is no one who takes my part.

I have no means of escape,

not one who cares for my soul.

I cry to you, O Lord.

I have said: "You are my refuge,
all I have in the land of the living."

Listen, then, to my cry
for I am in the depths of distress.

Rescue me from those who pursue me
for they are stronger than I.

10. Bring my soul out of this prison
and then I shall praise your name.
9. Around me the just will assemble
because of your goodness to me.

Psalm 129:

8. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice!
7. Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.
6. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord,
who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you.
5. My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word.
My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.

4. Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.
3. Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

Psalm 116:

2. Praise the Lord, all you nations,
acclaim him all you peoples!
1. Strong is the love of the Lord for us;
he is faithful forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

*At the conclusion of the stichera, the celebrant, from the
chairs behind the holy table, intones:*

Celebrant: Wisdom! Be attentive!

The faithful chant:

O Joyful Light of the holy glory of the Father Immortal,
the heavenly, holy, blessed One, O Jesus Christ, now that
we have reached the setting of the sun, and see the
evening light, we sing to God, Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit. It is fitting at all times to raise a song of praise in
measured melody to you, O Son of God, the Giver of
Life. Therefore, the universe sings your glory.

THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

During the singing of “O Joyful Light,” the celebrant leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. Standing before the holy doors, he turns to the faithful and intones:

Celebrant: Let us be attentive! + Peace be to all.
Wisdom! Be attentive!

The faithful sing the Prokeimenon. The celebrant chants the verse(s).

On Sunday Evening:

Tone 8 (Psalm 133:1) Come, bless the Lord, all you who serve the Lord.

Verse: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

On Monday Evening:

Tone 4 (Psalm 4:4,2) The Lord hears me whenever I call him.

Verse: When I call, answer me, O God of Justice.

On Tuesday Evening:

Tone 1 (Psalm 22:6,1,2) Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

Verse: The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want; fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

On Wednesday Evening:

Tone 5 (Psalm 53:3,4) O God, save me by your name, by your power uphold my cause.

Verse: O God, hear my prayer; listen to the words of my mouth.

On Thursday Evening:

Tone 6 (Psalm 120:2,1) My help shall come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Verse: I lift up my eyes to the mountains, from where shall come my help.

On Friday Evening:

Tone 7 (Psalm 58:10,2) You, O God, are my defender and your mercy goes before me.

Verse: Rescue me, O God, from my foes; protect me from those who attack me.

*On the eve of an All Souls Saturday
(outside the Great Fast):*

Tone 8 (Psalm 64:5, 101:13) Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Verse: Blessed are they whom you have chosen and received, O Lord.

Verse: They are remembered from generation to generation.

*For a Day of Alleluia in a minor fast,
beginning on Monday evening:*

Tone 6 (Psalm 6:2) Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Verse: Lord, do not reprove me in your anger; punish me not in your rage. Alleluia!

Verse: Now and ever and forever. Alleluia!

*For a Day of Alleluia in a minor fast,
beginning on Tuesday or Thursday evening:*

Tone 6 (Psalm 98:5) Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Verse: Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool; for he is holy. Alleluia!

Verse: Now and ever and forever. Alleluia!

*For a Day of Alleluia in a minor fast,
beginning on Wednesday evening:*

Tone 6 (Psalm 18:5) Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Verse: Through all the earth their voice resounds; their message reaches to the ends of the world. Alleluia!

Verse: Now and ever and forever. Alleluia!

*For Feasts of the Lord
(Exaltation of the Cross, Theophany,
Bright Monday, Ascension, Transfiguration):*

Tone 7 (Psalm 113:11,1,2,5) But our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he wills.

Verse: When Israel came forth from Egypt, Jacob's sons from an alien people.

Verse: Judah became the Lord's temple, Israel became his kingdom.

Verse: Why is it, O sea, that you fled; O Jordan, that you turned back?

*For Feasts of the Lord
(Nativity, Pascha, Thomas Sunday, Pentecost):*

Tone 7 (Psalm 76:14,15,11,12) What god is as great as our God? You are the God who works wonders.

Verse: You showed your power among the peoples.

Verse: I said: "This is what causes my grief; that the way of the Most High has changed."

Verse: I remember the deeds of the Lord, I remember your wonders of old.

At the end of the Prokeimenon, the celebrant returns to his place behind the holy table.

READINGS

If there are readings, before each, the celebrant intones:

Celebrant: Wisdom!

The lector announces the title of the Reading:

Celebrant: Let us be attentive!

The lector chants the Reading.

When the readings are finished, the celebrant blesses the lector(s), saying quietly:

Celebrant: + Peace be to you, reader(s).

The faithful chant recitando:

Make us worthy, O Lord, to be kept sinless this evening. Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praiseworthy and glorious is your name forever. Amen. May your mercy, O Lord, be upon us who have placed our hope in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your commandments. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your commandments. Blessed are you, O Holy One; enlighten me with your commandments. O Lord, your mercy is forever; despise not the work of your hands. To you is due praise; to you is due a hymn; to you is glory due, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

During this hymn, the celebrant leaves the sanctuary by the northern door and goes to stand before the holy doors, where he intones the following litany.

ANGEL OF PEACE LITANY

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

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- **Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.**

Response: Lord, have mercy.

- **That this whole evening be perfect, holy, peaceful, and without sin, let us beseech the Lord.**

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- **For an angel of peace, a faithful guide and guardian of our souls and bodies, let us beseech the Lord.**

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- **For the pardon and remission of our sins and offenses, let us beseech the Lord.**

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- **For what is good and beneficial to our souls and for peace in the world, let us beseech the Lord.**

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- **That we may spend the rest of our life in peace and repentance, let us beseech the Lord.**

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- **For a Christian, painless, unashamed, peaceful end of our life, and for a good account before the fearsome judgment-seat of Christ, let us beseech the Lord.**

Response: Grant this, O Lord.

- **Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.**

Response: To you, O Lord.

The celebrant prays aloud:

Celebrant: Great and most high God, you alone possess immortality and dwell in unapproachable light. You made all creation with wisdom,⁷⁴ dividing light from darkness,⁷⁵ establishing the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night.⁷⁶ You have allowed us sinners to approach your presence with thanksgiving⁷⁷ in this present hour and to offer you evening praise. O loving Lord, make our prayer ascend to you like incense⁷⁸ and accept it as a sweet fragrance.⁷⁹ Grant that we may spend the present evening and the coming night in peace; clothe us with the armor of light;⁸⁰ deliver us from the fears of the night and from everything that lurks about in darkness. Grant that the sleep you have given us to refresh our fatigue may be free from all illusions of the devil. Yes, O Master of All, Giver of good things, let us feel contrition as we lie on our beds⁸¹ remembering your name throughout the night. Enlightened by meditation on your commands,⁸² may we rise with gladdened soul⁸³ to give glory to your goodness, offering to your compassion prayers and supplications for our sins and those of all your people. Visit us with mercy through the

intercession of the holy Theotokos.

For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

The celebrant turns to bless the faithful, intoning:

Celebrant: + Peace be to all.

Response: And to your spirit.

Celebrant: Bow your heads to the Lord.

Response: To you, O Lord.

Celebrant: Lord our God, you bowed the heavens⁸⁴ and came down for the salvation of the human race. Look upon your servants and upon your inheritance, for they have bowed their heads and bent their necks to you,⁸⁵ the awesome judge who love us all. They do not expect human help, but await your mercy and long for your salvation. Protect them at all times, this evening and tonight, from every enemy, from all the devil's assaults, from vain thoughts, and evil imaginings.

May the might of your kingdom be blessed and glorified, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

APOSTICHERA

The celebrant returns to his place behind the holy table. Vespers continues with the singing of the Apostichera, sung according to the Typikon. The ordinary daily versicles are:

Cantor: To you have I lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in the heavens; my eyes, like the eyes of slaves on the hand of their lords. Like the eyes of a servant on the hand of her mistress, so our eyes are on the Lord our God till he show us his mercy.

Cantor: Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy. We are filled with contempt. Indeed all too full is our soul with the scorn of the rich, with the proud man's disdain.

Cantor: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, / now and ever and forever. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF HOLY SIMEON THE GOD-BEARER

Immediately after the Apostichera, the faithful chant recitando:

Now you may dismiss your servant, O Lord, in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.⁸⁶

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,⁸⁷ have mercy on us. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.⁸⁸

Celebrant: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

If it is a vigil of a Day of Alleluia, at this point the Dismissal for a Day of Alleluia is chanted (see pages 81-88). Otherwise, the Troparia are sung according to the Typikon, followed by the Litany of Fervent Supplication.



LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

Standing before the holy doors, the celebrant intones:

Celebrant: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray you, hear and have mercy.

Response: Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

- Again we pray for our holy father *(Name)*, Pope of Rome, and for our most reverend Metropolitan *(Name)*, for our God-loving Bishop *(Name)*, [*if in a monastery:* our most venerable hieromonks, our Proto-archimandrite *(Name)*, our Archimandrite *(Name)*, our Protohegumen *(Name)*, and our Hegumen *(Name)*,] for those who serve and have served in this holy church, for our spiritual fathers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Response: Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

- Again we pray for our government and for all in the service of our country.

Response: Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

The celebrant may intone special petitions here.

- **Again we pray for the people here present who await your great and abundant mercy, for those who show us mercy, and for all Christians of the true faith.**

Response: Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Celebrant: For you are a merciful and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

DISMISSAL

Celebrant: Wisdom!

If it is Friday evening (except for Friday in Cheesefare Week):

Response: Give the blessing.

Celebrant: Blessed is Christ our God, the One-Who-Is, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen. O God, uphold the holy and true faith, forever and ever.

Celebrant: Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Response: More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim; who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung in place of “More honorable.”

Response: Shine in splendor, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. O Zion, now dance and be glad; and you, pure Theotokos, rejoice in the resurrection of your Son.

Celebrant: **Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope,⁸⁹ glory to you.**

Response: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung in place of “Glory to the Father.”

Response: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.⁹⁰ Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

Facing the faithful, the celebrant intones the Prayer of Dismissal:

SUNDAY EVENING

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; through the protection of the honorable and heavenly angelic powers; through the prayers of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of the holy *(Name/s)*, the patron[s] [patroness] of this church; of the holy *(Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is)*; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

MONDAY EVENING

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner, and baptist John; of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of the holy *(Name/s)*, the patron[s] [patroness] of this church; of the holy *(Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is)*; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

TUESDAY EVENING

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; by the power of the precious and life-creating cross; through the prayers of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of the holy *(Name/s)*, the patron[s] [patroness] of this church; of the holy *(Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is)*; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

WEDNESDAY EVENING

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of our holy father Nicholas the Wonder-worker, archbishop of Myra; of the holy *(Name/s)*, the patron[s] [patroness] of this church; of the holy *(Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is)*; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

THURSDAY EVENING

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; by the power of the precious and life-creating cross; through the prayers of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of the holy (*Name/s*), the patron[s] [patroness] of this church; of the holy (*Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is*); and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

FRIDAY EVENING

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; by the power of the precious and life-creating cross; through the protection of the honorable and heavenly angelic powers; through the prayers of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner, and baptist John; of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of our holy father Nicholas the Wonder-worker, archbishop of Myra; of the holy, glorious, and victorious martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the holy and just ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy *(Name/s)*, the patron[s] [patroness] of this church; of the holy *(Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is)*; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response: Amen.

The celebrant returns to the sanctuary through the southern door. He kisses the holy table and removes his epitrichilion.

DISMISSAL FOR A DAY OF ALLELUIA

The celebrant stands before the holy doors.

Troparia, Tone 4

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you! Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. For you gave birth to Christ the Savior and redeemer of our souls. *Prostration*

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

O baptizer of Christ, remember us all, that we be delivered from our transgressions. For you have been given the grace to intercede on our behalf. *Prostration*

Now and ever and forever. Amen.

Pray for us, O holy apostles and all you saints, that we be delivered from danger and affliction. For we have you as our fervent intercessors before the Savior. *Prostration*

Then, according to a special melody:

Beneath your compassion we take refuge, O Virgin Theotokos. Despise not our prayers in our need, but deliver us from dangers, for you alone are pure and blessed.

Then:

Lord, have mercy. (*Forty times*)

Lord, give the blessing.

Celebrant: Blessed is Christ our God, the One-Who-Is, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Celebrant: King of heaven, support our civil authorities, confirm the faith, calm the nations, give peace to the world, and safeguard this city [*or: this holy monastery*]. Grant those who have gone before us a dwelling-place among the righteous, and accept us in repentance and confession and have mercy, for you are good and love us all.

Response: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim; who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

Give the blessing, Reverend Father, in the name of the Lord.

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

Response: Amen.

The clergy in their usual places, together with the faithful, recite the Prayer of Saint Ephrem:

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter.

Prostration

Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love.

Prostration

Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins, and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

Prostration

Then twelve small bows, while repeating four times:

O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.⁹¹

O God, cleanse me of my sins and have mercy on me.⁹²

O Lord, forgive me for I have sinned without number.⁹³

The entire Prayer of Saint Ephrem is repeated with one prostration at the end.

Then:

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,⁹⁴ have mercy on us. (*Three times, each time making a prostration*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Three times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.⁹⁵

Celebrant: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

If it is a Day of Alleluia in a minor fast, chant “Glory” and “Now and ever” and then “Lord, have mercy” three times, then “Give the blessing,” and the celebrant intones the Prayer of Dismissal (see pages 77-80).

If it is a Day of Alleluia in the Great Fast, Vespers concludes with the following prayers:

Celebrant: Most holy Trinity, Consubstantial Power, Indivisible Kingdom, Cause of all good things, look favorably upon me, a sinner, at this present hour. Take away all the defilement of my mind and enlighten my understanding that I may always praise, glorify, and say: One is holy,⁹⁶ one is Lord,⁹⁷ Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.⁹⁸

Response: Amen.

Then the faithful sing:

Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and forever.⁹⁹
(Three times, with a bow each time)

Then immediately:

Psalm 33

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;

in the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.

I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

The angel of the Lord is encamped,
around those who revere him,
to rescue them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him.

Revere the Lord, you his saints.
They lack nothing, those who revere him.

Strong lions suffer want and go hungry
but those who seek the Lord
lack no blessing.

Come, children, and hear me
that I may teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is he who longs for life and many days,
to enjoy his prosperity?

Then keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.

Turn aside from evil and do good;
seek and strive after peace.

The Lord turns his face against the wicked
to destroy their remembrance from the earth.

The Lord turns his eyes to the just
and his ears to their appeal.

The just cried out and the Lord heard them,
and rescued them from all their distress.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will save.

Many are the trials of the just,
but from them all the Lord will rescue them.

He will keep guard over all their bones,
not one of their bones shall be broken.

Evil brings death to the wicked;
those who hate the good are doomed.

The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants.
Those who hide in him
shall not be condemned.

After Psalm 33, the faithful sing:

It is truly proper to glorify you, * O Theotokos, * the ever-blessed, immaculate, and the mother of our God.

More honorable than the cherubim, * and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim; * who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, * you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

Facing the faithful, the celebrant intones the Prayer of Dismissal (see pages 77-80).

The celebrant returns to the sanctuary through the southern door. He kisses the holy table and removes his epitrichion.

THE ORDER OF VESPERS IN CHEESEFARE WEEK

On Tuesday evening and Thursday evening in Cheesefare Week (that is, the week before Cheesefare Sunday), the service follows the ordinary order for daily Vespers, and concludes with the ending for a Day of Alleluia in the Great Fast.

On Wednesday evening and Friday evening in Cheesefare Week, the service follows the ordinary order for daily Vespers outside the Fast, except that the prokeimenon of the day is followed by a single Old Testament reading together with a second prokeimenon from the Triodion, and the following elements of Typika are added after the Litany of Fervent Supplication:

Celebrant: Most holy Trinity, Consubstantial Power, Indivisible Kingdom, Cause of all good things, look favorably upon me, a sinner, at this present hour. Take away all the defilement of my mind and enlighten my understanding that I may always praise, glorify, and say: One is holy,¹⁰⁰ one is Lord,¹⁰¹ Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.¹⁰²

Response: Amen.

The faithful sing Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and forever (three times), then chant Psalm 33, through the end of the Psalm, before continuing with the dismissal of Vespers.

THE ORDER OF VESPERS ON CHEESEFARE SUNDAY AND ON THE SUNDAYS OF THE GREAT FAST

On the evening of Cheesefare Sunday and of the five Sundays of the Great Fast, Vespers follows the order of Great Vespers until the singing of the appointed great Prokeimenon from the Triodion. The rest of Vespers is celebrated according to the order of daily Vespers for a Day of Alleluia.

But after the recitation of the Prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian with three prostrations, the service of Vespers concludes as follows:

Celebrant: **Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope,¹⁰³ glory to you.**

Response: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

And the celebrant intones the Prayer of Dismissal for Sunday evening (see page 77).

On Cheesefare Sunday, the rite of mutual forgiveness (from Compline) may be celebrated after the dismissal.

THE ORDER OF VESPERS ON GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

Prior to this service, a tomb is placed before the icon screen directly before the holy doors far enough from them that passage is not obstructed. If there is not enough room, it may be placed to the side.

The priest vests in dark-colored epitrachilion. The deacon, having received the blessing from the celebrant, vests in dark-colored sticharion and orarion.

Great Vespers is celebrated. There are no kathisma. The entrance is made with the holy Gospel book. After the entrance, the prokeimena, readings, Epistle, and Gospel are sung and read as at the Divine Liturgy: the lector reads the Old Testament and apostolic readings, and the deacon chants the holy Gospel.

After the readings, Great Vespers continues with the Litany of Fervent Supplication, the Hymn of Glorification (chanted, not sung), and the Angel of Peace Litany.

At the beginning of the Aposticha, all the clergy enter the sanctuary. The priests vest fully in dark vestments.

After the Trisagion prayers and Our Father with its exclamation, the clergy and servers prostrate before the shroud three times. The celebrant takes the shroud on his shoulders, so that the head of Christ in the image is at the top. If there are concelebrants, all the priests hold an edge of the shroud.

The shroud-bearers are preceded by the deacon who incenses while walking backwards. The clergy are preceded by the candle-bearers and other servers. The

cross-bearer leads the procession which passes to the right and back of the holy table, and leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. No wooden clappers or like instruments are to be sounded during this procession.

Outside the sanctuary, the procession moves down the northern side of the church to the doors of the nave. The faithful may join in the procession by following the clergy and the shroud.

From the doors of the nave, the procession continues to the tomb. It may go outside and circle the church once or three times in a counter-clockwise direction.

The Troparion of Holy and Great Friday is sung repeatedly while the procession with the shroud takes place:

Tone 2. The noble Joseph took down your most pure body from the Cross. * He wrapped it in a clean shroud, * and with fragrant spices laid it in burial in a new tomb.

At the end of the procession, the shroud is placed in the tomb as the following Troparion is sung. The celebrant again, with the deacon standing opposite the tomb holding a large candle, incenses the shroud three times from the four sides of the tomb. The concelebrants stand in two files to the right and left of the tomb, facing one another. They stand far enough away from the tomb to allow the circumambulation by the celebrant and deacon. After the incensation, the clergy and servers venerate the shroud.

Tone 2. Glory... now and ever... The angel standing by the tomb * cried out to the myrrh-bearing women: * Myrrh is fitting for the dead, * but Christ has shown himself not subject to corruption.

The deacon continues:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

The celebrant, going before the ambon and facing East, intones the Ambon Prayer for Holy and Great Friday:

Celebrant: Lord Jesus Christ our God, Savior of the world, you have made us worthy to reach this hour when, as God, you surrendered your divine soul as a ransom for the life of the world, and we will be saved from the tyranny of death and sin, as we serve you in newness of life. You have cleansed us from sin by your own blood when you cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Deliver us from every snare of the devil, grant compunction to our souls, and careful insight in our thoughts concerning your fearful and righteous judgment. Nail our bodies to fear of you, and put to death our earthly cares, that, rejecting all ungodliness and worldly desires, we may live in moderation, righteousness, and reverence. Do not turn your face away from us, but stretch out your hand in help, raising us from our fall into sins. For you are our God, a God of mercy, salvation, and freedom from sins and we give glory to you, together with your eternal Father, and your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

The service concludes with the Dismissal of Great Vespers on page 46.

Then the faithful approach to venerate the burial shroud while the following sticheron is sung:

Tone 5. Come, let us bless the ever-memorable Joseph, * who went to Pilate by night to beg for the Life of all: * Give me this stranger, who had no place to lay his head. * Give me this stranger, who was handed over to death by his wicked disciple. * Give me this stranger whose Mother wept, seeing him hanging on the cross, * mourning and crying out in a motherly lament: * Woe is me, my child! * Woe is me, my light, my beloved whom I bore in my womb! * What as foretold by Simeon in the temple comes to pass today: * A sword has pierced my heart; * but change my tears into the joy of your resurrection. * We bow to your passion, O Christ. * We bow to your passion, O Christ. * We bow to your passion, * Christ, * and to your holy resurrection.

The deacon closes the holy doors. All offer prayers of thanksgiving.

THE ORDER OF THE ALL-NIGHT VIGIL

In the Sabbaitic liturgical tradition, an all-night Vigil consisting of Great Vespers with Litija, followed by Sunday or festal Matins, is appointed for the vigils of most Sundays and all vigil rank feast, except for the feasts of the Nativity and Theophany of the Lord, when the all-night Vigil consists of Great Compline, Litija, and festal Matins.

If it is desired to celebrate such a vigil, this is the order to be followed.

The celebrant is vested in the epitrachilion and phelonion. The deacon, fully vested, opens the holy doors and takes a lighted candle. The celebrant incenses the holy table, the apsidal icon, the icon screen, the interior of the church, and the faithful. The deacon precedes him with a lighted candle. The celebrant then stands before the holy table, holding the censer. The deacon stands before the icon of Christ and intones:

Deacon: Give the command!

This is omitted if there is no deacon. Then the faithful:

Response: In the name of the Lord, Father, give the blessing.

While making the sign of the cross with the censer, the celebrant intones:

Celebrant: **Glory to the holy, consubstantial, life-creating, and undivided Trinity, always, now and ever and forever.**

RESPONSE: Amen.

Throughout Pascha, the following is sung:

Celebrant: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.

Response: Christ is risen from the dead! By death he trampled Death; and to those in the tombs he granted life.¹⁰⁴ (*Twice*)

The deacon enters the sanctuary through the southern door, gives the candle to a server, and closes the holy doors. The priest removes the phelonion.

*Great Vespers with Litija (or Great Compline with Litija) is celebrated, beginning with “**Come let us worship our King**” and concluding with Psalm 33 and the blessing that follows it.*

*Matins begins immediately with “**Glory to God in the highest**” and the Six Psalms on Matins.*

DISMISSALS AT VESPERS

1. Festive dismissals are used on the feast and on each day in the post-festive period. The patron(s) or patroness of the church is commemorated on the post-festive days of the celebration.
2. The words “**gloriously**” and “**today**” are used only on the day of the feast and are omitted on the post-festive and final days of the celebration.
3. If a feast of our Lord falls on a Sunday (beginning on Saturday evening), the dismissal of the feast replaces that of Sunday. If a feast of the Theotokos falls on a Sunday, the dismissal of Sunday and the commemoration of the feast are included.
4. If one of the days of the post-festive period or the final day of the feast is a Sunday, then the regular Sunday dismissal is used.
5. In churches dedicated to the Savior or to the Theotokos or to an event in their lives (e.g. Theophany, Ascension, Nativity, Dormition, etc.), the holy day dismissal of the patronal feast is used only on the particular feast and during its post-festive period.
6. On days of saints commemorated with an all-night vigil or of *polyeleos* rank, the phrase: “**whose memory we solemnly celebrate today**” is added to the dismissal.

DISMISSALS FOR MOVEABLE FEASTS

PALM SUNDAY

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation deigned to enter Jerusalem seated on the colt of a donkey and accepted the praise of Hebrew children, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY

May Christ our true God, who endured dreadful sufferings, the lifegiving cross, and voluntary burial for our salvation, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

PASCHA AND BRIGHT WEEK

May Christ our true God, risen from the dead, by death trampling Death and granting life to those in the tombs, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

THOMAS SUNDAY

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation came to his disciples although the doors were locked and brought Thomas to belief, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation ascended in glory from us to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God and Father, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation sent down the all-holy Spirit from heaven in tongues of fire upon his holy disciples and apostles, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

DISMISSALS FOR IMMOVABLE FEASTS

NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS (SEPTEMBER 8)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother whose nativity we [gloriously] celebrate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (SEPTEMBER 14)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; by the power of the precious and life-creating cross, whose universal exaltation we [gloriously] celebrate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS (OCTOBER 1)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother whose protection we gloriously celebrate today; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

SYNAXIS OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL AND ALL
THE ANGELS (NOVEMBER 8)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; through the protection of the honorable and heavenly angelic powers whose synaxis we gloriously celebrate today; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE
TEMPLE (NOVEMBER 21)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother whose entrance into the temple we [gloriously] celebrate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

MATERNITY OF THE HOLY ANNA (DECEMBER 8)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother whose conception in the womb of the holy Anna we gloriously celebrate today; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
(DECEMBER 25)

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation was born in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea and lay in a manger, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
(JANUARY 6)

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation deigned to be baptized by John in the Jordan, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

MEETING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
(FEBRUARY 2)

May Christ our true God, who for our salvation deigned to be held in the arms of the righteous Simeon, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

ANNUNCIATION OF THE THEOTOKOS (MARCH
25)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother whose annunciation we [gloriously] celebrate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

NATIVITY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (JUNE 24)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner, and baptist of the Lord, John, whose nativity we [gloriously] celebrate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

PRE-EMINENT APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL
(JUNE 29)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the holy, glorious, and illustrious pre-eminent apostles Peter and Paul whose feast we gloriously celebrate today; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIJAH (JULY 20)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the holy and glorious prophet Elijah the Thesbite whose fiery ascent to heaven we gloriously celebrate today; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (AUGUST 6)

May Christ our true God, who was transfigured in glory on Mount Tabor in the presence of his holy disciples and apostles, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS (AUGUST 15)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother whose dormition we [gloriously] celebrate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (AUGUST
29)

May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the honorable and glorious prophet, forerunner, and baptist of the Lord, John, whose beheading we commemorate [today]; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Third Apostichon from Vespers of Pentecost Sunday
- ² Paschal Troparion
- ³ Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 41:3
- ⁴ Matthew 6:9-13
- ⁵ Psalm 95:6
- ⁶ Psalm 85:15
- ⁷ Psalm 85:6
- ⁸ Psalm 85:17
- ⁹ Psalm 85:11
- ¹⁰ Psalm 85:10
- ¹¹ Psalm 85:8
- ¹² Psalm 85:17
- ¹³ Psalm 6:2; 37:2
- ¹⁴ Psalm 106:30
- ¹⁵ Ephesians 1:18; Psalm 12:4
- ¹⁶ Titus 1:1
- ¹⁷ Luke 17:10
- ¹⁸ Deuteronomy 6:5; Joshua 22:5
- ¹⁹ Tobit 12:6
- ²⁰ Jeremiah 13:25
- ²¹ 1 Timothy 3:9; 2 Timothy 1:3
- ²² Matthew 6:13
- ²³ Psalm 24:6
- ²⁴ Psalm 105:4
- ²⁵ Daniel 9:4
- ²⁶ 1 Timothy 1:17
- ²⁷ Psalm 50:19
- ²⁸ Ezekiel 43:11
- ²⁹ Hebrews 9:12
- ³⁰ Psalm 103:24
- ³¹ Genesis 1:4
- ³² Genesis 1:14-18; Psalm 103:19-20; 135:7-9
- ³³ Psalm 94:2
- ³⁴ Psalm 140:2
- ³⁵ Ephesians 5:2
- ³⁶ Romans 13:12
- ³⁷ Psalm 4:5
- ³⁸ Psalm 118:97-98,143
- ³⁹ Psalm 34:9
- ⁴⁰ Psalm 17:10

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- 41 Sirach 51,26
42 Luke 2:29-32
43 Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 41:3
44 Matthew 6:9-13
45 Psalm 112:2
46 1 Timothy 1:1
47 Paschal Troparion
48 Third Apostichon from Vespers of Pentecost Sunday
49 Paschal Troparion
50 Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 41:3
51 Matthew 6:9-13
52 Psalm 95:6
53 Psalm 85:15
54 Psalm 85:6
55 Psalm 85:17
56 Psalm 85:11
57 Psalm 85:10
58 Psalm 85:8
59 Psalm 85:17
60 Psalm 6:2; 37:2
61 Psalm 106:30
62 Ephesians 1:18; Psalm 12:4
63 Titus 1:1
64 Luke 17:10
65 Deuteronomy 6:5; Joshua 22:5
66 Tobit 12:6
67 Jeremiah 13:25
68 1 Timothy 3:9; 2 Timothy 1:3
69 Matthew 6:13
70 Psalm 24:6
71 Psalm 105:4
72 Daniel 9:4
73 1 Timothy 1:17
74 Psalm 103:24
75 Genesis 1:4
76 Genesis 1:14-18; Psalm 103:19-20; 135:7-9
77 Psalm 94:2
78 Psalm 140:2
79 Ephesians 5:2
80 Romans 13:12
81 Psalm 4:5
82 Psalm 118:97-98,143
83 Psalm 34:9
84 Psalm 17:10

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- 85 Sirach 51,26
86 Luke 2:29-32
87 Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 41:3
88 Matthew 6:9-13
89 1 Timothy 1:1
90 Paschal Troparion
91 Luke 18:13
92 Psalm 50:4
93 Prayer of Manasseh 9
94 Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 41:3
95 Matthew 6:9-13
96 Revelation 15:4
97 Ephesians 4:5
98 Philippians 2:11
99 Psalm 112:2
100 Revelation 15:4
101 Ephesians 4:5
102 Philippians 2:11
103 1 Timothy 1:1
104 Paschal Troparion