MOLEBEN
TO THE PRECIOUS
AND LIFE-CREATING CROSS

Metropolitan Cantor Institute
Byzantine Catholic Seminary
January, 2008

Revised – March 2020
Foreword:

Devotion to the precious and life-creating Cross of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ has a great part in the spiritual life of the Byzantine Catholic Church. The "Moleben" is a prayer service drawn from the Matins (Morning Prayer) for the feast of the "Elevation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross," celebrated on September 14. In this form, we give thanks for the glorious passion, life-giving death, and glorious resurrection of Jesus. Adorned with traditional Carpatho-Rusyn prostopinije (i.e., plainchant), it is a brief and powerful service.

Celebrant: 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; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response:

A - - - - - - men.
Cleanse us from every blemish of flesh and spirit.
Grant us to pass through the night of his present life
both courageously and seriously,
aawaiting the bright and manifest day of your only-begotten Son,
our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

In that day, he shall come in glory to judge all,
and will give to each of us the reward due to our actions.

May we not fall into lazziness,
but take courage and be inspired to action.
May we be found ready to enter into the joy
of the divine bridal-chamber of his glory,
where the voice of those who feast is ceaseless,
and the delight of those who look upon the beauty of your face
cannot be described.

For you are the true Light
which enlightens and sanctifies everything in the world,
and all creation praises you forever.

Response:

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

Response:

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

Response:

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 from all stain,    
and save our souls, O gracious One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. (3 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.

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

Response: Amen.

Celebrant: Let us kiss it with joy and fear; with joy because Christ the Lord was crucified in his great mercy upon it; with fear because of our unworthiness due to sin. Through the Cross, Christ our God grants salvation to the world.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, have mercy.

Prayer of Repentance of our holy father Basil the Great

Celebrant: O Lord almighty, God of angelic hosts and of all flesh:
you dwell in the highest and care for the humble.
You search the innermost depths of mind and heart,
and clearly discern the hidden things of all people.
You are the Light without beginning, without change or alteration.

O King immortal, receive our prayers
which we offer before you at this time from our sinful lips,
ever trusting in your great mercy.
Forgive us our sins which we have committed,
both voluntarily and involuntarily.

Psalm 21

The verses are alternated between cantor and congregation.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
You are far from my plea and the cry of my distress.

O my God, I call by day and you give no reply;
I call by night and I find no peace.
Yet you, O God, are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you set them free.

When they cried to you, they escaped. In you they trusted and never in vain. But I am a worm and no man, the butt of men, laughing-stock of the people.

All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads. "He trusted in the Lord, let him save him; let him release him if this is his friend."

Yes, it was you who took me from the womb, entrusted me to my mother’s breast. To you I was committed from my birth, from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

Do not leave me alone in my distress; Come close, there is none else to help. Many bulls have surrounded me, fierce bulls of Bashan close me in.

Against me they open wide their jaws, like lions, rending and roaring. Like water I am poured out, disjointed are all my bones.

My heart has become like wax, it is melted within my breast. Parched as burnt clay is my throat, my tongue cleaves to my jaws.

Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet and lay me in the dust of death. I can count every one of my bones. These people stare at me and gloat; they divide my clothing among them. They cast lots for my robe. O Lord, do not leave me alone, my strength, make haste to help me!

Rescue my soul from the sword, my life from the grip of these dogs. Save my life from the jaws of these lions, my poor soul from the horns of these oxen.

I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled. "You who fear the Lord give him praise; all sons of Jacob, give him glory. Revere him, Israel's sons.

For he has never despised nor scorned the poverty of the poor. From him he has not hidden his face, but he heard the poor man when he cried."

You are my praise in the great assembly. My vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and shall have their fill. They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him. May their hearts live for ever and ever!

All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord, all families of the nations worship before him; for the kingdom is the Lord's, he is ruler of the nations. They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth;

Stichera from the Praises - Tone 8 samohlasen

O, what a strange mystery! The most holy Cross, the life-giving Tree, is exalted on high today. The ends of the earth give glory, and the demons are terrified. What a great gift is bestowed upon us mortals.

Through your Cross, O Christ, save our souls, since you alone are full of compassion.

O, what a strange mystery! The Cross which carried the Most High as a cluster of life-giving grapes is exalted today high above the earth.

We are all drawn to God through it, and death has been swallowed up. O spotless Wood, we enjoy the immortal fruit of Eden.
Glory to you, O God!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God!

O rescue me, God, my helper,
and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.

O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

For in sacrifice you take no delight,
burnt offering from me you would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit,
a humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

In your goodness, show favor to Zion:
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice,
burnt offerings wholly consumed,
then you will be offered young bulls on your altar.

Litany of Peace

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

Response: 1. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For peace from on high and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: 2. Lord, have mercy.

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Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offense.

O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offenses truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

That you may be justified when you give sentence
and be without reproach when you judge,

O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed you love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.

O purify me, then I shall be clean;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may thrill.

From my sins turn away your face
and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God;
put a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervor sustain me,

that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.
Deacon: That we may be deemed worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord, our God.

Response:

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us stand and listen to the holy Gospel.

Celebrant: * Peace be to all!

Response:

Celebrant: A reading of the holy Gospel according to John.

Response:

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

The celebrant (even if a deacon is serving) reads John 12: 28-36.

Response:

Homily [optional]
Prokeimenon - Tone 4
Verse: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

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

Exaltation
Verse: Save your people, O Lord, and bless your inheritance. Grant victory to your Church over evil, and protect your people by your cross.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Response: The Exaltation is repeated after each of the following verses:

Verse: We exalt you, O Christ, the Giver of Life and we honor your Precious Cross, through which we have been saved from the bondage of the enemy.

Verse: O Lord, please my cause against my foes; fight those who fight me.

Verse: Take up your buckler and shield; arise to help me.

Verse: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Verse: O Lord, let the light of your countenance shine upon us.

Verse: Glory...now and ever...

Three times: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to you, O God!

Deacon: Let everything that lives and that breathes give praise to the Lord!

Response: Let every thing that lives and that breathes give praise to the Lord,

Deacon: Praise God in his holy place; praise him in his mighty heavens.

Response: "Let everything that lives..."