

The Veneration of the Holy Cross

This ceremony takes place at Matins on the third Sunday of the Great Fast, and on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14). If Matins is not celebrated, the veneration may take place before or during the Divine Liturgy.

On the previous evening, before Vespers, the Cross is placed on the holy table, in place of the Gospel book.

*Then (1) at the end of the Great Doxology at Matins, during the singing of the Trisagion, OR
(2) before the Divine Liturgy, OR
(3) during the Divine Liturgy, after the Little Entrance, when the people stand for the Trisagion,*

the celebrant incenses the Cross on the holy table, three times. Taking the Cross and holding it toward the people, he processes around the the holy table, leaves the sanctuary through the nothern door, and goes to stand before the holy doors. Servers accompany him with candles, and the deacon precedes him, incensing.

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

The cantor and people sing the troparion of the Cross, three times:

Troparion of the Cross - Tone 1

Save your peo - ple, O Lord, and bless your in - her - i - tance. Grant vic - to - ry

to your Church o - ver e - vil, and pro - tect your peo - ple by your cross.

During the singing of the troparion, the celebrant processes to the tetrapod, places the cross on it, and incenses around the tetrapod three times.

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, a special litany is intoned. Otherwise continue with "We bow to your cross" on page 4.

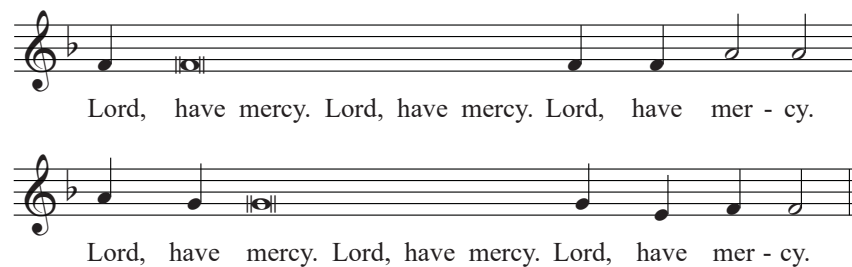
Litany for the Exaltation of the Cross

The celebrant takes the cross and holding it above his head, intones the following petition, while standing before the tetrapod and facing East (toward the holy table):

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

The cantor and faithful sing "Lord, have mercy" (24 times; originally 100 times) as the priest slowly bows as deeply as he can, holding the cross and then rising up again during the chant.

(The following is sung four times)



Other languages may also be used, to express the universality of the Church:

Greek: Kyrie, eleison. Slavonic: Hospodi, pomiluj. Hungarian: Uram irgalmaz. Spanish: Señor ten piedad.

Going to the right side of the tetrapod and facing north, the celebrant holds the cross above his head and intones:

Celebrant: We also pray for our holy father, (*Name*), the Pope of Rome, that the Lord God will grant him health and salvation, ever-directing and assisting him in all he does; we pray you, O Lord, hear and have mercy.

Faithful: Lord, have mercy. (*24 times, as above*)

Going to the far side of the tetrapod and facing west (away from the holy table), the celebrant holds the cross above his head and intones:

Additional stichera for the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14);

Tone 5 samohlasen. Come, O people, let us contemplate the marvelous wonder; * let us bow before the power of the Cross. * For the tree of Paradise gave rise to the reign of death, * and now a Tree has made our life blossom forth, * when the sinless Savior was nailed upon it. * And now, all the nations that are nourished by this incorruptible food sing praises: * You destroyed death by your Cross and set us free. * O Lord, glory to you!

The word of your prophets Isaiah and David is now fulfilled, * for they spoke of you, O Lord, and said: * All the nations shall come to you and bow before you. * Behold the people who are now filled with your grace * in your sanctuary in the temple of Jerusalem. * O God of goodness who suffered on the Cross for us * and gave us life through your holy resurrection, * protect us with your care, O Lord, and save us.

Tone 6 samohlasen. The four corners of the earth are sanctified today, O Christ our God, * by the four ends of your exalted Cross. * With it, exalt your faithful Christians * who destroy the power of the Enemy through your Cross. * You are great, O Lord, * and wondrous in your works; glory to you!

The words of the prophets have told of the most holy wood * by which Adam was delivered from the ancient curse and from death. * On this day of its exaltation, creation raises its voice * to beg God for the abundance of his mercy. * O Lord, your compassion is beyond measure; * spare us, O God, and save our souls.

Glory... now and ever...

Tone 8 samohlasen. Behold the words of your prophet Moses are fulfilled, O Lord; * for he said: You shall see your life suspended before your eyes. * Today the Cross is exalted, and the world is freed from error. * Today the Resurrection of Christ is renewed; * the ends of the earth exult with joy. * At the sound of the cymbals of David, * they offer a hymn of praise and say: * In your goodness and love for all, * you have brought about your salvation in the middle of the earth, O our God. * Through your Cross and Resurrection you save us. * O Lord all-powerful, glory to you!

If the veneration takes place during the Divine Liturgy, the clergy return to the sanctuary for the readings.



Music for the following can be found on the Metropolitan Cantor Institute website.

Additional stichera for the Third Sunday of the Great Fast:

Tone 8 samohlasen. Today, the King of glory * and the Master of the universe * is nailed to the Cross; * a lance pierces his side. *The One in whom the Church finds its sweetness, * now tastes vinegar and gall; *The One who covers the heavens with clouds *is now crowned with thorns. * The One who fashioned mortals with his own hand * is now clothed with the garment of derision, * and He is struck by his own creatures. * The One who clothes the heavens with clouds * is now flogged on the back. * He accepts scourging and spitting, insults and blows; * and He suffers all that to save the world from death; * for He is the compassionate God and my Redeemer.

Glory... (in the same tone) Today the inaccessible Lord draws me close to Him.* He endures his Passion to free me from my passions. * He who gives light to the blind, * receives spitting from impure lips *and permits himself to be scourged to save the captives. *When his Mother, the Virgin, saw Him on the Cross, * she sighed and said:* Alas, O my beloved Child! * You surpass every mortal in beauty; * yet You are now without charm or attraction, * having neither grace, nor form, nor life; * Alas! O Light of my eyes, * a sword pierces my heart, * and I suffer inwardly to see You so. * I sing and praise your Passion, * I venerate your infinite mercy,* O long-suffering Lord, glory to You.

Now and ever... (in the same tone) Today the word of the prophet is fulfilled: * Behold, we bow before your footstool, O Lord; * having tasted the Tree of salvation, * we have been freed from our passions and sin * by the prayers of the Theotokos.

Celebrant: We also pray for our most reverend Metropolitan, *(Name)*, for our God-loving Bishop, *(Name)*, for our spiritual father and mothers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ; for their health and salvation, and for the remission of all their sins, let us all say:

Faithful: Lord, have mercy. *(24 times, as above)*

Going to the left side of the tetrapod and facing south, the celebrant holds the cross above his head and intones:

Celebrant: We also pray for every Christian soul that is afflicted and maltreated; for their health and salvation, and for the remission of their sins, let us all say:

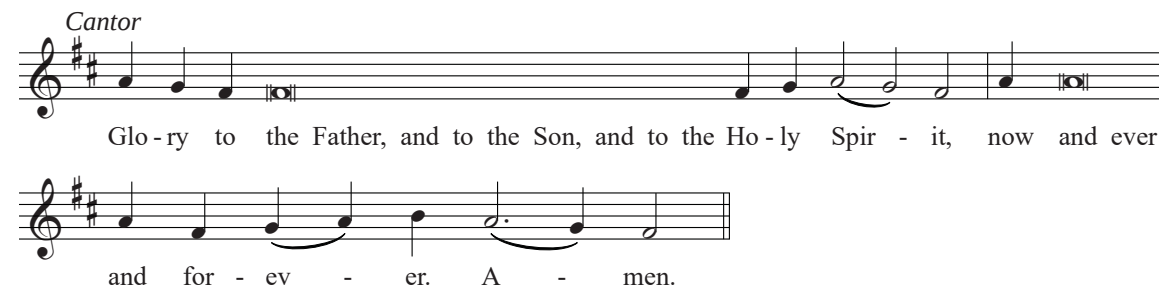
Faithful: Lord, have mercy. *(24 times, as above)*

Returning to the front of the tetrapod and facing east, the celebrant holds the cross above his head and intones:

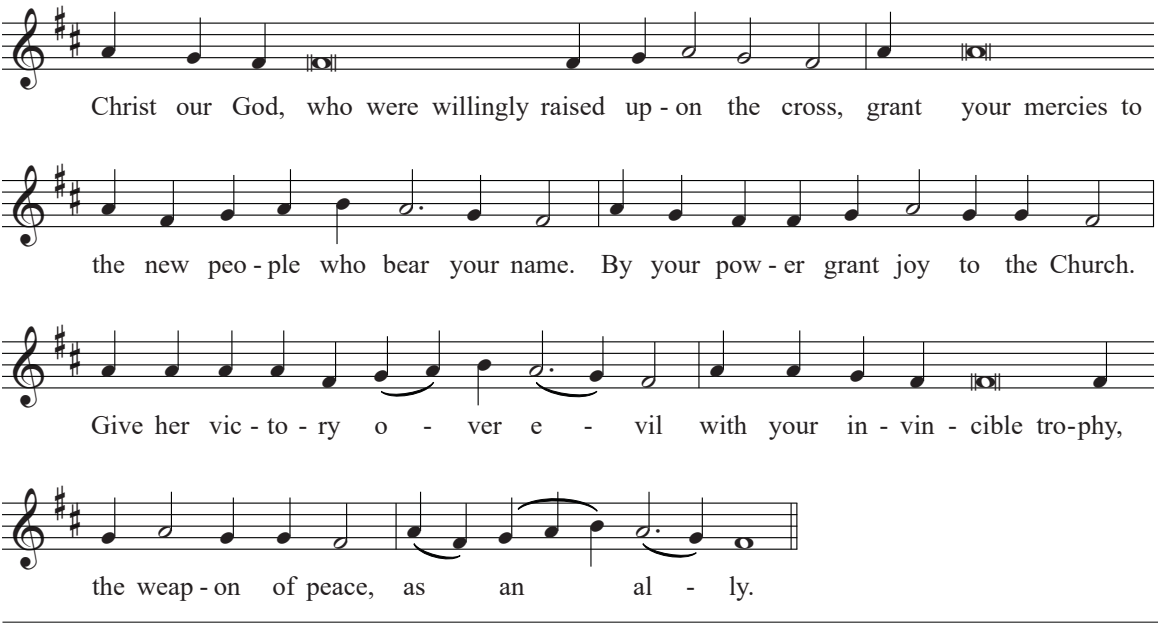
Celebrant: We also pray for all those who serve and have served in this holy church *(or: monastery)*; for their health and salvation, and for the remission of their sins, let us all say:

Faithful: Lord, have mercy. *(24 times, as above)*

The cross is replaced on the tetrapod as the kontakion of the Cross is sung.

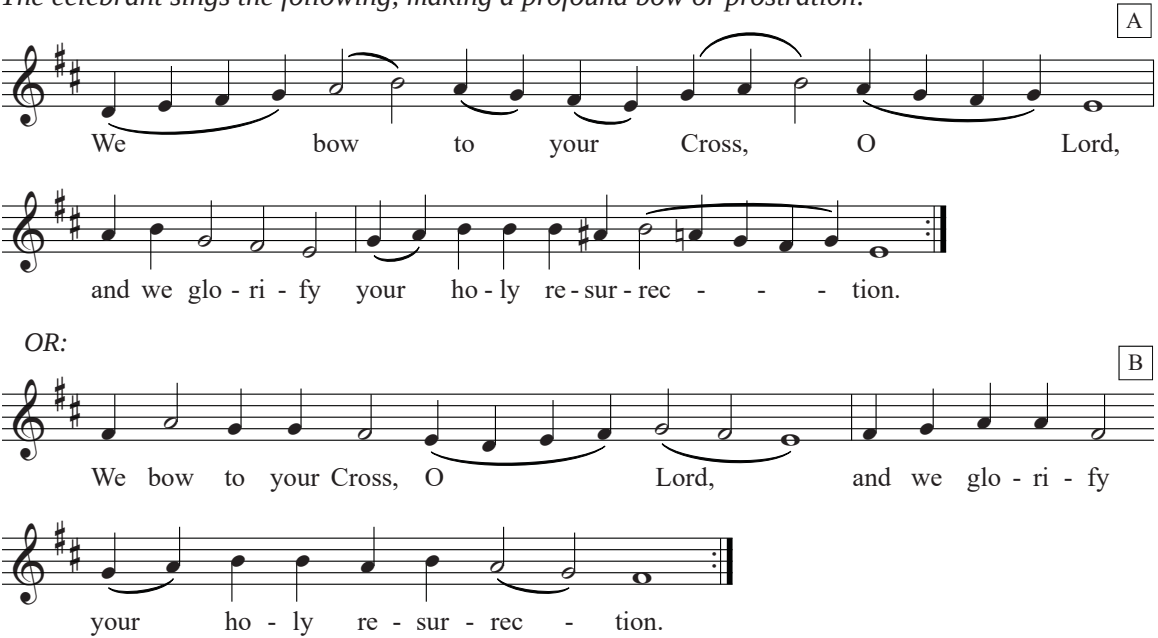


Kontakion of the Cross - Tone 4:



Christ our God, who were willingly raised up - on the cross, grant your mercies to
the new peo - ple who bear your name. By your pow - er grant joy to the Church.
Give her vic - to - ry o - ver e - vil with your in - vin - cible tro-phy,
the weap - on of peace, as an al - ly.

The celebrant sings the following, making a profound bow or prostration:



We bow to your Cross, O Lord,
and we glo - ri - fy your ho - ly re-sur-rec - - - tion. A

OR: B

We bow to your Cross, O Lord, and we glo - ri - fy
your ho - ly re - sur - rec - - - tion.

And the faithful sing it twice, making a profound bow or prostration each time. Then they come forward to venerate the cross, while the following stichera are sung.

Tone 2 samohlasen



①
Come, O faith - ful, let us bow before the life - giv - ing Cross on which Christ,
the King of Glory, free-ly stretched out his hands. By this he raised us up to
our for-mer hap - pi-ness, which we had lost because of the an - cient En - e - my
and the bit - ter pleas-ure that ex - iled us from God. Come, O faith - ful, let us bow
be - fore the Wood which lets us crush the head of the in - vis - i - ble En - e - my.
Come, all you fam-'lies of the na - tions, let us ven - er - ate the Cross of the
Lord with our hymns: Re - joice, O perfect redemption of the fall of Ad - am;
Re - joice, O ven-er - a - ble Cross. Filled with fear and awe we em-brace you;