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READER'S GREAT VESPERS ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

The Universal Exaltation of the Holy and Life-giving Cross

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

Reader: Amen.

Glory to Thee, our God. Glory to Thee!

O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

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

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

All: Amen.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

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

O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

PSALM 103

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the

sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid. The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice. He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares. He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad. Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being. May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. The sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. (*Twice*)

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia: Glory to Thee, O God our Hope, O Lord, glory be to Thee.

THE LITANY OF PEACE REPLACEMENT

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

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

Choir: Amen.

No Kathisma reading today¹

“O LORD, I HAVE CRIED” IN TONE SIX

Choir: O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me; hear Thou me, O Lord. O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me. Give ear to the voice of my supplication when I cry out unto Thee: hear Thou me, O Lord.

Choir: Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as the incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; hear Thou me, O Lord.

- Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth and a protecting door about my lips.
- Incline not my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins.
- With men that work iniquity; and I will not communicate with the choicest of them.
- The just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me; but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head.
- For my prayer also shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased; their judges falling upon the rock have been swallowed up.
- They shall hear my words for they are sweet; as when the thickness of the earth is broken upon the ground, their bones are scattered by the side of Hell.
- But to Thee, O Lord, are my eyes; in Thee have I put my trust; take not away my soul.
- Keep me from the snare(s) which they have laid for me, and the traps of the workers of iniquity.
- Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I alone escape.

Psalm 141

- I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.
- I poured out my supplication before Him; I showed before Him my trouble.
- When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path.
- In the way wherein I walked have they secretly laid a snare for me.
- I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no one that would know me.
- Refuge failed me; no one cared for my soul.
- I cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.
- Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low.
- Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.
- Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.
- The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.

Psalm 129

- Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.
- Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

For the Feast in Tone Six (***Having laid up all their hope***)

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

¹ The 1st Kathisma “Blessed is the man...” at Great Vespers for this particular Feast is only read on Saturday night (full) or Sunday night (1st stasis).

As the Cross is lifted up, * it urgeth all of creation * to praise the immaculate * Passion of the One Who was * lifted up thereon. * For by means of the Cross, * He slew him that slew us; * and He made the dead to live again, * making them beautiful, * granting them the Heavens as dwelling-place, * because He is compassionate, * in the unsurpassed and unspeakable * excess of His goodness. * With joy, then, let us all exalt His Name, * while magnifying His infinite * condescension toward our race.

Verse 5. Because of Thy Name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

As the Cross is lifted up, * it urgeth all of creation * to praise the immaculate * Passion of the One Who was * lifted up thereon. * For by means of the Cross, * He slew him that slew us; * and He made the dead to live again, * making them beautiful, * granting them the Heavens as dwelling-place, * because He is compassionate, * in the unsurpassed and unspeakable * excess of His goodness. * With joy, then, let us all exalt His Name, * while magnifying His infinite * condescension toward our race.

Verse 4. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord. Moses once prefigured thee, * stretching his hands out toward Heaven, * and prevailing mightily * over tyrant Amalek, * O most precious Cross, * boast of all faithful men, * staff and strength of athletes, * the Apostles' fair embellishment, * champion of the just, * and the sure salvation of all the Saints. * Hence, seeing thee exalted now, * all creation keepeth a festival, * filled with joy and gladness, * and glorifying Christ God, Who through thee * in His extreme goodness joined again * what was set at enmity.

Verse 3. For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

Moses once prefigured thee, * stretching his hands out toward Heaven, * and prevailing mightily * over tyrant Amalek, * O most precious Cross, * boast of all faithful men, * staff and strength of athletes, * the Apostles' fair embellishment, * champion of the just, * and the sure salvation of all the Saints. * Hence, seeing thee exalted now, * all creation keepeth a festival, * filled with joy and gladness, * and glorifying Christ God, Who through thee * in His extreme goodness joined again * what was set at enmity.

Psalm 116

Verse 2. Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people.

O all-honored Cross of Christ, * round which the orders of Angels * hover with exceeding joy,* as thou art raised up today * by the will of God, * thou dost raise up all those * cast away and exiled* for the theft of the forbidden fruit, * who had slipped down to death. * Wherefore, with our lips and with all our heart, * we kiss thee, filled with faith and love, * and we draw forth holiness for ourselves,* crying out: Exalt ye * Christ Jesus, the transcendently good God, * and do ye worship the most divine * footstool of His holy feet.

Verse 1. For His mercy is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

O all-honored Cross of Christ, * round which the orders of Angels * hover with exceeding joy,* as thou art raised up today * by the will of God, * thou dost raise up all those * cast away and exiled* for the theft of the forbidden fruit, * who had slipped down to death. * Wherefore, with our lips and with all our heart, * we kiss thee, filled with faith and love, * and we draw forth holiness for ourselves,* crying out: Exalt ye * Christ Jesus, the transcendently good God, * and do ye worship the most divine * footstool of His holy feet.

DOXASTICON FOR THE FEAST IN TONE TWO

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

Come, all ye nations, let us worship the blessed Tree, through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he that by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam, is himself ensnared by the Cross; and he that by tyranny gained dominion over the creation of the King, is by faith overthrown in utter ruin. By the Blood of God, the serpent's poison is washed away; and the curse of a just condemnation is loosed by the unjust judgment passed against the Just One. For it was fitting that the wood should be healed by wood; and that the sufferings of him who was condemned because of the tree should be done away through the Passion of Him Who is passionless. But, O Christ our King, glory to Thy dread dispensation toward us, whereby Thou hast saved us all, since Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

THE HYMN OF THANKSGIVING AT THE LIGHTING OF THE LAMPS

Choir: Gladsome light of the Holy glory that shines from the immortal Father in Heaven, the Holy, the Blessed, O Jesus Christ! Lo now that we come to sunset, now that we see the evening light, we sing the praise of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, One God. Worthy art Thou to be praised at all times with voices meet for holy song. Son of God, Thou Giver of Life, wherefore the world glorifieth thee.

WEDNESDAY EVENING PROKEIMENON IN TONE THREE

Leader: The Evening Prokeimenon!

Choir: O God, in thy name save me, and in thy strength do thou judge me. (*twice*)

Verse: O God, hearken unto my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth.

Choir: O God, in thy name save me, and in thy strength do thou judge me.

THE PARAMIA

First Passage

Reader: The Reading from the Book of Exodus (15:22-16:1).

Moses brought the sons of Israel out of the Red Sea, and led them into the wilderness of Sur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water to drink. And they came to Marah, and could not drink of the water of Marah, for it was bitter; therefore the name of that place was called Bitterness. And the people murmured against Moses, saying: What shall we drink? And Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, and he cast it into the water, and the water was sweetened; there He established to him ordinances and judgments, and there He proved him, and said: If thou wilt indeed hear the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is pleasing in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commands, and keep all His statutes, no disease which I have brought upon the Egyptians will I bring upon thee, for I am the Lord that healeth thee. And they came to Aelim, and there were there twelve fountains of water, and three score and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters. And they departed from Aelim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Aelim and Sinai.

The Second Passage

Reader: The Reading from the Book of Proverbs (3:11-18).

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Blessed is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who knoweth prudence. For it is better to traffic

for her, than for treasures of gold and silver. And she is more valuable than precious stones; no evil thing shall resist her; she is well known to all that love her, and no precious thing is equal to her in value. For length of existence and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are wealth and glory; out of her mouth proceedeth righteousness, and she carrieth law and mercy upon her tongue. Her ways are good ways, and all her paths are peaceful. She is a tree of life to all that lay hold upon her; and she is a secure help to all that stay themselves on her, as on the Lord.

The Third Passage

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (60:11-16).

Thus saith the Lord: Thy gates shall be opened continually, O Jerusalem; they shall not be shut day nor night, to bring in to thee the power of the nations, and their kings as captives. For the nations and the kings which will not serve thee shall perish; and those nations shall be made utterly desolate. And the glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, with the cypress, and pine, and cedar together, to glorify My holy place; and the place of My feet will I glorify. And the sons of them that humbled thee, and of them that provoked thee, shall come to thee in fear; and all they that provoked thee shall worship at the footsteps of thy feet; and thou shalt be called Zion, the city of the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. Because thou art become desolate and hated, and there was none to help thee, therefore I will make thee a perpetual gladness, a joy of generations of generations. And thou shalt suck the milk of the nations, and shalt eat the wealth of kings; and shalt know that I am the Lord that saveth thee and delivereth thee, the God of Israel.

AUGMENTED EKTENIA REPLACEMENT

Reader: Lord have mercy (*40 times*)

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

THE EVENING PRAYER

People: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever. Amen. Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy statutes. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

LITANY OF SUPPLICATION (& THE PEACE) REPLACEMENT

Reader: Lord have mercy (*12 times*)

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

APOSTICHA FOR THE FEAST IN TONE FIVE (**Rejoice**)

Rejoice, life-giving Cross of the Lord, * thou never-conquered battle-trophy of piety, * support and staff of the faithful, the wall surrounding the Church, * and the door that leadeth into Paradise. * Through thee hath corruption been made to vanish and be no more; * death's mighty power hath been vanquished and swallowed up, * and we have been raised from the earth to celestial things. * O truceless foe of demons, and our weapon invincible, * thou art the glory of

Martyrs and true adornment of all the Saints, * calm port of salvation, * that which granteth the Great Mercy of God unto the world.

Verse 1. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool.

Rejoice, O holy Cross of the Lord, * whereby the race of man was loosed from the ancient curse; * thou ensign of joy and gladness, thou who dost dash down the foes * by thine Elevation, O all-ven'erable. * Our succor and help art thou, and the might of all them that rule, * strength of the righteous, and the beauty adorning priests; * where thou art portrayed, thou dost rescue from every ill. * Scepter of power, staff of strength, wherewith we are shepherded; * weapon of peace round about which the Angels hover with fear and awe; * divine and true glory * of Christ God, Who doth bestow His Great Mercy on the world.

Verse 2. As for God, He is our King before the ages.

Rejoice, thou faithful guide of the blind * and skilful healer of the sick, O most precious Cross, * who, when we fell to corruption, didst lift us up once again, * O thou resurrection of all them that died. * Through thee is corruption quelled, incorruption hath blossomed forth; * we, who are mortals born of earth, have been deified; * and in utter loss hath the devil been overthrown. * Looking on thee exalted by the hands of high priests today, * with faith and love we exalt Him Who was exalted on thee for us; * and thee do we worship, * richly drawing forth divine and Great Mercy for our souls.

DOXASTICON FOR THE FEAST IN TONE EIGHT

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

Thy precious Cross, which Moses prefigured in himself of old, defeated Amalek and put him to flight; and David the sweet-singer cried out commanding that it be worshipped as Thy footstool. As we sinners worship it with unworthy lips today, O Christ God, we praise Thee Who didst deign to be nailed thereon and we cry to Thee: O Lord, with the thief, count us worthy of Thy Kingdom.

THE HYMN OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER

Leader: Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

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

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

All: Amen.

APOLYTIKION OF THE CROSS IN TONE ONE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserve Thy community. (*thrice without* “Glory..., ” “Both now... ”)

THE DISMISSAL

Choir: Preserve, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without corruption bearest God the Word and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

The Leader bows toward the icon of Christ on the iconostasis, saying:

Leader: Glory to thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. O Lord, bless.

Leader: O Thou Who rose from the dead for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross—the Exaltation of which we now celebrate; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the Holy Equal to the Apostles and Myrrh-Bearer Mary Magdalene, protector of this community; and of all the saints: have mercy on us, and save us, for Thou art good and lovest mankind.

Then, facing the icon of Christ, on the iconostasis, the Leader says:

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

All: Amen.