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READER'S GREAT VESPERS ON SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2026

(Eve of 2nd Sunday after Pascha)

***Sunday of the Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women, Pious Joseph of Arimathea
& Righteous Nicodemus***

THE OPENING

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

Reader: Amen.

Leader & Choir: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (*thrice*)

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.

FIRST STASIS OF FIRST KATHISMA

Psalm 1

Reader: Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the pestilent. But his will is rather in the law of the Lord, and in His law will he meditate day and night. And he shall be like the tree which is planted by the streams of the waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in its season; and its leaf shall not fall, and all things whatsoever he may do shall prosper. Not so are the ungodly, not so; but rather they are like the chaff which the wind doth hurl away from the face of the earth. For this reason shall the ungodly not stand up in judgement, nor sinners in the council of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 2

Why have the heathen raged, and the peoples meditated empty things? The kings of the earth were aroused, and the rulers were assembled together, against the Lord, and against His Christ. Let us break their bonds asunder, and let us cast away their yoke from us. He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn, and the Lord shall deride them. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and in His anger shall He trouble them. But as for Me, I was established as king by Him, upon Sion His holy mountain, proclaiming the commandment of the Lord. The Lord said unto Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt herd them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt shatter them like a potter's vessels. And now, O ye kings, understand; be instructed, all ye that judge the earth. Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling. Lay hold of instruction, lest at any time the Lord be angry, and ye perish from the righteous way. When quickly His wrath be kindled, blessed are all that have put their trust in Him.

Psalm 3

O Lord, why are they multiplied that afflict me? Many rise up against me. Many say unto my soul: There is no salvation for him in his God. But Thou, O Lord, art my helper, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy mountain. I laid me down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord will help me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God, for Thou hast smitten all who without cause are mine enemies; the teeth of sinners hast Thou broken. Salvation is of the Lord, and Thy blessing is upon Thy people.

Stasis

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.

“O LORD, I HAVE CRIED” IN TONE TWO

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 round 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, Lord, are mine eyes; in Thee have I put my trust, take not away my soul.
- Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the traps of the workers of iniquity.
- Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst I alone escape.
- 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 man 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.

For the Resurrection in Tone Two

Verse 10. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.

Come ye, let us worship Him Who was born of the Father before all time, the Word of God, incarnate of the Virgin Mary; for He did submit to crucifixion by His own choice, was delivered to burial as He Himself willed, rose from the dead, and saved me, who was lost.

Verse 9. The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.

Verily, Christ our Savior nailed to His Cross the handwriting of the decree, and did expunge it. And He abolished the might of Death. Let us therefore adore His third-day Resurrection.

Verse 8. Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.

Come, let us with the archangels praise the Resurrection of Christ; for He is the Redeemer and Savior of our souls, and He it is Who will come with fearful magnificence and glorious might to judge the world which He hath created.

Verse 7. Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

O Thou Who wast crucified and wast buried, the angel did proclaim Thee, that Thou art the Master, saying to the women, Come ye and behold where the Lord was laid; for He is risen as He said; for He is the Almighty One, and therefore, do we worship Thee, O Thou Who alone art deathless; O Christ, Giver of life, have mercy upon us.

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

With Thy Cross Thou didst abolish the curse of the tree; with Thy Death and Burial Thou didst cause the might of Death to die; and with Thy Resurrection Thou didst enlighten mankind. Wherefore, do we cry to Thee, O Christ our God, the Benefactor, glory to Thee.

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.

O Lord, verily, the gates of Death were opened to Thee for fear of Thee. And as the gate-keepers of Hades saw Thee they did tremble; for Thou didst break asunder its brazen gates; didst crush its iron bars; didst bring us out from the shadow and darkness of death; and didst break our bonds asunder.

Verse 4. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord.

Come let us all sing with our mouths a song of salvation. Let us kneel down in the house of the Lord saying, O Thou Who wast crucified on a Tree, Who didst rise from the dead, and Who still remainest in the bosom of the Father, forgive us our sins.

For the Myrrh-bearing Women in Tone Two

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

Early, at dawn, the ointment-bearing women arose, and carrying ointments, came to the Lord's tomb. And not attaining their desire, the pious women pondered the removal of the stone, addressing one another and saying: Where are the seals of the grave? Where are Pilate's watchmen and the security of his great care? And lo, an angel, radiant as lightning, proclaimed to them that of which they were ignorant, addressing them and saying: Why, wailing, seek ye the Living Who produceth life for mankind? Christ our God hath risen from the dead, since He is Almighty, bestowing on all, life, incorruptibility, illumination and the Great Mercy.

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

Why mingle tears with the ointment, O women Disciples? Behold, the stone hath been rolled away, and the sepulcher is empty. Behold corruption trodden under of Life, the seals bearing clear witness, the guards of the rebellious fast asleep, the dead saved by the body of God, and Hades

mourning. Hasten with joy, and tell the Disciples that Christ, Who is First-born of the dead, Who caused death to die, shall go before ye into Galilee.

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

The ointment-bearers, O Christ, rose up early and hastened to Thy tomb, seeking to anoint with oils Thine incorruptible body. But when the glad tidings were brought to them by the words of the angel, with signs of joy they proclaimed to the Apostles that the Element of our salvation had risen, leading death captive, and granting the world life eternal and the Great Mercy.

DOXASTICON FOR MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN TONE SIX

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

The ointment-bearing women, O Savior, came to Thy tomb; and when they beheld the seals, not finding Thy body, they hurried anxiously, wailing and saying: Who hath stolen our Hope? Who hath taken away a naked, embalmed corpse, the only consolation to His Mother? Woe! How hath the dead-reviving One died? And how was He buried Who spoiled Hades? But arise Thou, by Thine own power after three days, as Thou didst say, and save our souls.

THEOTOKION FOR THE RESURRECTION IN TONE TWO

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Virgin, verily, the shadow of the law hath been annulled by the coming of thy grace; for as the bush was burning but not consumed, so didst thou give birth while yet a Virgin. And instead of the pillar of fire, the Sun of justice shone forth; and instead of Moses, Christ the Savior of our souls.

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.

SATURDAY EVENING PROKEIMENON IN TONE SIX

Leader: The Evening Prokeimenon!

Choir: The Lord is King, and hath clothed Himself with majesty. *(twice)*

Verse: The Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself;

Choir: The Lord is King, and hath clothed Himself with majesty.

Verse: For He established the world which shall not be shaken

Choir: The Lord is King, and hath clothed Himself with majesty.

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

Choir: The Lord is King, and hath clothed Himself with majesty.

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.

APOSTICHON FOR THE RESURRECTION IN TONE TWO

Thy Resurrection, O Christ Savior, hath illumined the whole universe. Thou hast renewed Thy creation. O Lord Almighty, glory to Thee.

THE PASCHAL STICHERA IN TONE FIVE¹

Verse 1. Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those who hate Him flee from before His face!

Today, a sacred Pascha is revealed to us: a new and holy Pascha, a mystical Pascha, a Pascha worthy of veneration, a Pascha which is Christ the Redeemer, a blameless Pascha, a great Pascha, a Pascha of the faithful, a Pascha which has opened to us the gates of Paradise, a Pascha which sanctifies all the faithful.

Verse 2. As smoke vanishes so let them vanish; as wax melts before the fire!

Come from that scene, O women bearers of glad tidings, and say to Zion: "Receive from us the glad tidings of joy, of Christ's Resurrection! Exult and be glad, and rejoice, O Jerusalem, seeing Christ the King, Who comes forth from the tomb like a bridegroom in procession!"

Verse 3. So the sinners will perish before the face of God. But let the righteous be glad!

The myrrh-bearing women, at the break of dawn, drew near to the tomb of the Life-giver. There they found an Angel sitting upon the stone. He greeted them with these words: "Why do you seek the Living among the dead? Why do you mourn the Incorrupt amid corruption? Go, proclaim the glad tidings to His disciples!"

Verse 4. This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Pascha of beauty, the Pascha of the Lord, A Pascha worthy of honor has dawned for us. Pascha! Let us embrace each other joyously! Pascha, ransom from affliction! For today, as from a bridal chamber, Christ has shown forth from the tomb, and filled the women with joy saying: "Proclaim the glad tidings to the Apostles!"

DOXASTICON FOR MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN TONE FIVE

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

O Thou Who puttest on light like a robe, when Joseph with Nicodemus brought Thee down from the Tree and beheld Thee dead, naked and unburied, he mourned outwardly and grievously, crying to Thee with sighs, and saying: Woe is me, sweet Jesus, Whom but a while ago, when the sun beheld suspended upon the Cross, it was shrouded in darkness, the earth quaked with fear, and the veil of the Temple was rent asunder. Albeit, I see that Thou willingly enduredst death for my sake. How then shall I array Thee, my God? How shall I wrap Thee with linen? Or what dirges

¹ The translation of the Paschal verses and of the accompanying Theotokion shown here matches the Znamenny Chant music setting.

shall I chant for Thy funeral? Wherefore, O compassionate Lord, I magnify Thy Passion, and praise Thy Burial with Thy Resurrection, crying: O Lord, glory to Thee.

DOXASTICON FOR PASCHA IN TONE FIVE

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

This is the day of resurrection! Let us be illumined by the feast! Let us embrace each other! Let us call “brothers” even those that hate us, and forgive all by the resurrection, and so let us cry: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”

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.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA IN TONE TWO

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

The noble Joseph, taking Thine immaculate Body down from the Tree, and having wrapped It in pure linen and spices, laid It for burial in a new tomb. But on the third day Thou didst arise,

O Lord, granting to the world Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN TONE TWO

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Unto the myrrh-bearing women did the Angel cry out as he stood by the grave: Myrrh-oils are meet for the dead, but Christ hath proved to be a stranger to corruption. But cry out: The Lord is risen, granting to the world Great Mercy.

THE DISMISSAL

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

Shine! Shine! Shine! O new Jerusalem. The glory of the Lord has shone on thee. Exult now, exult and be glad, O Sion. Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection, the Resurrection of thy Son.²

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 again from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the *Holy Myrrh-Bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalene*, protector of this community; *of the Pious Joseph of Arimathea, Righteous Nicodemus and the holy Myrrh-bearing Women; of the Hieromartyr Basil, bishop of Amasea with Venerable Glaphyra; Stephen, bishop of Perm; and Venerable Ioanikios of Devitch in Serbia, whose memory we celebrate today*, 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: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death, and upon those in the tombs...

People: ...bestowing life!

² Some sources have the usual "More honorable..." in place of "Shine, shine ..." Our parish uses this hymn during Paschal season.