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# *The taking of the Holy Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ down from the Holy Cross*

## GREAT VESPERS OF HOLY SATURDAY (Served in the afternoon of Holy Friday)

*Priest:* Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

*All:* Amen.

*Reader:* O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King. (*metania*)

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God. (*metania*)

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

### 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

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

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God and the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For this holy house and those who with faith, reverence and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For our (*metropolitan or archbishop or bishop*), *N.*, the honorable presbytery, the diaconate in Christ, all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For our president (*or appropriate head of state*), civil authorities and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For this city and every city and countryside and the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For healthful seasons, abundance of the fruits of the earth and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For travelers by sea, by land and by air, the sick, the suffering, captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and

each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

*Choir:* To thee, O Lord.

*Priest:* For unto thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

“LORD, I HAVE CRIED” IN TONE ONE

*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.
- Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.
- The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.
- 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 Holy Saturday in Tone One  
*Verse 6.* *If Thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.*

All creation was altered for fear when it beheld Thee hanging upon the Cross, O Christ; the sun was darkened, and the foundations of the earth were shaken. All things suffered with the Creator of all. O Thou Who willingly didst endure these things for us, Lord, glory be 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.*

All creation was altered for fear when it beheld Thee hanging upon the Cross, O Christ; the sun was darkened, and the foundations of the earth were shaken. All things suffered with the Creator of all. O Thou Who willingly didst endure these things for us, Lord, glory be to Thee.

For Holy Saturday in Tone Two

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

Why doth this impious and iniquitous people meditate empty things? Why have they condemned to death the Life of all? O great wonder! The Creator of the world is betrayed into the hands of lawless men, and the Friend of man is lifted up upon the Tree, that He might free the bondsmen of Hades, who cry: O long-suffering Lord, glory be to Thee.

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

On seeing Thee hanging on the Cross today, the blameless Virgin was bitterly wounded in her heart, O Word, and her maternal bowels lamented. Sighing in lament from the depth of her soul, she was worn from tearing at her cheeks and hair. Wherefore, smiting her breast, she cried out plaintively: Woe unto me, O divine Child! Woe unto me, O Light of the world! Why, like the sun, hast Thou set before mine eyes, O Lamb of God? Hence, the incorporeal hosts were seized with trembling and said: O incomprehensible Lord, glory be to Thee.

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

Beholding Thee, the Creator and God of all, hanging upon the Tree, O Christ, she who

seedlessly gave Thee birth cried out bitterly: My Son, whither is departed the comeliness of Thy form? I cannot bear to see Thee unjustly crucified. Hasten, therefore, and arise, that I too may behold Thy Resurrection from the dead on the third day.

For Holy Saturday in Tone Six

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

Today the Sovereign Master of creation standeth before Pilate, and the Creator of all is delivered to the Cross, led like a lamb, of His own will. He that rained down manna is affixed with nails, His side is pierced, and His lips are touched with the sponge. The Redeemer of the world is smitten on His cheeks; the Fashioner of all is mocked by His own servants. O how great is the Master's love for man! He besought His Heavenly Father for the crucifiers, saying: Forgive them this sin, for the lawless ones know not what they do in their injustice.

### DOXASTICA OF HOLY SATURDAY IN TONE SIX

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

O how did the lawless synagogue condemn to death the King of creation, feeling no shame because of His benefits which He called to remembrance in His defense, saying unto them: My people, what have I done unto you? Did I not fill Judea with miracles? Did I not raise the dead by a word alone? Did I not heal every sickness and disease? Wherewith then do ye requite Me? Why have ye forgotten Me? In return for the healings, ye inflicted wounds upon Me; instead of life, ye put Me to death, hanging the Benefactor upon the Tree as a malefactor; as a lawbreaker, the Giver of the Law; as a criminal, the King of all. O long-suffering Lord, glory be to Thee.

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

A terrible and strange mystery is brought to pass today: He that cannot be touched is held fast. He is bound that loosed Adam from the curse. He that trieth the hearts and reins is tried unjustly. He that shut up the abyss is shut in prison. He before Whom the hosts of Heaven stand with trembling, standeth before Pilate. The Creator is smitten by the hand of His creature; He that judgeth the quick and the dead is condemned to the Tree. The Destroyer of Hades is shut in a grave. O Thou Who endurest all things in Thy compassion, and hast saved all from the curse, O forbearing Lord, glory be to Thee.

*As the clergy prepare for the **Entrance with the Gospel**, the priest recites the following prayer quietly: O Master, Lord our God, who hast appointed in heaven orders and hosts of angels and archangels for the service of thy glory: Cause that with our entrance there may be an entrance of holy angels serving with us and glorifying thy goodness. For unto thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.. Amen.*

*Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!*

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.*

THE PARAMIA

*Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon!*

In Tone Four

*Reader: They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture, did they cast lots. (Ps.21:18)*

*Verse: My God, my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me? (Ps.21:1a)*

*Deacon: Wisdom.*

*Reader: The Reading is from the book of Exodus (33:11-23).*

*Deacon: Let us attend.*

*Reader: Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tent.*

*Moses said to the Lord, "See, thou sayest to me, 'Bring up this people'; but thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, show me now thy ways, that I may know thee and find favor in thy sight. Consider too that this nation is thy people." And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." And he said to him, "If thy presence will not go with me, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in thy sight, I and thy people? Is it not in thy going with us, so that we are distinct, I and thy people, from all other people that are upon the face of the earth?"*

*And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." Moses said, "I pray thee, show me thy glory." And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will*

be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live." And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

In Tone Four

*Reader:* Judge them, O Lord, that do me injustice; war against them that war against me. (*Ps.34:1*)

*Verse:* They repaid me with evil things for good. (*Ps.34:14a*)

*Deacon:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* The Reading is from the Book of Job (38:1-21; 42:1-5).

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

*Reader:* And the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemi'mah; and the name of the second Kezi'ah; and the name of the third Ker'en-hap'puch. And in all the land there were no women so fair as Job's daughters; and their father gave them inheritance among their brothers. And after this Job lived a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. And Job died, an old man, and full of days. The same dwelt in Haran, on the borders of Edom and Arabia. And he was called Yabob, and he took unto himself a wife, an Arabian woman, and she bore him a son called Hannoun. And Job's father was Zerah, the son of Esau, making him the fifth in the

descent from Abraham. And it was also written that he will rise with those whom our Lord shall raise.

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

In Tone Four

*Reader:* O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Thy name in all the earth! (*Ps.8:1a*)

*Verse:* Thy magnificence is lifted high above the heavens. (*Ps.8:1b*)

*Deacon:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah (52:13-15; 53:1-12; 54:1).

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

*Reader:* These things the Lord doth say, "Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. As many were astonished at him – his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men – so shall he startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which has not been told them they shall see, and that which they have not heard they shall understand. Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

"He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one

to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

“Yet it was the will of the LORD to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities.

“Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. ‘Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her that is married,’” says the LORD.

#### THE APOSTOLOS & THE GOSPEL

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

*Reader:* Prokeimenon in the 6<sup>th</sup> one.

They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and in the shadow of death. (*Ps. 87:6*)  
{twice}

*Verse:* O Lord God of my salvation, by day have I cried and by night before Thee. (*Ps. 87:1*)

They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and in the shadow of death.

*Vespers Apostolos for Holy Saturday*

*Deacon:* Wisdom!

*Reader:* The reading is from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians §125 (1:18-2:2).

*Deacon:* Let us attend!

*Reader:* Brethren, the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart." Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctifica-

tion and redemption; therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord."

When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

*Priest:* Peace to thee that readest.

*Alleluia, in tone 5*

*Choir:* Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*Verse 1:* Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul. (*Ps.68:1*)

*Choir:* Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Verse 2:* And they gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. (*Ps.68:26*)

*Choir:* Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Verse 3:* Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see. (*Ps.68:28a*)

*Choir:* Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

*Choir:* Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*Vespers Gospel for Holy Saturday*

*Deacon:* Wisdom! Attend! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

*Priest:* Peace be to all.

*Choir:* And to thy spirit.

*Deacon:* The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew §110 (27:1-38).<sup>1</sup>

*Choir:* Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

*Deacon:* Let us attend!

The Lord said to his disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of man will be delivered up to be crucified.

At that time, when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor.

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barab'bas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barab'bas or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much

<sup>1</sup> With additional Gospel fragments, as noted.

over him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barab'bas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barab'bas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified."

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for them Barab'bas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyre'ne, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Gol'gotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him

there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

*(Luke 23:39-43)*

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us! " But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

*(Matthew 27:39-54)* And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

*(John 19:31-37)*

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his

legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

*(Matthew 27:55-61)*

There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Mag'dalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zeb'edee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathe'a, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

*At this point, the reading stops. The senior priest and deacon exit the sanctuary through the north door, carrying a large, white linen shroud, and come to stand on the solea before the cross. As the senior priest, assisted by the deacon, removes the body from the cross, wraps it in the white shroud and carries it through the holy doors into the sanctuary, the junior priest concludes the chanting of the gospel. If only one priest is serving, he removes the body from the cross and carries it into the sanctuary when the chanting of the gospel is completed.*

And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Mag'dalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

*Choir:* Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

## THE AUGMENTED EKTENIA

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

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Deacon:* Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Deacon:* Again we pray for our (*metropolitan or archbishop or bishop*), *N.*

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Deacon:* Again we pray for our brethren: the priests, hiero-monks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Deacon:* Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and forgiveness of sins for (*the servants of God, NN., and*) all Orthodox Christians of true worship, who live and dwell in this community.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Deacon:* Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church (*and for the servants of God, NN.*), and all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Deacon:* Again we pray for those who bear fruit and do good works in this holy and all-venerable temple, those who serve and those who sing and all the people here present, who await thy great and rich mercy.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy

*Priest:* For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*Choir:* 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.

### THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

*Deacon:* Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by thy grace.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

*Deacon:* That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir:* Grant this, O Lord.

*Deacon:* An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir:* Grant this, O Lord.

*Deacon:* Pardon and forgiveness of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir:* Grant this, O Lord.

*Deacon:* All things good and profitable for our souls and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir:* Grant this, O Lord.

*Deacon:* That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir:* Grant this, O Lord.

*Deacon:* A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask.

*Choir:* Grant this, O Lord.

*Deacon:* Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

*Choir:* To thee, O Lord.

*Priest:* For thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

### THE PEACE

*Priest:* Peace be to all.

*Choir:* And to thy spirit.

*Deacon:* Bow your heads unto the Lord.

*Choir:* To Thee, O Lord.

*All bow their heads as the priest says the following prayer:*

*Priest:* O Lord our God, who didst bow the heavens and come down for the salvation of mankind: Look upon thy servants and thine inheritance; for unto thee, the fearful Judge

who yet lovest mankind, have thy servants bowed their heads and submissively inclined their necks, awaiting not help from men but entreating thy mercy and looking confidently for thy salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil and from vain thoughts and from evil imaginations.

Blessed and glorified be the might of thy kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

#### THE PROCESSION WITH THE EPITAPHIOS

*A procession is made with the Epitaphios during the chanting of the Aposticha Doxasticon as the people kneel. The clergy and altar boys prepare during the chanting of the Aposticha.*

- 1) *The procession forms inside the sanctuary with the altar boys carrying the torches and fans, and the deacon (if there is one) carrying the censer.*
- 2) *Concelebrating priests wear only their exorasson and epitachelion.*
- 3) *When the choir begins to slowly chant the Doxasticon, the junior priests take up the epitaphios from the prothesis table, hold it above their heads and make a procession from the north door, to the center of the solea where the bier sits.*
- 4) *The senior priest walks under the epitaphios, carrying the gospel book, while the deacon walks before, censuring the epitaphios. (If only one priest is serving, he places the epitaphios on his back, as he would an aer, and makes the procession. After placing the epitaphios upon the bier, he re-enters the sanctuary, takes up the gospel book, carries it to the bier and places it upon the epitaphios.)*
- 5) *Upon reaching the bier, the clergy process around it three times and then place upon it the epitaphios with the head of Christ being on the north side.*
- 6) *The senior priest places the gospel book,*

*cross side up, in the middle of the epitaphios.*

- 7) *The senior priest then sprinkles fragrant blossoms upon the epitaphios, makes three prostrations before the bier and venerates the gospel book and the epitaphios.*
- 8) *Then the other clergy come forward, two by two, followed by all the faithful — each making three prostrations before venerating the gospel book and epitaphios.*
- 9) *The clergy re-enter the sanctuary, and Great Vespers concludes as usual.*

#### APOSTICHA FOR HOLY SATURDAY IN TONE TWO

*(\*\*The original melody\*\*)*

When he took Thee dead from off the Tree,  
\* the Arimathean prepared Thee with finest  
linen and myrrh \* that he might give burial  
to Thee, the Life of all. \* Then, compelled  
by his fervent love, \* he longed to embrace  
Thee \* and to press Thy spotless Body to his  
heart and lips. \* But his fear and rev'ence  
restrained him, \* whilst with joy he cried to  
Thee: Glory \* to Thy condescension, O  
Thou Friend of man.

*Verse 1. The Lord is King, and hath clothed  
Himself with majesty. The Lord is clothed  
with strength and He hath girt Himself.*

When Thou hadst been laid in the new tomb  
\* for the sake of all men, O Thou Who art  
the Redeemer of all, \* Hades the most ludi-  
crous saw Thee and shook with fear; \* then  
destroyed were the bars thereof; \* the gates  
burst asunder; \* sepulchers were opened and  
the dead were roused from sleep; \* then was  
Adam filled with thanksgiving, \* and with  
joy he cried to Thee: Glory \* to Thy conde-  
scension, O Thou Friend of man.

*Verse 2. For He established the world which  
shall not be shaken.*

Thou hadst been bodily enclosed \* in a tomb  
as Thou hadst so willed it, Who in Thy na-  
ture as God \* dost abide uncircumscribable  
and infinite, \* Thou didst close off the vaults

of death, \* O Christ, and didst empty \* all of Hades' dark dominions, leaving nothing there. \* Then Thou also madest this Sabbath \* worthy of divine benediction \* and Thy glory and far-shining radiance.

*Verse 3. Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.*

When the hosts of Heaven, O Christ God, \* saw Thee slandered as a deceiver by lawless men, then they quaked \* at Thine inexpressible long-suffering, as they saw \* that the hands that had lately pierced \* Thy spotless divine side \* sealed the stone upon Thy tomb, and they were sore afraid. \* But rejoicing at our salvation, \* mightily they cried to Thee: Glory \* to Thy condescension, O Thou Friend of man.

DOXASTICON FOR HOLY SATURDAY  
IN TONE FIVE

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

Thou Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, when Joseph with Nicodemus took Thee down from the Tree and beheld Thee dead, naked and unburied, he struck up a compassionate dirge, and with mourning he said: Woe is me, O sweet Jesus! When but a short while ago the sun beheld Thee hanging upon the Cross, it shrouded itself in darkness, and the earth quaked with fear, and the veil of the Temple was rent asunder. And behold, now I see Thee willingly submitting unto death for my sake. How shall I bury Thee, O my God? Or how shall I wrap Thee with winding sheets? With what hands shall I touch Thine undefiled Body? Or what dirges shall I sing at Thy departure, O Compassionate One? I magnify Thy Passion; I praise Thy Burial and Resurrection, and I cry out: O Lord, glory be to Thee. \_\_

THE HYMN OF ST. SIMEON  
THE GOD-RECEIVER

*All:* 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.

*Priest:* For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

*All:* Amen.

APOLYTIKIA OF HOLY SATURDAY  
IN TONE TWO

*(Sung without "Glory... Both now ...")*

The pious Joseph, having brought down thy pure body from the tree, wrapped it in pure linen, embalmed it with ointment, arrayed it and laid it in a new tomb.

Verily the angel came to the tomb and said to the ointment bearing women, "Ointment

is meet for the dead, but Christ hath shown himself to be free from corruption”

*Deacon:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* Father, bless.

*Priest:* Christ our God, the Existing, is blessed, always now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

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

*Priest:* Most holy Theotokos, save us.

*Choir:* 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.

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

*Reader:* 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. Father, bless.

#### THE GREAT DISMISSAL

*Priest:* May He Who endured spitting, scourges, reviling, and death 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; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; *of the Holy Myrrh-Bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalene*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints: have mercy on us, and save us,

forasmuch as he is good and loveth mankind.

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

*All:* Amen.

*As the faithful come forward to reverence the Epitaphios, the chanters and people sing the Apolytikia of Holy Saturday, repeating them as many times as is necessary.*