
GREAT & HOLY

FRIDAY

VESPERS

with the Rite of Entombment

VESPERS of GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY

On Great and Holy Friday, Christ died on the Cross, when He gave up His spirit, having fulfilled all things for our salvation – the reason for His Incarnation, miracle-working, suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

During Vespers service, we remember and *participate*, with mourning, in all the final events of the life of Christ: the trial, the sentence, the scourging and mocking, the Crucifixion, the death, the removal of the Body of Christ from the Cross, and His burial.

Excerpts from the Old Testament, which foretold the death of Christ and His resurrection, are read. The Gospel reading, composite of a few different excerpts, relates the entire story of Christ's crucifixion. All the hymnology offers the faithful proper understanding of these events – how God has revealed them, how the Church has always received them, and how we continue to confess.

The service is concluded with the bringing out of the Shroud, which symbolizes Christ's Body being taken down from the Cross by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. The Shroud is placed in the middle of the church, on a 'tomb,' just like Christ's Body was laid in a new tomb. Therefore, the church building becomes the tomb of Christ from this moment until we find it empty after the midnight procession. While all the faithful are Christ's disciples: those who took down His Body and those who watched from afar, in fear and silence.

This text was prepared for the use at
SAINT JOHN *the* BAPTIST
Russian Orthodox Church
Little Falls, NJ

The faithful STAND.

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

Reader: Amen. Glory to You, O God, glory to You.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things. Treasury of blessings, and Giver of Life, come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

EVERYONE: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into

temptation but deliver us from evil.

Priest: For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

Come, let us worship God our King.

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

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

The faithful may SIT.

PSALM 104 (103 LXX)

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, You are very great.

You are clothed with honor and majesty,
covered with light as with a garment.

You stretch out the heavens like a curtain,

You cover Your high halls with the waters,

You make the clouds Your staircase,

You ascend on the wings of the wind,

You make Your angels spirits,

and Your ministers – a flame of fire.

You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it will never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment,
the waters stood above the mountains.
At Your rebuke they flee,
at the sound of Your thunder,
they tremble with fear.
The mountains rise up,
and the valleys run down to the place
that You appointed for them.
You set a boundary that waters may not pass,
so that they might not again cover the earth.
You make springs gush forth in the valleys,
the waters flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal,
the wild donkeys will quench their thirst.
By the streams the birds of the air
have their habitation,
they sing among the branches.
From Your lofty abode You water the mountains,
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.
You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring bread from the earth,
and wine to gladden the heart of people,
oil to make the face shine,

and bread to strengthen people's hearts.
The trees of the plain are full of fruit,
the cedars of Lebanon that You planted.
In them the birds build their nests,
the stork has its home in the fir trees.
The high mountains are for the deer,
the rocks are a refuge for the rabbits.
You have made the moon to mark the seasons,
the sun knows its time for setting.
You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God.
When the sun rises,
they withdraw and lie down in their dens.
People go out to their work
and labor until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are Your works.
In wisdom You have made them all,
the earth is filled with Your creation.
There is the sea, great and wide,
creeping things are innumerable there,
living things both small and great.
There go the ships, and Leviathan
that You formed to play in it.
All of them look to You

to give them their food in due season,
when You give it to them, they gather it up,
when You open Your hand,
all things are filled with Your goodness.
But when You turn Your face away,
they are troubled.

When You take away their breath,
they die and return to their dust.

When You send out Your spirit, they are created,
and You renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever,
may the Lord rejoice in His works.

He looks on the earth and it trembles,
He touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live,
I will sing praises to my God as long as I exist.

May my words be pleasing to Him,
for I rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth,
and let the wicked be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to You, O God. (3x)

the GREAT LITANY

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

Singers: Lord, have mercy. (*after each petition*)

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

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

For our Patriarch [*name*], for our Bishop (*or* Archbishop *or* Metropolitan) [*name*], for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For this country, its president, for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city, for every city and countryside, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord.

For seasonable weather, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

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

That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us surrender ourselves, each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Singers: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For to You 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.

Singers: Amen.

LORD, I CALL

PSALM 141 (140 LXX)

Singers: tone 1

Lord, I call up Thee, hear me.

Hear me, O Lord.

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me.

Receive the voice of my prayer,
when I call upon Thee.

Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer arise in Thy sight as incense,
and let the lifting up of my hands,
be an evening sacrifice.

Hear me, O Lord.

Reader: Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord,
keep watch over the door of my lips.
Do not incline my heart to evil words
that make excuses for evil men
to work their lawlessness;
do not let me join their inner circle.
Let the righteous person
correct me with mercy, and reprove me.
Never let the oil of the wicked anoint my head,
for my prayer is continually
against their wicked deeds.
Their judges were smashed on the rock,
although they heard my pleasant words.
Like a lump of ground is broken apart on the land,
so their bones were be scattered beside in hell.
But my eyes are turned to You, O God,
my Lord, in You I hope, do not take my soul away.
Guard me from the trap that they have set for me,
and from the stumbling blocks of evildoers.
Sinners will fall into their own nets,
while I am alone escape.

PSALM 142 (141 LXX)

I cried to the Lord with my voice,
with my voice I prayed to the Lord.
I pour out my petition before Him,

I declare my afflictions in His presence.
When my spirit was failing me,
then You knew my way.
In the way where I walk,
they have hidden a trap for me.
I looked on my right hand
and saw that no one took notice of me,
no refuge remained for me,
no one cared for my soul.
I cried to You, O Lord, saying,
“You are my hope,
my portion in the land of the living.”
Give heed to my cry, for I am greatly humbled.
Save me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.
Bring my soul out of prison,
so that I may give thanks to Your Name, O Lord.
The righteous will wait for me,
until You reward me.

PSALM 130 (129 LXX)

Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice.
Let Your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications.
If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?

For there is forgiveness with You.
For Your Name's sake, O Lord, I wait for You.
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for Your word,
my soul hopes in the Lord.

Signers: tone 1

All creation was changed by fear
when it saw You hanging on 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 Lord, Who endured this for us,
glory to You!

Reader: From the morning watch until night, from
the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord.

Singers: tone 2:

An impious and transgressing people –
Why do they imagine vain things?
Why do they condemn to death the Life of all?
O great wonder!
The Creator of the world is betrayed
into the hands of lawless men.
He Who loves mankind
is lifted up upon the wood,
that He might free those bound in hell,
who cry, “O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!”

Reader: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Singers: tone 2

Today the blameless Virgin
saw You suspended upon the Cross, O Word.
She mourned within herself
and was sorely pierced in her heart.
She groaned in agony from the depth of her soul.
Exhausted from tearing her hair
and cheeks and beating her breast,
she cried out lamenting,
“Woe is me, O my divine Child!
Woe is me, O Light of the world!
Why have You departed from my eyes,
O Lamb of God?”
Then the bodiless hosts
were seized with trembling and cried,
“O Incomprehensive Lord, glory to You!”

PSALM 117 (116 LXX)

Reader: Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise Him, all you peoples.

Singers: tone 2

When she who gave birth to You without seed
saw You suspended upon the Tree, O Christ,
the Creator and God of all, she cried bitterly,

“Where is the beauty of Your form, O my Son?
I cannot bear to see You unjustly crucified.
Hasten and arise, that I too
may see Your Resurrection
from the dead on the third day!

Reader: For His mercy rules over us, and the truth
of the Lord endures forever.

Singers: tone 6

Today the Master of creation stands before Pilate.
Today the Creator of all
is condemned to die on the Cross.
Of His own will, He is led
as a lamb to the slaughter.
He who fed His people
with manna in the desert
is transfixed with nails.
His side is pierced,
and a sponge of vinegar touches His lips.
The Redeemer of the world is slapped on the face.
The Maker of all is mocked by His own servants.
How great is the Master’s love for mankind!
For those who crucified Him,
He prayed to His Father saying,
“Forgive them this sin,
for they know not what they do.”

Reader: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Singers: tone 6

See how the lawless assembly
condemns the King of creation to death.
They are not ashamed,
even when He reminds them
of His mighty works,
“My people, what have I done to you?
Have I not filled Judea with miracles?
Have I not raised the dead by My word alone?
Have I not healed every sickness and disease?
How have you repaid Me?
Why have you abandoned Me?
In return for healing, you give Me blows.
In return for life, you put Me to death.
You hang your Benefactor on the Cross,
as an evildoer.
Your Lawgiver – as a transgressor.
The King of all – as one condemned.”
O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!

The faithful STAND.

Reader: Now and every and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Singers: tone 6

We see a strange and fearful mystery
accomplished today.

He Whom none may touch is seized.

He Who loosed Adam from the curse is bound.

He Who tries the hearts of men
is unjustly brought to trial.

He Who closed the abyss is shut in prison.

He before Whom the hosts of heaven
stand with trembling stands before Pilate.

The Creator is struck by the hand of His creature.

He Who comes to judge the living and the dead
is condemned to the Cross.

The Conqueror of hell is enclosed in a tomb.

O Lord, having endured

all these things in Your tender love,

You have saved us from the curse,

O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!

the SMALL ENTRANCE

Priest: Wisdom. Stand upright.

Singers: *tone 5 - Byzantine*

O Gladsome Light of the Holy Glory
of the Immortal Father, Heavenly,
Holy, Blessed Jesus Christ.

Now that we have come to the setting of the sun,
and behold the light of evening,

we praise God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
For meet it is at all times to worship Thee
with voices of praise, O Son of God,
and Giver of life. Therefore,
all the world glorifies Thee.

the OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

Priest: Let us attend. Peace be unto all. Wisdom.

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th tone: They divide My garments among them, and for My raiment they cast lots. (*Psalm 22:18*)

Singers: *repeat the verse.*

Reader: My God, My God, look upon Me. Why have You forsaken Me. (*Psalm 22:1*)

Singers: *repeat the first verse.*

Reader: They divide My garments among them...

Singers: *finish the first verse.*

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading from the Book of Exodus.

Priest: Let us attend.

The faithful may SIT.

Reader: The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as one speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the

camp, his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun, did not leave the tent. Moses said to the Lord, “Behold, You have told me to lead these people, but You have not shown me whom You will send with me. Yet You say to me, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.’ Now, if I have found favor in Your sight, show Yourself to me, so that I may know You. And let me find favor in Your sight, so that I may know that this great nation is Your people.”

The Lord said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” And Moses said to Him, “If Your Presence will not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how will I know for certain that I and Your people have found favor in Your sight, unless You go with us? In this way, I and Your people will be glorified above all nations on the earth.”

The Lord said to Moses, “I will do what you have asked, because you have found favor in My sight, and I know you by name.” Moses said, “Show Yourself to me.” And God said, “I will pass by you in My glory, and I will speak My Name, ‘the Lord,’ before you. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But, you cannot see My face. No one will see My face and live. Behold, there is a place by Me, where you will stand on the rock. And when My

glory passes by, I will hide you in a cleft of the rock. I will cover you with My hand until I pass by. Then I will remove My hand, and you will see My back. But you will not see My face.” (*Exodus 33:11-23*)

The faithful STAND.

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th tone: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong Me, fight against those who fight against Me. (*Psalm 35:1*)

Singers: *repeat the verse.*

Reader: They rewarded Me evil for good, My soul is deserted. (*Psalm 35:12*)

Singers: *repeat the first verse.*

Reader: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong Me...

Singers: *end the first verse.*

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading from Book of Job.

Priest: Let us attend.

The faithful may SIT.

Reader: The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. And he had fourteen thousand

sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand pairs of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first daughter Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keren-happuch. In all the land there were no women so beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father gave them an inheritance along with their brothers. After his affliction, Job lived one hundred and seventy years; in all, he lived two hundred and forty years. Job saw his descendants to the fourth generation. He died an old man and full of days. And it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord will raise. (*Job 42:12-17*)

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: The Lord said, "Behold, My Servant will understand and He will be exalted and greatly glorified. Just as many will be astonished at You, so will Your appearance be without glory from men, and Your glory will not be honored by the sons of men. In this, many nations will be amazed at Him, kings will shut their mouths because of Him. Those who were not told about Him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.

“O Lord, 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, as a root out of dry ground. He had no form or glory that we should look at Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by the children of men. A Man of suffering and acquainted with bearing weakness. And as One from Whom others hide their faces He was despised, and we dishonored and disrespected Him.

“He carries our sins and suffers pain for us, yet we thought Him stricken, suffering, and in distress. But He was wounded for our sins, crushed for our lawless deeds. Upon Him was the punishment that brought us peace, and by His bruises we are healed. We, like sheep, have gone astray. We have all strayed in our own way, and the Lord handed Him over for our sins.

“He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He does not open His mouth. Like a sheep, He was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb that before its shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth. In His humiliation, His judgment is taken away. Who will describe His generation? His life is taken away from the earth. He was led to death because of the transgression of My people. They made His grave with the wicked and His tomb with the rich,

although He had done no violence, and there was no deceit in His mouth.

“The Lord wishes to cleanse Him from His blow. If you give an offering for sin, your soul will see a long-lived offspring. And the Lord desires to take away the suffering of His soul, to show Him light, and to form Him with understanding. The righteous One, My Servant, will make many righteous, and He will bear their sins. Therefore, He will inherit many and He will divide the plunder of the strong, since His soul was handed over to death, and was counted among the lawless, and He carried the sins of many, and was handed over because of their sins.

“Rejoice, O barren one who has never given birth. Burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor. For the children of the desolate woman are more than the children of her who has a husband.”
(Isaiah 52:13-54:1)

The faithful STAND.

the EPISTLE and GOSPEL READINGS

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 6th tone: They have laid Me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep. *(Psalm 88:6)*

Singers: repeat the verse.

Reader: O Lord God of my salvation, I call for help by day. I cry out in the night before You. (*Psalm 88:1*)

Singers: repeat the first verse.

Reader: They have laid Me in the depths of the pit...

Singers: finish the first verse.

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: BROTHERS and SISTERS, the message of the Cross is foolishness 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 discernment of the discerning I will bring to nothing” (*Isaiah 29:14*). Where is the wise? Where is the expert of the Law? Where is the debater of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through its ‘wisdom’ did not know God, it was God’s good pleasure, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand a sign and Greeks desire wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who are

called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human 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 put to shame the strong. God chose what is lowly and despised in the world, things that are nothing, in order to bring to nothing things that are thought to be important, so that no flesh might boast in the presence of God. By God's doing, you are in Christ Jesus, Who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Whoever boasts, should boast in the Lord" (*Jeremiah 9:23*). When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (*1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2*)

Priest: Peace be to you.

Reader: And to your spirit. Alleluia in the 1st tone:
Save Me, O God, for the waters have come up to My

neck. (*Psalm 69:1*)

Singers: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: They gave Me gall for food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink. (*Psalm 69:21*)

Singers: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see. (*Psalm 69:23*)

Singers: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Priest: Wisdom. Stand upright. Let us hear the holy Gospel. Peace be unto all.

Singers: And to you spirit.

Priest: The reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

Singers: Glory to Your Passion, O Lord.

Priest: Let us attend.

MATTHEW 27:1-38

IN THOSE DAYS, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel together against Jesus to put Him death. They bound Him, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pontius Pilate, the governor. When Judas, His betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he felt remorse and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Throwing down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he

departed. And he went away and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood.” After conferring together, they used the money to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason, that field has been called “The Field of Blood” to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him upon Whom a price had been set, on Whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me” (*Jeremiah 32:6*).

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when He was accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many accusations they make against You?” But He gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now on the Feast, the governor had the custom to release one prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release

for you, Barabbas or Jesus Who is called Christ?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had arrested Jesus. While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent Man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about Him.”

Now the chief priests and the elders convinced the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus Who is called Christ?” All of them said, “Let Him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let Him be crucified!”

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this Man’s blood. See to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” So Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after flogging Jesus, he handed Him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around Him. They stripped Him and

put a scarlet robe on Him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on His head. They put a reed in His right hand and knelt before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. After mocking Him, they stripped Him of the robe and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him away to crucify Him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry His cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means “The Place of a Skull.” They offered Jesus sour wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it. And when they had crucified Him, they divided His clothes among themselves by casting lots, so that what had been spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled, “They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (*Psalm 22:18*). Then the soldiers sat down there and kept watch over Him. Over His head they put the charge against Him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Then two outlaws were crucified with Him, one on His right and one on His left.

LUKE 23:39-43

One of the criminals who was hanged there kept insulting Jesus and saying, “Are You not the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!” But the other criminal

rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come in Your Kingdom." Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

MATTHEW 27:39-54

Those who passed by mocked Jesus, shaking 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." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders and Pharisees, were mocking Him, saying, "He saved others, yet He cannot save Himself. If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the Cross now, and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God, let God deliver Him now, if He wants to. For He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" The outlaws who were crucified with Him also taunted Him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" When some of the bystanders

heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to Jesus to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him.”

Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After His resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

JOHN 19:31-37

Since it was the Day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a great day. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and

immediately blood and water came out. And he who saw this has testified, so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth. These things happened so that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “None of His bones shall be broken” (*Exodus 12:46*). And again another passage of Scripture says, “They will look on Him Whom they have pierced” (*Psalms 22:16*).

MATTHEW 27:55-61

Many women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee to serve Him, were also there, watching from afar. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and Pilate ordered that the body be given to him. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Singers: Glory to Your long-suffering, O Lord.

The faithful may SIT.

the LITANY

Priest: Let us all say, with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say.

Singers: Lord, have mercy.

O Lord almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

Singers: Lord, have mercy.

Have mercy on us, O God, in Your great mercy, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

Singers: Lord, have mercy. (3x) (*after each petition*)

Again we pray for our Patriarch [*name*], for our Bishop (*or* Archbishop *or* Metropolitan) [*name*], for priests, deacons, and all other clergy, and for all our brethren in Christ.

Again we pray for this country, its president, for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces.

Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable Orthodox bishops; and for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church; and for all our departed fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters; and for all Orthodox Christians departed this life before us, who here and everywhere lie asleep in the Lord.

Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God, [*names*],

and for all the parishioners of our community, and for the forgiveness and remission of our sins.

Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable temple, for those who labor and those who sing, and for all the people here present, who await Your great and rich mercy.

Priest: For You are a merciful God and love mankind, and to You we give glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Singers: Amen.

the EVENING PRAYER

Reader: Grant, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your Name forever. Amen.

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us even as we have set our hope on You. Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your statutes. Blessed are You, O Master, make me to understand Your commandments. Blessed are You, O Holy One, enlighten me with Your precepts. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Do not despise the works of Your hands. To You is due worship. To You is due praise. To You is due 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 FERVENT SUPPLICATION

Priest: Let us complete our evening prayer to the Lord.

Singers: Lord, have mercy.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

Singers: Lord, have mercy.

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

Singers: Grant this, O Lord. (*after each petition*)

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

Forgiveness and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

All things good and beneficial for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

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

A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and a good account before the Great Judgment Seat of Christ, let us ask.

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us surrender ourselves, each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Singers: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For You are a good God and love mankind, and to You we give glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Singers: Amen.

The faithful STAND.

the PRAYER of INCLINATION of the HEADS

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Singers: And to your spirit.

Priest: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Singers: To You, O Lord.

Priest: O Lord our God, You bowed the heavens and came down for the salvation of the human race: Look upon Your servants and Your inheritance, for to You, the fearful Judge Who yet love mankind, we have bowed our heads and submissively inclined our necks, not awaiting help from men, but asking Your mercy and looking confidently for Your salvation. Guard us at all times, both during this present evening and in the coming night, from every enemy, from every adverse power of the devil, from vain thoughts, and from evil imaginations. Blessed and glorified be the power of Your Kingdom, of the Father and the Son and the

Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Singers: Amen.

The faithful may SIT.

Shroud carriers should come into the altar.

the APOSTICHA

Singers: tone 2

Joseph of Arimathea

took You down from the tree,

the Life of all, cold in death.

Bathing You with sweet and costly myrrh,

he gently covered You in finest linen

and with sorrow and tender love in his heart,

he embraced Your most pure Body.

Trembling at this awesome sight,

he cried out to You, O Christ,

“Glory to Your great humility, O Lover of man!”

Reader: The Lord is King. He is robed in majesty.

Singers: When You, the Redeemer of all,

were placed in a tomb,

all hell’s powers quaked in fear.

Its bars were broken, its gates were smashed.

Its mighty reign was brought to an end,

for the dead came out alive from their tombs,
casting off the bonds of their captivity.

Adam was filled with joy.

He gratefully cried out to You, O Christ,

“Glory to Your great humility, O Lover of man!”

Reader: He has established the world so that it will never be moved.

Singers: In the flesh You were willingly
enclosed in the tomb,
for You are boundless and infinite
in Your divinity.

You closed the chambers of death, O Christ.

You have emptied all the palaces of hell.

You have honored this Sabbath

with Your blessing, glory, and splendor.

Reader: Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore.

Singers: The powers of heaven shook with fear,
when they saw Your inexpressible patience.

They beheld You slandered by lawless men,
mocked as a deceiver by transgressors.

They beheld the stone that closed Your tomb,
sealed by the same hands that pierced Your side,
but they knew that Your death would be our life,

and joyfully they cried out to You, O Christ,
“Glory to Your great humility, O Lover of man!”

The faithful STAND.

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

Singers: tone 5

Joseph together with Nicodemus
took You down from the tree,
Who clothe Yourself with light as with a garment.
He gazed on Your Body –
dead, naked, and unburied –
and in grief and tender compassion he lamented,
“Woe is me, my sweetest Jesus.
A short while ago,
the sun beheld You hanging on the Cross,
and it hid itself in darkness.
The earth quaked with fear at the sight.
The veil of the Temple was torn in two.
Lo, now I see You willingly
submit to death for my sake.
How will I bury You, O my God?
How can I wrap You in a shroud?
How can I touch Your most pure Body
with my hands?

What songs can I sing for Your Exodus,
O Compassionate One?
I magnify Your Passion,
I glorify Your burial,
and Your holy Resurrection,
crying, “O Lord, glory to You!”

the PRAYER of SAINT SIMEON

Reader: Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people: a light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of Your people, Israel.

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

Priest: For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

As the Shroud is brought out, everyone should KNEEL.

the TROPARIA

Singers: The noble Joseph
when he had taken down
Your most pure Body from the tree,
wrapped it in fine line,
and anointed it with spices,
and placed it in a new tomb.

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

The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said,
“Myrrh is fitting for the dead,
but Christ has shown Himself
a stranger to corruption.”

the DISMISSAL

Priest: Wisdom.

Singers: Father, bless.

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

Singers: Amen. Establish, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith and Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages.

Priest: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Singers: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify you.

Priest: Glory to You, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to You.

Singers: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. (3x) Father, bless.

Priest: May He Who endured fearful suffering, the life-giving Cross and voluntary burial in the flesh for us and for our salvation, Christ our true God, by the prayers of His most pure Mother; by the prayers of the holy, glorious, and most praised apostles; by the prayers of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and by the prayers of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

Singers: Amen.

Our great lord and father, Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus, and his grace Matthew, Bishop of Sourozh. The pastor and parishioners of this holy temple, and all Orthodox Christians, O Lord, preserve them for many years!

The faithful then venerate the Shroud, by making three prostrations: two before kissing the Shroud, and one after.

After the veneration, all should remain silent and depart the church in silence.

During the veneration of the Shroud, the choir sings the following verses:

Singers: tone 5

O come, let us bless Joseph of eternal memory,
who came by night to Pilate
and begged the Life of all,
“Give me this Stranger,
rejected by His own people.
Give me this Stranger,
the refuge of the poor and weary.
Give me this Stranger,
Whom a crafty disciple betrayed to death.
Give me this Stranger,
that I may bury Him in my tomb,
for He has no place to lay His head.
Give me this Stranger,
Whose Mother, when she beheld Him
Hanging on the Cross,
cried out in bitter grief,
“O Light of my eyes

and beloved Fruit of my womb,
that which Simeon foretold in the Temple
is coming to pass this day:
a sword of sorrow has pierced my heart,
yet trusting in Your resurrection, I glorify You.”
We worship Your Passion, O Christ.
We worship Your Passion, O Christ.
We worship Your Passion, O Christ.
Show us Your holy Resurrection.

SAINT JOHN *the* BAPTIST

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