

# *Holy Friday Great Vespers*

DEACON: Bless, Father.

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

*“Come Let Us Worship...”*

## *Psalm 104*

Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord You are very great: / You are clothed with honor and majesty, / Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, / Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

**He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, / Who makes the clouds His chariot, / Who walks on the wings of the wind, / Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.**

You Who laid the foundations of the earth, / so that it should not be moved forever, / You covered it with the deep as with a garment; / the waters stood above the mountains.

**At Your rebuke they fled; / at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away. / They went up over the mountains; they went down into the valleys, / to the place which You founded for them.**

You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, / that they may not return to cover the earth. / He sends the springs into the valleys, / which flow among the hills.

**They give drink to every beast of the field; / the wild donkeys quench their thirst. / By them the birds of the heavens have their habitation; / they sing among the branches.**

He waters the hills from His upper chambers; / the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

**He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, / and vegetation for the service of man, / that he may bring forth food from the earth, / and wine that makes glad the heart of man,**

oil to make his face shine, / and bread which strengthens man's heart.

**The trees of the Lord are full of sap, / the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, / where the birds make their nests; / the stork has her home in the fir trees.**

The high hills are for the wild goats; / the cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.

**He appointed the moon for the seasons; / the sun know its going down. / You made darkness, and it is night, / in which all the beasts of the forest creep about.**

The young lions roar after their prey, / and seek their food from God. / When the sun arises, they gather together / and lie down in their dens.

**Man goes out to his work / and to his labor until the evening. / O Lord, how manifold are Your works! / In wisdom You have made them all.**

The earth is full of Your possessions / – this great and wide sea, / in which are innumerable teeming things, / living things both small and great.

**There the ships sail about and there is that Leviathan / which You have made to play there. / These all wait for You, / that You may give them their food in due season.**

What You give them they gather in; / You open Your hand, they are filled with good. / You hide Your face, they are troubled; / You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

**You send forth 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 hills, and they smoke.

**I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; / I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. / May my meditation be sweet to Him; / I will be glad in the Lord.**

May sinners be consumed from the earth, / and the wicked be no more. / Bless the Lord, O my soul! / Praise the Lord!

**The sun knows its going down. / You make darkness and it is night. / O Lord, how manifold are Your works! / In wisdom You have made them all.**

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

PEOPLE: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to You, O God. (3x)

O our God and our hope, glory to You!

### *The Great Litany*

DEACON: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For our president, all civil authorities, and for our armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: For healthful seasons, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Your grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Calling to remembrance our most-holy, most-pure, 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.

PEOPLE: To You, O Lord.

*Exclamation of the Fourth Prayer*

PRIEST: For unto 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.

PEOPLE: Amen.

***O Lord, I Cry...” – Tone 5***

***Opening Psalm Verses - Psalm 141:1, 2 (LXX 140)***

O Lord, I cry out unto You, hear me! Hear me, O Lord. O Lord, I cry out to You, hear me. Give ear to my voice when I cry out, when I cry out to You. Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Hear me, O Lord.

Set a guard, O Lord over my mouth; keep watch o’er the door of my lips.

*Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.*

Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me; it shall be as excellent oil. Let not my head refuse it, for still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.

*Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the cliff and they hear my words for they are sweet. Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave, as when one plows and breaks up the earth.*

But my eyes are upon You, O God the Lord; in You I take refuge; do not leave my soul destitute.

*Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and from the traps of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I escape safely.*

***Psalm 142 (LXX 141)***

I cry out to the Lord with my voice; with my voice to the Lord I make my supplication.

*I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble.*

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. In a way in which I walk they have secretly set a snare for me.

*Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul.*

I cried out to You, O Lord. I said, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.

*Attend to 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 Your name.

*The righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me.*

***Psalm 130 (LXX 129)***

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!

*Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*

If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

*(Tone 1)*

*The whole creation was changed by fear, when it saw You, O Christ, hanging on the Cross. The sun was darkened and the foundations of the earth were shaken; all things suffered with the Creator of all. Of Your own will You have endured this for our sakes: O Lord, glory to You.*

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.

*The whole creation was changed by fear, when it saw You, O Christ, hanging on the Cross. The sun was darkened and the foundations of the earth were shaken; all*

*things suffered with the Creator of all. Of Your own will You have endured this for our sakes: O Lord, glory to You.*

My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, I say more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord;

*(Tone 2)*

*Why do the impious and transgressing people imagine vain things? Why have they condemned to death the Life of all? O mighty wonder! The Creator of the world is delivered into the hands of lawless men, and He Who loves mankind is raised upon the Cross, that He may free the prisoners in hell, who cry: O longsuffering Lord, glory to You.*

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

*Today the most pure Virgin saw You hanging on the Cross, O Word; and with a mother's love she wept and bitterly her heart was wounded. She groaned in anguish from the depth of her soul, and in her grief she struck her face and tore her hair. And, beating her breast, she cried lamenting: 'Woe is me, my divine Child! Woe is me, Light of the world! Why do You vanish from my sight, O Lamb of God!' Then the hosts of angels were seized with trembling, and they said: 'O Lord beyond all understanding, glory to You.'*

### ***Psalm 117 (LXX 116)***

O, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!

*Seeing You hanging on the Cross, O Christ the Creator and God of all, bitterly Your virgin mother cried: 'O my Son, where is the beauty of Your form? I cannot bear to look upon You crucified unjustly. Make haste, then to arise, that I too may see Your Resurrection on the third day from the dead.'*

For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

*(Tone 6)*

*Today the Master of creation stands before Pilate; today the Maker of all things is given up to the Cross, and of His own will He is led as a Lamb to the slaughter. He Who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails. His side is pierced, and a sponge with vinegar touches His lips. The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face, and the Creator 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 in their wickedness they know not what they do.'*

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

*See how the lawless synagogue has condemned to death the King of the creation! They were not ashamed when He recalled His blessings, saying: 'O 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 then have you repaid Me? Why have you forgotten Me? In return for healing, you*

*have given Me blows; in return for life, you are putting Me to death. You hang upon the Cross your Benefactor as an evildoer, your Lawgiver as a transgressor of the law, the King of all as one condemned.’ O longsuffering Lord, glory to You.*

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*A dread and marvelous mystery we see come to pass this day. He Whom none may touch is seized; He Who looses Adam from the curse is bound. He Who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial. He Who closed the abyss is shut in prison. He before Whom the powers 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 Destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb. O You Who endure all these things in Your tender love, Who have saved all men from the curse, O longsuffering Lord, glory to You.*

### ***The Prayer before the Entrance***

DEACON: Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: In the evening and in the morning and at noonday we praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, and we pray to You, O Master of all, Lord Who love mankind. Direct our prayer before You as incense, and incline not our hearts to words or thoughts of evil; but deliver us from all who seek after our souls. For unto You, Lord, O Lord, we lift up our eyes, and in You have we hoped. Put us not to shame, O our God.

For unto 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.

DEACON: Amen.

DEACON: Bless, father, the holy entrance.

PRIEST: Blessed is the entrance into Your holy place always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

DEACON: Amen.

DEACON: Wisdom. Let us attend.

### ***“O Joyful Light”***

PEOPLE: O joyful Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father: O Jesus Christ. Now that we have come to the setting of the sun and behold the light of evening, we praise God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For it is right at all times to worship You with voices of praise, O Son of God and Giver of life. Therefore all the world glorifies You.

*After “O Joyful Light,” we chant the Evening Prokeimena, each followed by the Old Testament readings.*

### ***Holy Friday Prokeimenon: Tone 4 (Psalm 21 – LXX 20)***

They divide My garments among them and for My raiment they cast lots.

*Verse: O God, My God, look upon Me: Why have You forsaken Me?*

***First Old Testament Reading***

**Exodus 33:11-23**

So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle. Then Moses said to the LORD, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.” And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.” So the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.” And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.” Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

***Holy Friday Prokeimenon: Tone 4 (Psalm 35 – LXX 34)***

Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me. Fight against those who fight against me.

*Verse: They reward me evil for good, to the sorrow of my soul.*

***Second Old Testament Reading***

**Job 42:12-17**

Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.

### ***Third Old Testament Reading***

**Isaiah 52:13 – 54:1**

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider. Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 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; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by 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; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for 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 unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. “Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD.

***Prokeimenon: Tone 6 (Psalm 88 – LXX 87)***

They have laid me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

*Verse: O Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You.*

***The Epistle Reading – 1 Corinthians 1:18 – 2:2***

For 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 bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save



those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, Who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

***The Alleluia before the Gospel - Psalm 69 (LXX 68)***

*Verse: Save Me, O God; for the waters have come up even to My soul.*

*Verse: They gave Me gall to eat and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.*

*Verse: Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see.*

***Gospel Reading***

**Matthew 27:1-38    Luke 23:39-43    Matthew 27:39-54**

**John 19:31-37    Matthew 27:55-61**

*The Gospels are read as one continuous reading. At the end, the Cross is taken away. The decorated Tomb has been placed in the front of the Church. Great Vespers continues as usual with the Litany of Fervent Supplication.*

***The Litany of Fervent Supplication / The Ektenia***

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, hear us we pray, and have mercy.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great mercy, hear us we pray, and have mercy.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

DEACON: Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians; for our father, (*metropolitan, archbishop, or bishop*) N.; for our brethren: the priests, deacons, and monastics and for all our brotherhood in Christ.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

DEACON: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation, and for 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.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

PRIEST: [O Lord our God, receive this fervent supplication of Your servants, and have mercy on us according to the multitude of Your mercy; and send down Your compassion on us and on all Your people, who await Your great and rich mercy.]

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

### *The Evening Prayer*

PEOPLE: Grant, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen. Let Your mercy be upon us, O Lord, 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 statutes. Blessed are You, O holy One; enlighten me with Your statutes. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Despise not the works of Your hands. To You belongs worship, to You belongs praise, to You belongs glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### *The Evening Litany*

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

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

DEACON: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Your grace.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

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

PEOPLE: Grant this, O Lord.

DEACON: For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant this, O Lord.

DEACON: For pardon and forgiveness of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant this, O Lord.

DEACON: For all things good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: 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.

PEOPLE: Grant this, O Lord.

DEACON: For a Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and for a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

PEOPLE: Grant this, O Lord.

DEACON: Calling to remembrance our most-holy, most-pure, 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.

PEOPLE: To You, O Lord.

*Exclamation of the Seventh Prayer*

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

PEOPLE: And to your spirit.

*The Prayer with Heads Bowed*

DEACON: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

PEOPLE: To You, O Lord.

PRIEST: O Lord, our God, Who bowed the heavens and came down for the salvation of mankind, look upon Your servants and Your inheritance; for to You, the fearful Judge, Who love mankind, have Your servants bowed their heads, and submissively inclined their necks, not awaiting help from men, but entreating Your mercy and looking confidently for Your salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every enemy, from all adverse powers of the devil, and from vain thoughts and evil imaginations.

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

*Aposticha: Tone 2*

Down from the Tree  
Joseph of Arimathea took You dead,  
Who are the Life of all, \*  
and he wrapped You, O Christ, in a linen cloth with spices.  
Moved in his heart by love,  
he kissed Your most pure body with his lips;  
yet, drawing back in fear, he cried to You, rejoicing: \*  
“Glory to Your self-abasement, O You Who love mankind.”

*The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty The Lord is clothed with strength and  
has girded Himself.*

When You, the Redeemer of all,  
were laid for the sake of all in a new tomb,  
hell was brought to scorn \*  
and, seeing You, drew back in fear.  
The bars were broken and the gates were shattered,  
the tombs were opened and the dead arose.  
Then Adam in thanksgiving and rejoicing cried to You: \*  
“Glory to Your self-abasement, O You Who love mankind.

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

In the flesh You were of Your own will  
enclosed within the tomb,  
yet in Your divine nature \*  
You remain uncircumscribed and limitless.  
You have shut up the treasury of hell, O Christ,  
and emptied all his palaces.  
You have honored this Sabbath with Your divine blessing, \*  
with Your glory and Your radiance.

*Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever.*

The powers of heaven beheld You, O Christ,  
Falsely accused by lawless men as a deceiver,  
and they saw the stone before Your tomb \*  
sealed by the hands which had pierced Your most pure side.  
They were filled with fear at Your ineffable forbearance.  
Yet, rejoicing at our salvation,  
they cried aloud to You: \*  
“Glory to Your self-abasement, O You Who love mankind.”

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

**“Joseph with Nicodemus...”** (Special metered version, Passion Chorale)

**ALL KNEEL.**

*The clergy make a solemn procession carrying the Shroud, the Icon of Christ's burial, from the altar to the Tomb at the front of the Church. The Gospel is brought from the altar and placed on the Shroud which is then venerated by the clergy. Each person makes a prostration, kisses the Shroud, and then makes another prostration. During this time the choir sings:*

Joseph with Nicodemus took You down from the Tree,  
Who died there to redeem us, from sin to set us free.  
And You Whose robes are glory he saw now stripped and slain,  
Unburied, wounded, gory; and cried with bitter pain:

“O woe is me, my Jesus! The sun did turn its head;  
The earth did quake around us, when they beheld You dead.  
And now I see You hanging, for me accepting death.  
My God, Who died so willing what can I wrap You with?

“What song at Your departure shall I to You now sing?  
O gentle loving Savior, what praises shall I bring?  
I praise Your crucifixion; I praise Your lowly tomb;  
I praise Your Resurrection. Lord, glory be to You.”

**ALL STAND.**

*Hymn of St. Simeon (Byzantine)*

Lord, now You are let-ting Your ser - vant de - part in peace, ac-  
cor-ding to Your word. For my eyes have seen Your sal -  
va - tion, which You have pre - pared be-fore the face of all  
peo - ple, a light to light - en the Gen - tiles,  
and the glo - ry of Your peo-ple Is - ra - el.

### *Trisagion Prayers*

PEOPLE: 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.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, 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.

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

### *Troparion - "The Noble Joseph..." (Special metered version)*

The Noble Joseph did take Your most pure body down  
From off the Cross and did make with linen clean a shroud.  
Anointing it with spices, and pouring out perfume,  
He then so gently laid it within his own new tomb.

The angel who was standing and watching at Your tomb  
Said to the women bearing more spices and perfume:  
"Indeed it's truly fitting to bring myrrh for the dead,  
But Christ Himself, though dying, Has death's corruption shed."

### *The Dismissal*

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

PEOPLE: 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 Christ our true God, *Who endured fearful sufferings, the life-giving Cross, and voluntary burial in the flesh, on behalf of us men and for our salvation...*for He is good and loves mankind.

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

PEOPLE: Amen.



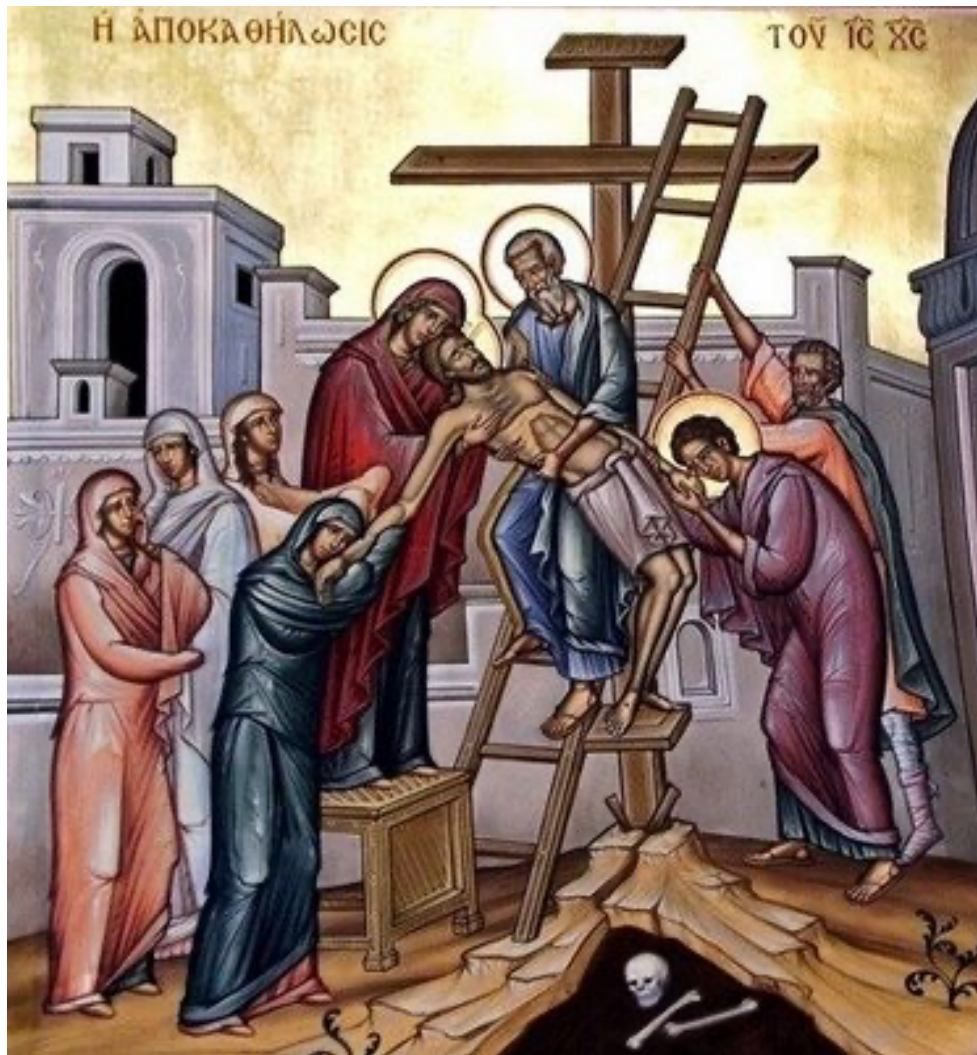
*Come Let Us Bless Joseph*

Come, let us bless Joseph of eternal memory, who came by night to Pilate and begged for the life of all:

“Give me this stranger, Who has no place to lay His head. Give me this stranger Whom an evil disciple betrayed to death. Give me this stranger Whom His mother saw hanging upon the cross, and with a mother’s sorrow cried, weeping:

Woe is me, O my child, light of my eyes and beloved of my bosom! For what Simeon foretold in the temple now has come to pass: A sword has pierced my heart, but change my grief to gladness by Your Resurrection!”

We worship Your Passion, O Christ! We worship Your Passion, O Christ!  
We worship Your Passion, O Christ and Your holy Resurrection!



*Down from the Cross*

*Holy Saturday Troparia: Tone 2 (Bulgarian)*

The no - - - ble Jo - seph, when he had  
ta - ken down Your most pure bod - y from the tree,  
wrapped it in fine lin - en and a - noint-ed it with spi-ces,  
and placed it in a new tomb.

The an - - - gel came to the myrrh - bear - ing  
wom - en at the tomb and said:  
"Myrrh is fit - ting for the dead, but Christ has  
shown Him- self a stran - ger to cor-rup-tion.