

THE BRIDEGROOM SERVICES

Tuesday Evening



Bridegroom Services

The Orthodox Church observes a special Matins (“Orthos”) service known as the Service of the Bridegroom on the first three days of Holy Week (i.e. Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday and Holy Wednesday). The Matins (“morning prayer”) service is usually held in the morning, however, the tradition of the Orthodox Church is that all the services of Holy Week are held in anticipation in the evening of the previous day. Accordingly, the Matins service for Holy Monday is held on Palm Sunday evening, the Matins service for Holy Tuesday is held on Monday evening and the Matins service for Holy Wednesday is held on Tuesday evening.

The name “Service of the Bridegroom” comes from the central figure in the well-known parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). In this parable the kingdom of God is depicted as a bridal feast and a bridal chamber with Jesus Christ as the divine Bridegroom of the Church. The imagery of Christ as the Bridegroom coming in the middle of the night illustrates two messages:

- (1) **Divine Union and Love:** Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is the Bride. There is a mystical union between Christ and His Church and an intimate and deep love.
- (2) **Vigilance and Watchfulness:** The Second Coming of Christ is yet to

come, we should be watching and waiting for the Lord and ensure we are spiritually vigilant and prepared by keeping His divine commandments and following His divine will.

The Troparion "Behold the Bridegroom comes at midnight..." is sung during each Bridegroom Service. On Palm Sunday evening as this hymn is being chanted, the priest carries the icon of Christ as Bridegroom in procession. The icon is placed in the middle of the solea of the church and remains there until Holy Thursday. In the icon Christ bears the marks of suffering but also prepares a marriage feast for us in the heavenly kingdom.

Holy Monday

On Holy Monday the Church commemorates the following:

- (1) **Joseph the Patriarch**, the beloved son of Jacob (~ 2000 years before Christ). Joseph is portrayed in the Orthodox tradition as a prototype or image of Christ. After being thrown into a pit by his brothers because of their envy he rose to become the Governor of Egypt, a high rank worthy of honour. The story symbolises the Passion of Christ and His Resurrection and His ultimate glory at the right hand of the Father. The story of Joseph also illustrates the mystery of God's providence and redemption and the power of God's love and promise.
- (2) **The cursing of the fig tree** (Matthew 21:18-20). According to the Gospel this event occurred the day after Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Thus being included into the liturgy of Holy Monday. The cursing of the fig tree shows of God's judgment upon Israel who has become barren by her failure to recognize and receive Christ and His teachings. The cursing of the fig tree is a parable in action, relevant to Christians, which illustrates that Christ's judgment on the faithless, unbelieving, unrepentant and unloving will be certain and decisive at His Second Coming.

Holy Tuesday

On Holy Tuesday the Church calls to remembrance two parables, which are related to the Second Coming:

- (1) **The parable of the Ten Virgins** (Matthew 25:1-13); and
- (2) **The parable of the Talents** (Matthew 25:14-30).

We learn two messages from these parables. First, Judgment Day will be like the situation in which the bridesmaids of the parable found themselves: some ready and some not ready for it. We must follow Christ now and not at some

uncertain point in the future. Second, to be watchful requires us to “ask, seek and find” the will of God and obey His commandments so that we may guard our minds and hearts from evil thoughts and actions. Watchfulness is the intense love of God.

Holy Wednesday

On Holy Wednesday the Church invites the faithful to focus their attention on two figures:

- (1) **The sinful woman** who anointed the head of Jesus shortly before the passion (Matthew 26:6-13); and
- (2) **Judas**, the disciple who betrayed the Lord (Matthew 26:14-16).

The former acknowledged Jesus as Lord, while the latter severed himself from the Master. The one was set free, while the other became a slave. The one inherited the kingdom, while the other fell into perdition. These two people bring before us concerns and issues related to freedom, sin, Hell and repentance. The repentance of the sinful harlot is contrasted with the tragic fall of the chosen disciple. The Orthodox Church teaches that Judas perished, not simply because he betrayed his Master, but because, having fallen into the sin of betrayal, he then refused to believe in the possibility of forgiveness.

Opening Doxology and Prayers

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Priest: Glory be to You, O God, Glory be to You!

O Heavenly King, Comforter, and Spirit of Truth, You that are in all places and fill all things; the treasury of Blessings and the giver of Life; come to dwell in us, cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.

People: **Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. [3 times]**

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

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

Lord have mercy [3 times].

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

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your kingdom come, Your 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 Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Priest: Amen.

Troparion of the Holy Cross

Reader: O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to Your people over their adversaries, and by virtue of Your Cross preserve Your habitation.

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

Kontakion of the Holy Cross

Reader: O Christ our God, Who of Your own good will was lifted up on the Cross, bestow Your bounties upon the new nation which is called

by Your Name. Make glad in Your might those who lawfully govern, that with them we may be led to victory over our adversaries, having in Your aid a weapon of peace and a trophy invincible.

Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion to the Theotokos

Reader: O fearsome champion, who cannot be put to confusion despise not our petitions, O good and all-praised Theotokos, Mother of God. Establish the way of the Orthodox, save those who have been called upon to govern us, leading us all to that victory which is from Heaven, for you are she who gave birth to God and alone are blessed.

The Litany

The Priest censens around the Altar and in front of the Preparation Table as he says:

Priest: Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Your great goodness, we pray to You, hear us and have mercy.

People: **Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Again we pray for all Orthodox Christians.

People: **Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Again we pray for our Father and Metropolitan [*Name*].

People: **Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Again we pray for all priests, deacons, monks and nuns and for all our brethren in Christ.

People: **Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For You are a merciful God and loving toward mankind, and to You we ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen. Bless, Father, in the Name of the Lord.**

The Priest makes the sign of the cross with the censer over the holy Gospel and says:

Priest: Glory to the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-giving and Undivided Trinity, always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Six Psalms

Reader: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards all people [*3 times*].

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim Your praise [2 *times*].

Psalm 3

Reader: LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One Who lifts up my head. I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill.

I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O LORD; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people.

I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.

Psalm 38

Reader: O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure! For Your arrows pierce me deeply, And Your hand presses me down. There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are full of inflammation, And there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.

Lord, all my desire is before You; And my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart pants, my strength fails me; As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me. My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague, And my relatives stand afar off. Those also who seek my life lay snares for me; Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction, And plan deception all the day long. But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; And I am like a mute who does not open his mouth. Thus I am like a man who does not hear, And in whose mouth is no response.

For in You, O LORD, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God. For I said, "Hear me, lest they rejoice over me, Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt themselves against me." For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare my iniquity; I

will be in anguish over my sin. But my enemies are vigorous, and they are strong; And those who hate me wrongfully have multiplied. Those also who render evil for good, They are my adversaries, because I follow what is good.

Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation! Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

Psalm 63

Reader: O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your Name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life, to destroy it, Shall go into the lower parts of the Earth. They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals.

But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped. I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadows of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.

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

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to You, O God! [*3 times*]

Lord have mercy [*3 times*].

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

Psalm 88

Reader: O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry. For my soul is full of troubles, And my life draws near to

the grave. I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man who has no strength, Adrift among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And who are cut off from Your hand.

You have laid me in the lowest pit, In darkness, in the depths. Your wrath lies heavy upon me, And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. You have put away my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an abomination to them; I am shut up, and I cannot get out; My eye wastes away because of affliction. LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You. Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

But to You I have cried out, O LORD, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. LORD, why do You cast off my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? I have been afflicted and ready to die from my youth; I suffer Your terrors; I am distraught. Your fierce wrath has gone over me; Your terrors have cut me off. They came around me all day long like water; They engulfed me altogether. Loved one and friend You have put far from me, And my acquaintances into darkness.

O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry.

Psalm 103

Reader: Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His Holy Name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the Heavens are high above the Earth, So great is His mercy

toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, And its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

The LORD has established His throne in Heaven, And His kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word. Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You ministers of His, who do His pleasure. Bless the LORD, all His works, In all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul! In all places of His dominion.

Psalm 143

Reader: Hear my prayer, O LORD, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, And in Your righteousness. Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no one living is righteous. For the enemy has persecuted my soul; He has crushed my life to the ground; He has made me dwell in darkness, Like those who have long been dead. Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; My heart within me is distressed.

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands. I spread out my hands to You; My soul longs for You like a thirsty land. Answer me speedily, O LORD; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.

Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; In You I take shelter. Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness. Revive me, O LORD, for Your Name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. In Your mercy cut off my enemies, And destroy all those who afflict my soul; For I am Your servant.

O LORD, Give ear to my supplications: Do not enter into judgment with Your servant [2 *times*].

Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.

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

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to You, O God! [*3 times*]

O our God and our hope, glory to You.

The Great Litany

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For the peace of the whole world, the well-being of the holy churches of God and for the unity of all people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For our Father and Metropolitan [*Name*], for the revered priesthood, for the deacons in Christ and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For the Prime Minister of our country, for all national and regional government and for the civil administration, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For our armed forces, that the Lord God will grant them wisdom and strength to preserve our nation in harmony and stability, and to maintain peace in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For this city, for every city, town and village and for the faithful who dwell in them, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: For travellers by land, sea and air, for the sick and those who suffer, for prisoners, and for the salvation of them all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and watch over us, O God, by Your grace.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Calling to mind our all-holy, pure, most blessed and most glorious Lady Theotokos, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary together with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and each other, and our whole life, to Christ our God!

People: **To You, O Lord.**

Priest: For to You belong all glory, honour, and adoration to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and throughout all ages.

People: **Amen.**

Alleluias (Tone 8)

Reader: From the early nightwatch my spirit keeps vigil for You, O God, for Your commandments are a light on the Earth.

People: **Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Reader: Learn righteousness, you that dwell upon the Earth.

People: **Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Reader: Envy shall seize upon an untaught people, and now, fire shall consume the adversaries.

People: **Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Reader: Bring more evils upon them, O Lord, bring more evils upon those, who are vainglorious on Earth.

People: **Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Troparion of the Bridegroom (Tone 8)

Chanter: Behold the Bridegroom comes at midnight; and blessed is he, whom He shall find watching; but unworthy is he whom He shall find

heedless. Beware, therefore, O my soul, not to be weighed down with sleep, lest you be given up to death, and shut out from the kingdom. But, rouse yourself crying: ["Holy, Holy, Holy are You, our God, **through the prayers of all the Saints have mercy on us.**"]

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

Chanter: [*Repeat Troparion of the Bridegroom with following ending:*]

["Holy, Holy, Holy are You, our God, **by the power of Your Cross have mercy on us.**"]

Reader: Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Chanter: [*Repeat Troparion of the Bridegroom with following ending:*]

["Holy, Holy, Holy are You, our God, **through the prayers of the Theotokos have mercy on us.**"]

The Little Litany

Priest: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and watch over us, O God, by Your grace.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Priest: Calling to mind our all-holy, pure, most blessed and most glorious Lady, Theotokos, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, together with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and each other, and our whole life, to Christ our God!

People: **To You, O Lord.**

Priest: For Yours is the might, and Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Kathismata

(Tone 3)

Chanter: The harlot came to You, O Merciful Lord, pouring out on Your feet myrrh, mixed with her tears, and was redeemed of her vices at Your command; but Your ungrateful Disciple, though he breathed Your grace, rejected it, and becoming mixed in the filthy mire, he sells You in his greed. O Christ, glory to Your compassion.

(Tone 4)

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

Chanter: The deceitful Judas, in his love for money, set out cunningly to betray You, O Lord, the Treasure of Life. Therefore in his folly he hastens to the Judeans, saying to the lawless: "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him to you, that He may be crucified?"

(Tone 1)

Reader: Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Chanter: The harlot, in her grief, called out to You, O compassionate Lord, and fervently dried Your sacred feet with the hair of her head; and from the depths of her heart she groaned: "Cast me not out, neither abhor me, O my God; but receive me in my repentance and save me, for You alone are Merciful."

Matins Gospel

The Gospel is read from the royal doors.
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Deacon: And that we may be accounted worthy to hear the holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord our God.

People: **Lord have mercy [3 times].**

Deacon: This is wisdom! Arise! Let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to you all.

People: **And to your spirit.**

Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Saint John.
(Chapter 12:17-50)

People: **Glory be to You, O Lord, glory be to You.**

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has

come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour. Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your Name. Then a voice came from Heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Therefore the people who stood by and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die. The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them. But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him Who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. "I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My

words, has that which judges him - the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father Who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

People: **Glory be to You, O Lord, glory be to You.**

Psalm 51

Reader: Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight – That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, The God of my salvation, And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, And my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart – These, O God, You will not despise. Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

The Canon
Ode 3 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] You have edified me on the rock of faith. You have opened wide my mouth against my enemies; for my spirit has rejoiced in singing: “There is none Holy as our God, and there is none righteous, save You, O Lord.”

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

Chanter: In vain, the council of the lawless men is assembled, and in a perverse manner agree to declare You, the Deliverer, condemned, to Whom we sing; “You are our God, and there is none Holy, save You, O Lord.”

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

Chanter: The arbitrary council of lawless men convenes, with a God-fighting spirit, to put to death as inexpedient the righteous Christ, to Whom we sing: “You are our God, and there is none Holy, save You, O Lord.”

Reader: Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] You have edified me on the rock of faith...

The Little Litany

Deacon: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and watch over us, O God, by Your grace.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Deacon: Calling to mind our all-holy, pure, most blessed and most glorious Lady, Theotokos, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, together with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and each other, and our whole life, to Christ our God!

People: **To You, O Lord.**

Priest: For You are our God and loving toward mankind, and to You we ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Kontakion, Oikos, Synaxarion

Kontakion (Tone 4)

Chanter: I have transgressed, O Master, more than the harlot, but I have not offered You a shower of tears; praying though, in silence, I fall down before You with fervour, kissing Your sacred feet, that You will forgive my debts, as I cry out to You: "O Saviour, deliver me from the filth of my evil deeds."

Oikos (Tone 4)

Chanter: The woman, who was once a prodigal, showed herself suddenly wise, despising her shameful sins and carnal pleasure; she reflected on the magnitude of her shame, and the judgment of hell, which harlots and prodigals suffer. Of these I am the first, and I am terrified; but, fool that I am, I persist in my perverse habits. The harlot also, was in terror, but she hastened, and came to the Redeemer, crying out: "O Loving and Merciful Master, deliver me from the filth of my evil deeds."

Synaxarion (To be read, not chanted)

Reader: The more accurate and exacting of the commentators on the four Gospels acknowledge that two women anointed the Lord, one long before His Passion, and one a few days before. One of these was a harlot, while the other was a chaste, virtuous woman. On this day the Church commemorates this act of piety and righteousness which proceeded from the harlot, contrasting it with the treachery of Judas and his Betrayal of Christ. Both of these acts fell on Wednesday, corresponding to the twenty-first of March, two days before the Mosaic Passover, as it appears from the course of the account of St Matthew the Evangelist.

The above mentioned harlot anointed the head and feet of Jesus with spikenard, and wiped them with the hair of her head. The precious ointment was worth three hundred dinars, or about fifteen pieces of Venetian gold. When the Disciples saw this they stumbled, especially Judas, the money-lover, and were angry because of the wasting of such an amount of ointment. Jesus rebuked them lest the woman be embarrassed. Judas was wroth, and went to the high priests, where they were gathered in the house of Caiphas, taking counsel against Jesus, and agreed with them to deliver the Master for thirty pieces of silver. From that time Judas sought an opportunity to deliver him. Because of this the fast of Wednesday was instituted from the days of the apostolic age itself.

Wherefore, O Bridegroom Christ, anointed with the supersensuous ointment deliver us from suffering, and have mercy on us. Amen.

Ode 8 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] When the tyrant's order prevailed, the furnace was fired sevenfold. In it, the Children were not burned; but trampling under foot the king's decree they cried out: "All the works of the Lord, praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever."

Reader: Glory be to You, O Lord, glory be to You.

Chanter: The woman, O Christ, poured out the precious myrrh on Your exalted, Divine and awesome head; and touched Your most pure feet with her defiled hands crying out: "All the works of the Lord, praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever."

Reader: We bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Chanter: She who was immersed in sin, washed the feet of the Creator with her tears, and dried them with her hair. She was forgiven for all that she had committed in her life, and cried aloud: "All the works of the Lord, praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever."

Reader: Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Chanter: The grateful woman was ransomed from her sins through the saving Love of God and a fountain of tears. Washed clean by her confession, she was not ashamed, but cried aloud: "All the works of the Lord, praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever."

Reader: We praise, we bless and we worship the Lord.

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] When the tyrant's order prevailed...

The Deacon goes through the Royal Doors and stands before the icon of the Theotokos, raises his Orarion and says:

Deacon: The Theotokos and Mother of the Light let us honour and magnify in song.

The Deacon censens the whole church as the choir sings Ode 9.

Ode 9 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] Come, let us with pure souls and blameless lips magnify the undefiled and all-pure Mother of Emmanuel; offering through her, to Him, Who was born of her, this prayer: "Spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us."

Reader: Glory be to You, O God, Glory be to You!

Chanter: Showing himself ungrateful, envious, and cunning, Judas calculates the God worthy Gift, by which a debt of sins was forgiven; and as a knave he exploited the Divine favour. Spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

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

Chanter: Going to the lawless rulers, Judas says: "What will you give me, and I will deliver to you the Christ, Whom you want and seek?" From the closest bond with Christ, Judas is drawn away by gold. Spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

Reader: Now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Chanter: O for your vicious love of silver, you traitor, which made you forget what you have been taught, that you are a soul, whose worth the world does not equal. For you, O betrayer, in despair hanged yourself by the neck. Spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] Come, let us with pure souls...

The Little Litany

Deacon: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and watch over us, O God, by Your grace.

People: **Lord have mercy.**

Deacon: Calling to mind our all-holy, pure, most blessed and most glorious Lady, Theotokos, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary, together with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and each other, and our whole life, to Christ our God!

People: **To You, O Lord.**

Priest: For all the Powers of Heaven praise You, and to You we ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Exaposteilarion (Tone 3)

Chanter: I see Your Bridal Chamber adorned, O my Saviour, and I have no wedding garment, that I may enter therein; O giver of Light, make radiant the vesture of my soul, and save me [*3 times*].

The Praises (Tone 1)

Chanter: Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights. To You, O God, is due our song. Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts. To You, O God, is due our song.

(Tone 1)

Reader: This honour have all His saints.

Chanter: The harlot recognizing You, the Son of the Virgin, as God, and weeping besought You with tears, equal to her past deeds, and said: "Loose my debt, as I unloose my tresses; show love to the one, justly hated, who loves You, and who with the publicans hails You, O Benefactor, Lover of mankind."

Reader: Praise God in His Sanctuary. Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

Chanter: With the precious myrrh the harlot mixed her tears, and poured it over Your sacred feet, as she kissed them. Immediately You justified her; grant also forgiveness to us, You, Who suffered for us, and save us.

Reader: Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

Chanter: While the sinful woman was offering the myrrh, the Disciple was making terms with the lawless; she rejoiced in emptying out that, which was precious; he hastened to sell Him, Who was above all price. She acknowledged the Master, he severed himself from the Master; she was set free, and Judas became a slave to the enemy. Monstrous was his callousness! Great was her repentance! Grant me this also, O Saviour, Who suffered for us, and save us.

Reader: Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp.

Chanter: O misery of Judas! He saw the harlot kissing the feet, and with guile he meditated the kiss of betrayal. She unloosed her tresses, and he bound himself with fury, bringing instead of myrrh, his foul wickedness; for envy knows not to appreciate even its own advantage. O wretchedness of Judas! From this, O God, deliver our souls.

(Tone 2)

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

Chanter: The woman who was a sinner hastened to the market, that she might purchase precious myrrh to anoint the Benefactor. To the myrrh-

seller she cried out: "Give me the myrrh, that even I may anoint Him, Who has wiped away all my sins."

(Tone 6)

Reader: Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Chanter: She who was engulfed in sin found You, the haven of salvation; and pouring out myrrh with her tears, cried out: "Behold Him, Who bears the repentance of sinners!" O Master, in Your great mercy, rescue me from the tempest of sins.

The Little Doxology (To be read)

People: **To You, Lord our God, belongs glory, and to You we send up glory: To the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.**

Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill to all people.

We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give You thanks for Your great glory,

Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father almighty; Lord, the Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us; You take away the sin of the world. Receive our prayer, You that sit at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us.

For You alone are Holy, You alone are the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every day I will bless You, and praise Your Name, forever and to the ages of ages.

Lord, You have been our refuge from one generation to another. I said, Lord, have mercy upon me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.

Lord, I have run to You for refuge; teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. For with You is the source of life, and in Your light we shall see light.

Continue Your mercy to those that know You.

Vouchsafe, O Lord to keep us this day without sin.

Blessed are You, Lord God of our fathers, and praised and

glorified is Your Name, forever. Amen.

May Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, even as our hope is in You.

Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your statutes.

Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your precepts.

Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your commandments.

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 forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The Litany of Supplication

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

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

People: **Lord have mercy.**

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

People: **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.

People: **Grant this O Lord.**

Deacon: For pardon and forgiveness of our sins and offences, let us ask of the Lord.

People: **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: For that which is good and profitable to our souls, and for the peace of the world, let us ask of the Lord.

People: **Grant this, O Lord.**

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

People: **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless and peaceful; and for a good defence before the dread judgement-seat of Christ, let us

ask of the Lord.

People: **Grant this, O Lord.**

Deacon: Calling to mind our all-holy, pure, most blessed and most glorious Lady Theotokos, Mother of God and ever-Virgin Mary together with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and each other, and our whole life, to Christ our God!

People: **To You, O Lord.**

Priest: For You are a good and loving God, and to You we offer glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Priest: Peace be to you all.

People: **And to your Spirit.**

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

People: **To You, O Lord.**

Priest: O Holy Lord, Who dwells on high and regards the humble of heart and with Your all-seeing eye does behold all creation, to You have we bowed the neck of our soul and body, and we entreat You: O Holy of holies, stretch forth Your invisible hand from Your Holy dwelling-place, and bless us all. And if indeed we have sinned, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, forgive, inasmuch as You are a good God and love mankind, vouchsafing to us Your Earthly and Heavenly good things.

For Yours it is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and to You we ascribe glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Aposticha

(Tone 6)

Chanter: Today Christ comes to the house of the Pharisee, and a sinful woman approached Him falling at His feet and crying out: "Behold me, engulfed in sin, and in despair for my deeds; and yet, not despised by Your goodness. Grant me, O Lord, the remission from evil, and save me."

Reader: O, satisfy us early with Your mercy, That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!

Chanter: The harlot spread out her hair before the Master; Judas spread out his hands to the lawless men; the one to receive forgiveness, the other to receive the silver. Therefore, let us cry out to You, Who was sold, and Who has freed us: "O Lord, glory to You."

Reader: Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, The years in which we have seen evil. Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children.

Chanter: A sinful and defiled woman drew near to You, O Saviour, and poured out tears upon Your feet, proclaiming Your passion. "How can I look upon You, O Master? For You indeed have come to save the harlot. You, Who raised Lazarus from the tomb after four days, raise me, out of the depths who is dying; accept me, the wretched one, O Lord, and save me."

Reader: And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

Chanter: She who was in despair for her life, with her evil ways well known, holding the myrrh, came to You crying out: "You, Who was born of a Virgin, reject me not, the harlot; disregard not my tears, You, Who are the joy of the Angels; but, O Lord, through Your great mercy, receive me in repentance, whom as a sinner, You did not cast out."

The Hymn of Kassiani (Tone 8)

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

Chanter: The woman had fallen into many sins, O Lord, yet when she perceived Your divinity, she joined the ranks of the myrrh-bearing women. In tears she brought You myrrh before Your burial. She cried, "Woe is me! For I live in the night of licentiousness, shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin. But accept the fountain of my tears, O You Who gathered the waters of the sea into clouds. Bow down Your ear to the sighing of my heart, O You Who bowed the heavens in Your ineffable condescension. Once Eve heard Your footsteps in paradise in the cool of the day, and in fear she ran and hid herself. But now I will tenderly embrace those pure feet and wipe them with the hair of my head. Who can measure the multitude of my sins, or the depth of Your judgements, O Saviour of my soul? Do not despise Your servants in Your immeasurable mercy."

Chanter: It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High. To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night.

People: **Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. [3 times]**

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

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

Lord have mercy [3 times].

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

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your kingdom come, Your 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 Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Kontakion

(Tone 4)

Reader: I have transgressed, O Master, more than the harlot, but I have not offered You a shower of tears; praying though, in silence, I fall down before You with fervour, kissing Your sacred feet, that You will forgive my debts, as I cry out to You: "O Saviour, deliver me from the filth of my evil deeds."

People: **Lord have mercy. [40 times]**

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

People: More honoured than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, in all purity you gave birth to God the Word, true Theotokos, we exalt you.

People: **Bless, Father, in the Name of the Lord.**

Priest: Wisdom! Christ our God, the Existing One, is blessed, always, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: **Amen.**

Chanter: O Heavenly King, support the faithful; confirm the faith; guide the nations; give peace to the world; and preserve well this holy church and this city. Grant repose to our departed fathers and brethren in the dwelling-place of the righteous. Receive us in repentance and confession, for You are a good and merciful God and love mankind. Amen.

Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian.

People: **O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. [Prostration]**

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Your servant. [Prostration]

O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother or sister; for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen. [Prostration]

The Dismissal

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

People: **Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy. Father bless.**

Priest: May He Who is going to His voluntary passion for our salvation, Christ our True God, through the prayers of His most pure, blameless and holy Mother; of [*patron saint(s) of the community*] the patron(s) of this community; of [*saints of day*], whose memory we celebrate today; and of all the Saints; have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

People: **Amen.**

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: **Amen.**

The Faithful proceed in line to reverence the Icon of Christ the Bridegroom praying for His love and mercy.
