

THE BRIDEGROOM SERVICE

Palm Sunday Evening



Bridegroom Service

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 night watch 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)

On Sunday Evening only, while the choir sings the Bridegroom troparion, the priest preceded by the altar boys carries the Bridegroom Icon in a procession and places the Icon on a table placed at the solea where it will stay until the end of the service on Wednesday morning.
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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, **through the protection of the heavenly hosts 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 1)

Chanter: The sublime Holy Passion on this day, dawns on the world as a light of salvation; for Christ, of His goodness, draws near to His sufferings. He Who holds all things in His Hand, condescends to be raised up on the Cross, that He may save mankind.

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

Chanter: O Invisible Judge, how is it that You have been seen in the flesh, and have come to be slain by lawless men? By Your Passion You condemned the judgment against us. Therefore, with one voice we offer in consonance praise, greatness and glory to Your Authority, O Word of God.

(Tone 8)

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

Chanter: This day radiates with the first fruits of the Passion of the Lord. Come, therefore, O feast loving friends, let us meet and greet it with hymns; for the Creator comes, condescending to the Cross; to questioning and to lashings, judged by Pilate. Also smitten on the head by a servant, He endures all to save mankind. For this, let us cry aloud: "O Merciful Christ our God, grant remission of sins to those who worship in faith Your Holy Passion."

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 Matthew.
(Chapter 21:18-43)

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

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing

on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John where was it from? From Heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From Heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him. Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes,

what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected, Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvellous in our eyes'? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

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 1 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] Let us sing to the Lord, Who by His Divine command dried up the impassable and raging sea, and led the people of Israel to pass through on foot; for gloriously He has been glorified.

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

Chanter: The ineffable condescension of the Word of God, is Christ Himself, both God and Man; counting not His Godhead a thing to be seized, He showed this to His Disciples by taking on the form of a servant; for gloriously He has been glorified.

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

Chanter: I have come to minister to the impoverished Adam, whose form I fashioned, and now willingly have assumed the same. I, the passionless Godhead, lay down My life for his ransom.

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

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] Let us sing to the Lord, Who by His...

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 8)

Chanter: Jacob lamented the loss of Joseph, but his noble son was seated in a

chariot and honoured as a king; for when he refused to be enslaved by the fascinations of the Egyptian woman, he was in turn glorified by Him, Who beholds the hearts of men, and bestows an incorruptible crown.

Oikos (Tone 8)

Chanter: Let us now add our lamentation, and let us shed our tears with those of Jacob, bewailing Joseph, his memorable and wise son. For Joseph, though enslaved in body, preserved his soul in freedom, becoming lord over all Egypt. For God grants His servants an incorruptible crown.

Synaxarion (To be read, not chanted)

Reader: Holy and Great Monday begins the anniversary of the holy Passion of the Saviour, He of whom Joseph of exceeding beauty is taken as the earliest symbol; for this Joseph was the eleventh of the sons of Jacob, and because his father loved him exceedingly, his brothers envied him and threw him into a pit. Then they took him out and sold him to strangers, who sold him in Egypt. He was slandered for his chastity, and was thrown into prison. But finally he was taken out of prison, and he attained a high rank, and received honours worthy of kings, becoming governor of the whole of Egypt, whose people he supported. Thus he symbolised in himself the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and his consequent great glory.

To the remembrance of Joseph is added the story of the fig tree which the Lord cursed on this day (corresponding at that time to the nineteenth of the month of March) because of its barrenness, so that it dried up. The fig tree was a symbol of the Council of the Jews which did not show the necessary fruits of virtue and righteousness, so that Christ stripped it of every spiritual grace.

Wherefore, O Bridegroom Christ, hear the intercessions of the noble Joseph, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Ode 8 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] The sweeping fire fed with endless fuel, withdrew in fear before the spotless souls and bodies of the Holy Children; and as the ceaseless flame diminished, the singing of an everlasting hymn was chanted: "Praise the Lord all His works, and exalt Him to all ages."

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

Chanter: Approaching His Passion, the Saviour said to His friends: "All shall

know that you are My Disciples, if you keep My commandments. Be at peace with one another, and with all; thinking humbly, you will be exalted; and knowing Me as Lord, sing praises and exaltations to all ages."

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

Chanter: "Let the power of your fellow men be different from the dominion of the Gentiles; their selfish will is not My lot, but a tyranny. He then, who would be first among you, let him be the last of all; and knowing Me as Lord, sing praises and exaltations to all ages."

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

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] The sweeping fire fed with endless fuel ...

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 censes the whole church as the choir sings Ode 9.
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Ode 9 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] You, O Christ, have magnified the Theotokos who bore You; and from whom You, our Creator, did put on a body with passions like our own, thus setting us free from our ignorance's. Calling her blessed, we, in all generations, magnify You.

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

Chanter: You, the Wisdom of all, declared to Your Disciples: "Cast away the impurity of human passions, and obtain a wise understanding, worthy of the Divine Kingdom; in which you shall be glorious, and shine more brightly than the Sun."

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

Chanter: "Looking to Me," said the Lord to His Disciples, "be not high-minded, but condescend to men of humility; My cup which I drink, drink of it, that you may be glorious with Me in the Kingdom of the Father."

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

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] You, O Christ, have magnified the Theotokos...

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: As the Lord was going to His voluntary Passion, He was saying to His Apostles on the way: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up, as it is written of Him." Come therefore, and let us accompany Him, with purified minds, and let us be crucified with Him, and for His sake mortify the pleasures of this life, that we may also live with Him, and hear Him declaring: "No longer do I go to the earthly Jerusalem to suffer, but I go to My Father, and your Father; to My God and your God. And I will raise you up with Me to the upper Jerusalem, in the Kingdom of Heaven."

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

Chanter: [*Repeat above Stichera*] As the Lord was going...

(Tone 5)

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

Chanter: O believers, having come to the saving Passion of Christ our God, let us glorify His ineffable forbearance; that through His compassion He may also raise us up, who are dead in sin, for He is good and loves mankind.

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

Chanter: [*Repeat above Stichera*] O believers, having come ...

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: When You, O Lord, were coming to Your Passion, You gave courage to Your own Disciples, taking them aside and saying: "How have you forgotten My words, which I spoke to you of old, as it is written, that no Prophet will be put to death, except in Jerusalem? Now, therefore, the time has come of which I told you; for behold, I am betrayed to be mocked at the hands of sinners, and they will fix Me to the Cross, delivering Me up for burial, and account Me as a corpse. But, take courage, for on the third day, I shall rise, bringing joy and life eternal to the faithful."

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 5)

Chanter: The ineffable mystery of Your dispensation, O Lord, was incomprehensible to the mother of the children of Zebedee, asking of You, that the honour of a temporal kingdom be granted to her sons; but instead of this, You promised to Your friends, that they would drink the cup of death. You did say that You, Yourself would drink this cup before them, as expiation for sins. Wherefore we cry out to You: "O salvation of our souls, glory to You."

Reader: O, satisfy us early with Your mercy, That we may rejoice and be glad all our days! 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: Lord, when You were instructing Your own Disciples to think perfect thoughts, You told them not to be like the Gentiles, exercising authority over the weakest. You said: "It shall not be so with you, My Disciples, for I am of My own will, poor. Therefore he, who would be first among you let him be the servant of all; the one who rules, as the one being ruled; and the one who is preferred as the least of all. For I have come to serve the impoverished Adam, and to give My life as a ransom for the many, who cry out to Me: 'Glory to You'."

(Tone 8)

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: Fearing a similar sentence to that of the fruitless fig tree, brethren, let us bring forth fruits worthy of repentance to Christ, Who bestows on us the Great Mercy.

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 serpent finding the Egyptian woman as a second Eve, hastened through words of flattery to cause the downfall of Joseph; but he leaving his garment, fled from sin; and being naked, felt unashamed, even as the first created before the disobedience. By his

intercessions, O Christ, have mercy on us.

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 8)

Reader: Jacob lamented the loss of Joseph, but his noble son was seated in a chariot and honoured as a king; for when he refused to be enslaved by the fascinations of the Egyptian woman, he was in turn glorified by Him, Who beholds the hearts of men, and bestows an incorruptible crown.

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.
