

# THE BRIDEGROOM SERVICE

**Monday 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

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

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| The Priest makes the sign of the cross with the censer over the holy Gospel and says: |
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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, **through the prayers of the Forerunner 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 4)

Chanter: Brethren, let us love the Bridegroom, and prepare our lamps with care, shining in virtues and true faith; that, like the prudent virgins of the Lord, we may be ready to enter with Him into the wedding feast; for the Bridegroom, as God, bestows a gift to all, the incorruptible crown.

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

Chanter: The priests and scribes, O Saviour, calling together a lawless council against You, with great envy, moved Judas to betrayal. Wherefore, he went forth shamelessly, and spoke against You to the lawless people; "What will you give me," he said, "that I may deliver Him into your hands?" O Lord, save our souls from this condemnation.

(Tone 8)

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

Chanter: The impious Judas, with avarice in mind, plots against the Teacher, deliberating and meditating the betrayal; he falls from the light and receives the darkness; he agrees to the terms, and sells the priceless One. Wherefore he, most wretched of men, finds a noose and a horrible death, the reward for his deed. O Christ our God, deliver us from his lot, granting remission of sins to those, who compassionately observe Your Holy Passion.

Matins Gospel

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| 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 22:15-23:39)

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

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said

to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her." Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in Heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool' "? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works

they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He Who is in Heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by Heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him Who sits on it. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the LORD!' "

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 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 2)

Chanter: Having realized, O my soul, the hour of the end, and remembering the cutting down of the fig tree, work therefore most diligently, O wretched soul, with the talent, which has been given to you, in vigilance and crying aloud: "May we not remain outside the Bridal Chamber of Christ".

#### Oikos (Tone 2)

Chanter: Why are you heedless, O my miserable soul? Why do you

inopportuno imagine vain cares? Why do you occupy yourself with that, which flows away? The last hour is at hand, and we shall shortly be parted from earthly things. Therefore, gaining time, rouse yourself and cry out: "I have sinned against You, my Saviour; do not cut me down like the unfruitful fig tree; but as the merciful Christ, have pity on me, for with fear I cry out: 'May we not remain outside the Bridal Chamber of Christ'."

Synaxarion (To be read, not chanted)

Reader: On Holy and Great Tuesday we make remembrance of the parable of the ten virgins which Jesus told to others as he was coming to the Passion. It teaches us not to rest as though safe in virginity, but to guard it whenever possible, and not to desist from any virtues and good deeds, especially deeds of mercy, which make the lamp of virginity shine brilliantly. It teaches us also to be ready for our end, not knowing when our hour is coming, as the wise virgins were ready to meet the bridegroom, lest death overtake us and close the door of the heavenly chamber in our face, and we hear the terrible judgment which the foolish virgins heard "Truly, truly, I do not know you".

Wherefore, O Bridegroom Christ, number us with the prudent virgins; and by including us in Your chosen flock, have mercy on us. Amen.

Ode 8 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] The three holy children were not obedient to the decree of the tyrant; and even when cast into the furnace they confessed God singing: "All the works of the Lord, bless the Lord."

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

Chanter: Let us cast off slothfulness, and with bright lamps let us meet Christ, the immortal Bridegroom, crying out: "All the works of the Lord, bless the Lord."

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

Chanter: May the oil of fellowship in the vessels of our soul be sufficient, lest in going to make the purchase we miss the reward, that we may sing: "All the works of the Lord, bless the Lord."

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

Chanter: All have received equal grace from God; increase accordingly the talent given to you with the help of Christ, singing: "All the works

of the Lord, bless the Lord."

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

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] The three holy children were...

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.

### Ode 9 (Tone 2)

Chanter: [*Irmos*] We praise you, All-holy Virgin; you, who in your womb did contain the uncontainable God, bringing joy to the world.

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

Chanter: You, O Lord, did say to the Disciples: "Watch, for you do not know the hour the Lord will come to render to each his reward."

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: In Your second fearful coming, O Master, overlook the multitude of my sins, and place me with the sheep on Your right.

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

Chanter: [*Repeat Irmos*] We praise you, All-holy Virgin...

### 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: Into the splendour of Your Saints, how can I, the unworthy enter? For should I dare to come into the Bridal Chamber, my vesture will reproach me, not being a wedding garment; and bound, I shall be cast out by the Angels. O Lord, cleanse the impurity of my soul, and save me.

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

Chanter: [*Repeat above Stichera*] Into the splendour of Your Saints...

(Tone 2)

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

Chanter: Since I, O Bridegroom Christ, have permitted my soul to slumber in indolence, I do not possess the flaming lamp of virtues; and like the foolish virgins, I wander, when it is the time for work. O Master, do not close for me Your heart of compassion; but awaken me, shaking off my darkening sleep, and bringing me in with the prudent Virgins to Your Bridal Chamber, where there is the clarity of song, from those who feast, and unceasingly cry out: "O Lord, glory to You."

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

Chanter: [*Repeat above Stichera*] Since I, O Bridegroom Christ...

(Tone 4)

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: O my soul, you have heard the condemnation of him, who hid his

talent; likewise, do not hide away the word of God. Proclaim His wonders, so that, abounding in grace, You may enter into the joy of Your Lord.

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: Come, you faithful, let us eagerly work for the Master, for He distributes His wealth to His servants; accordingly then, let us increase the talent of grace. Let one, be graced with wisdom through good works; let another, celebrate a service of splendour; let another, faithful to the word communicate this to the uninstructed; and yet another, distribute wealth to the poor; for thus, we shall increase what is entrusted to us, and as faithful stewards of His Grace, we may be worthy of the Master's joy. Of this, deem us worthy, O loving Christ, our God.

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: When You shall come in glory, O Jesus, with the angelic hosts, and shall sit upon the throne for judgement, do not drive me away, O Good Shepherd, for You know the ways of those on the right, and that those on the left are perverted. Wherefore, though I be hardened in sin, do not condemn me to perish with the goats, but numbering me with the sheep on Your right, save me as a Loving God.

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: The Bridegroom, surpassing all in comeliness, has called us to the spiritual wedding Feast. Through sharing in Your sufferings, remove the blotched raiment of my sins, and adorning me with a robe of glory of Your comeliness, make me a radiant guest of Your Kingdom, as a Merciful God.

(Tone 7)

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: Behold O my soul! The Master entrusts to you a talent. Receive the gift with fear; lend to Him Who gave it; distribute to the poor, and gain the Lord as a Friend; that you may stand on His right, when He comes in Glory, and hear His blessed voice: "Enter, O servant, into the joy of Your Lord!" In Your great Mercy, O Saviour, deem me, who has strayed, worthy of this joy.

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 2)

Reader: Having realized, O my soul, the hour of the end, and remembering the cutting down of the fig tree, work therefore most diligently, O wretched soul, with the talent, which has been given to you, in vigilance and crying aloud: "May we not remain outside the Bridal Chamber of Christ".

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. |
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