

The Sunday Of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of the Great Fast is commonly known among the Orthodox as “The Sunday of Orthodoxy.” It has been established by the Orthodox Church as the day on which to honor the memory of the myriad of martyrs and saints, clergymen and laymen, men and women, princes and commoners, who shed their blood in defense of what we today call “The Church of Our Fathers.” We also honor all those thousands of great teachers and propagators of the true teachings of Christ who, although having died natural deaths, did devote their entire life and energy to the spreading of the Word of God so that you and I and our children and our children’s children may receive the teachings and principles of our Redeemer, whole and unadulterated, a living inspiration now as they were then, when they were first uttered.

Among the many victories of the Church against her enemies, we commemorate on this Sunday the triumph of the true faith over the foes of the icons, the controversy which started in 726 A.D., with Emperor Leo III the Isaurus (717-741), and culminated with Empress Theodora in 843 A.D. Here is a brief history:

The Orthodox Church always made use of icons which, in the words of St. John of Damascus (680-749), “are to vision, what speech is to hearing;” and they were placed in the churches so that we might “imitate their virtues and glorify God.”

In the controversy which divided the people into icon-lovers and icon-smashers (iconoclasts), great icons were smashed or consigned to the flames. In 754, Emperor Constantine Copronymous (741-775) summoned a pseudo-ecumenical council against the icons. Finally, in 787, Empress Irene, acting as guardian of her ten-year old son Constantine VI, convened the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicea of Asia Minor which decided that, “together with the venerable and life-giving Cross, icons of our Lord, His Mother, the Angels and the Saints might be set up, whether in murals or mosaics or any other material; that they might be depicted on sacred vessels or vestments; on the walls and on the books of churches; in houses and by the wayside; the more often they were looked upon, the more people would be stirred in remembrance of the prototypes; that greeting and veneration (*proskinisis*) be paid them, but not actual worship (*latria*) which belongs

exclusively to God. Incense and lights were to be burnt in their honor as had been done by the ancients. Whoever venerates an image (icon) venerates the person it depicts.”

However, the controversy went on for another 55 years until 842 when Theodora, the widow of Emperor Theophilos (829-842) ascended the throne as Empress-guardian of her 3-4 year old son Michael III in 842. She summoned a Synod in Vlahernes of Constantinople on the first Sunday of the Great Lent, March 11, 843, and in a special ceremony decreed that the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council should be upheld and the veneration of icons be restored.

The procession which takes place in all the Orthodox churches on the first Sunday of the Great Fast, today, in commemoration of this event, is only a small picture of the delirium that followed the official restoration of the Holy Icons in Constantinople. Thousands of people carrying small and large icons and lighted candles, with Patriarch Methodios I at the head, paraded through the streets chanting hymns to God and praises to the Holy Icons.

As we celebrate today, let us also commit ourselves to serve our Orthodox Church as they did.

Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers

Deacon: Arise! Bless, Master!

The Priest, standing on the Solea facing the closed Holy Doors, says:

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

Reader: Amen.

Glory to You, our God; glory to You!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, You are everywhere and fulfill all things. Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Good One!

The Trisagion Prayers

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. (3x)

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

O most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us!

O Lord, cleanse us from our sins!

O Master, pardon our transgressions!

O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your name's sake!

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

All: Our Father, Who are 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, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12x)

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

When another service precedes Vespers, the service begins here:

Come, let us worship God our King!

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

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

The Priest, standing in front of the Holy Doors, reads the Prayers of Light silently. See Appendix A.

The Introductory Psalm

Psalm 103 (104)

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

O Lord my God, You are very great,
You are clothed with praise and majesty,

wrapping Yourself in light for a garment,
stretching out the sky like a tent-skin;

Who covers His upper rooms with water,
Who makes clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,

Who makes spirits his angels
and His servant a flame of fire,

Who poises the earth on its axis;
it will not be moved throughout the ages.

The deep like a garment is its clothing.
On the mountains the waters stand.

At Your rebuke they run,
At the crack of Your thunder they are afraid.

Mountains rise up and plains sink down
to the place which You have appointed for them.

You have set a bound the waters will not pass,
so they will never return to cover the earth.

You send torrents in the ravines,
the waters run between the mountains.

They give drink to all the beasts of the field;
wild donkeys wait to quench their thirst.

The birds of the sky perch on them;
from among the rocks they pipe their calls.

You water the mountains from above.
The earth is filled with the fruit of Your works.

You make grass spring up for the cattle
and vegetation for the service of men,

for them to produce food from the earth
and wine which cheers man's heart,
that his face may be bright with oil
and that bread may strengthen man's heart.

The trees of the plain will be drenched,
the cedars of Lebanon which You planted.

There the sparrows build their nests,
the house of the heron at the top of them.

The high mountains are for the deer,
a rock is a refuge for hares.

You made the moon to mark the months,
the sun knows his going down.

You appoint darkness and it becomes night,
in which all the wild beasts of the forest prowl:

young lions roaring to seize their prey
and seeking their food from God.

The sun rises and they gather together
and lie down in their dens.

Man goes out to his work
and to his business until the evening.

How great are Your works, O Lord!
You have made all things in wisdom,
the earth is filled with Your creation.

This is the great and wide sea:
there live reptiles without number,
living creatures small and great;

There ships go to and fro;
there, too, is that sea serpent
which You have made to play in it.

All look expectantly to You
to give them their food in due season.

When You give it to them, they gather it;
when You open Your hand,
all things are filled with goodness.

But when You turn away Your face they are troubled.
You will take their spirit and they will die
and they will return to their dust.

You will send Your Spirit and they will be created,
and You will renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord be forever;
the Lord delights in His works.

He looks upon the earth and makes it tremble,
He touches the mountains and they smoke.

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

May my conversation be pleasing to Him,
and I will rejoice in the Lord.

May sinners vanish from the earth,
and the lawless so as to be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Deacon, standing at the Southwest corner of the Altar Table, passing the High Place, exits the Sanctuary, through the North door and stands before the icon of the Theotokos until the conclusion of the Psalm.

You made the moon to mark the months,
the sun knows his going down.

How great are Your works, O Lord!
You have made all things in wisdom,

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

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to You, O God. (3x)

At the conclusion of Psalm 103, the Deacon and the Priest bow to each other. The Priest returns to the Sanctuary through the South door and stands at his place before the Altar Table.

The Deacon moves to stand before the Holy Doors, lifts his Orarion and says:

The Great Litany

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the Holy Orthodox Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops, Bishops, _____ (*Bishop of this temple*), Priests, Deacons, Monks, Nuns, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the President¹ and all civil authorities of this country, and for those serving in its Armed Forces, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

The Deacon moves to stand before the icon of Christ.

People: To You, O Lord.

¹ We pray for the Chief of State and the civil authorities of the place in which we are praying.

Priest: For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Deacon enters the Sanctuary through the South door, goes to the High Place, bows, turns, bows to the Priest, and goes to his place at the Altar Table, presents the censer to the Priest, saying:

Deacon: Bless, Master, the incense.

Priest: + We offer You incense, O Christ our God, for a perfume of spiritual fragrance. Receive it upon Your heavenly Altar, and send down upon us in return the grace of Your all-Holy Spirit.

Deacon: Amen.

The Deacon then censes the Priest two times. When the people begin to sing "Let my prayer arise" the Deacon begins the Great Censing, exiting the Sanctuary through the North door and entering through the South door.

Lord, I Call

Psalm 140 (141):1-2

People: Lord, I call upon You, hear me.
Hear me, O Lord.
Lord, I call upon You, hear me.
Receive the voice of my prayer, when I call upon You.
Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer arise,
in Your sight as incense,
and let the lifting up of my hands
be an evening sacrifice.
Hear me, O Lord.

Psalm 140 (141):3-10

Reader: Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth,
and a door of enclosure and protection around my lips.

Do not incline my heart to evil words,
to make excuses for sins.

With men who practice lawlessness,
not even with their chosen ones will I be joined.

A just man will correct and rebuke me with mercy,
but may the oil of a sinner never anoint my head,
because again and again my prayer is against their pleasures.

Their judges and kings drown holding rocks:
they will hear my words, for they are sweet.

As a clod of earth is crushed on the ground,
our bones have been scattered beside the grave.

For my eyes look to You, O Lord;
O Lord, in You I trust, do not take away my life.

Keep me from the trap they have set for me
and from the snare of the evildoers.

Sinners will fall into their own net;
I am alone until I pass on.

Psalm 141 (142)

I cry to the Lord with my voice,
I pray with my voice to the Lord.

I will pour out before Him my prayer,
I will tell my trouble before Him.

When my spirit departs from me,
You know my paths.
In this way that I was going,
they hid a trap for me.

I look to the right hand and watch,
but there is no one who knows me.
Escape is cut off from me,
but there is no one seeking my life.

I cried to You, O Lord, and said,
“You are my hope,
You are my portion in the land of the living.”

Attend to my prayer,
for I have been brought very low.
Deliver me from those who are persecuting me,
because they are stronger than I am.

Bring my soul out of prison
that I may confess Your name,

People: [Sticheron of Repentance in the Tone of the Day – Appendix B]

Reader: The righteous are waiting for me
until You reward me.

People: [Sticheron of Repentance in the Tone of the Day]

Psalm 129 (130)

Reader: Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord;
O Lord, hear my voice.

People: [Sticheron of Repentance in the Tone of the Day]

Reader: Let Your ears be attentive
to the cry of my prayer.

People: [Sticheron of Repentance in the Tone of the Day]

Reader: If You, O Lord, should take note of our sins,
O Lord, who would survive?
But with You there is forgiveness.

Tone 4 (to the Special Melody, “You have given a sign...”)

People: Grant reverence, estrangement from evil, and perfect discipline to me,
who am now drowned in the passions of the flesh,
and separated from You, in utter lack of hope, O my God, the King of all!
Save me, Your prodigal son,
by the bounty of Your goodness,//
O Jesus, the Almighty, the Savior of our souls!

Reader: For Your name’s sake, O Lord, I wait for You,
my soul waits for Your word,
my soul hopes for the Lord,

People: When Moses the wonder-worker was purified by fasting,
he beheld the Beloved One.
Therefore, emulate him, O my humble soul!
Hasten to be purified of evils on the day of abstinence,
that the Lord may bestow forgiveness on you,
and that you may behold Him,//
for He is the Almighty, the good Lord, and the Lover of mankind!

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

People: Let us begin the second week of the fast, O brethren,
fulfilling it with rejoicing, day by day,
making a fiery chariot for ourselves, like Elijah the Tishbite,
out of the great cardinal virtues,
elevating our minds by subduing our passions,
arming ourselves with purity,//
to chase away and vanquish the Enemy!

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

People: [Sticheron to the Saint of the day from the Menaion]

The Deacon receives the censer from the Server.

The Priests vest in the Phelonion for the Entrance.

Psalm 116 (117)

Reader: Praise the Lord, all you nations,
praise Him, all you peoples!

People: [Sticheron to the Saint of the day from the Menaion]

Reader: For great is His mercy to us,
and the truth of the Lord continues forever.

People: [Sticheron to the Saint of the day from the Menaion]

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

People: [Doxasticon, if any]

Reader: ...now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

As the People sing “now and ever...” the Holy Doors are opened, the Deacon asks the Priest to bless the censer, they both kiss the Altar Table, and preceded by the Acolytes, passing by the High Place, they proceed out of the Sanctuary through the North door, and go to the solea in front of the Holy Doors.

People: [Sing the Theotokion from the Menaion, or from the Common Theotokia if there be a Doxasticon]

The Vespers Entrance

As they proceed:

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

Priest: In the evening, in the morning, and at midday, we praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, and we pray to You: O Master of all, O Lord, the Lover of mankind, let our prayer arise in Your sight as incense, and incline not our hearts to words or thoughts of evil, but rescue us from all who seek after our souls. For our eyes are toward You, O Lord: Lord, in You we put our hope. Put us not to shame, O our God. For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Priest stands in the center facing the Sanctuary.

The Deacon approaches the Holy Doors to the right of the Priest and then he censes the Holy Doors, the icons of Christ and the Theotokos, and the Priest. After this he transfers the censer from his right hand to his left, bows to the Priest and, pointing to the Holy Doors with his Orarion in his right hand, he says quietly:

Deacon: Bless, Master, the holy entrance.

Priest: + Blessed is the entrance into Your Sanctuary always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

After this, the Deacon stands in the middle of the Holy Doors and, at the conclusion of the Theotokion, makes the Sign of the Cross with the censer and says:

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

The Deacon proceeds into the Sanctuary, censes the Altar Table on all four sides and the High Place.

The Priest(s) kisses the two small icons located on the sides or pillars of the Holy Doors area, blesses the People, kisses the Altar Table, and goes to the High Place, makes the Sign of the Cross and a small metania and stands to the right of center (Southeast corner of the Altar Table) facing the people.

The Deacon gives the censer to the Acolyte, kisses the Altar Table, goes to the left side of the Sanctuary, makes the Sign of the Cross on himself facing the High Place, bows to the Priest, and stands to the left (Northeast corner) of the Altar Table at the High Place facing toward the people.

Gladsome Light

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

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: + Peace be unto all.

Deacon: Wisdom!

The Great Prokeimenon

Deacon: The Great Prokeimenon in the eighth tone:

You have given an inheritance, O Lord, to those who fear You!

People: You have given an inheritance, O Lord, to those who fear You!

Deacon: From the ends of the earth I call to You!

People: You have given an inheritance, O Lord, to those who fear You!

Deacon: O to be safe under the shelter of Your wings!

People: You have given an inheritance, O Lord, to those who fear You!

Deacon: So will I ever sing praises to Your name!

People: You have given an inheritance, O Lord, to those who fear You!

Deacon: Your decrees are very sure;

People: You have given an inheritance, O Lord, to those who fear You!

Deacon: You have given an inheritance, O Lord...

People: ...to those who fear You!

The Priest and the Deacon turn, make the Sign of the Cross (lesser metania) to the High Place, and proceed to their places.

The Homily

A homily may be given at this point.

As the Homulist enters the Sanctuary, the Holy Doors are closed for the remainder of the service.

The Deacon bows to the Priest, passing the High Place, exits the Sanctuary through the North door and goes to his place before the icon of the Theotokos.

Grant, O Lord

People: Grant, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin.

Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen.

Let Your mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on You.

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

Blessed are You, O Master: make me to understand Your commandments.

Blessed are You, O Holy One: enlighten me with Your precepts.

Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

To You belongs worship, to You belongs praise, to You belongs glory; to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Evening Litany

The Deacon moves to stand before the Holy Doors, lifts his Orarion and says:

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

Deacon: For pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

The Deacon moves to stand before the icon of Christ:

People: To You, O Lord.

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

People: Amen

The Priest turns to bless the People:

Priest: + Peace be unto all.

People: And to your spirit.

The Priest faces the East as the Deacon says:

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

The Prayer with Heads Bowed

Priest: O Lord our God, Who bowed the heavens and came down for the salvation of the human race; look upon Your servants and Your inheritance; for to You, the awesome Judge, Who yet love mankind, have Your servants bowed their heads and submissively bent their necks, not waiting for help from men, but asking for Your mercy and looking confidently for Your salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the Devil, from vain thoughts, and from evil imaginations. Blessed and glorified be the majesty of Your kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

An offering may be taken at this time.

The Deacon enters the Sanctuary through the South door, bows to the High Place, turns, bows to the Priest, and goes to his place.

The Aposticha

Tone 8

People: Come, let us purify ourselves with alms and mercy to the poor, not blowing a trumpet, or publicizing what we do in charity, lest our left hand know what our right has done, and vainglory steal from us the fruit of almsgiving. But, let us plead in secret with the One who knows our secrets, crying out: “Father, forgive us our trespasses,// for You are the Lover of mankind!”

Reader: I lift up my eyes to You, the One Who lives in heaven. Behold, as the eyes of slaves are on the hands of their lords, and as the eyes of a maid are on the hands of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God until He has compassion on us.

People: Come, let us purify our souls... (*repeat above*)

Reader: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for we have had our fill to the full of scorn, our soul is more than filled. Let the reproach be for the prosperous and the contempt for the proud.

People: O Martyrs of the Lord,
you sanctify every place and heal every ill.
Now therefore, intercede with Him,//
that He may deliver our souls from the snares of the Enemy!

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

People: The hosts of heaven praise you,
O unwedded Mother, full of grace.
We glorify your ineffable childbearing.//
Therefore, O Theotokos, intercede for the salvation of our souls!

At this point the Servers carrying candles, processional fans, and the Holy Cross exit from the North door, and followed by all the Clergy carrying holy icons, proceed in a counter-clockwise direction through the church while the people chant the following Troparion. Any Laity who wish to carry an icon in the procession may do so.

Troparion

Tone 2

People: We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One;
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.
Of Your good will You were pleased to ascend the cross in the flesh
and deliver Your creatures from bondage to the Enemy.
Therefore, with thankfulness we cry aloud to You:
“You have filled all with joy, O our Savior,//
for You alone have come to save the world.”

Halfway through the church the procession stops and the Deacon makes the first set of petitions:

The Litany of the Holy Icons

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great goodness, we implore You, hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the pious and Orthodox Christians.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for our Orthodox Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops, Bishops, _____ (*Bishop of this temple*), Priests, Deacons, Monks, Nuns, and all other clergy, and for all our brethren in Christ.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, forgiveness and remission of sins of the servants of God, all the Orthodox Christians, and for the forgiveness of their every error both voluntary and involuntary.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

People: Amen.

The people resume the singing of the Troparion while the procession moves toward the entrance of the church. There it stops again and the Deacon makes the following petitions:

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great goodness, we implore You, hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the blessed and ever memorable founders of this holy house; for all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, and for the forgiveness of all their errors, both voluntary and involuntary.

People: Memory eternal. (3x)

Priest: For You are the resurrection, the life and the repose of your departed servants, all the pious and Orthodox Christians, O Christ our God, and to You we send up glory, together with your Father Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The people again resume the singing of the Troparion and the procession starts moving toward the Solea through the center aisle. When it reaches the center of the church, they all stop and the Deacon makes the following petitions:

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great goodness, we implore You, hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the pious and Orthodox Christians.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for our Orthodox Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Monks, Nuns, and all other clergy, and for all our brethren in Christ.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, forgiveness and remission of sins of the servants of God, all the Orthodox Christians, and for the forgiveness of their every error both voluntary and involuntary.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

People: Amen.

The people again resume the singing of the Troparion and the procession starts moving again toward the Solea. When they arrive there, the Laity give up their icons and return to their seats and the Clergy stand in a semi-circle in front of the Holy Doors facing the congregation. Then the Deacon makes the last set of petitions:

Deacon: Again we pray for the preservation of this holy Church and city, and every city and countryside, from the wrath of God, pestilence, famine, earthquake, flood, fire, invasion by enemies, civil war and sudden death, and that our God, Who loves mankind, will be merciful, gracious and favorable toward us, and will fend off and turn away all the wrath and

every illness that threatens us, and will deliver us from His righteous chastisement, impending against us, and will have mercy on us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Hear us, O God, our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who sail the distant seas, and traverse the air, and be gracious and show mercy, O Master, upon our sins and be merciful to us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

People: Amen.

The Synodikon

In a loud voice:

All: As the Prophets beheld, as the Apostles have taught,
As the Church has received, as the Teachers have dogmatized,
As the Universe has agreed, as grace has shown forth,
As Truth has revealed, as Falsehood has been dissolved,
As Wisdom has presented, as Christ awarded;

Thus we declare, thus we assert,
Thus we preach Christ Our True God, and honor His Saints in words, in writings,
In thoughts, in sacrifices,
In Churches, in Holy Icons;
On the one hand worshipping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord,
And on the other, honoring the Saints as true servants of the same Lord of All,
And offering them proper veneration.

This is the Faith of the Apostles,
This is the Faith of the Fathers,
This is the Faith of the Orthodox,
This is the Faith which has established the Universe.

(*The Anathemas may be inserted here. See Appendix C*)

Clergy: Furthermore, we brotherly and paternally declare and say concerning those who faithfully preached and fought for the glory and honor of godliness: May the memory be eternal of pious Rulers, Holy Patriarchs, Bishops, Teachers, Martyrs, and Confessors who in the past fought for Orthodoxy.

People: Memory Eternal.

Clergy: Asking God, Who has prepared and strengthened them to preach, fight, and die for the sake of the faith, to make us imitators of their holy lives to the end, may we be deemed worthy to receive our petition through the grace and compassion of the great and supreme high priest, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of the most holy, pure, blessed, and glorified Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, the Holy Angels, and all the saints.

People: Amen.

The Nicene Creed

All: I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and

suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the prophets.

And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Clergy enter the Sanctuary.

The Canticle of Simeon

People: Master, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word. For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people: a light for revelation to the gentiles and for the glory of Your people Israel.

The Trisagion Prayers

Holy God! Holy Mighty! Holy Immortal! Have mercy on us. (3x)

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

O most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us!
O Lord, cleanse us from our sins!
O Master, pardon our transgressions!
O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your name's sake!

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

Our Father, Who are 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, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Deacons and Priests exit the Sanctuary through the Deacon doors and take their places.

The Lenten Troparia

During the first three of the following Troparia, one prostration is made by all at each Troparion. During the fourth Troparion, all make a lesser reverence.

People: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb;// for you have borne the Savior of our souls. (*All make a prostration.*)

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

O Baptiser of Christ, remember us all,
that we may be delivered from our iniquities;//
for to you is given grace to intercede for us. (*All make a prostration.*)

...now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Intercede for us, O holy apostles and all the saints,
that we may be delivered from perils and sorrows;//
for we have acquired you as fervent intercessors before the Savior.
(All make a prostration.)

Beneath your compassion we take refuge, O Theotokos.
Do not despise our supplications in adversity,//
but deliver us from perils, O only pure and only blessed one.
(All make a metania.)

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40x)

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

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

In the Name of the Lord, father bless.

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

Reader: Amen.

O Heavenly King, establish the Orthodox Christians, strengthen the
faith, quiet the heathen, give peace to the world, place our departed
fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous, and accept us
sorrowers and penitents, for You are good, and You love mankind.

People: Amen.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim

Facing East, the Priest prays:

Priest: O Lord and Master of my life, do not permit me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. (*All make a prostration.*)

But give, rather, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to Your servant. (*All make a prostration.*)

O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed are You unto ages of ages. Amen. (*All make a prostration.*)

Then all make 12 lesser reverences, saying for each:

O God, cleanse me a sinner and have mercy on me.

The Prayer of St. Ephraim is repeated, with one prostration at the end.

The Dismissal

The Priest bows toward the icon of Christ on the Iconostasis, saying:

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

The Priest and the Deacon turn to face the People.

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Father, bless.

Priest: May Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most-pure Mother; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of heaven; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; of our father among the saints, St. (of the temple.....; of St. (of the day), whom we commemorate today; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us for He is good and loves mankind.

People: Amen.

Then the people are invited to come forward and venerate the Holy Icon(s) held by the clergy and depart in peace.

Appendix A

THE SEVEN VESPERS PRAYERS

I

O Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and of great mercy, give heed to our prayers, and attend to the voice of our supplications. Work upon us a sign for good. Guide us in Your way that we may walk in Your truth. Gladden our hearts that we may fear Your holy name, for You are great and You work wonders. You alone are God, and among the gods there is none like You, O Lord, powerful in mercy and good in might, to help and to comfort and to save all those who hope in Your holy name. For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

II

O Lord, in Your displeasure, rebuke us not, neither chasten us in Your wrath, but deal with us according to Your tenderness, O physician and healer of our souls. Guide us to the haven of Your will. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts to the knowledge of Your truth, and grant that the remainder of the present day and the whole time of our life may be peaceful and sinless, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints. For Yours is the majesty, and Yours are the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

III

O Lord our God, remember us, Your sinful and unprofitable servants, when we call on Your holy and venerable name, and put us not to shame in our expectation of Your mercy, but grant us, O Lord, all our petitions which are unto salvation, and make us worthy to love and fear You with all our hearts, and to do Your will in all things. For You are a good God and You love mankind, and to You we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

IV

O You to Whom the holy powers sing with unending hymns and unceasing doxologies, fill our mouths with Your praise that we may magnify Your holy name. And grant to us part and inheritance with all those who fear You in truth and keep Your commandments, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints. For to You belong all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

V

O Lord, Lord, Who uphold all things in the most pure hollow of Your hand, Who are long-suffering toward us all, and Who turn away from our wickedness, remember Your compassion and Your mercy. Look on us with Your goodness. Grant to us also by Your grace, through the remainder of the present day, to avoid the various subtle snares of the Evil One. Keep our lives unassailed, through the grace of Your all holy Spirit. Through the mercy and love toward mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

VI

O God, great and wonderful, Who with goodness indescribable and rich providence, order all things and grant to us earthly good things; Who have given us a pledge of the promised kingdom through the good things already granted to us, and have made us to shun all harm during that part of the day which is past, grant that we may also fulfill the remainder of this day blamelessly before Your holy glory, and hymn You, our God Who alone are good and love mankind. For You are our God, and to You we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

VII**a**

O great and most high God, You alone have immortality, and You dwell in unapproachable light. You have fashioned all creation in wisdom. You have divided the light from the darkness, and have set the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night. You have also permitted us sinners at this present hour to come before Your presence with confession and to offer to You our evening doxology. O Lord, Lover of Mankind, direct our prayer as incense before You, and accept it as a sweet fragrance. Grant that the present evening and coming night be peaceful. Clothe us with the armor of light. Rescue us from the fear of night, and from everything that walks in darkness. Grant that the sleep that You have given us for rest in our weakness may be free from every fantasy of the devil.

b

O Master of all, leader of the good, may we, being moved to compunction on our beds, remember Your name in the night. Enlightened by doing Your commandments, may we rise up with joyful soul to glorify Your goodness of heart for our own sins and those of all Your people. Look on them in mercy, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos. For You are a good God and You love mankind, and to You we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Appendix B

“Lord I Call...” (Stichera of Repentance)

The first 2 come from the Vespers Aposticha for Sunday evening, and the last 2 from the Matins Aposticha for Monday morning, in the tone of the week.

Tone 1

The sea of my transgressions is great, O Savior,
and I am sinking terribly because of my sins.

Give me your hand, as you saved Peter, O God,//
and have mercy on me!

My thoughts and deeds condemn me, O Savior.
Give me the thought of turning back,
that I may cry out to You://
“Save me, O God, and have mercy on me!”

Another world awaits you, my soul:
A Judge will soon reveal your secret and terrible thoughts and deeds!
Do not linger, then, among the things that are here.
Anticipate the Judgment and cry out to the Judge://
“Be merciful to me, O God, and save me!”

Do not reject me at the testing, O my Savior,
though I am held fast by the laziness of sin.
Arouse my thoughts to repentance;
make me a proven worker of Your vineyard://
Grant me the wages of the eleventh hour and great mercy!

Tone 2

I have sinned against You, O Christ our Savior,
like the Prodigal Son.

Father, accept me in repentance!//
Have mercy on me, O God!

I cry to You, O Christ our Savior,
with the voice of the Publican:
“Be merciful to me, as to him,//
and have mercy on me, O God!”

When I think of my detestable and horrible deeds,
I fly for refuge to your compassion,
imitating the Publican,
the weeping Harlot and the Prodigal Son.
So I fall before You, O merciful One:
“Before You condemn me, O my God,//
rather spare me and have mercy on me!”

Overlook my transgressions,
O Lord, born of the Virgin!
Cleanse my heart, making it a temple of the Holy Spirit!
Do not make me as nothing before Your face,//
since You have boundless mercy!

Tone 3

We offer You our evening hymn, O Christ,
with incense and spiritual songs.//
O Savior, have mercy on us!

Save me, O Lord my God:
You are the Salvation of all!
The storm of my passions troubles me;
the yoke of my sins weighs me down.
Stretch out Your hand to help me;
lead me to the light of repentance,//
for You alone are the compassionate Lover of mankind!

O Lord, gather my scattered mind
and cleanse my barren heart!
Grant me repentance as You gave to Peter,
groans as You gave the Publican and tears as the Harlot,
so that I may cry to You with a loud voice://
“Save me, O God, as You alone are tender-hearted and the Lover of mankind!”

Often, when I am singing hymns,
I find myself committing sins.
With my tongue I am singing praises,
but with my soul, I am pondering evil things.//
But correct both through repentance, O Christ God, and save me!

Tone 4

O Lord, I long to wash away with tears the record of all my sins,
and to spend the remaining days of my life
pleasing You through repentance,
but the Enemy continually deceives me.
He wages war against my soul.//
O Lord, save me, before I utterly perish!

Who, when caught in a storm, if he runs to this haven is not saved?
Or who that is sick, if he runs to this healing, is not made whole?
Creator of all and Physician of the sick,//
O Lord, save me, before I utterly perish!

Wash me in my tears, O Savior,
for I am defiled by many sins!
Therefore, I fall before You://
I have sinned; have mercy on me, O God!

I flee for refuge to You, the good Shepherd;
I am a sheep of Your rational flock.
O God, I have gone astray;//
seek me, and have mercy on me!

Tone 5

O Lord, I do not cease from sins;
I do not perceive that I am counted worthy of Your love for mankind.//
Conquer my hardheartedness, O only Good One, and have mercy on me!

O Lord, even though I fear You,
I do not cease from doing evil.
Who does not fear the Judge in the hour of judgment?
And who, desiring healing, chases away the physician as I do?
Have compassion on my infirmity,//
and have mercy on me, O long-suffering Lord!

Disregard the multitude of my transgressions,
O Lord, born of the Virgin!
Blot out all my iniquities;
grant me, I pray, a firm intention to change,//
for You are the Lover of mankind;
and have mercy on me!

Woe is me! Why have I become like the barren fig tree?
I fear being cursed and cut down.
But, O heavenly Gardener, Christ my God,
reveal my parched soul to be fruitful!//
Accept me as You did the Prodigal Son; and have mercy on me!

Tone 6

At Your terrible coming, O Christ,
may we not hear the words: “I know you not!”
For we have put our hope in You,
and though through neglect we have not kept Your commands,/
yet we entreat You to have mercy on our souls.

I have not gained repentance or tears,
therefore, I entreat You, O Christ God:
“Turn me back before I die,/
that I may find mercy and be delivered from torments!”

Finding me naked of virtues,
the Enemy wounded me with the arrow of sin,
but as Physician of souls and bodies,
heal the wounds of my soul, O God,/
and have mercy on me!

O Savior, heal the wounds of my heart left by my many sins!
O Physician of souls and bodies,
grant forgiveness of faults to those who ask!
Ever give me tears of penitence,
releasing me from what I owe You, O Lord,/
and have mercy on me!

Tone 7

Like the Prodigal I come and fall before You, O Lord:
accept me as one of Your hired servants,//
and have mercy on me, O compassionate One!

Like the man who fell among thieves and was wounded,
I have fallen, and my soul is bruised by my many sins.
To whom can I, the guilty one, run,
if not to You, the only merciful Physician of our souls?//
Pour out Your great mercy on me, O God!

O Savior, sinner that I am,
do not cut me down like the barren fig tree!
But grant me forgiveness all the year long,
watering my soul with tears of repentance,//
that I may bring forth acts of mercy as fruit for You!

Since You are the Sun of righteousness,
enlighten and guide the hearts of those who cry out to You://
“O Lord, glory to You!”

Tone 8

The angels never cease singing praises to You,
and I fall before You, O King and Master.
I cry out like the Publican://
“Be merciful to me, O God, and save me!”

Since you are without end, O my soul,
do not be overwhelmed by the waves of this life.
Come to your senses and cry out to the Benefactor:
“Be merciful to me, O God, and save me!”

When I grasp with my mind the great number of terrible things I have done,
and go in my thoughts to that terrible reckoning,
I tremble with fearfulness!
I flee for refuge to you, O God and Lover of mankind!
I humbly pray: “Do not turn from me, O sinless Lord,//
but grant my lowly soul repentance before the end and save me!”

Give me tears, O God, as You once did to the woman who had sinned,
and count me worthy to drench Your feet --
those feet which freed me from the path of error.
As fragrant ointment let me offer You a life of purity,
acquired by me through repentance,
that I too may hear that voice for which I pray, saying://
“Your faith has saved you; go in peace!”

Appendix C

The Anathemas

Deacon: Furthermore, we accept and confirm the councils of the holy fathers, and their traditions and writings which are agreeable to divine revelation.

And though the enemies of Orthodoxy oppose this providence and the saving revelation of the Lord, yet the Lord has considered the reproaches of His servants, for He mocks those who blaspheme His Glory, and has challenged the enemies of Orthodoxy and put them to flight!

As we therefore bless and praise those who have obeyed the divine revelation and have fought for it; so we reject and anathematize those who oppose this truth, if while waiting for their return and repentance, they refuse to turn again to the Lord; and in this we follow the sacred tradition of the ancient Church, holding fast to her traditions.

To those who deny the existence of God, and assert that the world is self-existing, and that all things in it occur by chance, and not by the providence of God, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who say that God is not spirit, but flesh; or that He is not just, merciful, wise and all-knowing, and utter similar blasphemies, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who dare to say that the Son of God and also the Holy Spirit are not one in essence and of equal honor with the Father, and confess that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not one God, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who foolishly say that the coming of the Son of God into the world in the flesh, and His voluntary passion, death, and resurrection were not necessary for our salvation and the cleansing of sins, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who reject the grace of redemption preached by the Gospel as the only means of our justification before God, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who dare to say that the all-pure Virgin Mary was not a virgin before giving birth, during childbirth, and after giving birth, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who do not believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets and apostles, and by them taught us the true way to eternal salvation, and confirmed this by miracles, and now dwells in the hearts of all true and faithful Christians, and teaches them in all truth, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who reject the soul is everlasting, the end of time, the future judgment, and eternal reward for virtue and condemnation for sin, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who reject all the holy mysteries held by Christ's Holy Church, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who reject the Councils of the holy fathers and their traditions, which are agreeable to divine revelation and kept piously by the Orthodox Catholic Church, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who mock and profane the holy images and relics which the Holy Church receives as revelations of God's work and of those pleasing to Him, to inspire their beholders with piety, and to arouse them to follow these examples; and to those who say that they are idols, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To those who dare to say and teach that our Lord Jesus Christ did not descend to earth, but only seemed to; or that He did not descend to the earth and become incarnate only once, but many times, and who likewise deny that the true Wisdom of the Father is His only-begotten Son, Anathema!

All: Anathema!

Deacon: To the followers of the occult, spiritualists, wizards, and all who do not believe in the one God, but honor the demons; or who do not humbly give their lives over to God, but strive to learn the future through sorcery, Anathema!

All: Anathema!