

THE MIDNIGHT OFFICE OF  
PASCHA  
*also known as Nadhrobnoje (“At the tomb”)*



Metropolitan Cantor Institute  
Byzantine Catholic Seminary  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
April 2026

In the Slavonic use of the Byzantine Rite, the Church's liturgical book for the Great Fast and Holy Week, the Lenten Triodion, closes with an abbreviated version of the monastic Midnight Office, to be celebrated on the night of Holy and Great Saturday. This service is sometimes called "Nadhrobnoje" – "Before the tomb". At this service, the Canon of Holy and Great Saturday is again chanted in church. During the Ninth Ode of the Canon, the burial shroud which represents the body of our crucified Lord is solemnly transferred from a symbolic tomb in the midst of the church, to the holy table. The shroud remains on the holy table until the Otdanije (Leave-Taking) of Pascha.

After the transfer of the burial shroud, all of the lamps in the Church are extinguished and the Matins of the Resurrection (Paschal Matins) begins.

In recent times, the Midnight Office, which the Typikon says is to begin around 11:30 PM, has fallen into disuse, and the solemn transfer of the shroud takes place at the start of Paschal Matins instead. We hope that this booklet, which provides the text and music for the Midnight Office of Pascha, may aid in its rediscovery.

The text and music in the booklet are almost entirely taken from the Metropolitan Cantor Institute's book for Matins on Holy and Great Saturday. As in that publication, we provide both simple and solemn melodies for the irmos of each ode of the canon. Cantors may choose to use either set of melodies, or to sing one melody at the start of each ode and the other at the end of the ode, as katavasia.

Like the other publications of the Metropolitan Cantor Institute, this setting of the service of the Midnight Office of Pascha is UNOFFICIAL and subject to change or revision by the Cantor Institute, the Inter-Eparchial Music Commission, or the Council of Hierarchs of the Byzantine Catholic Church. We hope that it provides spiritual benefit to all who use it.

The image on the cover is from *The Sunday Gospels*, a collection from Byzantine Seminary Press.

## The Midnight Office of Pascha

*The faithful STAND as the celebrant, vested in a dark epitrachilion, goes to stand before the burial shroud in the tomb.*

**Celebrant:** Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever.

**Response:**

*Psalm tone:*



A - - - men.

Glory to you, our God,  
glory *to* you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,  
everywhere present and filling all things,  
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,  
come and dwell within us,  
cleanse us of all stain,  
and save our souls, O *gracious* One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,  
have mercy *on* us. (*3 times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. *Amen.*

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;  
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;  
Master, forgive our transgressions;  
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for *your* name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, *have* mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. *Amen.*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us *from* evil.

**Celebrant:** For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

**Response:**   
A - - - men.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, *have* mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. *Amen*.

Come, let us worship our King and God.  
Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God.  
Come, let us worship and bow down to the only Lord Jesus Christ,  
the King and *our* God.

## Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness.  
In your compassion blot out my *offense*.

O wash me more and more from my guilt  
and cleanse me from *my* sin.

My offenses truly I know them;  
my sin is always *before* me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned;  
what is evil in your sight I *have* done.

That you may be justified when you give sentence  
and be without reproach when *you* judge,

O see, in guilt I was born,  
a sinner was I *conceived*.

Indeed you love truth in the heart;  
then in the secret of my heart teach *me* wisdom.

Sprinkle me with hyssop, then I shall be clean;  
O wash me, I shall be whiter *than* snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,  
that the bones you have crushed *may* thrill.

From my sins turn away your face  
and blot out all *my* guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God;  
put a steadfast spirit *within* me.

Do not cast me away from your presence,  
nor deprive me of your *holy* spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;  
with a spirit of fervor *sustain* me,

that I may teach transgressors your ways  
and sinners may return *to* you.

Deliver me from blood-guilt, O God, my saving God  
and my tongue shall ring out *your* goodness.

O Lord, open my lips  
and my mouth will declare *your* praise.

For in sacrifice you take no delight,  
burnt offering from me you would *refuse*,

my sacrifice, a contrite spirit,  
a humbled, contrite heart you will *not* spurn.

In your goodness, show favor to Zion:  
rebuild the walls of *Jerusalem*.

Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice,  
burnt offerings wholly consumed,  
then you will be offered young bulls on *your* altar.

# The Canon of Holy and Great Saturday

## (Tone 6)

### Ode 1

**Irmos** - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 5)



He who in an-cient times hid the pur-su-ing ty-rant be-neath the waves of the sea



is hid-den be-neath the earth by the chil-dren of those whom once he saved;



but as the mai - dens, let us sing to the Lord



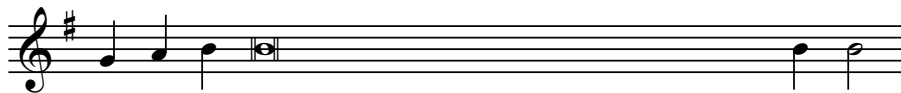
for he is great - ly glo - ri - fied.



Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

O Lord my God, I sing a hymn of farewell to you; \* for, by your burial, you open for me the gates of life, \* destroying Death and Hades by your death. *Refrain*

Upon your throne in heaven and lying in the tomb here below, \* by your death you terrify the powers in heaven and below, O God and Savior; \* for they contemplated this sight that is beyond description: \* the Creator sleeping in death.



Glo - ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir - it;



now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A-men.

You have gone down into the deepest recesses of the earth, \* so that the entire universe may be filled with your glory; \* and I was not able to hide my fallen nature from you; \* but your burial renews me, O Lord and Lover of us all.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 4, or the following solemn melody:

He, who in an - cient times hid the pur - su - ing ty - rant be - neath  
the waves of the sea, is hid - - - den be - neath the earth  
by the chil - dren of those whom once he saved; but  
as the mai - dens let us sing to the Lord  
for he is great - ly glo - - - - ri - fied.

### Ode 3

**Irmos** - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 6)

When the cre - a - - - tion be - held you hang - ing in Gol - go - tha who has hung  
the whole creation up - on the wa - ters, it was seized with a - mazement and cried out:  
There is none, there is none ho - ly save you, O Lord.

*Refrain*

Glo-ry to you, O God, glo-ry to you.

By your many wondrous works, you showed us signs of your death; \* but today you reveal your mysteries to those in Hades, O Lord; \* and they cry out before your divine humanity: \* None is holy as you, O our God.

Glo-ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir-it;

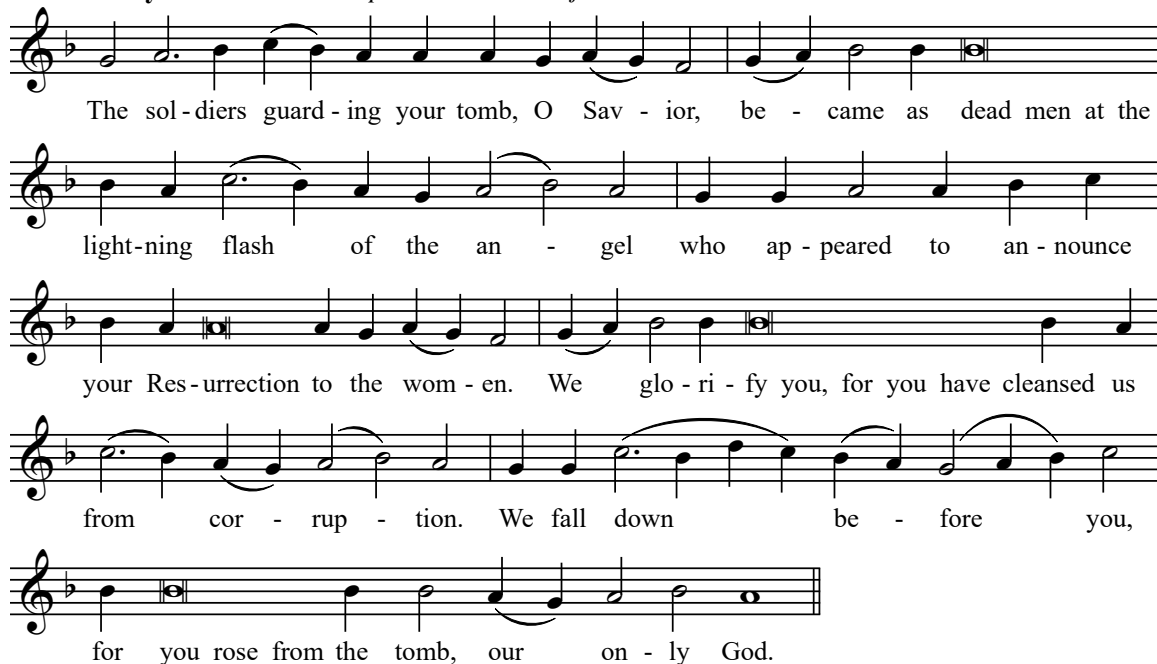
now and ev-er and for-ev-er. A-men.

Stretching out your arms on the Cross, \* you gather your scattered children; \* wrapped in the linen cloth in the tomb, \* you deliver the captives, O Lord, who cry out: \* None is holy as you, O our God.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 5, or the following solemn melody:

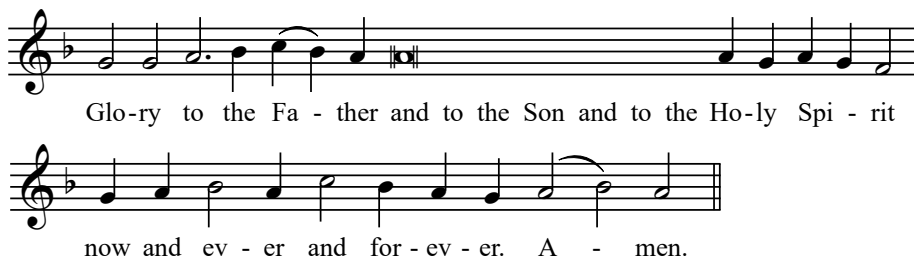
When the cre - a - tion be - held you hang - - - - -  
 ing in Gol - go - - tha who has hung the whole earth up - on the  
 wa - - - - ters, it was seized with a - mazement and cried out:  
 There is none, none ho - ly save you, O Lord.

**Sessional hymns** - *Tone 2 samopodoben: Hrob tvoj*



The sol-diers guard-ing your tomb, O Sav-ior, be-came as dead men at the  
light-ning flash of the an-gel who ap-peared to an-nounce  
your Res-urrection to the wom-en. We glo-ri-fy you, for you have cleansed us  
from cor-rup-tion. We fall down be-fore you,  
for you rose from the tomb, our on-ly God.

*Cantor:*

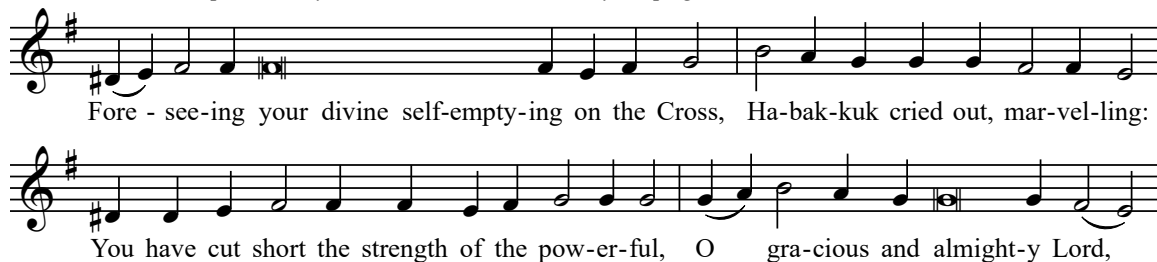


Glo-ry to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho-ly Spi-rit  
now and ev-er and for-ev-er. A-men.

*All repeat the sessional hymn: "The soldiers guarding your tomb, O Savior..."*

**Ode 4**

**Irmos** - *Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 8)*



Fore-see-ing your divine self-empty-ing on the Cross, Ha-bak-kuk cried out, mar-vel-ling:  
You have cut short the strength of the pow-er-ful, O gra-cious and almight-y Lord,

and preached to those in hell.

*Refrain*

Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

Today you sanctify the seventh day \* which you formerly blessed by resting from your work; \* by keeping the Sabbath, O God, our Creator and Savior, \* you renew all things and recreate the universe. *Refrain*

In your victory, O almighty Lord, \* your soul was separated from your body; \* O Word, your strength has broken the bonds of Hades and the chains of death.

Glo - ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir - it;

now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

At your coming, O Word, Hades was filled with bitterness; \* for it saw a mortal deified, \* a man covered with wounds, \* who was yet an all-powerful victor; \* at this sight, Hades was gripped with terror.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 7, or the following solemn melody:

Fore - see - - - ing your di - vine self - emp - ty - ing on the Cross,  
 Ha - bak - kuk cried out, mar - vel - ling: You have cut short  
 the strength of the pow - er - ful, O gra - cious and al - might - y Lord,

and preached, and preached to those, to those in hell.

## Ode 5

*Irmos - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 10)*

I - sai - ah, as he watched by night, be - held the light that knows no  
eve-ning, the light of your holy Theo-pha - ny, O Lord, that came to pass  
from ten - der love for us, and he cried a - loud: The dead shall a - rise!  
and they that dwell in the tomb shall be raised up, and all those  
born on earth shall re - jice ex - ceed - ing - ly.

*Refrain*

Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

By being covered with the dust of the earth,\* you renew the nature of mortals,  
O Creator; \* the tomb and the winding-sheet reveal your deepest mystery, O Word; \*  
the noble counsellor renders present the counsel of your eternal Father, \* who renews  
me in this wondrous way through you. *Refrain*

By your death, you transform that which is mortal; \* by your burial, you transform  
that which is corruptible; \* by your divinity, you draw us up from the abyss. \* For,  
that which you assume, you make immortal; \* your flesh, O Master, did not undergo  
corruption, \* and your soul did not remain in Hades where you were a stranger.

Glo - ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir - it;

now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

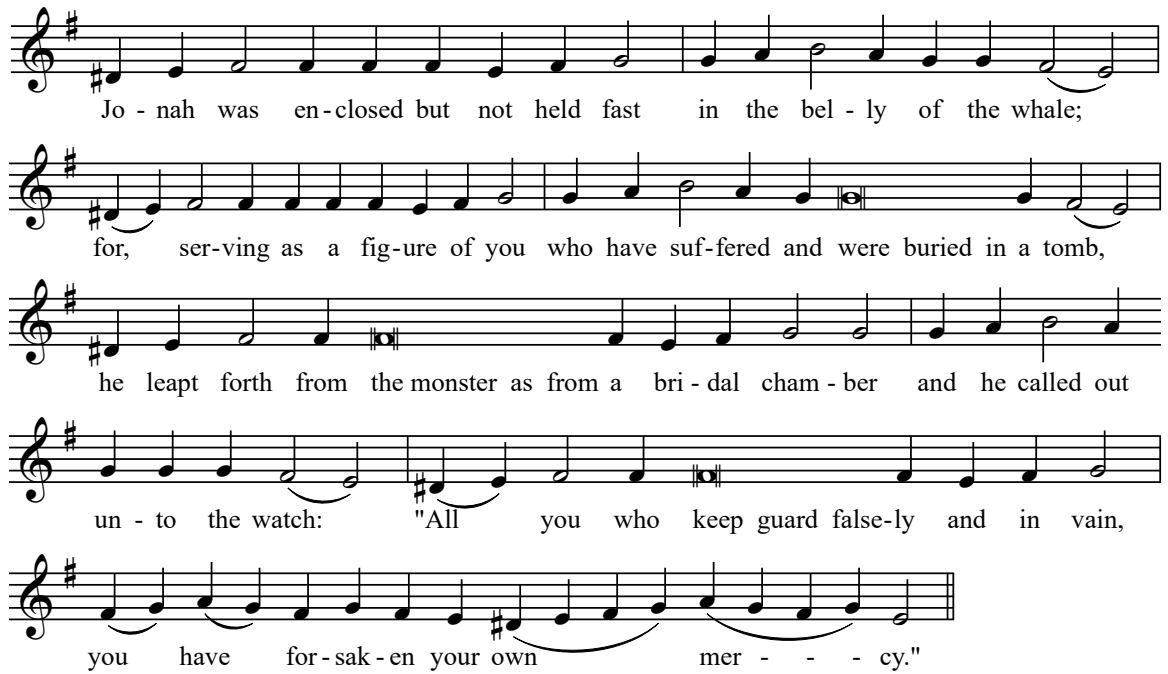
You were born of the spouseless Virgin; \* and when the soldier pierced your side with his lance, \* you made a new Eve come forth, O Creator. \* And you, the New Adam, have slept a wondrous sleep, \* a sleep that brings us life; \* you have awakened our life from sleep and death, O almighty Lord.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 9, or the following solemn melody:

I - sai - ah, as he watched by night, be - held the light that  
 knows no eve - ning, the light of your ho - ly The - o - phan - y,  
 O Christ, that came to pass from ten - der love for us,  
 and he cried a - loud: The dead shall a - rise! and they that dwell  
 in the tomb shall be raised up, and all those born on the earth  
 shall re - jice ex - ceed - ing - ly.

## Ode 6

Irmos - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 12)



Jo - nah was en - closed but not held fast in the bel - ly of the whale;  
for, ser - ving as a fig - ure of you who have suf - fered and were buried in a tomb,  
he leapt forth from the monster as from a bri - dal cham - ber and he called out  
un - to the watch: "All you who keep guard false - ly and in vain,  
you have for - sak - en your own mer - - - cy."

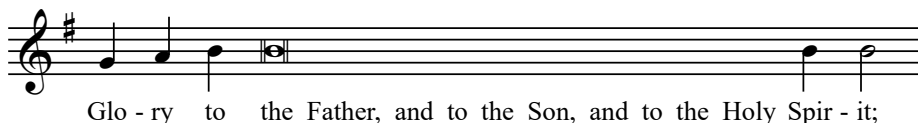
*Refrain*



Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

The flesh that you had assumed, O Word, \* was taken without being separated from you; \* at the hour of your Passion, the temple of your body was destroyed; \* but your divinity remained united to your flesh; \* in both one and the other, you are God and man, \* the Son and Word of God. *Refrain*

The fall of Adam brought mortality to the human race \* and not to the divinity; \* and even though your flesh suffered in your earthly condition, \* you remained beyond all suffering in your divinity. \* In the tomb, you brought us back to immortality, \* and by your Resurrection, you reveal to us the fountain of immortal life.



Glo - ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir - it;



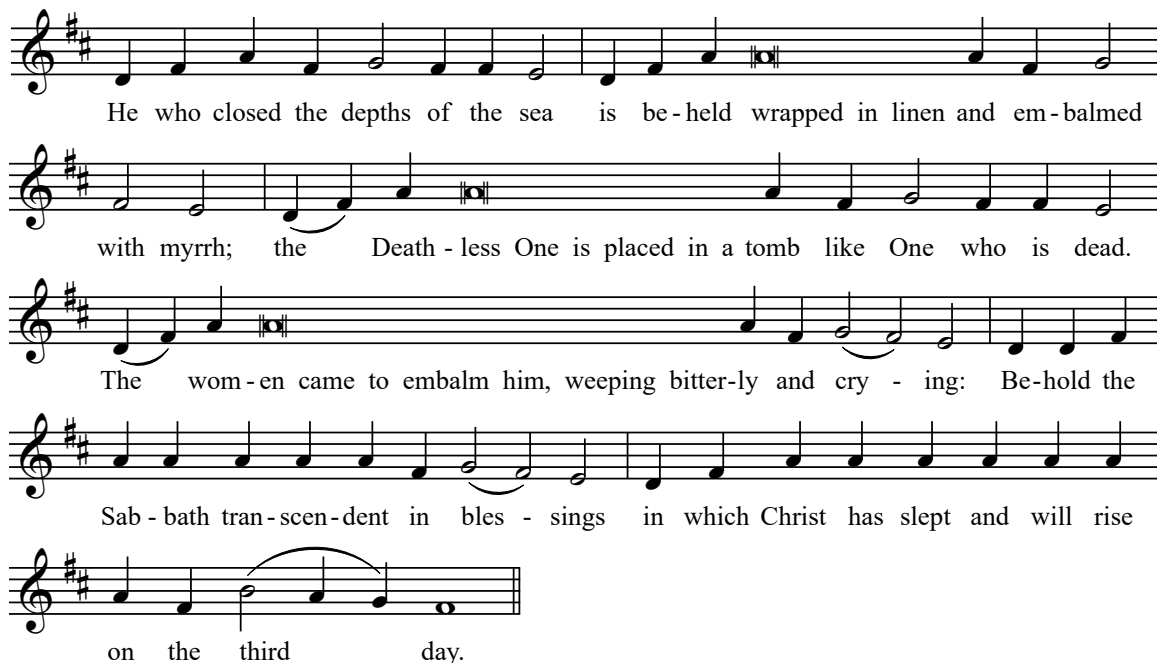
now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

Hades ruled over the human race, \* but its kingdom was not eternal; \* when they placed you in the tomb, O almighty God, \* with your life-giving hand, you broke the chains of death; \* you announce the only redemption \* to those who were asleep from all ages; \* and you, O our Savior, are the firstborn from the dead.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 11, or the following solemn melody:

Jo - nah was en - closed but not held fast  
 in the bel - ly of the whale; for, ser - ving as a fig - ure  
 of you who have suf - fered and was bur - ied in a tomb,  
 he leapt forth from the mon - ster as from a bri - dal cham - ber,  
 and he called out un - to the watch: "All you who keep guard  
 false - ly and in vain, you have for - sa - ken your own  
 mer - - - - cy."

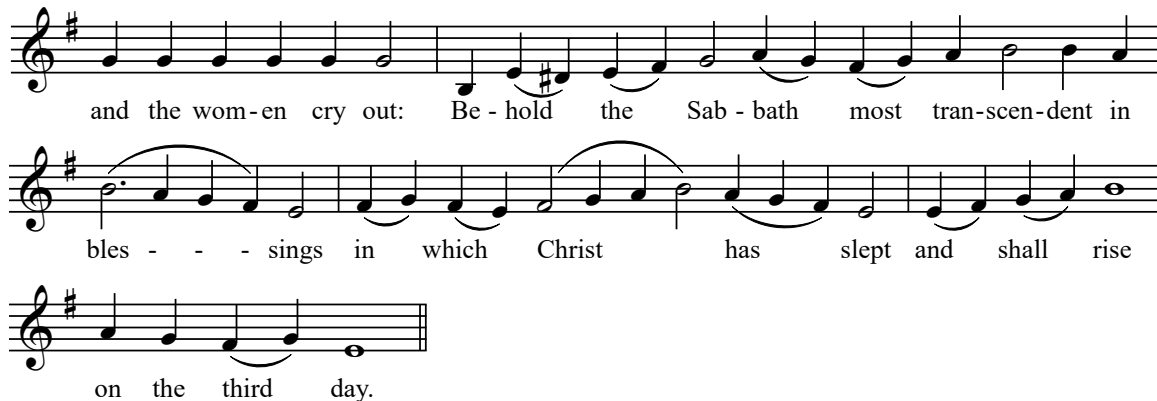
### Kontakion of Holy Saturday - Tone 6



He who closed the depths of the sea is be-held wrapped in linen and em-balmed  
with myrrh; the Death-less One is placed in a tomb like One who is dead.  
The wom-en came to embalm him, weeping bitter-ly and cry - ing: Be-hold the  
Sab - bath tran-scen-dent in bles - sings in which Christ has slept and will rise  
on the third day.

### Ikos of Holy Saturday - chanted, with a special conclusion (below)

He who holds the whole universe in his hands is raised upon the Cross, \* and all creation weeps as it sees him hanging on the wood: \* the sun hides its rays, and the stars lose their brightness; \* the earth quakes and is filled with fear; \* the seas draw back and the rocks split in two; \* the tombs open and the bodies of the saints rise; \* Hades laments and the Sanhedrin gathers to fabricate a story to deny the Resurrection of Christ, \*



and the wom-en cry out: Be - hold the Sab - bath most tran-scen-dent in  
bles - - - sings in which Christ has slept and shall rise  
on the third day.

## Ode 7

**Irmos** - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 15)

Won - - - der past speech! He who de - liv - ered the holy Children from the  
fie - ry fur - nace is laid a corpse with - out breath in the tomb for our sal - va - tion  
who sing: O God, our de - liv - er - er, bles - sed, bles - sed are You!

*Refrain*

Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

Hades was struck in the heart \* when it received the One whose side was wounded by the lance of the soldier; \* it groaned aloud as it was consumed by the divine fire; \* this was done for our salvation, and we praise Him: \* Blessed are you, O Lord, for you save us. *Refrain*

O blessed tomb that sheltered the sleep of the Creator! \* You have become the divine treasure of life; \* this was done for our salvation, and we praise him: \* Blessed are you, O Lord, for you save us. *Refrain*

Submitting himself to the law of death, \* the Life of all accepts burial in the tomb; \* and the grave becomes the fountain of the Resurrection; \* this was done for our salvation, and we praise him: \* Blessed are you, O Lord, for you save us.

Glo - ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir - it;  
now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

In Hades, as well as in the tomb and in Eden, \* the unique divinity of Christ was inseparable from the Father and the Holy Spirit; \* this was done for our salvation, and we praise Him: \* Blessed are you, O Lord, for you save us.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 14, or the following solemn melody:

Won - - - - der past speech! He who  
 de - liv - ered the ho - ly Chil - dren from the fie - ry fur - nace  
 is laid a corpse with - out breath in the tomb  
 for our sal - va - - - tion who sing: O God,  
 our De - liv - er - er, Bles - - - - sed, bles - - - - sed are You!

## Ode 8

**Irmos** - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 16)

Be a - ston - ished, O you heavens, and be hor - ri - bly a - fraid and let  
 the foun - dations of the earth be sha - ken. For, lo! he who dwells on high  
 is num - bered with the dead and lod - ges in a nar - row tomb. Him, there - fore,

do you chil-dren bless, all you priests, praise, and you peo-ples, ex - alt  
 a - bove all for - ev - - - - er.

Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

The most holy Temple is destroyed, \* but he raises up the fallen tabernacle; \* for he who dwells in the highest heaven, the New Adam, \* goes down into Hades to raise up the first Adam. \* O youths, bless the Lord; \* praise him, you priests; \* and let the whole nation exalt him forever.

Let us bless the Lord, Father, Son, and Ho - ly Spi - rit.

The courage of the apostles has vanished, \* and seeing your naked and lifeless body, \* it is Joseph of Arimathea who asks for the body of the God of all, \* and he buries him, crying out: \* O youths, bless the Lord; \* praise him, you priests; \* and let the whole nation exalt him forever.

Now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.

O marvelous wonder! \* O goodness and condescension beyond description! \* He who dwells in the highest heavens \* accepts burial beneath a sealed rock; \* and God himself is treated as a deceiver! \* O youths, bless the Lord; \* praise him, you priests; \* and let the whole nation exalt him forever.

Let us praise, bless and wor-ship the Lord, sing-ing and high-ly ex-alt-ing him  
a - bove all for - ev - - - er.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 15, or the following solemn melody:

Be a - ston - ished, O you hea - vens, and be hor - ri - bly  
a - fraid and let the foun-da-tions of the earth be sha - ken. For, lo!  
he who dwells on high is num - - bered with the dead  
and lod - - - ges in a nar - - row tomb. Him,  
there - fore, do you chil - - - dren bless, all you priests, praise,  
and you peo-ples, ex - - - alt a - bove all for - ev - - - er.

*All STAND.*

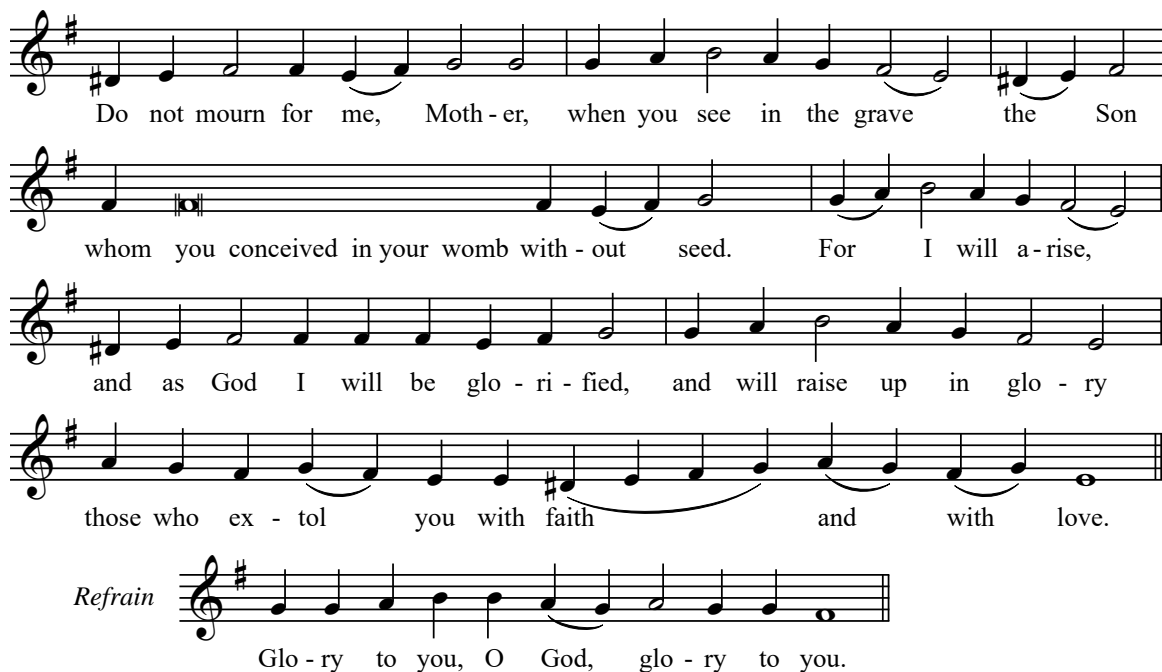
*At the end of the eighth ode, the deacon (or the celebrant, if there is no deacon) comes with the censer before the icon of the Theotokos on the icon screen. Incensing her icon, he intones:*

**Deacon:** Let us greatly extol the Theotokos and the Mother of Light in hymns!

## Ode 9

*During Ode 9, the celebrant vests in a dark phelonion, opens the holy doors, and censes around the tomb three times from the four sides. Then he takes the shroud and carries it through the holy doors into the sanctuary. He carries the shroud around the holy table, and then places it upon the holy table, where it will remain until the Eve of Ascension. He then censes the shroud from the four sides of the altar three times.*

**Irmos** - Tone 6 simple melody (or use the solemn melody on page 19)



Do not mourn for me, Moth - er, when you see in the grave the Son  
whom you conceived in your womb with - out seed. For I will a - rise,  
and as God I will be glo - ri - fied, and will raise up in glo - ry  
those who ex - tol you with faith and with love.

*Refrain*

Glo - ry to you, O God, glo - ry to you.

I conceived you in a wondrous way, O my eternal Son, \* and I was happier than all women, \* for I did not suffer any pain. \* But today I see you lifeless, O my God, \* and a sword of sadness pierces me in a most cruel manner; \* but arise, O Lord, that I may extol you. *Refrain*

O Mother, the earth covers me by my own will; \* but the guardians of Hades shudder to see me, \* wearing the bloody garment of punishment; \* for, on the Cross, I have struck down my enemies; \* I shall arise as God, and you shall be exalted.

Glo-ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spir-it;  
 now and ev-er and for-ev-er. A-men.

Let creation rejoice and let all mortals exult with joy! \* I have despoiled the enemy Hades; \* let the myrrh-bearing women come to anoint me. \* I redeem Adam and Eve and all the human race; \* and on the third day, I shall arise.

**Katavasia** - Repeat the irmos, using either the simple melody on page 18, or the following solemn melody:

Do not mourn for me, Mo-ther, when you see  
 in the grave the Son whom you con-ceived  
 in your womb with-out seed. For I will a-rise,  
 and as God I will be glo-ri-fied, and will raise up,  
 raise up in glo-ry those who ex-tol you  
 with faith and with love.

**All:** Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,  
have mercy *on* us. (*3 times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. **Amen.**

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;  
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;  
Master, forgive our transgressions;  
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for *your* name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Lord, *have* mercy.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. **Amen.**

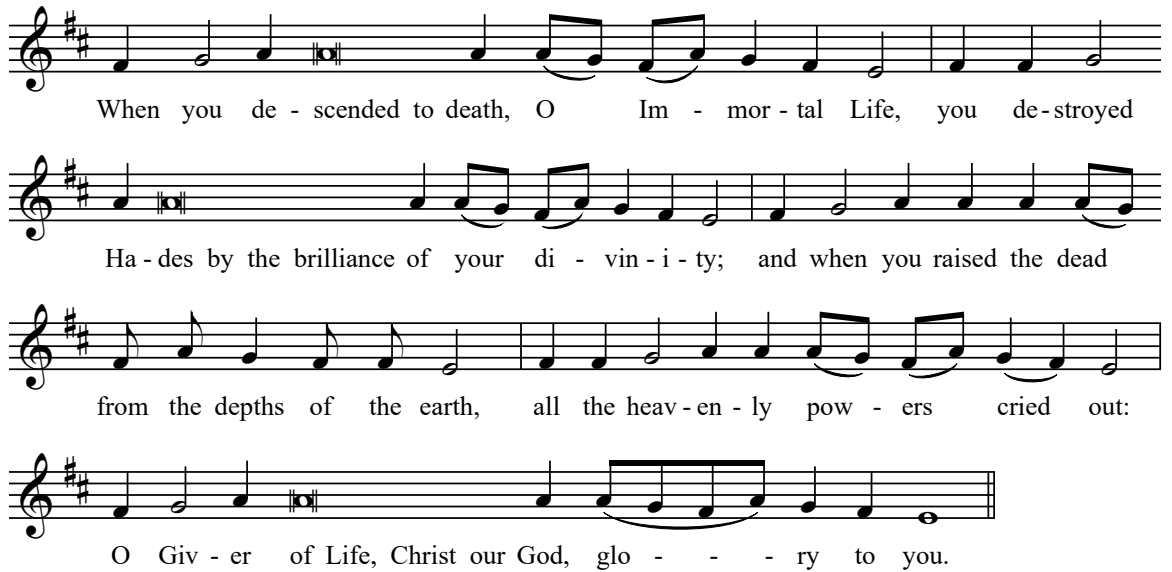
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us *from* evil.

**Celebrant:** For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and  
Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

**Response:**   
A - men.

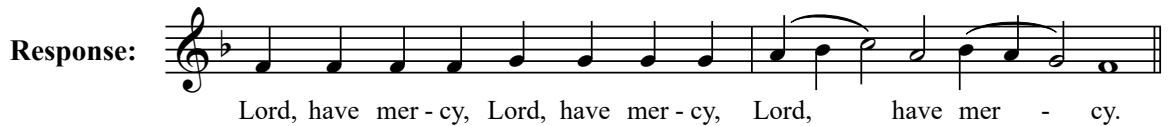
*Then the following troparion is sung:*

**Troparion of the Resurrection - Tone 2**



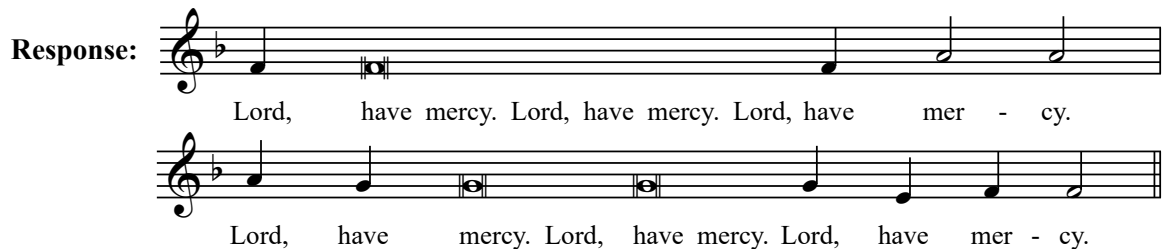
When you de - scended to death, O Im - mor - tal Life, you de - stroyed  
Ha - des by the brilliance of your di - vin - i - ty; and when you raised the dead  
from the depths of the earth, all the heav - en - ly pow - ers cried out:  
O Giv - er of Life, Christ our God, glo - - - ry to you.

**Deacon:** Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy, we pray You, hear us and have mercy.



**Response:** Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

**Deacon:** Again, we pray: O our God, clement and gracious, good Lover of us all, protect this city and this holy church, and every city, village and country, from violence, earthquake, flood, hail, fire, sword, foreign invasion and civil war. Be merciful to us, and turn away your anger justly directed at us, and deliver us from your righteous judgment, and have mercy on us.



**Response:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mer - cy.  
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mer - cy.

*(sing twice)*

