

THE OFFICE OF VESPERS



*with the Solemn Entombment
of the Burial Shroud
for Holy & Great Friday*

Foreword

Holy and Great Friday is one of the most important liturgical days of the year. In the Western Church, it is appropriately called “Good Friday” – for although on this day our Lord suffered the most terrible tortures and death, by his death he trampled upon the power of death, turning back the disobedience of Adam and re-opening Paradise to restore eternal life. This mystery was accomplished for the whole human race – those who lived before the coming of Jesus, those who followed him to the cross, and all who were to come to belief in him.

On this most holy day, we follow the normal daily Divine Office of the Church. During the Office of Matins, we add the reading of the Passion in twelve gospels. In the prescribed Hours (First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours), we read of the death of our Lord according to the four gospels. Then, in the Office of Vespers, we read Saint Paul’s meditation on the theology of the Cross in 1 Corinthians and the full gospel of Jesus’ arrest, passion death and burial according to the Gospel of Matthew. Therefore, we have three readings of the Passion, which form the structure of the day, and which make the mystery of our Lord’s passion and death as real and present for us as on that first Holy and Great Friday.

This is the mystery of Holy and Great Week; we do not simply call to mind events from the distant past, but we make them present for us now. This is seen in the Stichera at the Psalm 140, which are called the “Today” Stichera (*in Greek*: σήμερον; sémeron *and, in Church Slavonic*, днѣтъ; dnés’) because they tell us that the mystery is present in our liturgical celebration.

To support this, a ritual is added at the end of the Office of Vespers in which the faithful imitate Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in taking the Body of Jesus from the Cross, and laying it in burial in a new tomb. The Burial Shroud (*in Greek*: Ἐπιτάφιος; Epitáphios *and, in Church Slavonic*: Плащаница; Plashchanítsa) is an icon of Christ – after he has been removed from the cross – on a cloth sheet, which is placed on the altar during Vespers and later taken by the priest and carried in a solemn procession around the church and placed in a representation of the Tomb.

During this procession, the Troparion of Holy and Great Saturday is sung repeatedly: **“The noble Joseph took down your most pure body from the cross. He wrapped it in a clean shroud and with fragrant spices laid it in burial in a new tomb.”** In this way, we truly take part in the eternal mysteries of our salvation through the death and resurrection of the Lord.

Liturgical Notes

During this service, there are references to liturgical posture for the faithful:

A **bow or reverence** is an inclination of the head at the shoulders while making the sign of the cross, without extending the hand to the knees or to the ground.

A **profound bow** is an inclination at the waist, touching the floor with the fingers and making a sign of the cross on themselves.

A **prostration** means to make the sign of the cross, kneel, and then touch the forehead to the floor.



*From left to right: a **bow or reverence**, a **profound bow**, and a **prostration**.*



The Office of Vespers for Holy and Great Friday

STAND

Prior to this service, the tomb is placed on the solea directly before the holy doors, but far enough from them that passage is not obstructed. If there is insufficient room, the tomb may also be placed to the side. The celebrant vests in the epitrichilion (dark or penitential color). The deacon, having received the blessing from the celebrant, vests in the sticharion and orarion.

The celebrant leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. The deacon remains in the sanctuary. Standing in his place in front of the tomb, the celebrant makes three small bows, saying nothing. Then he intones:

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

Response: 
A - men.

The faithful immediately continue with the Trisagion Prayers.

Trisagion Prayers

Psalm Tone:


Glo - ry to you, our God, glo - ry 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,
cleans us from all stain,
and save our souls, O *gracious* One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy *on* us. (*Three 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.

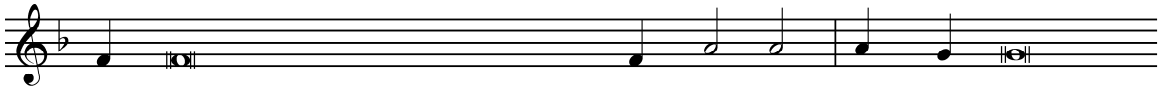
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Lord *have* mercy.

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 mer - cy. Lord, have mercy. Lord,



(Two Times)

have mercy. Lord, have mer - cy.

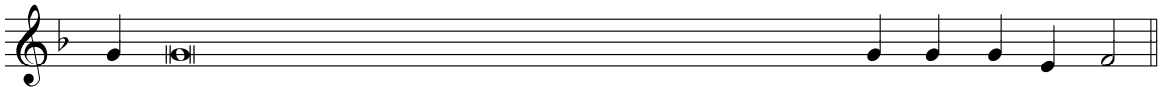
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. *Amen.*

Call to Worship

Each time with a reverence:



Come, let us worship our King and God. Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God.



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

Psalm 103

During the singing of Psalm 103, the celebrant, standing in front of the tomb, quietly says the first seven Prayers of Light of Vespers (pages 48-49).

Psalm Tone:



Bless the Lord, O my soul! Lord my God, how great *you* are.

Clothed in majesty and glory,
wrapped in light as in *a* robe.

You stretch out the heavens like a tent.
Above the rains you build *your* dwelling.
You make the clouds your chariot,
you walk on the wings of *the* wind;

You make your angels spirits
and your ministers a flaming *fire*.
You founded the earth on its base,
to stand firm from age *to* age.

You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:
the waters stood higher than *the* mountains.
At your threat they took to flight;
at the voice of your thunder *they* fled.

They rose over the mountains and flowed down
to the place which you had *appointed*.
You set limits they might not pass
lest they return to cover *the* earth.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow in between *the* hills.
They give drink to all the beasts of the field;
the wild asses quench *their* thirst.

On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;
from the branches they sing *their* song.
From your dwelling you water the hills;
earth drinks its fill of *your* gift.

You make the grass grow for the cattle
and the plants to serve *man's* needs,
That he may bring forth bread from the earth
and wine to cheer *man's* heart;

Oil, to make his face shine
and bread to strengthen *man's* heart.

The trees of the Lord drink their fill,
the cedars he planted *on* Lebanon;

There the birds build their nests;
on the treetop the stork has *her* home.
The goats find a home on the mountains
and rabbits hide in *the* rocks.

You made the moon to mark the months;
the sun knows the time for *its* setting.
When you spread the darkness it is night
and all the beasts of the forest *creep* forth.

The young lions roar for their prey
and ask their food *from* God.
At the rising of the sun they steal away
and go to rest in *their* dens.

Man goes out to his work,
to labor till *evening* falls.
How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have made them all.
The earth is full of *your* riches.

There is the sea, vast and wide, with its moving swarms past counting,
living things great *and* small.
The ships are moving there
and the monsters you made *to* play with.

All of these look to you
to give them their food in *due* season.
You give it, they gather it up;
you open your hand, they have *their* fill.

You hide your face, they are dismayed; you take back your spirit, they die,
returning to the dust from which *they* came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created;
and you renew the face of *the* earth.

The deacon leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. The deacon goes to his place in front of the tomb and the celebrant enters the sanctuary by way of the southern door. (If there is no deacon, the celebrant remains before the tomb). Then the deacon (or the celebrant) intones the Litany of Peace.

Litany of Peace

SIT

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Response:

①



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

Response:

②



Deacon: For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord. ①

Deacon: For this holy church and for all who enter it with faith, reverence, and fear of God, let us pray to the Lord. ②

Deacon: For our holy father (*Name*), Pope of Rome, let us pray to the Lord. ①

Deacon: For our most reverend Metropolitan (*Name*), for our God-loving Bishop (*Name*), for the venerable presbyterate, the diaconate in Christ, and all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord. ②

Deacon: For our government and for all in the service of our country, let us pray to the Lord. ①

Deacon: For this city, for every city, community, and for the faithful living in them, let us pray to the Lord. ②

Deacon: For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord. ①

Deacon: For those who travel by sea, air, and land, for the sick, the suffering, the captive and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord. ②

Deacon: That we be delivered from all affliction, wrath, and need, let us pray to the Lord. ①

Deacon: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us and preserve us, O God, by your grace. ②

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: 
To you, O Lord.

STAND

The celebrant, having left the sanctuary through the northern door, stands before the tomb and intones the conclusion to the litany:

Celebrant: Evening, morning, and at noon we praise you, we bless you, we thank you, and we pray to you, Master of All and loving Lord. Let our prayer rise like incense before you and do not let our hearts be turned to evil words or thoughts, but deliver us from all that might ensnare our souls. For to you Lord, O Lord, our eyes are turned and in you we hope; let us not be put to shame, O our God.

For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

The Lamp-Lighting Psalms

REMAIN STANDING

The celebrant and deacon return to the sanctuary via the southern door. The faithful remain standing for the great incensation of the church, and for the singing of the Lamp-Lighting Psalms and the stichera. The opening verses of Psalm 140 with refrain are sung according to the tone of the first sticheron:

Psalm 140:

Tone 1 Samohlasen

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me. Hear me, O Lord! O
Lord, I have cried to you, hear me; re - ceive the voice of my pray'r when I
call up - on you. Hear me, O Lord! Let my pray'r
as - cend to you like in - cense and the lift - ing up of my hands like an
eve - ning sac - ri - fice. Hear me, O Lord!

The remaining verses are chanted alternately:

O Lord, set a guard before my mouth
and set a seal on the door of **my** lips.
Let not my heart be inclined to evil,
nor make excuse for the sins I **commit**.

Let me never share in sinners' feasting.
If a just man strikes or reproves me it *is* kindness
but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.
Let my prayer be ever against *their* malice.

The princes were thrown down by the side of the rock;
then they understood that my words *were* kind.
As a millstone is shattered to pieces on the ground,
so their bones were strewn at the mouth of *the* grave.

To you, Lord God, my eyes are turned;
in you I take refuge; spare *my* soul!
From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe;
keep me from the snares of those who *do* evil.

Let the wicked fall into the traps they have set
while I pursue my way *unharmed*.

Psalm 141:

With all my voice I cry to the Lord,
with all my voice I entreat *the* Lord.
I pour out my trouble before him;
I tell him all my distress while my spirit faints *within* me.

But you, O Lord, know my path.
On the way where I shall walk
they have hidden a snare to *entrap* me.
Look on my right and see:
there is no one who takes *my* part.

I have no means of escape,
not one who cares for *my* soul.
I cry to you, O Lord.
I have said: "You are my refuge,
all I have in the land of *the* living."

Listen, then, to my cry
for I am in the depths of *distress*.
Rescue me from those who pursue me
for they are stronger *than* I.

Bring my soul out of this prison
and then I shall praise *your* name.
Around me the just will assemble
because of your goodness *to* me.

Psalm 129:

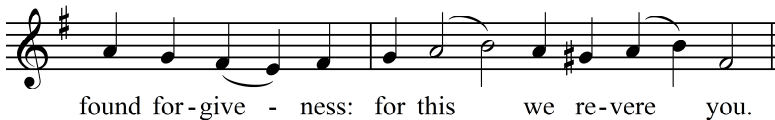
Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear *my* voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of *my* pleading.

The remaining versicles are sung to melody by the cantor, and all the faithful sing the sticheron which follows each verse.

Stichera of Holy and Great Friday:



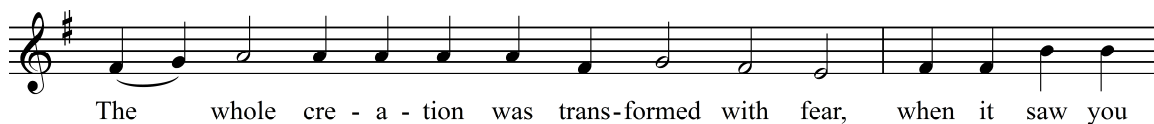
Cantor:
(on 6)



All:

⑥

Tone 1 Samohlasen



hang - ing on the Cross, O Christ. The sun grew dark and the earth's
 foun - da - tions were shak - en. All things suf - fered along with you, who
 made all things. O Lord, who will - ing - ly en - dured this for us,
 glo - ry to you!

Cantor:
 (on 5)

My soul is wait - ing for the Lord. I count on his word. My soul is longing for the

Lord more than watch - man for day - break.

All:

⑤

Tone 1 Samohlasen

The whole cre - a - tion was trans - formed with fear, when it saw you

hang - ing on the Cross, O Christ. The sun grew dark and the earth's

foun - da - tions were shak - en. All things suf - fered along with you, who
made all things. O Lord, who will - ing - ly en - dured this for us,
glo - ry to you!

Cantor:
(on 4)

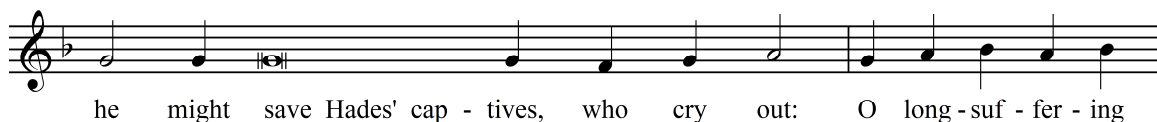
Let the watch-man count on daybreak and Is - ra - el on the Lord.

All:

④

Tone 2 Samohlasen

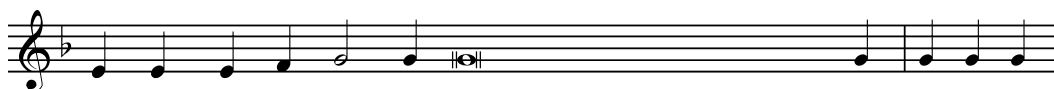
O im - pious and outlaw people, why do you plot vain things?
Why did you con - demn to death the Life of all? What a great won - der!
The Cre - a - tor of the world is be - trayed in - to law - less hands
and the Lov - er of us all is lift - ed up on the wood, so that



he might save Hades' cap - tives, who cry out: O long - suf - fer - ing



Lord, glo - ry to you.



Be - cause with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemp - tion, Is - ra - el

Cantor:
(on 3)



in - deed he will re - deem from all its in - i - qui - ty.

All:

③

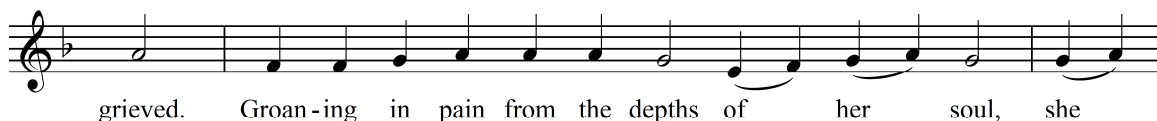
Tone 2 Samohlasen



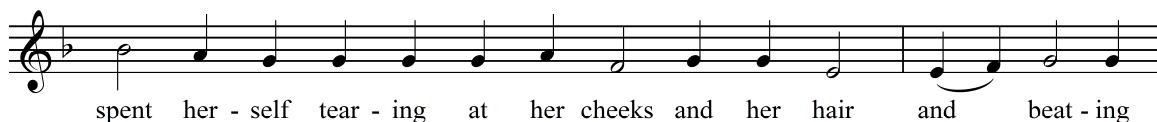
See - ing you on the cross to - day, O sin - less Word, the spot - less



Vir - gin wept with ma - ter - nal ten - der - ness and her heart was sore - ly



grieved. Groan - ing in pain from the depths of her soul, she



spent her - self tear - ing at her cheeks and her hair and beat - ing

her breast she cried out pit - i - fully: A - las, O di - vine child!

A - las, O Light of the world! Why are you fad - ing from my eyes,

O Lamb of God? Then the ranks of angels were seized with trem-bling and said,

O in - com - pre - hen - si - ble Lord, glo - ry to you!

Psalm 116:

Cantor:
(on 2)

Praise the Lord, all you na - tions; ac-claim him all you peo - ples!

All:

②

Tone 2 Samohlasen

See - ing you, O Christ, hang - ing on the wood, you, the Cre - a - tor and

God of all, the moth - er who bore you without seed cried out bit - ter - ly:

My Son, how have your form and beau - ty van - ished? I can - not bear



to see you un - just - ly cru - ci - fied. There-fore has - ten and a - rise



so that I, too, may see your resurrec-tion from the dead on the third day.

Cantor:
(on 1)



Strong is the love of the Lord for us; he is faith-ful for-ev - er.

All:

①

Tone 6 Samohlasen



To-day the mas - ter of creation stands be-fore Pi-late, and the judge of all is handed



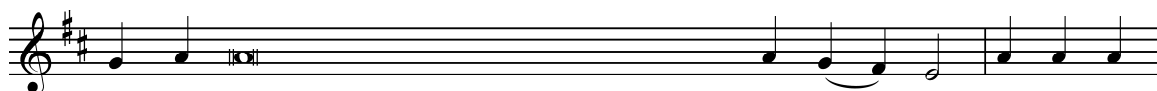
over to be cru - ci - fied. Led like a lamb, by his own will, he is fas-tened



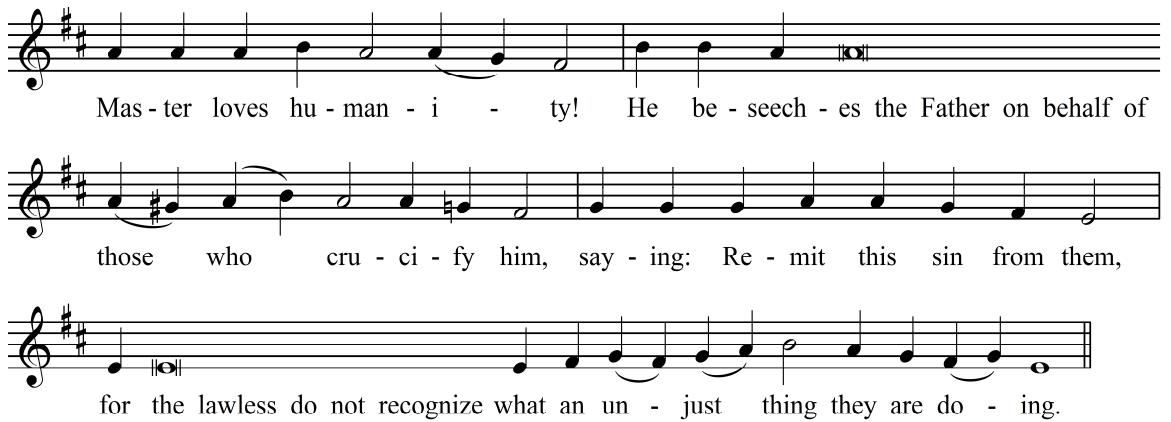
with nails and his side is pierced. The one who rained down manna is giv-en



drink from a sponge. The re-deem-er of the world is slapped in the face.




The One who fashioned everything is mocked by his own serv - ants. Oh, how the



Mas-ter loves hu-man-i-ty! He be-seech-es the Father on behalf of
 those who cru-ci-fy him, say-ing: Re-mit this sin from them,
 for the lawless do not recognize what an un-just thing they are do-ing.

REMAIN STANDING

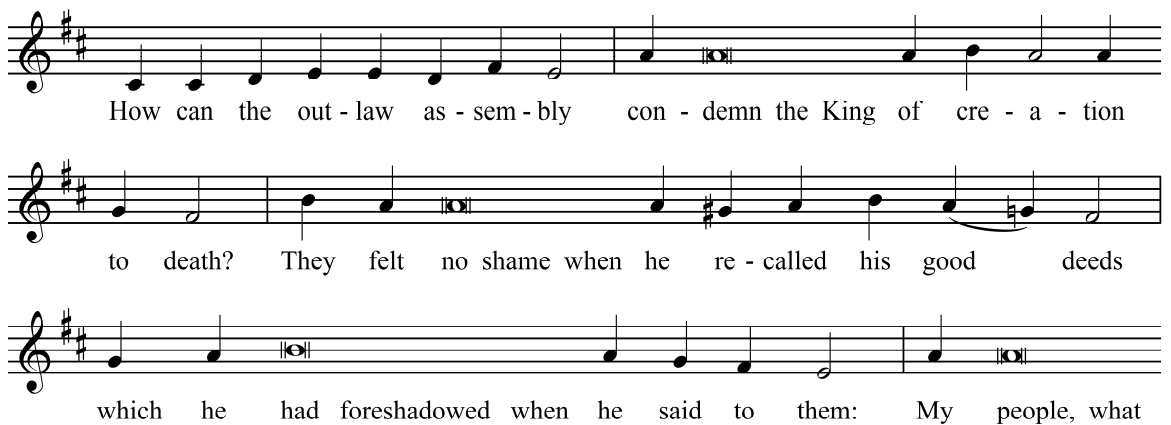
Doxastika of Holy and Great Friday:

Cantor: 

Glo-ry to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spir-it.

All:

Tone 6 Samohlasen



How can the out-law as-sem-bly con-demn the King of cre-a-tion
 to death? They felt no shame when he re-called his good deeds
 which he had foreshadowed when he said to them: My people, what

have I done to you? Did I not fill Ju - de - a with mir - a - cles?

Did I not raise the dead with just a word? Did I not heal every dis - ease

and ill - ness? How then do you re - pay me? Why have you

for - got - ten me? In place of healings you have giv - en me beat - ings.

In ex - change for life, you give me death, hang - ing your ben - efactor

on the wood like a crim - i - nal; the giver of the law like an out - law;

the king of all like one con - demned. O long - suf - fer - ing Lord,

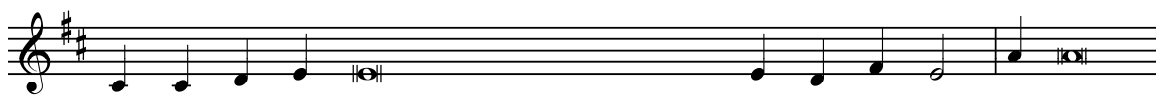
glo - ry to you.

Cantor:

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

All:

Tone 6 Samohlasen



We see a fear - some and perplexing mystery act-ed out to - day. The invisible



one is cap - tured. The one who ab-solved Ad - am's curse is chained.



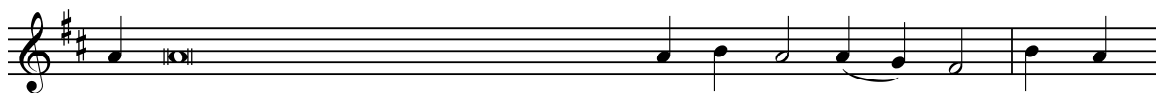
The search - er of hearts and minds is un - just - ly tried. Locked in prison is the one



who locks up the a - byss. The one before whom heavenly powers stand trembling



stands be - fore Pi - late. The Cre - a - tor is slapped by a crea - ture's hand.



Con - demned to the Cross is the Judge of the liv - ing and the dead. En - closed



in a tomb is he who o - ver - throws Ha - des. You bear all out of sympathy,



to save all from the curse, O for - bear - ing Lord, glo - ry to you.



Prayer of the Entrance

As the Doxastika are sung, the celebrant vests in the phelonion. The deacon opens the holy doors and receives the censer from the server. The celebrant blesses the incense.

The Little Entrance is then made with the holy Gospel book and censer. The clergy and servers pass to the right and back of the holy table and leave the sanctuary through the northern door, passing before the tomb.

Standing before the tomb, the deacon stands at the celebrant's right.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

The celebrant says quietly:

Celebrant: Good and loving King, who have blessed all things, we fervently implore you with contrite heart and humble spirit to bless our comings and goings.

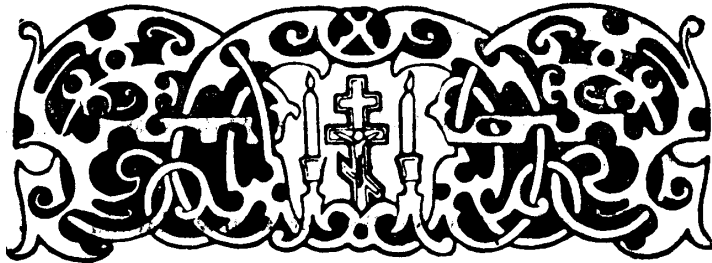
For your coming and going, and your dwelling among us are blessed, O Christ our true God, always, now and ever and forever. Amen.

When the prayer is concluded, the deacon, holding his orarion with three fingers of his right hand and pointing to the east, quietly says to the celebrant:

Deacon: Reverend Father, bless the holy entrance.

The celebrant, blessing, quietly says:

Celebrant: + Blessed is the entrance into your holy of holies, always, now and ever and forever.



The Hymn of the Evening

REMAIN STANDING

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

The clergy and servers enter the sanctuary as “O Joyful Light” is sung. The sanctuary and the faithful are incensed.

O Joy - ful Light of the ho - ly glo - ry of the Fa - ther Im - mor - tal,
the hea - ven - ly, ho - ly, bles - sed One, O Je - sus Christ: Now that we have
reached the set - ting of the sun, and see the eve - ning light, we sing to God,
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it. It is fit - ting at all times to raise
a song of praise in meas - ured mel - o - dy to you, O Son of God, the
Giv - er of Life. There - fore, the u - ni - verse sings your glo - ry.

Office of Readings

Remaining before the holy table, the celebrant and the deacon turn to the faithful and introduce the Prokeimenon. They face the faithful, the celebrant with his hands crossed upon his chest, until the Prokeimenon has been completed.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Celebrant: + Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Prokeimenon I – Tone 4 (Psalm 21:19,2):

They di - vide my clo - thing a - mong them; they cast lots
for my robe.

Deacon: My God, my God, hear me;
why have you forsaken me?

The faithful repeat the Prokeimenon after the deacon's verse. If there is no deacon, the celebrant or a concelebrant chants the verse.)

The celebrant, having made a small bow towards the holy table, goes to the chairs behind the holy table, saying nothing.

If, for pastoral reasons, only one Old Testament reading is taken, please continue with the reading from Isaiah on page 24.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from Exodus.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: *(chants Exodus 33: 11-23)*

At the conclusion of the first reading, the celebrant and deacon return to their places before the holy table, and, turning to the faithful, introduce the Prokeimenon. They face the faithful, the celebrant with his hands crossed upon his chest, until the Prokeimenon has been completed.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Prokeimenon II – Tone 4 (Psalm 34: 1, 12):

O Lord, plead my cause a - gainst my foes;
fight those who fight me.

Deacon: Take up your buckler and shield;
 arise to help me.

The faithful repeat the Prokeimenon after the deacon's verse. (If there is no deacon, the celebrant or a concelebrant chants the verse.)

The celebrant, having made a small bow towards the holy table, goes to the chairs behind the holy table, saying nothing.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Book of Job.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: *(chants Job 42: 12-17)*

At the conclusion of the second reading, the celebrant and deacon remain at the chairs behind the holy table.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: *(chants Isaiah 52:13 through 54:1)*

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Celebrant: + Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Prokeimenon of Holy and Great Friday – Tone 6 (Psalm 87: 7, 2):

You have laid me in the depths, in the depths of the tomb,
in places that are dark, in the depths.

Lector: Lord my God, I call for help by day;
I cry at night before you.

The faithful repeat the Prokeimenon after the lector's verse.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

SIT

Lector: *(chants 1st Corinthians 1:18 through 2:2)*

When the readings are finished, the celebrant blesses the reader(s), saying quietly:

Celebrant: + Peace be to you, reader(s).

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

STAND

Alleluia of Holy and Great Friday – Tone 1 (Psalm 68: 2, 21, 24a):

Al - le - lu - - - ia! Al - - - le - lu - ia!

Al - le - lu - - - ia!

The faithful repeat the Alleluia after the lector chants the following verses:

Lector: Save me, O God,
for the waters have risen to my neck.

Lector: Taunts have broken my heart;
I have reached the end of my strength.

Lector: Let their eyes
grow dim and blind.

The holy gospel book is incensed along with the faithful.

Homily

The homily may be offered at this time, during which the faithful are seated.

[At the conclusion of the holy Gospel reading (or the homily), the holy doors are closed and the celebrant removes the phelonion.]

The deacon leaves the sanctuary through the northern door and, going to his place in front of the tomb, intones the Litany of Fervent Supplication.

If there is no deacon, the celebrant intones the litany before the tomb.

SIT

Litany of Fervent Supplication

Deacon: Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind; let us say:



Deacon: O Lord Almighty, God of our fathers, we pray you, hear and have mercy.



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



Deacon: Again we pray for our holy father *(Name)*, Pope of Rome, and for our most reverend Metropolitan *(Name)*, for our God-loving Bishop *(Name)*, for those who serve and have served in this holy church, for our spiritual fathers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Response:



Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Again we pray for our government and for all in the service of our country.

Response:



Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: Again we pray for the people here present who await your great and abundant mercy, for those who show us mercy, and for all Christians of the true faith.

Response:



Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - - cy.

The celebrant, having left the sanctuary through the northern door, stands before the tomb and intones the conclusion to the litany:

Celebrant: For you are a merciful and loving God and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response:



A - men.

Hymn of Glorification

STAND

The celebrant returns to the sanctuary via the southern door.

The deacon (or, if there is no deacon, the celebrant) remains before the tomb while the faithful (or the Lector) chant(s) recitando:

Make us worthy, O Lord,
to be kept sinless *this* evening.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
and praiseworthy and glorious is your name forever. *Amen.*

May your mercy, O Lord, be upon us
who have placed our hope *in* you.

+ Blessed are you, O Lord;
teach me your *commandments*. (*reverence*)

+ Blessed are you, O Master;
make me understand your *commandments*. (*reverence*)

+ Blessed are you, O Holy One;
enlighten me with your *commandments*. (*reverence*)

O Lord, your mercy is forever;
despise not the work of *your* hands.

To you is due praise;
to you is due *a* hymn;

to you is glory due, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. *Amen.*

The deacon (or, if there is no deacon, the celebrant) remains before the tomb to intone the following litany.

Aitesis Litany

REMAIN STANDING


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

Response: 
Lord, have mer - cy.


Deacon: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by your grace.

Response: 
Lord, have mer - cy.

Deacon: That this whole evening be perfect, holy, peaceful, and without sin, let us beseech the Lord.

Response: 
Grant this, O Lord.

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

Response: 
Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: For the pardon and remission of our sins and offenses, let us beseech the Lord. ①

Deacon: For what is good and beneficial to our souls and for peace in the world, let us beseech the Lord. ②

Deacon: That we may spend the rest of our life in peace and repentance, let us beseech the Lord. ①

Deacon: For a Christian, painless, unashamed, peaceful end of our life, and for a good account before the fearsome judgment-seat of Christ, let us beseech the Lord. ②

Deacon: Asking for unity in the faith and for communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God.

Response: 
To you, O Lord.

The celebrant, having left the sanctuary through the northern door, stands before the tomb and prays aloud:

Celebrant: Great and most high God, you alone possess immortality and dwell in unapproachable light. You made all creation with wisdom, dividing light from darkness, establishing the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night. You have allowed us sinners to approach your presence with thanksgiving in this present hour and to offer you evening praise. O loving Lord, make our prayer ascend to you like incense and accept it as a sweet fragrance. Grant that we may spend the present evening and the coming night in peace; clothe us with the armor of light; deliver us from the fears of the night and from everything that lurks about in darkness. Grant that the sleep you have given us to refresh our fatigue may be free from all illusions of the devil.

Yes, O Master of All, Giver of good things, let us feel contrition as we lie on our beds remembering your name throughout the night. Enlightened by meditation on your commands, may we rise with gladdened soul to give glory to your goodness, offering to your compassion prayers and supplications for our sins and those of all your people. Visit us with mercy through the intercession of the holy Theotokos.


For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

Celebrant: + Peace be to all!

Response: 
And to your spi - - - rit.

Deacon: Bow your heads to the Lord.

Response: 
To you, O Lord.

The celebrant or a concelebrant, standing before the tomb, intones:

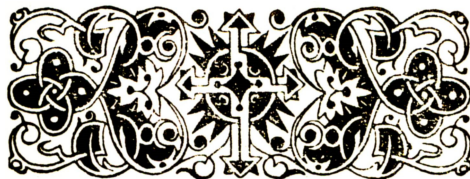
Celebrant: Lord our God, you bowed the heavens and came down for the salvation of the human race. Look upon your servants and upon your inheritance, for they have bowed their heads and bent their necks to you, the awesome judge who love us all. They do not expect human help, but await your mercy and long for your salvation. Protect them at all times, this evening and tonight, from every enemy, from all the devil's assaults, from vain thoughts, and evil imaginings.

May the might of your kingdom be blessed and glorified, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: 
A - men.

The clergy enter the sanctuary by the southern door.

The celebrant and deacon return to their place behind the holy table. Vespers continues with the singing of the Apostichera.



Apostichera

SIT

All:

①

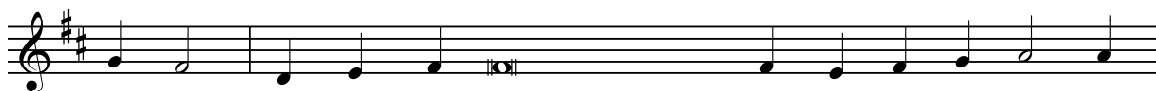
Tone 2 Podoben, "Jehdá ot dréva"



When the Ar - i - ma - the - an took you, life - less from the cross,



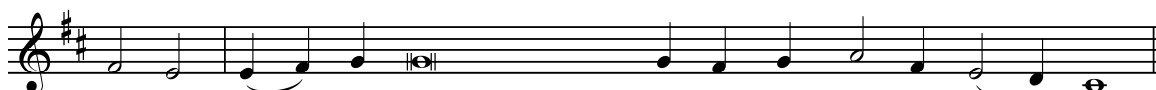
O Life of all, he wrapped you with myrrh and a shroud,



O Christ, and his heart was overcome with long - ing to en - fold you



with kiss - es. Re - strained by fear, he re-joiced in - stead and cried



a - loud: O Lov - er of humanity, glo - ry to your con - de - scen - sion!



Cantor:

The Lord reigns, he is clothed in maj - es - ty.

All:

②

Tone 2 Podoben, "Jehdá ot dréva"



When, for the sake of all, you were placed in a new tomb, O

Re - deem - er of All, Ha - des was mocked and filled with ter - ror
 when it saw you. Its bars were tram - pled and its gates
 were smashed. The tombs were o - pened and the dead a - rose.
 Then Ad - am rejoiced and cried out to you with grat - i - tude:
 O Lov - er of humanity, glo - ry to your con - de - scen - sion!

Cantor: The world he made firm, not to be moved.

All:

③

Tone 2 Podoben, "Jehdá ot dréva"

When you al - lowed your bod - y to be en - closed in the grave,
 you re - mained un - limited and boundless in your di - vine na - ture.

You closed down Ha - des' store - house, O Christ, and emp - tied
 all its pal - a - ces. Then you hon - ored this Sab - bath Day
 with di - vine blessing, glory, and your own ra - di - ance.

Cantor: Ho - li - ness is fitting to your house, O Lord, un - til the end of time.

All:

④

Tone 2 Podoben, "Jehdá ot dréva"

When the heav - en - ly hosts saw you slan - dered as a de - ceiv - er
 by law - less peo - ple, O Christ, they trem - bled at your in -
 de - scrib - a - ble pa - tience; and see - ing the stone sealed
 to your tomb by the hands which had pierced your im - mac - u - late

side, they re - joiced none - the - less for our sal - va - tion
and cried out to you: O Lov - er of Humanity, glo - ry
to your con - de - scen - sion!

STAND

If he has not already done so, the celebrant now vests fully in all of the priestly vestments (dark or penitential color) in preparation for the procession.

[If the holy doors were closed after the reading from the holy Gospel, the holy doors are opened.]

As the Doxastikon is sung, the celebrant incenses the burial shroud three times from the four sides of the holy table. The deacon also circumambulates the altar, standing opposite the celebrant and holding a large candle.

Cantor: 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.

All:

5 To - geth - er with Ni - co - de - mus, Jo - seph took you down from the wood,

Tone 5 Samohlasen

you who are wrapped in light as with a robe, and be - hold - ing
you dead, naked and un - bur - ied, he be - gan to mourn you with deep
sym - path - y say - ing: Woe is me, sweet - est Je - sus!
Just a lit - tle while ago, the sun saw you hanging on the cross and
veiled it - self in som - ber hues. The earth rocked with fear and the
cur - tain of the Temple was torn in two. Now that I see how you willingly
un - der - went death for me, how can I bur - y you, my God? How
will I wrap you in a shroud? How will I touch your spot - less
bod - y with my hands? What dirg - es shall I sing at your departure, O

com-pas - sion - ate One? I ex - tol your pas - sion and I praise your burial
together with your res - ur - rec - tion, cry - ing out:
O Lord, glo - ry to you.

Prayer of the Holy Prophet Simeon

REMAIN STANDING

Immediately after the Apostichera, the faithful (or the Lector) chant(s) recitando:

Now you may dismiss your servant, O Lord,
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 the glory of your **people** Israel.

Then, the faithful immediately continue with the Trisagion Prayers.

Trisagion Prayers

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy **on** us. *(Three 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.

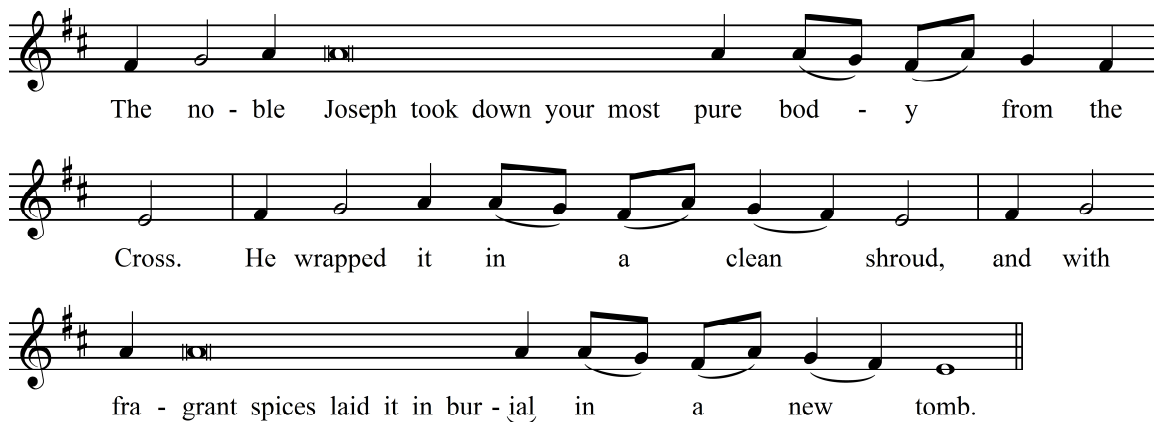


Procession

REMAIN STANDING

Having completed the incensation and in preparation for the procession, the clergy and servers prostrate before the burial shroud three times. The faithful sing the following Troparion repeatedly.

Troparion of Holy and Great Saturday – Tone 2:



The no - ble Joseph took down your most pure bod - y from the
Cross. He wrapped it in a clean shroud, and with
fra - grant spices laid it in bur - ial in a new tomb.

The celebrant takes the shroud on his shoulders, so that the head of Christ in the image is at the top. If there are concelebrants, all the priests hold an edge of the shroud. The shroud-bearers are preceded by the deacon who incenses while walking backwards. The clergy are preceded by the candle-bearers and other servers.

The cross-bearer leads the procession which passes to the right and back of the holy table, and leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. No wooden clappers or like instruments are to be sounded during this procession.

*Outside the sanctuary, the procession moves down the northern side of the church to the doors of the nave. **The faithful may join in the procession by following the clergy and the shroud.** Those of the faithful who do not join in the procession remain standing.*

From the doors of the nave, the procession continues to the tomb.

If it be the custom, the procession may go outside and circle the church once or three times in a counter-clockwise direction.

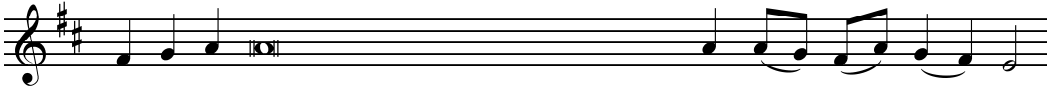
The faithful return to their places as the procession continues to the tomb.

The celebrant places the burial shroud in the tomb.


The celebrant again, with the deacon standing opposite the tomb holding a large candle, incenses the shroud three times from the four sides of the tomb.

After the incensation, the faithful kneel as the cantor sings:

KNEEL

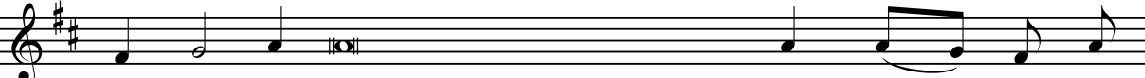


Cantor: Glo-ry to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,
now and ev - er and for - ev - er. A - men.





All:

Troparion of the Holy Myrrh-Bearers – Tone 2:



The an - gel standing by the tomb cried out to the myrrh - bear - ing
wo - men: Myrrh is fit - ting for the dead, but Christ
has shown himself not sub - ject to cor - rup - tion.



At the conclusion of the hymn, the clergy and servers venerate the burial shroud.

Ambon Prayer

STAND

Following the veneration of the burial shroud, the clergy remain before the tomb for the Ambon Prayer of Holy and Great Friday.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.



Celebrant: Lord Jesus Christ our God, Savior of the world, you have made us worthy to reach this hour when, as God, you surrendered your divine soul as a ransom for the life of the world, and we will be saved from the tyranny of death and sin, as we serve you in newness of life.

You have cleansed us from sin by your own blood when you cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Deliver us from every snare of the devil, grant compunction to our souls, and careful insight in our thoughts concerning your fearful and righteous judgment.

Nail our bodies to fear of you, and put to death our earthly cares, that, rejecting all ungodliness and worldly desires, we may live in moderation, righteousness, and reverence. Do not turn your face away from us, but stretch out your hand in help, raising us from our fall into sins.

For you are our God, a God of mercy, salvation, and freedom from sins and we give glory to you, together with your eternal Father, and your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever.





Dismissal

REMAIN STANDING

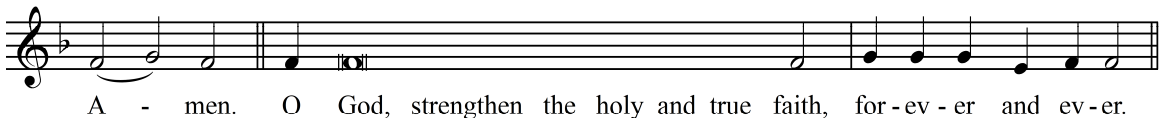
The deacon remains before the tomb and, looking towards the faithful and elevating the orarion, he intones:

Deacon: Wisdom!



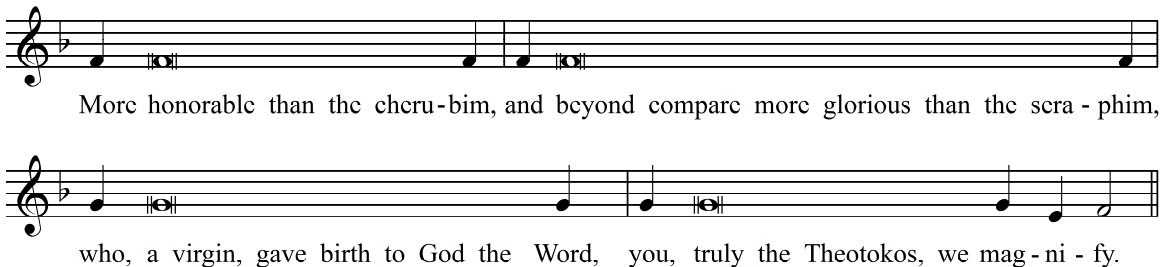
Celebrant: Blessed is Christ our God, the One-Who-Is,
always, now and ever and forever.

Response:



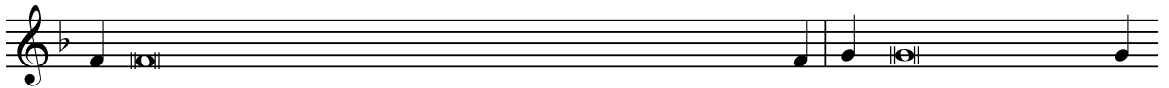
Celebrant: Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Response:

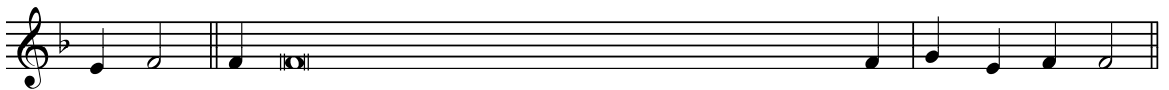


Celebrant: Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope, glory to you.

Response:



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



A - men. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mer - cy. Give the bless - ing.

Facing the faithful, the celebrant intones the Prayer of Dismissal:

Celebrant: May Christ our true God, who endured dreadful sufferings, the life-giving cross, and voluntary burial for our salvation, have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response:



A - - - - - men.

Veneration of the Burial Shroud

The faithful approach to venerate the burial shroud while the following is sung:

Tone 5 Samohlasen



Come, let us bless the ever-memor - a - ble Jo - seph, who went to



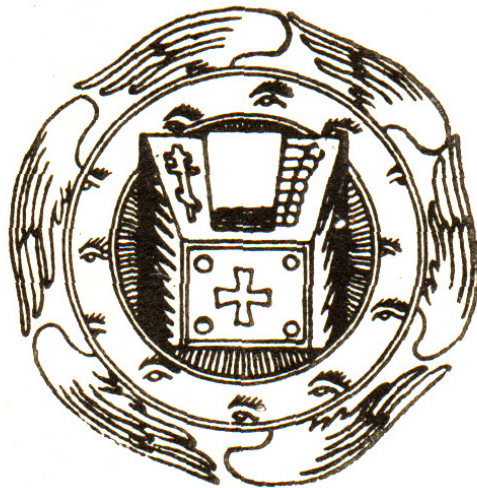
Pi - late by night to beg for the Life of all: Give me this stran - ger,

who has no place to lay his head. Give me this stranger, who was
handed over to death by his wick - ed dis - ci - ple. Give me this
stran - ger, whose Moth - er wept, see - ing him hang - ing on the cross,
mourn - ing and cry - ing out in a moth - er - ly la - ment: Woe is me,
my child! Woe is me, my light, my belov - ed whom I bore in my womb!
What was fore - told by Simeon in the temple comes to pass to - day:
A sword has pierced my heart; but change my tears into the joy of
(reverence)
your res - ur - rec - tion. We bow to your pas - sion, O Christ.
(reverence) We bow to your pas - sion, O Christ. *(reverence)* We bow to your pas - sion,



The deacon enters the sanctuary through the southern door, and closes the holy doors. All offer prayers of thanksgiving.

**THE END OF
THE OFFICE OF VESPERS
FOR HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY**

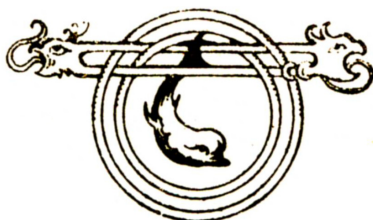


Prayers of Light

During the chanting of Psalm 103, the celebrant quietly reads all the Prayers of Light before the holy doors. Upon completion of the Psalm, the celebrant returns to the altar via the southern door and, standing before the holy table, finishes the recitation of the Prayers of Light (if not already completed).

1. Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and rich in mercy, give ear to my prayer and attend to the sound of my plea. Show us a sign of your favor; guide us in your way so that we may walk in your truth. Gladden our hearts that we may fear your holy name, for you are great and do marvelous deeds. You alone are God, and among the gods there is none like you, O Lord. Powerful in mercy and gracious in strength, you help, comfort, and save all those who hope in your holy name. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.
2. Lord, do not rebuke us in your anger, nor punish us in your wrath. Deal with us according to your kindness, O Physician and Healer of our souls. Guide us to the harbor of your will; enlighten the eyes of our minds that we may know your truth. Grant that we may spend what remains of this day and the rest of our life peacefully and sinlessly through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints. For yours is the might; and yours are the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.
3. Lord our God, remember us your sinful and useless servants as we call upon your holy and sublime name, and do not put us to shame for hoping in your mercy. Grant us instead, O Lord, all our petitions which lead to salvation, and make us worthy to love and to fear you with all our hearts and to do your will in everything. For you are a good and loving God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.
4. You are praised by the holy powers with hymns that are never silent and in doxologies that never cease. Fill our mouth with your praise that we may ascribe majesty to your holy name. Through the intercession of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints, give us a share and an inheritance with those who fear you in truth and who keep your commandments. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor, and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.

-
5. Blessed are you, Lord God almighty. You know the human mind, you know our needs long before we ask or recognize them. Therefore, O loving King, good in every way, allow us in your great mercy to call upon your holy name with a clear conscience, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one, and in your providence, arrange everything for our good. For to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is due all glory, honor and worship, now and ever and forever. Amen.
 6. Lord, O Lord, you hold all things in your spotless hand; you are long-suffering toward all of us, and you repent over our evil deeds. Remember your mercy and your compassion. Visit us in your goodness and for the rest of this day enable us to flee from the many wiles of the evil one, and keep our life secure by the grace of your all-holy Spirit. Through the mercy and the loving-kindness of your only-begotten Son with whom you are blessed, together with your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.
 7. Great and wonderful God, you govern all things with indescribable goodness and rich providence. You have granted us the good things of this earth, and through the good things already bestowed on us, have given us a pledge of the promised kingdom. You have kept us away from every evil during the part of this day which has passed, even until the present moment; now allow us to complete the rest of the day without blame in the presence of your holy glory singing hymns to you, O God, who alone are good and love us all. For you are our God, and we give glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.
 8. *Prayed aloud at the conclusion of the Aitesis Litany (pages 30-31)*



Appendix – Procession (Church Slavonic)

REMAIN STANDING

Having completed the incensation and in preparation for the procession, the clergy and servers prostrate before the burial shroud three times. The faithful sing the following Troparion repeatedly.

Troparion of Holy and Great Saturday – Tone 2:



Bla - ho - o - bráz - - nyj Ió - sif, so dré - va sném pre - čí - sto - je

T'í - lo Tvo - jé, pla - šča - ní - ce - ju čí - sto - ju ob - vív, i vo - ňá - mi

vo hró - bi nó - vi po - krýv, po - lo - ží.

The celebrant takes the shroud on his shoulders, so that the head of Christ in the image is at the top. If there are concelebrants, all the priests hold an edge of the shroud. The shroud-bearers are preceded by the deacon who incenses while walking backwards. The clergy are preceded by the candle-bearers and other servers.

The cross-bearer leads the procession which passes to the right and back of the holy table, and leaves the sanctuary through the northern door. No wooden clappers or like instruments are to be sounded during this procession.

*Outside the sanctuary, the procession moves down the northern side of the church to the doors of the nave. **The faithful may join in the procession by following the clergy and the shroud.** Those of the faithful who do not join in the procession remain standing.*

From the doors of the nave, the procession continues to the tomb.

If it be the custom, the procession may go outside and circle the church once or three times in a counter-clockwise direction.

The faithful return to their places as the procession continues to the tomb.

The celebrant places the burial shroud in the tomb.

The celebrant again, with the deacon standing opposite the tomb holding a large candle, incenses the shroud three times from the four sides of the tomb.

After the incensation, the faithful kneel as the cantor sings:

KNEEL



Cantor:

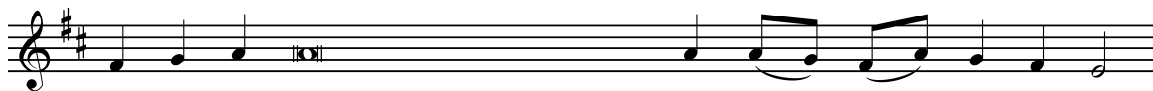
Slá - va Ot - cú, i Sýnu, i Svja - tó - mu Dú - chu, i ný - ňi



i prísno, i vo ví - ki vi - kóv. A - míň.

All:

Troparion of the Holy Myrrh-Bearers – Tone 2:



Mir - o - nó - sicam ženám pri hróbi predstáv Án - hel vo - pi - já - šc:



mí - ra mért - vym sut' pri - líč - na, Chri - stós že ist - l'í - ni - ja



ja - ví - sja čužd'.

At the conclusion of the hymn, the clergy and servers venerate the burial shroud.

Compiled from Approved Sources

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