

Vespers

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, and all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! **(Thrice)**

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *Thrice.*

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, have mercy. *12 times.*

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

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O come let us worship God our King.

O come let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid. The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the

rocks will they give voice. He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares. He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad. Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being. May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. **Thrice.**

Lord, have mercy. *12 times.*

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

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are all that have put their trust in Him.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Salvation is of the Lord, and they blessing is upon Thy people.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. **Thrice.**

Lord, have mercy. **Thrice.**

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

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me. * Hearken unto me, O Lord. * Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me; * attend to the voice of my supplication, * when I cry unto Thee. * Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be set forth * as incense before Thee, * the lifting up of my hands * as an evening sacrifice. * Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips. Incline not my heart unto words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins. With men that work iniquity; and I will not join with their chosen. The righteous man will chasten me with mercy and reprove me; as for the oil of the sinner, let it not anoint my head. For yet more is my prayer in the presence of their pleasures; swallowed up near by the rock have their judges been. They shall hear my words, for they be sweetened; as a clod of earth is broken upon the earth, so have their bones been scattered nigh unto hades. For unto Thee, O Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes, in Thee have I hoped; take not my soul away. Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity. The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone until I pass by. With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication. I will pour out before Him my supplication, mine affliction before Him will I declare. When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths. In this way wherein I have walked they hid for me a snare. I looked upon my right hand, and beheld, and there was none that did know me. Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul. I have cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion art Thou in the land of the living. Attend unto my supplication, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from them that persecute me, for they are stronger than I.

Verse: Tone 5: Bring my soul out of prison * that I may confess Thy name.

By Thy precious Cross, O Christ, * Thou hast shamed the devil, * and by Thy Resurrection Thou hast blunted the sting of sin, * and saved us from the gates of death: * we glorify Thee, the Only-begotten One.

Verse: The righteous shall wait patiently for me * until Thou shalt reward me.

He who hath granted Resurrection to mankind, * was led as a sheep to the slaughter; * the princes of Hades trembled before Him and the gates of lamentations were lifted up; * for Christ the King of glory entered, * saying to those in bondage: 'Come forth!' * and to those in darkness: 'Reveal yourselves!'

Verse: Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; * O Lord, hear my voice.

O great wonder! * Having suffered in the flesh through his love for mankind, * the Creator of all things visible and invisible, * hath arisen immortal. * Come O ye descendents of the nations, * let us worship Him; for delivered from error by his compassion, * we have learned to hymn one God in three Hypostases.

Verse: Let Thine ears be attentive * to the voice of my supplication.

We offer unto Thee our evening worship, * O never-setting Light, * who in the flesh at the end of the ages, as in a mirror, shone through upon the world, * and descended even into Hades, * dispersing the darkness therein * and showing unto the nations the light of the Resurrection. * O Lord, Giver of light, glory be to Thee!

Verse Tone 6 Spec. Mel.: "Having set all aside ...": If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? * For with Thee there is forgiveness.

The never-setting Sun doth come to shine forth from the Virgin's womb and enlighten all the world. Let us make haste to meet Him with pure eyes and deeds; and let us now make ready in spirit to receive Him Who cometh unto His own through a strange birth, as He hath been well pleased to do. In that He is compassionate, and so that He might lead us up who have estranged ourselves from the life of Eden, He is born in Bethlehem.

Verse: For Thy name's sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, * my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

God the Word, Who is borne up upon the shoulders of the cherubim, having united Himself hypostatically to the flesh, hath made His abode within the womb of the all-immaculate one and become a man; and He hath come to earth to be born of the tribe of Judah. The holy cave is beautifully adorned, like a most magnificent palace, for the King of all; and the manger, wherein the Virgin Mary layeth the Infinite One like a babe, is like a fiery throne, serving for the renewal of creation.

Verse: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch * let Israel hope in the Lord.

In a manger of dumb beasts the Virgin doth lay Thee, O beginningless Word of God, Who, in a manner transcending understanding, hast received a beginning. For Thou hast come to put an end to that foolishness which I assumed through the malice of the serpent, and to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, that Thou mightest rend asunder the rags and chains of my transgressions, O Thou Who alone art good and the Lover of mankind. Wherefore, I glorify Thee and I hymn and most joyfully worship Thine advent in the flesh, whereby I have been set free.

Verse: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; * and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

Unto the ends of the earth hath the memory of the forefathers been manifest as truly filled with light and shining with rays of grace; for Christ, the radiant Sun, shining from afar on high, doth lead forth an assembly of stars which shine with Him, and in the midst of Bethlehem a nativity is revealed to be that of God and man. Therefore, piously clapping our hands, with faith let us all join chorus to utter pre- festive praise unto His nativity..

Verse: O praise the Lord, all ye nations; * praise Him, all ye peoples.

Rejoicing today, Adam is adorned with the glory of divine communion, as the foundation and confirmation of the wise forefathers; and with him Abel doth leap for joy and Enoch is glad, and Seth danceth together with Noah; the all-praised Abraham doth chant with the patriarchs, and from on high Melchizedek doth behold a birth wherein a father had no part. Wherefore, celebrating the divine memory of the forefathers of Christ, we beseech Him, that our souls be saved.

Verse: For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, * and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

With gladness the assembly of the divinely wise children in the furnace hath shone forth, proclaiming the nativity of Christ on earth; for the Lord, descending like a precious dew, doth preserve unconsumed her who gave birth to Him, keeping her undefiled and enriching her with divine gifts. Wherefore, the God-pleasing Daniel rejoiceth in gladness, for he clearly foresaw the Stone uncut from the mountain, and with boldness he doth now pray in behalf of our souls.

Glory..., in Tone 6:

Daniel, the man of divine desires, seeing Thee, the Stone uncut by human hands, O Lord, prophetically called Thee a babe born without seed, the Word incarnate from the Virgin, the supremely immaculate God, the Savior of our souls.

Now & Ever ..., in Tone 6:

Adorn thyself well, O cave, for the ewe-lamb approacheth, bearing Christ in her womb! O manger, receive Him Who by His word hath loosed us mortals from irrational activity! Ye shepherds, piping, bear witness to the awesome wonder! O magi from Persia, bring ye gold, frankincense and myrrh to the King, for the Lord hath re-vealed Himself through the Virgin Mother! And, gazing down upon Him, His Mother made obeisance to Him as though she were His handmaiden, and greeted Him as she held Him in her embrace, saying: "How wast Thou sown within me, and how didst Thou spring forth within me, O my Redeemer and God?"

O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father, O Jesus Christ: Having come to the setting of the sun, having beheld the evening light, we praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: God. Meet it is for Thee at all times to be praised with reverent voices, O Son of God, Giver of life. Wherefore, the world doth glorify Thee.

Prokeimenon in Tone 6: The Lord is King, * He is clothed with majesty.

Verse 1: The Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself.

Verse 2: For He established the universe which shall not be shaken.

Verse 3: Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS [14:14-20]

And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlomer and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.

READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY [1:8-11, 15-17]

In those days, Moses said unto the sons of Israel; The land I have set the before you, go in and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them. And I spake unto you at that time, saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone: The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. (The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, as he

hath promised you!) So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes. And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.

READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY [10:14-21]

In those days, Moses said unto the sons of Israel; Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages of ages. Amen. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master, give me understanding of Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes. O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the works of Thy hands. To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *12 times.*

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

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Resurrection Aposticha. Tone 5

With voices of song we magnify Thee, O Christ, * the Saviour incarnate, * yet not separated from heaven, * for as the Lord who lovest mankind * Thou hast suffered the cross and death for the sake of our race, * overthrowing the gates of Hades, * and rising on the third day, * saving our souls.

Verse 1: The Lord is King: He hath clothed Himself in majesty. The Lord hath clothed and girded Himself with power.

When Thy side was pierced, O Giver of life, * Thou didst pour forth streams of forgiveness, * of life and salvation for all; * Thou didst suffer death in the flesh, * granting unto us immortality, * and by dwelling in a grave Thou hast freed us, * gloriously raising us up with thyself as God; * wherefore we cry out to Thee: * 'O Lord, Lover of mankind, glory be to Thee!'

Verse 2: He hath made the universe firm; which shall not be shaken.

Wonderful is Thy crucifixion and Thy descent into Hades, * O Lover of mankind, * for having despoiled it and as God gloriously raised with Thyself * those who were captive therein, * Thou hast opened Paradise and bidden them welcome. * So too grant unto us who glorify Thine Arising on the third day, * the forgiveness of our sins, * making us worthy to be inhabitants of Paradise, * as Thou alone art compassionate.

Verse 3: Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

O Lover of mankind, * who for ours sakes didst accept to suffer the passion in the flesh, * and hast arisen from the dead on the third day, * heal the passions of our flesh, * and raise us up from our grievous transgressions, and save us.

Glory ..., in Tone 2:

Rejoice, ye honorable prophets who dedicated yourselves well to the Law of the Lord, and by faith revealed yourselves to be unshaken and unbreakable pillars of Christ; and, having passed on to heaven, beseech ye Him to grant peace to the world and to save our souls.

Now & ever ...,Tone 2:

Behold, the hour of our salvation draweth nigh! Make ready, O cave, for the Virgin approacheth to give birth! Rejoice and be glad, O Bethlehem, land of Judah, for from thee our Lord shall shine forth! Lo! hearken, O ye mountains and hills, and ye surrounding lands of Judea, for Christ cometh to save mankind whom He created, in that He is the Lover of mankind!

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *Thrice.*

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot but our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Troparion, Tone 5:

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word * Who is co-unoriginate with the Father and the Spirit, * and Who was born of the Virgin for our salvation; * for He was pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh * and to endure death, * and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

Glory, Now & Ever: Tone 2:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! * In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, * the three holy children rejoiced; * and the prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. ** By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls!

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

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, and all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.