

Vespers of Mid-Pentecost

The Holy Doors are closed. The Priest, standing at the Altar Table, says:

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

Reader: Amen.¹

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (3x)

The Trisagion Prayers

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

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

O most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us!

O Lord, cleanse us from our sins!

O Master, pardon our transgressions!

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

All: Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest: For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of

¹ If another service has immediately preceded Vespers, or if Little Vespers has been served earlier, we omit the usual introductory prayers and go to "Come, Let us Worship" below.

ages.

Reader: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12x)

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

Come, let us worship God our King!

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

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

*When another service precedes Great Vespers and the service therefore begins
here:*

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon
those in the tombs bestowing life.

*The chief **Celebrant** goes to stand in front of the closed Holy Doors, head uncovered, to read
the Prayers of Light silently².*

The Introductory Psalm

Psalm 103 (104)

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

O Lord my God, You are very great,

You are clothed with praise and majesty,

wrapping Yourself in light for a garment,

stretching out the sky like a skin³;

² The seven prayers may be found together in Appendix A.

³ a "tent-skin".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There the sparrows build their nests,
the house of the heron⁴ at the top of them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁴ or "egret".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Great Litany

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: ⁵For [his Beatitude] Metropolitan _____; for [his Grace] our Bishop _____; for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the President⁶ and all civil authorities of this country, and for those serving in its Armed Forces, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this city, [*if a monastery:* For this holy habitation,] for every city and countryside, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the people here present, who await the grace of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For those who bow their hearts and their knees before the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

⁵ We pray for the bishop of the temple in which we are praying. When not in a temple, we pray for the bishop of the diocese in which we are located. If outside the territory of any Orthodox Church or mission, only then do we pray for the bishop of the celebrating priest.

⁶ We pray for the Chief of State and the civil authorities of the place in which we are praying.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He may strengthen us so that we may fulfill those things that are well-pleasing to Him, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He may send down the riches of His mercy upon us, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He may accept the bending of our knees as incense before Him, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For those that are in need of His help, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

The Deacon moves to stand before the icon of Christ.

People: To You, O Lord.

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

People: Amen.

The Deacon enters the Sanctuary through the South door, goes to the High Place, bows, turns and bows to the Priest, takes up the censer and presents it to the Priest, saying:

Deacon: Bless, Master, the incense.

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

Deacon: Amen.

Lord, I Call

Psalm 140 (141):1-2

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

The Deacon then begins the Great Censing.

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

Psalm 140 (141):3-10

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

Do not incline my heart to evil words,
to make excuses for sins.
With men who practice lawlessness,
not even with their chosen ones will I be joined.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Psalm 141 (142)

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 10.⁷ Bring my soul out of prison
 that I may confess Your name,
9. The righteous are waiting for me
 until You reward me.

Psalm 129 (130)

8. Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord;
 O Lord, hear my voice.
7. Let Your ears be attentive
 to the cry of my prayer.
6. If You, O Lord, should take note of our sins,
 O Lord, who would survive?
 But with You there is forgiveness.

⁷ From this point on, hymns (Stichera) can be inserted between Psalm verses. If there are ten Stichera, the first is inserted after the verse marked ‘10’, the second after the verse marked ‘9’, and so on. If there are six Stichera, the first is inserted after the verse marked ‘6’, the second after the verse marked ‘5’, and so on.

Tone 4 (to the Special Melody, "Having Ascended the Cross...")

The middle of the days has come,
beginning with the Savior's Resurrection,
and sealed by the holy Pentecost.
The first and the last glisten with splendor.
We rejoice in the union of both feasts,
as we draw near to the Lord's Ascension:://
the sign of our coming glorification.

5. For Your name's sake, O Lord, I wait for You,
my soul waits for Your word,
my soul hopes for the Lord,

The middle of the days has come... *(repeat above)*.

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

Be glad, O Zion!
Hear the announcement of Christ's Resurrection!
Let her faithful sons rejoice!
The filth of the daughter of Zion is washed away.
Jerusalem, stained with the blood of God's murder, is cleansed by the
Spirit:://
With songs of joy she celebrates the middle of the feast.

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

Be glad, O Zion... *(repeat above)*.

*During the singing of the Stichera, the **Priest** puts on the Phelonion, and, if a Deacon is serving, he keeps it on until the conclusion of the service.*

The Deacon receives the censer from the Server.

Psalm 116 (117)

2. Praise the Lord, all you nations,
praise Him, all you peoples!

As it is written,
the abundant outpouring of divine gifts is drawing near.
The chosen day of the Spirit is halfway come.
The true promise of Christ to the disciples
after His death, burial, and Resurrection, //
heralds the coming of the Comforter.

1. For great is His mercy to us,⁸
and the truth of the Lord continues forever.

As it is written... (*repeat above*).

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

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

Tone 6

People: We have assembled, O Christ,
to praise the miracle of Your mysteries:
The midpoint between Your Resurrection and the coming of Your Holy
Spirit. //
Send down on us great mercy!

⁸ Lit., "For His mercy has been strengthened upon us".

The Vespers Entrance

As they proceed:

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

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

People: Amen.

The Priest stands in the center facing the Sanctuary.

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

Deacon: Bless, Master, the holy entrance.

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

People: Amen.

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

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

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

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

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

Gladsome Light

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

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: + Peace be unto all.

Deacon: Wisdom!

The Prokeimenon

Psalm 22 (23)

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the first tone:

Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

Verse: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me lie down in green pastures.

Verse: He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Verse: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Verse: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Verse: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Deacon: Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me...

People: ...all the days of my life.

*At the end of the Prokeimenon, the **Priest** and the **Deacon** turn, make the Sign of the Cross (lesser metania) to the High Place, and proceed to their places - the Priest to the place in front of the Altar Table.*

*The **Deacon** closes the Holy Doors.*

The First Old Testament Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the Prophecy of Micah:

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: (Composite 19) *Thus says the Lord:* “Out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off. For all the peoples shall walk each one his own way, but we will walk in the Name of the Lord our God forever and ever.”

Thus says the Lord Almighty: “Hear, O mountains, the judgment of the Lord, and you valleys, the foundations of the earth; for the Lord has a case against His people, and He will contend with Israel. O My people,

what have I done to you? How have I grieved you? Answer Me! For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent you Moses, and Aaron, and Mariam. O My people, remember now what the adversaries plotted against you, and who declared against you.”

I have declared to you, O man, what is good; or what does the Lord seek from you but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to be ready to walk with the Lord your God? For the Lord shall stand and see, and shepherd His flock in the strength of the Lord, and they will dwell in the glory of the name of the Lord their God, for now they will be magnified unto the ends of the earth.

The Second Old Testament Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah:

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: *(Composite 20)* Thus says the Lord: “You who are thirsty, go to the water, and all who have no money, go and buy wine and fat, and eat and drink without money and price.” For thus says the Lord Almighty to you: “You will draw water with gladness from the wells of salvation.” In that day, you will say, “Praise the Lord; call upon His name. Declare His glorious things among the Gentiles and make mention that His name is exalted.”

“*My people*, listen to Me and eat good things, and your soul will delight in good things. Incline your ears, and follow my ways. Listen to Me, and your soul shall live in good things; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you.”

Seek God, and when you find Him, call upon Him when He draws near to you. Let the ungodly man abandon his ways, and the lawless man his

counsels; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; for He shall forgive your sins abundantly. “For My counsels are not as your counsels, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “But as heaven is distant from earth, so is My way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from My mind. For as rain comes down, or snow from heaven, and does not return until it saturates the earth, and it brings forth and produces, and gives seed to the sower and bread for food, so shall My word be, whatever proceeds from My mouth. It shall not return until it accomplishes whatever I willed, and I will prosper your ways and My commandments. For you shall go forth with gladness and shall be taught with joy, for the mountains and the hills shall exult to receive you with joy; and all the trees of the field shall applaud with their branches. Instead of the broom-tree shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle; and the Lord shall be for a name and for an everlasting sign, and He shall not fail,” *says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel.*

The Third Old Testament Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from Proverbs.

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: (9:1-11 LXX) Wisdom built her house, and she supported it with seven pillars.

She offered her sacrifices; she mixed her wine in a bowl and prepared her table.

She has sent her servants, inviting people to the bowl with a lofty proclamation, saying,

“He who is without discernment, let him turn aside to me”; and to those in need of discernment, she says,

“Come, eat my bread and drink the wine I mixed for you;

Forsake lack of discernment, and you shall live, and keep straight your

understanding with knowledge.”

He who chastises evil men shall receive dishonor to himself, and he who reproves the ungodly man shall be blamed himself.

Do not reprove evil men, so they may not hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

Give the opportunity to a wise man, and he will be wiser; instruct a righteous man, and he will continue to receive it.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel of saints is understanding;

for to know the law is characteristic of a good mind.

For in this manner you will live a long time, and the years of your life shall be increased.

The Deacon, passing the High Place, exits the Sanctuary through the North door, takes his place on the solea, lifts his Orarion and says:

The Augmented Litany⁹

Deacon: Let us say with all our soul and with all our mind, let us say.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: O Lord almighty, the God of our fathers, we implore You, hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

⁹ If there are special petitions for a specific situation in the community (flood, drought, harvest, health, war, plague, or whatever), the special petitions are added to this Litany.

Deacon: Again we pray for [His Beatitude] Metropolitan _____, for [His Grace] our Bishop _____, for priests, deacons, and all other clergy, and for all our brethren in Christ.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the President and all civil authorities of this country and for those serving in its Armed Forces.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable holy Orthodox Patriarchs; for the blessed and ever memorable founders of this holy house; for all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, [especially _____ and all those] who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God [especially _____], and for the pardon and remission of their sins.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for those who bring offerings and do good works in this holy and all-venerable house; for those who labor and those who sing; and for all the people here present, who await Your great and rich mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Priest: ¹⁰For You are a merciful God, and You love mankind, and to You we

¹⁰ This Litany has no obvious concluding prayer. Some say it should have the same prayer that is attached to it in the Divine Liturgy:

“O Lord our God, accept this fervent supplication of Your servants, and have mercy on us according to the multitude of Your mercy. Send down Your bounties upon us and upon all Your

send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Grant, O Lord

Reader: Grant, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin.
Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Evening Litany¹¹

The Deacon, still at his place in the center of the solea, lifts his Orarion and says:

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

people, who await the rich mercy that comes from You.”

¹¹ If there is no Deacon, the Priest will remove his Phelonion and take this litany in front of the closed Holy Doors.

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

People: Lord, have mercy.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

People: Grant it, O Lord.

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

*The **Deacon** moves to stand before the icon of Christ:*

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: ¹²For You are a good God, and You love mankind, and to You we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen

The Priest turns to bless the People:

Priest: + Peace be unto all.

People: And to your spirit.

The Priest faces the East as the Deacon says:

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

The Prayer with Heads Bowed

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

People: Amen.

The Deacon enters the Sanctuary through the South door as the people sing the Aposticha and verses.

¹² Some ancient sources suggest Prayer 7b in Appendix A be read here.

The Aposticha

Tone 1 (Idiomela; by John the Monk)

People: The middle of the fifty days is here,
wherein Christ manifested his divine power.
He healed the paralytic, raising him from his bed by a word!
In the flesh He worked signs and wonders,//
granting mankind eternal life and great mercy!

Reader: Remember Your congregation, which You have gotten of old!

People: You came to the Temple, O Wisdom of God,
in the middle of the feast,
to teach and edify the Jews, the Scribes and the Pharisees.
Let him who thirsts come to Me and drink the water of life!
He will never thirst again!
Whoever believes in Me, streams of living water shall flow from him!
How great is Your goodness and Your compassion!//
Glory to You, O Christ our God!

Reader: God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth!

Tone 2

People: Jesus went up to the Temple in the middle of the feast.
He proclaimed to the disobedient Jews:
“Let him who thirsts come to Me and drink!
I will give him the water of life, and he will never thirst again.
Living streams will flow from the heart of him who believes in Me;//
he will find the Light of the world!”

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

Tone 8

People: O Savior, while You were teaching the Jews in the midst of the feast, they murmured: “How can this man be learned, who never studied?” They would not believe that You are the Wisdom Who created the world.//
O Lord, glory to You!

The Canticle of Simeon

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

The Trisagion Prayers

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

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

O most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us!

O Lord, cleanse us from our sins!

O Master, pardon our transgressions!

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

All: Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from

the evil one.

Priest: For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

The Troparion

Tone 8

People: In the middle of the feast, O Savior,
fill my thirsting soul with the waters of piety, for You cried to all:
“If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink!”//
O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to You! (3x)

The Dismissal

Deacon: Wisdom.

People: Father, bless.

Standing in front of the Altar Table, the Priest says:

If it be a Vigil:

Priest: + The blessing of the Lord be upon you, through His Grace and love for mankind, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

And the Reader begins the Six Psalms of Matins.

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

People: Amen.

Confirm, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and Orthodox Christians unto ages of ages.

Priest: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

People: More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God, the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you.

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

The Deacon turns, exits through the Holy Doors, and goes to stand to the right of the Analo.

Standing in the Holy Doors, facing the people, the Priest says the Dismissal:

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Father, bless.

Priest: May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most pure Mother; by the power of the precious and life-creating Cross; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; of St. (of the temple....; of St. (of the day), whom we commemorate today; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us for He is good and loves mankind.

Reader: Amen.

The Priest enters the Sanctuary, closes the Holy Doors and the curtain, kisses the Holy Gospel and the Altar Table and then the Clergy remove their vestments.

APPENDIX A

THE SEVEN VESPERS PRAYERS

I

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

II

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

III

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

IV

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

V

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

VI

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

VII**a**

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

b

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