

## *Pentecost: the Feast of the Church*

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In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, Pentecost is "the last and great day." It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the *end* – the achievement and fulfillment – of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, however, it is also the celebration of the *beginning*: it is the "birthday" of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.

This double meaning and double joy is revealed to us, first of all, in the very name of the feast. Pentecost in Greek means *fifty*, and in the sacred biblical symbolism of numbers, the number fifty symbolizes both the fullness of time and that which is beyond time: the Kingdom of God itself. It symbolizes the fullness of time by its first component: 49 which is the fullness of *seven* (7 x 7): the number of time. And, it symbolizes that which is beyond time by its second component: 49 + 1, this *one* being the *new day*, the "day without evening" of God's eternal Kingdom. With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fullness revealed, all gifts bestowed; it belongs to us now to "appropriate" these gifts, to *be* that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

### **The Vigil of Pentecost**

The all-night Vigil service begins with a solemn invitation:

*Let us celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit,  
The appointed day of promise, and the fulfillment of hope,  
The mystery which is great as it is precious.*

In the coming of the Spirit, the very essence of the Church is revealed:

*The Holy Spirit provides all,  
Overflows with prophecy, fulfills the priesthood,  
Has taught wisdom to illiterates, has revealed fishermen as theologians.  
He brings together the whole council of the Church.*

In the three readings of the Old Testament (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezekiel 36:24-28) we hear the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit. We are taught that the entire history of mankind was directed towards the day on which

God “would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh.” This day has come! All hope, all promises, all expectations have been fulfilled. At the end of the Aposticha hymns, for the first time since Pascha, we sing the hymn: “O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth...,” the one with which we inaugurate all our services, all prayers, which is, as it were, the life-breath of the Church, and whose coming to us, whose “descent” upon us in this festal Vigil, is indeed the very experience of the Holy Spirit “coming and abiding in us.”

Having reached its climax, the Vigil continues as an explosion of joy and light for “verily the light of the Comforter has come and has illumined the world.” In the Gospel reading (John 20:19-23) the feast is interpreted to us as the feast of the Church, of her divine nature, power and authority. The Lord sends His disciples into the world, as He Himself was sent by His Father. Later, in the antiphons of the Liturgy, we proclaim the universality of the Apostle’s preaching, the cosmical significance of the feast, the sanctification of the whole world, the true manifestation of God’s Kingdom.

### **The Vespers of Pentecost**

The liturgical particularity of Pentecost is a very special *Vespers* of the day itself. Usually this service follows immediately the Divine Liturgy, is “added” to it as its own fulfillment. The service begins as a solemn “summing up” of the entire celebration, as its liturgical synthesis. We hold flowers in our hands symbolizing the joy of the eternal spring, inaugurated by the coming of the Holy Spirit. After the festal Entrance, this joy reaches its climax in the singing of the Great Prokeimenon:

“*Who is so great a God as our God!*”

Then, having reached this climax, we are invited to *kneel*. This is our first *kneeling* since Pascha. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fullness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Who has *already* revealed to us the joyful End, Who now will help us in our effort towards

fulfillment and salvation.

All this is revealed in the three prayers which the celebrant reads now as we all kneel and listen to him. In the first prayer, we bring to God our repentance, our increased appeal for forgiveness of sins, the first condition for entering into the Kingdom of God.

In the second prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us, to teach us to pray and to follow the true path in the dark and difficult night of our earthly existence. Finally, in the third prayer, we remember all those who have departed this life before us, who have achieved their earthly journey, but who are united with us in the eternal God of Love.

The joy of Pascha has been completed and we again have to wait for the dawn of the Eternal Day. Yet, knowing our weakness, humbling ourselves by kneeling, we also know the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit Who has come. We know that God is with us, that in Him is our victory.

Thus is completed the feast of Pentecost and we enter “the ordinary time” of the year. Yet, every Sunday now will be called “after Pentecost” - and this means that it is from the power and light of these fifty days that we shall receive our own power, the Divine help in our daily struggle. At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches – for the Church “never grows old, but is always young.” It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit – “the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life – comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity” and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann



# Vespers of Holy Pentecost

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## *The Kneeling Service*

*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.<sup>1</sup>

Glory to You, our God; glory to You!

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

## The Trisagion Prayers

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

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

O most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us!

O Lord, cleanse us from our sins!

O Master, pardon our transgressions!

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

*All:*        Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

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

*Reader:* Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12x)

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

*When another service precedes Vespers, the service begins here:*

Come, let us worship God our King!

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

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

*The chief Celebrant goes to stand in front of the closed Holy Doors, head uncovered, to read the Prayers of Light silently<sup>2</sup>.*

### **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 skin<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>2</sup> The seven prayers may be found together in Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> a “tent-skin”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There the sparrows build their nests,  
the house of the heron<sup>4</sup> 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;

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<sup>4</sup> 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:* <sup>5</sup>For [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 President<sup>6</sup> 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.

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.

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<sup>7</sup> 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*

Today, in the city of David  
all the nations beheld glorious wonders  
when the Disciples of Christ had gathered together  
and the Holy Spirit came down in tongues of fire,  
as Luke, inspired of God, records:  
“A sound came like the rushing of a mighty wind;  
it filled all the house where they were sitting,  
and they all began to proclaim strange words, strange doctrines,//  
strange teachings of the Holy Trinity.”

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

Today, in the city of David... (*repeat above*).

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

The Holy Spirit was, is, and ever shall be,  
without beginning, without ending,  
always ranked and numbered with the Father and the Son;  
He is Life and the Giver of life;  
He is Light and the Giver of light;  
all good and the Fountain of goodness,  
through Him the Father is known, the Son is glorified;  
through Him all people proclaim one power, one ranking,//  
one worship of the Holy Trinity.

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



The Holy Spirit was, is... (*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!

The Holy Spirit is Light and Life,  
a living Fountain of spiritual gifts,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
all-knowing, upright and good--  
He leads us and washes away our sins.  
He is God and he makes us divine;  
He is Fire proceeding from Fire,  
speaking and acting and distributing gifts.  
Through Him all the prophets, martyrs and apostles of God are crowned.  
Strange account, strange and wonderful sight://  
fire is divided for distributing gifts.

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

The Holy Spirit is Light and Life... (*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 "O Heavenly King..." 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.*

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<sup>8</sup> Lit., "For His mercy has been strengthened upon us".

## The Dogmatikon

### *Tone 6*

*People:* O heavenly King,  
the Comforter, the Spirit of truth,  
You are everywhere and fulfill all things;  
Treasury of blessings  
and Giver of life,  
come and abide in us,  
and cleanse us from every impurity,//  
and save our souls, O Good One.

## The Vespers Entrance

### *As they proceed:*

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

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

*People:* Amen.

*The Priest stands in the center facing the Sanctuary.*

*The Deacon approaches the Holy Doors to the right of the Priest and then he censes the Holy Doors, the icons of Christ and the Theotokos, 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, censes the Altar Table on all four sides and the High Place.*

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

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

### **Gladsome Light**

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

*Deacon:* Let us attend.

*Priest:* + Peace be unto all.

*Deacon:* Wisdom!

### **The Prokeimenon**

*from Psalm 76 (77)*

*Deacon:* The Great Prokeimenon in the seventh tone:

Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God Who does wonders.

*People:* Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God Who does wonders.

*Deacon:* You have made known Your power among the peoples.

*People:* Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God Who does wonders.

*Deacon:* And I said: now have I begun to understand: this is the change  
accomplished by the right hand of the Most High.

*People:* Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God Who does wonders.

*Deacon:* I will remember the works of the Lord: from the beginning will I  
remember Your wonders.

*People:* Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God Who does wonders.

*Deacon:* And I will meditate on all Your works and reflect on Your mighty acts.

*People:* Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God Who does wonders.

*Deacon:* Who is so great a God as our God?

*People:* ...You are the God Who does wonders.

*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 exits the Sanctuary through the North door, takes his place in front of the Icon of Christ, lifts his Orarion and says:*

*Deacon:* Again and again, on bended knees, let us pray to the Lord God.

*People:* Lord, have mercy. (3x)

*The Clergy uncover their heads. Then all kneel down and remain so while the Priest, kneeling also in the opened Holy Doors and facing the People, prays this prayer in the hearing of all:*

### **The First Prayer**

*Priest:* O Lord, You are immaculate, undefiled, without beginning, and unseen. You are incomprehensible, unsearchable, unchanging, unsurpassable, immeasurable, yet forbearing. You alone have immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light. You are the One Who made the sky and the earth and the sea and every creature in them. You are the One Who grants the requests of all, even before they ask.

We entreat You and implore You in Your love for mankind, O Master, Father of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who, for us and for our salvation, came down from Heaven and was incarnated by the Holy Spirit and the ever virgin Mary, the glorious Theotokos.

What He at first taught by His words, He later showed by His deeds. For when He endured the Passion by which He saved us, He granted us, Your humble and sinful and unworthy servants, an example of how to offer entreaties to You, bowing our heads and bending our knees over our own sins as well as for the ignorance of Your people.

So now, O merciful Lord Who loves mankind, hear us Yourself on any day when we call upon You, but especially on this Fiftieth Day, on which, after our Lord Jesus Christ had been taken up to Heaven and had

been seated at Your right hand, His God and Father, He sent down the Holy Spirit upon His holy disciples and Apostles. And when the Holy Spirit was seated upon each one of them, He filled them with His inexhaustible Grace.

Then, in different languages, they began to tell of Your great deeds, and to speak in prophecy. Hear us now, therefore, as we entreat You, and be mindful of us, humble and condemned as we are, and reverse the captivity of our souls, having Your accustomed compassion interceding for us.

Accept us, as we prostrate before You, and cry aloud: “We have sinned!” We have relied on You since before we were born; from when we were in our mothers’ wombs, You are our God.

But, because our days have slipped away in vanity, we have been stripped of Your assistance and deprived of every excuse.

Yet, taking courage in Your compassion, we cry: “May You not remember how sinful and ignorant we were when we were young!” Cleanse us of our hidden faults! May You not reject us when we are old! When our strength leaves us, may You not abandon us! Before we revert to earth, consider us worthy to be converted to You, and be attentive to us in Your kindness and Your grace.

Balance our lawless deeds by Your compassion: weigh the great number of our faults against the ocean of Your compassion. From the heights of Your holiness, look upon Your people kneeling here, expecting Your own abundant mercy.

Watch over us in Your loving care; rescue us from the powerful opposition of the Devil. Fortify our life with Your holy and sacred laws. Entrust Your people to a faithful guardian angel; gather us all together under Your reign.

Grant pardon to those who hope in You; forgive our sins as well as

theirs. Cleanse us by the action of Your Holy Spirit; undo every crafty device which the Enemy sets against us.

*And then he adds this prayer:*

Blessed are You, almighty Master! You give light to the day with the light of the sun, and You brighten the night with the glow of fire. You considered us worthy to pass through the length of this day and to approach the beginning of this night.

Hear our entreaty, and that of all Your people; pardon the intentional and unintentional sins of us all. Accept our evening supplications, and send down upon Your inheritance the abundance of Your mercy and compassion.

Build a wall of Your holy angels around us; arm us with the armor of Your righteousness; set Your truth as our defense on every side; guide us by Your power. Rescue us from every attempt of the Enemy to plot against us and hem us in.

Grant us that both this evening and the approaching night, as well as all the days of our life, may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, inoffensive, and dreamless, through the intercessions of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have pleased You throughout the ages.

*All stand. The Clergy cover their heads.*

*Deacon:* Help us, save us, have mercy on us, raise us up, 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.

*People:* To You, O Lord.



*Priest:* For Yours it is to have mercy on us and to save us, O 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.

*People:* Amen.

### The Augmented Litany

*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)

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

*People:* Amen.

*Deacon:* Again and again, on bended knees, let us pray to the Lord God.

*People:* Lord, have mercy. (3x)

*The Clergy uncover their heads. All kneel down as before and the Priest prays this prayer in the hearing of all:*

### **The Second Prayer**

*Priest:* O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, You gave Your ‘Peace!’ to mankind along with the gift of the Most Holy Spirit, Who remains ever present in our life as an inalienable inheritance for the faithful.

This was more clearly revealed when You sent down this Grace today upon Your disciples and Apostles, and opened their lips by setting tongues of fire in their mouths.

Through them, the whole human race received knowledge of God. Hearing it with our ears in our own languages, we were enlightened by the light of the Spirit, and released from delusion as if from darkness.

By the distribution of these perceptible tongues of fire and by their supernatural action, we learned to have faith in You.

We were radiantly enlightened to speak of You as God, together with Your Father and Your Holy Spirit, as a single divinity and power and authority. For You are the Radiance of the Father, the unchanging and immovable Imprint of His essence and nature; You are the Source of salvation and Grace.

Open even my lips, although I am a sinner; teach me how I ought to pray, and for whom prayer is needed. For, while You are aware of all my many sins, Your kindheartedness will overcome their countless number. Behold me here, fearful in Your presence, as I cast my soul's despair into the ocean of Your mercy. Steer the ship of my life, as You steer all of creation with a word in the inexpressible power of Your Wisdom, for You are the safe harbor of the tempest-tossed. Make known to me the way I should go.

Grant the Spirit of Your Wisdom to my thoughts as You give the Spirit of Understanding to my foolish mind. Overshadow my actions with the Spirit of Your Fear, and renew the Right Spirit within me.

Strengthen the stumbling steps of my mind with Your Guiding Spirit, so that, guided every day by Your Good Spirit along the way toward what is useful, I might be considered worthy to carry out Your commandments, and always to be mindful of Your glorious Presence among us, examining what we have accomplished.

May You not look away from me, leaving me to be deceived by the corrupting pleasures of the world, but strengthen me instead to reach for the enjoyment of treasures yet to come. For You said, O Master, that if anything was requested in Your Name, it would be easily received from God, Your coeternal Father.

Therefore, even I, a sinner, implore Your goodness as Your Holy Spirit comes among us: Allow me as many things as I have asked for my salvation.

Indeed, Lord, You are abundantly wealthy in good deeds, and You are generous with them, for You are the One Who gives in great excess over what we ask. You are the One Who suffered for us when, in Your great mercy, You sinlessly participated in our flesh. And to those who bend their knees to You, You bend down with a loving heart, becoming the propitiation for our sins.

Give Your compassion to Your people now, O Lord. Hear us from Your holy Heaven, and make them holy with the power of Your saving right hand; shelter them in the shelter of Your wings. May You not look away from the work of Your hands!

We sin against You alone, but we also adore You alone. O Master, we know not how to worship a different god, nor how to stretch out our hands to any other god.

Forgive us our failings as You accept the entreaties we offer on our knees, and extend a helping hand to us all. Accept the prayer of all as a pleasing incense ascending in the sight of Your good Royalty.

*And then he adds this prayer:*

O Lord, the Lord Who rescues us from every arrow flying by day, rescue us also from every deed done in darkness. Accept the lifting of our hands as an evening sacrifice. Consider us worthy to pass through the course of the night blamelessly, untempted by evil.

Redeem us from all the confusion and cowardice caused us by the Devil. Grace our souls with a tender conscience, and our minds with a concern for our examination in Your awesome and just judgment.

Pierce our flesh with an awe of You and mortify our earthly limbs, so that even in the quietness of sleep we might be enlightened by our contemplation of Your judgments. Remove from us every inappropriate dream and harmful desire.

Raise us up again at the hour of prayer, strengthened in faith and making progress in Your commandments.

*All stand. The Clergy cover their heads.*

*Deacon:* Help us, save us, have mercy on us, raise us up, 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.

*People:* To You, O Lord.

*Priest:* Through the favor and grace of Your only-begotten Son, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, and good, and life-creating 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.

*Deacon:* Again and again, on bended knees, let us pray to the Lord God.

*People:* Lord, have mercy. (3x)

*All kneel down as before, the **Clergy** uncover their heads, and the **Priest** prays this prayer in the hearing of all:*

### **The Third Prayer**

*Priest:* O Christ our God, You are the everlasting and overflowing Source of life and light, the creative Power coeternal with Your Father, Whose entire plan for our salvation You fulfilled. You loosened the chains of Death and broke through the barriers of Hades, trampling its many evil spirits.

You offered Yourself for us as an unblemished victim, giving Your immaculate body as a sacrifice, pristine in its beauty and untouched by any sin. Through this tremendous and indescribable exercise of Your priesthood, You graced us with everlasting life.

When You descended to Hades, You smashed the bars of its prisons and showed the way up to those who were sitting below.

As One Who was fishing with the bait of divine wisdom, You caught at great depths that serpent who originated evil. With murky ropes You bound him in Tártaros, within a fire which will never be extinguished. With Your immeasurably powerful strength, You confined him in the outer darkness.

You are the magnificently named Wisdom of the Father; You are revealed as the great Helper of those being threatened, and the One Who brings light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of Death.

You are the Lord of everlasting glory and the beloved Son of Your Father most high, eternal Light from eternal Light.

O Sun of Righteousness, hear us as we entreat You, and give rest to the souls of Your servants who have fallen asleep before us, our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and all our other relatives in the flesh, as well as all who are of the household of the Faith, and all those whose memorial we now observe. For the strength of all things is in You, and You hold all the ends of the Earth in Your hand.

Almighty Master, God of our fathers and Lord of mercy, You are the Creator of the race of mortals and of immortals, and of all human nature. You are the One who composes things and then dissolves them, You cause life to begin and to end; You dispose things to one place and then transfer them to another.

You measure out the years for those who are living, and You appoint the time of their death. You bring us down to Hades and then lead us up, binding us in weakness and releasing us in power. You manage the present as necessary, and keep the future profitably in order.

With the hope of resurrection, You engender life in those who have been stricken by the sting of Death. O Master of all, You Yourself are God, our Savior, the Hope of all the ends of the Earth and of those who are far away at sea.

On this last, great, and salutary Fiftieth Day, You demonstrated for us the mystery of the Holy Trinity, same in essence, coeternal, indivisible yet not combined. In the appearance of tongues of fire, You poured forth the intervention and presence of Your holy and life-creating Spirit upon Your Apostles, establishing them as bearers of the good news of our devout faith, to profess and preach the true theology which You had shown them.

And, on this most perfect and salutary festal day, You consider worthy of acceptance the propitiations with which we implore You on behalf of those captive in Hades. You provide great hope for us by sending down to the departed, wretched in captivity, Your own relief and refreshment.

Hear us, humble and pitiable, as we supplicate You, and give rest to the souls of Your servants who have fallen asleep before us in a place of light, in a place of green pastures, in a place of relief, from which all grief and groaning and suffering have fled.

Make a place for their souls in the tents of the righteous, and make them worthy of peace and relaxation. For the dead will not praise You, O Lord, nor could those in Hades dare to offer thanks to You.

But we, the living, bless You and entreat You, and we offer You prayers of propitiation and sacrifices on behalf of their souls.

*And then he adds this prayer:*

O God, great and eternal, You are holy and You love mankind. You consider us worthy even at this hour to stand in the sight of Your unapproachable glory in order to sing hymns in praise of Your wonders.



Be propitious toward us, Your unworthy servants, and grant that we, broken-hearted and presuming nothing, may offer You the glorious hymn of the thrice 'Holy!' as well as thanks for Your great gifts which You have given and continue to give us.

Be mindful of our weakness, O Lord! May You not destroy us along with our lawless deeds! Rather, exercise Your great mercy upon our humiliation, so that, when we flee the darkness of sin, we might walk freely in the daylight of righteousness. Then, clothed in the armor of light, we will persevere to the end, unaffected by any plots of the Evil One to harm us.

Then, for all things, we will boldly glorify You, the only true God, Who loves mankind. For this is truly a great mystery which is Yours alone, O Master Who made all things: both the temporary dissolution of Your creatures and then their recomposition, as well as their repose throughout the ages.

We acknowledge Your grace for all things: for our entrance into this world and our departure, for our hope of resurrection and of life intact, which are pledged by Your unfailing promise, and which we would enjoy when You are present with us for a second time in the future.

For You are the One who began our resurrection, and, for all who have lived, You are the impartial Judge Who loves mankind, and the Master and Lord of recompense.

Almost as we ourselves do, You participated in flesh and blood through Your deep condescension. You experienced our passions without blame, voluntarily being put to the test, accepting it in Your tender compassion. And when You Yourself were tempted as You suffered, You became the very Help which You had promised to us who are being tempted, and You gathered us into Your own freedom from the passions.

Therefore, O Master, accept our entreaties and supplications, and give rest to the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and children of each one of us, as well as to everyone else of our families and relatives, and to all the souls who have gone to their rest before us in the hope of resurrection to eternal life.

Make a place for their souls and their names in the Book of Life, in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Land of the Living, in the Kingdom of Heaven, in the Paradise of Delight. By Your shining angels, lead all of them to Your holy dwelling, and raise our bodies together with them on the day which You determine in accordance with Your holy and unfailing promise.

For there is no death for Your servants, O Lord, when we go forth from our bodies and come forth to You, our God. There is merely a change from what is more painful to what is more beneficial and pleasant, and to repose and joy.

But if we sinned against You in any way, be as propitious to us as to them, for none of us is pure from stain in Your sight, even if we live but a single day. You alone, our Lord Jesus Christ, revealed Yourself as sinless on Earth. Through You, we all hope that there will be mercy for us and forgiveness for our sins.

Therefore, for us as well as for them, since You are good and You love mankind, unbind, forgive, and pardon our intentional and unintentional failings whether we are aware of them or not, whether they are in plain sight or hidden away, whether in our actions or in our words, in every aspect of our lives and in our movements.

And, to those who have already been taken, grant freedom and release. Bless us who are present here, granting a good and peaceful end to us and to all Your people. Open wide Your tender mercy and Your love for mankind in Your tremendous and awesome Presence, and make us worthy of Your Kingdom.

*And then he adds this 7<sup>th</sup> Vespereal Prayer:*

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, the 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.

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.

*All stand. The Clergy cover their heads.*

*Deacon:* Help us, save, us, have mercy on us, raise us up, 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.

*People:* To You, O Lord.

*Priest:* For You are the repose of our souls and bodies, 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 Evening Litany<sup>9</sup>

*The Deacon lifts his Orarion and says:*

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

*People:* Lord, have mercy.

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

*People:* Lord, have mercy.

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

*People:* Grant it, O Lord.

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

*People:* Grant it, O Lord.

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

*People:* Grant it, O Lord.

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

*People:* Grant it, O Lord.

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

*People:* Grant it, O Lord.

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

*People:* Grant it, O Lord.

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

*People:* To You, O Lord.

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

*People:* Amen

*The Priest turns to bless the People:*

*Priest:* + Peace be unto all.

*People:* And to your spirit.

*The Priest faces the East as the Deacon says:*

*Deacon:* Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

*People:* To You, O Lord.

<sup>9</sup> If there is no Deacon, the Priest will remove his Phelonion and take this litany in front of the closed Holy Doors.

### **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.*

### **The Aposticha**

*Tone 3*

*People:* Now, the fiery tongues  
have become a bright sign for all people.  
The Jews, of whom Christ came according to the flesh,  
in their unbelief have fallen from divine grace.  
But we, the people of all nations,  
are made worthy of divine light.  
We are strengthened by the words of the Disciples,  
who revealed the glory of the Benefactor and God of all.  
Let us bend our knees and hearts with them,  
since we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit,//  
bowing down in faith to worship the Savior of our souls.

*Reader:* Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.

*People:* Now, the comforting Spirit  
has been poured out on all flesh,  
spreading grace to the faithful,  
beginning with the choir of the Apostles.  
As a pledge of His mighty coming  
He distributed the tongues of fire;  
He gave them to the Disciples  
to the praise and glory of God.  
Spiritually enlightened in our hearts,  
strengthened in faith by the Holy Spirit,//  
let us earnestly pray for salvation for our souls.

*Reader:* Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.

*People:* Now, the Apostles of Christ  
are clothed with power from on high.  
The Comforter is renewed in them  
and renews them with newness of knowledge.  
They preach in foreign tongues,  
proclaiming mystical knowledge in lofty words.  
They teach us to worship the Benefactor and God of all  
in His simple, eternal, tri-personal nature.  
Enlightened by their teaching,  
let us bow down to worship Father, Son, and Spirit,//  
earnestly praying for salvation for our souls.

*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:* Come, O people,  
let us worship the Godhead in three persons:  
the Son in the Father with the Holy Spirit.  
For the Father timelessly begot the Son, co-eternal and co-enthroned

with Him;  
and the Holy Spirit was in the Father and is glorified with the Son.  
We worship one Power, one Essence, one Godhead,  
and we say: “Holy God,  
You created all things through Your Son  
with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit.  
Holy Mighty,  
through You we know the Father;  
through You the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the world.  
Holy Immortal,  
Comforting Spirit,  
You proceed from the Father and rest in the Son.//  
O Holy Trinity, 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:* Blessed are You, O Christ our God;  
You have revealed the fishermen as most wise  
by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit  
through them, You drew the world into Your net.//  
O Lover of mankind, glory to You! (3x)

### **The Dismissal**

*Deacon:* Wisdom.

*People:* Father, bless.

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

*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 Analoq.*

*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 emptied Himself from the Paternal and Divine Bosom, and came down from heaven upon the earth, and took upon Himself all our nature, and made it divine, and after these things, again ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father, and sent down the divine and Holy Spirit, one in essence, equal in power, and equal in glory, and ever-existing with Him, upon His holy Disciples and Apostles, and through Him enlightened them, and through them the whole world, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most pure Mother; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; 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*

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### **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.