

Great Vespers – St. Nicholas

(for Vespers at an All-Night Vigil, see Appendix F)

*The Holy Doors remain closed and the Curtain (katapetasma) is opened. 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

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.

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.

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.

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. See Appendix A.*

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 skin²;

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.

² a “tent-skin”.

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 heron³ 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.

³ or "egret".

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

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: ⁴For [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 President⁵ 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 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ We pray for the Chief of State and the civil authorities of the place in which we are praying.

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: ⁶For 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, bows to the Priest, and goes to his place at the Altar Table.

The Kathisma

1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the godless.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
2. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the godless will perish.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
3. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in Him with trembling!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
4. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
5. Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God!

⁶ Some ancient sources suggest Prayer 7a or perhaps 1 in Appendix A be read here.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

6. Salvation is of the Lord! Your blessing be upon Your people!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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!

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

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

The Little Litany

Deacon: Again and again in peace 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: ⁷For 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.

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 Call⁸

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.

⁷ Some ancient sources suggest Prayer 2 in Appendix A be read here.

⁸ If the feast falls on a weekday, “Lord, I Call...” is sung in the tone of the first sticheron of the feast. If the feast falls on a Sunday, “Lord, I Call...” is sung in the tone of the week, followed by four stichera from the Octoechos in the same tone, then followed by six stichera to the Apostles; “Glory...”, and the sticheron to the Apostles; “Now and ever...” and the Theotokion in the tone of the week.

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. 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.

Tone 2 (to the Special Melody, “Joseph of Arimathea...”)

O Nicholas, living in Myra,
you were manifested as myrrh, O bishop of Christ,
anointed with the myrrh of the mind:
you make fragrant with myrrh those who keep your memorial with faith
and love,
loosing them, O father, from misery, danger and affliction, //
by your intercessions to Christ.

7. Let Your ears be attentive
to the cry of my prayer.

O Nicholas, the servant of Christ,
you were shown as truly victorious to the faithful people,
strong in temptation, and worthy of your name!
Called from all places, you are swift to come
to those who turn with love to your protection.
Appearing by day and night to the faithful, //
you save them from danger and temptation.

6. If You, O Lord, should take note of our sins,
O Lord, who would survive?
But with You there is forgiveness.

You appeared in a dream to the emperor Constantine and his counselor
Avlabius,
speaking to them, and putting them in fear:
“Set free at once those you hold unjustly bound in prison,
for they are not guilty of lawless murder.
And if you do not listen to my words, //
I will call on the Lord against you, O king.”

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

O glorious Nicholas, the holy preacher of Christ,
you are the great and fervent protector of those in danger:
those on land and sea, far off, or near,
for you are a most compassionate and mighty intercessor.
Therefore, as we assemble, we cry aloud: //
Pray to the Lord that we may be delivered from all danger!

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

Same Tone (to the Special Melody, “With what crowns...”

What crowns of praise shall we weave the bishop?
Although he lived in Myra,
he reaches out in spirit to all who sincerely love him.
He, the consolation of all in affliction,
the refuge of all in danger,
the tower of godliness,
the champion of the faithful,//
for whose sake the greatly merciful Christ has laid low the arrogance of
the enemy.

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

What crowns of praise... (*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!

What songs shall we sing to praise the bishop?
Who wrestled against godlessness
and was the champion of godliness:
a great leader, shield and teacher of the Church,
putting all inglorious heresy to shame,
the destroyer and fierce opponent of Arius,
whose arrogance Christ laid low on his account,//
through his great mercy.

1. For great is His mercy to us,⁹
and the truth of the Lord continues forever.

With what songs of prophecy shall we praise the bishop?
He who foresaw things afar and clearly announced them beforehand,
foretelling them as though they were taking place.
He who looked round the whole world, making injustice cease;
he who appeared in dreams to the emperor wise in God,
and delivered from an unjust execution those who had been in bonds, //
as he is rich in great mercy.

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

Tone 6

O you that love the feasts,
let us gather and sing the praises of the fair ornament of the bishops,
the glory of the fathers,
the fount of wonders and the great protector of the faithful.
Let us say: Rejoice, O guardian of the people of Myra,
their chief and honored counselor and the pillar that cannot be moved!
Rejoice, O light filled with brightness
that makes the ends of the world shine with wonders!
Rejoice, O divine delight of the afflicted,
the fervent advocate of those who suffer from injustice!
And now, all-blessed Nicholas,
never cease praying to Christ our God //
for those who honor the high feast of your memorial with faith and love.

...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.

⁹ Lit., “For His mercy has been strengthened upon us”.

(Theotokion of the Forefeast)

Make ready, O cave, for the Ewe Lamb comes,
bearing Christ in her womb.
O manger, receive Him Who by a word has released the dwellers of
earth from lawlessness.
O shepherds abiding in the fields,
bear witness to the fearful wonder;
you magi from Persia, offer to the King gold,
myrrh, and frankincense,
for the Lord has appeared from a virgin mother,
and she, bending over Him as a handmaiden,
worshipped Him as He lay in her arms, saying to Him:
“How were You sown as seed in me?
How have You grown within me, //
O my Deliverer and my God?”

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

Prokeimenon of the day. See Appendix C.

*The **Priest** and the **Deacon** turn, make the Sign of the Cross (lesser metania) to the High Place, and proceed to their places for the readings. The **Deacon** closes the Holy Doors.*

The First Old Testament Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from Proverbs:

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: (*Composite 2*) The remembrance of the righteous is with eulogies, and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and a mortal who sees discernment; for the profits gained from wisdom are better than the treasures of gold and silver. And wisdom is more valuable than precious stones; and nothing evil will withstand her. For length of days and years of life are in her right hand, and in her left hand are riches and glory; righteousness proceeds from her mouth, and she carries law and mercy upon her tongue.

Now therefore, my son, hear me: Blessed is the man who shall hearken to me and the man who shall guard my ways, for my issues are the issues of life, and grace is prepared from the Lord. Therefore, I implore you, and utter my voice to the sons of men. I, wisdom, dwell with

counsel, and I call upon knowledge and understanding. Counsel and safety are mine; discernment is mine, and strength is mine. I love those who love me, and those who seek me shall find me.

Understand astuteness, O simple ones, and put it in your heart, O uninstructed ones. Obey me, for I speak sacred things, and from my lips I will bring forth things that are true. For my mouth shall speak the truth, but false lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; there is nothing in them crooked or twisted. All things are evident to those who understand and true to those who find knowledge.

I shall instruct you in truth, so that your hope will be in the Lord and you shall be filled with the Spirit.

The Second Old Testament Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from Proverbs.

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: (10:32-11:10 LXX) The mouth of a righteous man distills wisdom, but the tongue of an unrighteous man utterly destroys. The lips of righteous men distill grace, but the mouth of the ungodly is perverse.

Deceitful scales are an abomination before the Lord, but a righteous weight is acceptable to Him.

Wherever arrogance enters, there also is dishonor, but the mouth of the humble meditates on wisdom.

When a righteous man dies, he leaves regret, but the destruction of the ungodly is immediate and brings joy.

Righteousness cuts straight and blameless paths, but ungodliness embraces wrongdoing.

The righteousness of upright men delivers them, but lawless men are taken to their destruction.

When a righteous man dies, his hope does not perish, but the boast of the ungodly perishes.
A righteous man escapes from a snare, but the ungodly man is handed over in his place.
There is a snare for citizens in the mouth of the ungodly, but the perception of the righteous is prosperous.
A city stays upright in the good things of the righteous, but it is razed to the ground by the mouths of the ungodly.
A man in need of discernment treats citizens with contempt, but a man of discernment keeps quiet.

The Third Old Testament Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon.

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: (4:7-15 LXX) Though the righteous man may die before his time, he shall be at rest. For old age is not honored for its length of existence, nor measured by its number of years; but discernment is gray hair for mankind, and a spotless life is the maturity of old age.

There was once a man pleasing to God, and loved by Him, and while living among sinners he was taken up. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or deceit deceive his soul. For envy arising from a lack of judgment obscures what is good, and a whirling of desire undermines an innocent heart. He was made perfect, for in a short time he fulfilled long years, for his soul was pleasing to the Lord; therefore, He took him early from the midst of evil. Yet peoples saw this but did not understand, nor take such a thing to heart, that the Lord's grace and mercy are with His elect, and that He watches over His holy ones.

*Near the end of the third reading, 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 Litany¹⁰

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)

¹⁰ 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 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: ¹¹For 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.

Grant, O Lord

*People:*¹² 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

¹¹ 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 people, who await the rich mercy that comes from You.”

¹² This is technically correct at a Vigil, and is customarily done at any Great Vespers.

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 Litany¹³

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.

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.

¹³ If there is no Deacon, the Priest will remove his Phelonion and take this litany in front of the closed Holy Doors.

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: ¹⁴For 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:

¹⁴ Some ancient sources suggest Prayer 7b in Appendix A be read here.

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 Litia¹⁵

*As the appointed Stichera are sung, the Clergy kiss the Altar Table, and, with the Servers, exit through the Holy Doors and proceed to the vestibule.*¹⁶

The Priest stands in the center, the Acolytes in front of him and to each side.

Then the Deacon censens the icons in the vestibule, the Clergy according to rank, the choirs, and the people and comes to stand in his place to the Priest's right in front of him.

Stichera

Tone 1

Steadfastly gazing upon the height of knowledge,
you plumbed secretly the depth of wisdom.
You enriched the world by your teachings, O father.//
O Bishop Nicholas, ever pray to Christ for us all!

¹⁵ In order to preserve the festal nature of the celebration, it is recommended that the Phelonion be worn, as in the Kievan practice.

¹⁶ In Kievan practice, the Holy Doors are opened, the Deacon remains in the Sanctuary for this procession to cense the Sanctuary, Iconostasis, people, temple and Priest and comes to the place of the Litia.

O faithful servant and man of God;
minister of His mysteries and man filled with the desire of the Spirit;
living pillar and breathing icon:
the church of Myra claims you as her treasure//
and the intercessor for our souls.

Tone 2

Christ our God has made you manifest, O Bishop Nicholas,
as an example of faith and an image of meekness to your flock.
For you brought a sweet fragrance into Myra,
shining brightly by your divine acts of virtue,
as the advocate of orphans and widows.//
Therefore, never cease to intercede that our souls may be saved.

O father Nicholas,
the shrine of your fragrant relics graces Myra abundantly!
And as you appeared in a dream to the emperor,
setting free those unjustly condemned to prison, death and bonds,//
so now, also, you visibly intercede for our souls.

O father Nicholas,
should the city of Myra be silent,
still the whole world enlightened by the fragrance of your myrrh and
many wonders,
joined by those condemned and saved by you,
raises hymns of praise!
And with the people of Myra we also cry aloud in songs://
intercede that our souls may be saved!

Tone 4

O father Nicholas,
you are the fragrant temple of the All-holy Spirit:
as a fountain flowing with the myrrh of gladness; the divine spices of
Christ.

For you have gone out into all the earth as an imitator of the apostles,
through the telling of your wonders.

You have appeared in dreams to people far and near,
delivering those who were to die unjustly from the sword,
and saving from dangers those who call on you.

As we praise you unceasingly, //
set us free from approaching calamities by your intercessions.

Tone 6

O good and faithful servant;
worker of the vineyard of Christ:
you have both borne the burden of the day,
and increased the talent given to you.

You have not shown envy towards those coming after you,
therefore, the gate of heaven has been opened to you:
enter into the joy of your Lord and intercede for us,

O Saint Nicholas,

for in the course of this temporal life
you have run the race to the praise of the Lord

Who has given you glory in the true and heavenly life. //

Since you have boldness before Him, pray that our souls may be saved!

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

The fruit of your brave deeds, O holy father,
has enlightened and brought joy to the hearts of the faithful!
Who cannot wonder at your measureless patience and humility,
at your graciousness towards the poor,
at your compassion for the afflicted?

O Bishop Nicholas, you have divinely taught all things well, //
 and now, wearing your unfading crown, you intercede for our souls!
 ...now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(Theotokion of the Forefeast)

Triumph, O Zion!
 Rejoice, O Jerusalem, city of Christ our God!
 Receive the Creator contained within a cave and a manger.
 Open the gates to me;
 I will enter to see a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes
 Who upholds the creation in the palm of His hand,
 Whose praises the angels sing with unceasing voice://
 the Lord and Giver of life Who saves the race of men.

The Deacon lifts his Orarion and prays:

The Great Intercession

Deacon: O God, save Your people and bless Your inheritance. Visit Your world in mercy and compassion. Exalt the horn of Orthodox Christians, and send down on us Your rich mercies; through the prayers of our most-pure Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; through the power of the precious and life-giving Cross; through the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of heaven; through the supplications of the honorable and glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; of the Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal-to-the-Apostles, Mary Magdalen;

of our fathers among the saints, hierarchs and ecumenical teachers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; of our fathers among the saints Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Irenaeus of Lyons, Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan, Nicholas of Myra in Lycia, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, Gregory of Rome, Augustine of Canterbury, and Theodore of Tarsus;

of Gregory the Enlightener of Armenia; Nina, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlightener of Georgia; Patrick, Enlightener of Ireland; Robert, Bishop of Salzburg and Enlightener of the Bavarians; the holy Methodius and Cyril, Evangelizers of the Slavs; the blessed Princess Olga and the holy Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles; Nahum, Enlightener of the Bulgarians; Nicholas, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlightener of Japan;

of our fathers among the saints: Innocent, the Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to America; Jacob, Enlightener of the Upiic and Athabascan peoples; Nicholas of Zhicha and South Canaan; Tikhon, Enlightener of North America and Patriarch of Moscow; and John the Wonderworker of Shanghai and San Francisco;

of the holy, glorious, and right-victorious Martyrs: the Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen; the Great-Martyr and Healer Panteleimon; the Great-Martyrs Demetrius of Thessalonika, George the Victorious, and Theodore the Recruit; Alban, Protomartyr of Britain; the martyrs Adrian and Natalia of Nicomedia; the New Martyr Gorazd of Prague; the new Hieromartyr Nicetas the Albanian of Mount Athos; the New Hieromartyr and Equal-to-the-Apostles Cosmos of Aitolia;

of Juvenaly, Protomartyr of America and the martyred Aleut Peter; of the New-martyrs and Passion-bearers of Russia, especially the martyrs John of Chicago and Alexander of New York;

of the Protomartyr among women and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thekla; of the Great Martyrs Barbara, Katherine, Irene of Thessalonika, and Marina of Antioch; of Lucy of Syracuse; the martyrs Faith, Hope, and Love and their mother Sophia; the Virgin-Martyrs of Rome: Anastasia, Tatiana, Paraskeva, Xenia, Agnes, Lucy, Susanna, and Eugenia; of Hripsime and Gayane of Armenia and Susanna of Georgia;

of our venerable and God-bearing fathers: Anthony the Great; Pachomias the Great; Sabbas; Euthymius; Benedict of Nursia; Colomban of Iona; Theodore of Studion; Anthony and Theodosius and the other wonderworkers of the Caves in Kiev; Sergius of Radonezh; Paisius of Modavia; Seraphim of Sarov; Macarius of Corinth; Nectarios of Aigina; Nicodemus of the Holy

Mountain; Sergius and Herman of Valaam; Ambrose, Elder of Optina; Silouan of Mount Athos;

and our venerable father Herman, Elder and Wonderworker of Alaska and all America;

of our venerable and God-bearing mothers: Pelagia; Theodosia; Anastasia; Eupraxia; Fevronia; Theodulia; Euphrosyne; Mary of Egypt; and Hilda of Whitby; and Xenia of Petersburg, Fool-for-Christ; of the Holy and God-crowned Emperor Constantine and his mother Helen; of the Righteous Sarah, wife of Abraham; the Righteous Hanna, mother of the Prophet Samuel; Emilia, mother of Saints Basil the Great, Macrina, and Gregory of Nyssa; Silvia, mother of Gregory the Dialogist; and Genevieve of Paris;

of St. John of Kronstadt; and our father-among-the-saints, Alexis of Minneapolis and Wilkes-barre, defender of the Orthodox Church in America;

of Saint (of the day) ; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints, hear us sinners who pray to You, and have mercy on us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (12x)

Deacon: Again we pray for [His Beatitude] Metropolitan _____, for [His Grace] our Bishop _____, and for all our brotherhood in Christ; and for every Christian soul afflicted and weary in well-doing, in need of God's mercies and help; for the protection of this city (*or countryside, or town, or village, or holy abode*), and for those who dwell therein, for the peace and quietness of the whole world; for the good estate of the holy churches of God; for the salvation and help of our fathers and brethren who with diligence and fear of God labor and serve; for those who are absent and those who are abroad; for the healing of those who lie in sickness; for the repose, refreshment and blessed memory and forgiveness of sins of all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us who lie here and everywhere; for the

deliverance of captives; for our brethren who are serving, and for all who serve and have served in this holy temple (*or holy abode*), let us say.

People: Lord, have mercy. (12x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the President and all civil authorities of this country, and for those serving in its armed forces, let us say.

People: Lord, have mercy. (12x)

Deacon: Again we pray that He will keep this city (*or countryside, or town, or village, or holy abode*) and every city and countryside from wrath, famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, the sword, foreign invasion or civil war, and from sudden death; that our good God, the Lover of mankind, will be gracious, favorable, and conciliatory, and turn away and dispel all the wrath stirred up against us, and all sickness, and may deliver us from His righteous chastisement which impends against us, and have mercy on us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray that the Lord God will hear the voice of supplication of us sinners and have mercy on us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Priest: Hear us, O God, our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are far off on the sea; and be gracious, be gracious, O Master, to us sinners and have mercy on us. For You are a merciful God, the Lover of 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.

Priest: + Peace be unto all.

People: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

The Prayer With Heads Bowed

Priest: O Master, great in mercy, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, through the intercessions of our most-pure Lady, and of all the saints, make our prayer acceptable, grant us forgiveness of our trespasses, hide us under the shelter of Your wings, drive away from us every enemy and adversary, give peace to our life, O Lord, have mercy on us and on Your world, and save our souls, for You are good and You love mankind.

*The procession proceeds “into the temple” (nave) to the center where the table is prepared with the tray of loaves, wheat, wine, and oil. The **Deacon** stands to the right of the Priest, facing East. The **Servers** stand on the sides, facing inward.*

The Aposticha

Tone 5 (to the Special Melody, “Rejoice...”)

People: Rejoice, O saintly Bishop,
 pure abode of the virtues:
 holy example of the divine priesthood,
 great shepherd and bright luminary who bear the name of victory;
 you are compassionate to those who call on you in prayer,
 and you bear the supplications of the weak;
 you are a deliverer and protector of those who honor
 your glorious memory in faith.
 Pray that Christ may grant the world great mercy!

Reader: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!

People: Rejoice, most sacred mind, pure dwelling of the Trinity,
 pillar of the Church and stay of the faithful,
 help of the fallen, star ever dispersing temptations and afflictions

through the radiance of your prayers,
well-pleasing to God.
You are a calm haven, O Bishop Nicholas,
where those fleeing are saved from the threatening wave of life.//
Pray that Christ may grant our souls great mercy!

Reader: Your priests, O Lord, are clothed with righteousness!

People: Rejoice, for you are filled with divine zeal!
By fearful visions and warnings in dreams
you delivered those about to die unjustly from an evil sentence.
O Nicholas, a fount pouring forth myrrh abundantly in Myra:
refreshing souls while expelling the stench of passions,
you were a scythe cutting the weeds of error;
a fan winnowing the chaff of Arius' teachings.//
Entreat Christ to send our souls great mercy!

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

Tone 2

People: O man of God, faithful servant, minister of the Lord,
man of desire and chosen vessel,
pillar and stay of the Church,
inheritor of the Kingdom,//
let your supplication for us to the King be unceasing!

Reader: ...now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(Theotokion of the Forefeast)

People: O unwedded Virgin, from where have you come?
Who has given you birth?
Who is your mother?
How can you carry your Creator in your arms?
How is your womb free from corruption?
O most holy one,

we see great and fearful mysteries upon earth fulfilled in you;
 we adorn the cave as a house worthy of you;
 we ask the heavens to send us a star,
 for behold the magi proceed from the east to the west
 desiring to see the Salvation of mortal men//
 shining in your arms as a pillar of flame.

The Canticle of Simeon

People: 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

Reader: 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 Deacon takes the censer, receives a blessing from the Priest for the censuring, and censes around the table on which lies the Litia tray while the people sing the Troparion three times. On the last time around, he censes the festal icon and turns to cense the Celebrant, and the five loaves from the front only.

The Troparia

Tone 4

People: You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith,
an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence.
Because of your lowliness, Heaven was opened to you,
because of your poverty, riches were granted to you.//
O holy Bishop Nicholas pray to Christ our God to save our souls! (2x)

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

Tone 4

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos,
Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you:
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb;
for you have borne the Savior of our souls.

The Deacon gives the censer to the Acolyte, makes the Sign of the Cross, bows to the Priest, and goes to his place.

The Blessing of Bread

The Deacon raises his Orarion and says:

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and with them You satisfied the five thousand, + bless these loaves, wheat, wine, and oil, and multiply them in this city, and in all the world, and sanctify all the faithful who partake of them. For it is You, O Christ our God, Who bless and sanctify all things, and to You we send up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, and good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Priest enters through the Holy Doors for the Dismissal. The Deacon stands to the right of the Analo.

The Dismissal

If it is an All-Night Vigil or there has been a Litia:

People: Blessed be the name of the Lord, henceforth and forevermore. (3x)

Psalm 33:1-10

Reader: I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall be continually in my mouth.

My soul will be praised by the Lord;
let the meek hear and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me
and let us exalt His name together.

I sought the Lord and He answered me,
and He delivered me out of all my troubles.

Come to Him and be radiant,
and your faces will not be ashamed.

This poor man called and the Lord heard him
and saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord will camp round those who fear Him
and will deliver them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good!
Blessed is the man who hopes in Him.

O fear the Lord, all you His saints,
because those who fear Him lack nothing.

(see Note ¹⁷)

The rich do become poor and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord
will not be in want of anything good.

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.

¹⁷ In some traditions, this verse is sung with sweet melody by one or more singers.

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.

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 [(*Sunday*) He Who rose from the dead,] Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most pure Mother; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostles; of our Father among the Saints, Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia whom we commemorate today; of St. (*of the temple.....*); 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.

APPENDIX C

VESPERS PROKEIMENA

in their complete form

Saturday Evening

Psalm 92 (93)

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the sixth tone:

The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty.

Verse: The Lord is robed, He is girded with strength.

Verse: Yea, the world is established; it shall never be moved,

Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.

Verse: The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice, the floods lift up their roaring.

Verse: Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty!

Verse: Your decrees are very sure;

holiness befits Your house, O Lord, forevermore.

Deacon: The Lord is King...

People: ...He is robed in majesty.

Sunday Evening

Psalm 133 (134)

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the eighth tone:

Behold, now bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord.

Verse: You who stand in the temple of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

Verse: Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord!

Verse: May the Lord bless you from Zion, He Who made heaven and earth!

Deacon: Behold, now bless the Lord...

People: ...all you servants of the Lord.

Monday Evening

Psalm 4

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the fourth tone:

The Lord hears me when I call to Him.

Verse: When I called, the God of my righteousness heard me.

Verse: You have given me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

Verse: O men, how long shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after life?

Verse: But know that the Lord has set apart the godly for Himself; the Lord hears when I call to Him.

Verse: Be angry, but sin not; commune with your own hearts on your beds, and be silent.

Verse: Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.

Verse: There are many who say, “O that we might see some good! Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Lord!”

Verse: You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.

Verse: In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Deacon: The Lord hears me...

People: ...when I call to Him.

Tuesday Evening

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.

Wednesday Evening

Psalm 53 (54)

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the fifth tone:

Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength.

People: Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength.

Verse: Hear my prayer, O God, listen to the words of my mouth.

Verse: For insolent men have risen against me, ruthless men seek my life; they do not set God before them.

Verse: Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life.

Verse: He will requite my enemies with evil; in Your faithfulness put an end to them.

Verse: With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to You; I will give thanks to Your name, O Lord, for it is good.

Verse: For You have delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

Deacon: Save me, O God, by Your name...

People: ...and vindicate me by Your strength.

Thursday Evening

Psalm 120 (121)

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the sixth tone:

My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Verse: I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

Verse: My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved. He Who keeps you will not slumber.

Verse: Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

Verse: The Lord is your keeper, the Lord is your shade on your right hand.

Verse: The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night.

Verse: The Lord will keep you from all evil. He will keep your life.

Verse: The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Deacon: My help comes from the Lord...

People: ...Who made heaven and earth.

Friday Evening

Psalm 58 (59)

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon in the seventh tone:

You, O God, are my helper and Your mercy shall go before me.

Verse: Deliver me from my enemies, O God, and protect me from those who rise up against me.

- Verse:* Deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men.
- Verse:* For lo, they lie in wait for my life; fierce men band themselves against me. For no transgression or sin of mine, O Lord, for no fault of mine, they run and make ready.
- Verse:* Rouse Yourself, come to my help, and see! You, Lord God of hosts, are the God of Israel. Awake to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.
- Verse:* Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. There they are, bellowing with their mouths, snarling with their lips--for "Who," they think, "will hear us?"
- Verse:* But You, O Lord, laugh at them; You hold all the nations in derision. O my strength, I will sing praises to You; for You, O God, are my fortress. My god in His steadfast love will meet me; my God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.
- Verse:* Slay them not, lest my people forget; make them totter by Your power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield! For the sin of their mouths, the word of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride. For the cursing and lies which they utter, consume them in wrath, consume them till they are no more, that men may know that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth.
- Verse:* Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. They roam about for food, and growl if they do not get their fill.
- Verse:* But I will sing of Your might; I will sing aloud of Your steadfast love in the morning. For You have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress. O my Strength, I will sing praises to You, for You, O God, are my fortress, the God Who shows me steadfast love.

Deacon: You, O God, are my helper...

People: ...and Your mercy shall go before me.

APPENDIX F

GREAT VESPERS AT A VIGIL

The **Priest** with the censer, and the **Deacon** with a candle, do a complete censuring of the Sanctuary (the Deacon walks in front of the Priest while the Priest censes).

After censuring the Sanctuary, the **Deacon** exits through the North door to the Solea and says:

Deacon: Arise! Bless, Master!

The **Deacon** then goes to the High Place and stands facing the Priest.

The **Priest**, moving to the front of the Altar Table, makes the Sign of the Cross with the censer and says:

Priest: Glory to the holy, consubstantial, life-creating, and undivided Trinity, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

And Great Vespers continues as usual except:

- *“Come, let us worship” is sung by the Clergy.*
- *The Introductory Psalm is sung.*
- *“Grant, O Lord...” is usually sung.*
- *The Canticle of Simeon is sung.*
- *The Litia is correct in Russian usage, if appointed.*
- *The Troparion is replaced by “Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos” (3x) unless it is a Great Feast.*