

## **The Sunday of the Prodigal Son Vespers on Saturday Evening**

*After the Psalm of Introduction (Psalm 103) and the Great Litany, we read Blessed is the man (the first kathisma of the Psalter).*

*To Lord, I have cried, ten stichera are sung: six of the Resurrection in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, and the following two from the Triodion, each of them being repeated:*

### *Tone One*

I was entrusted with a sinless and living land, but I sowed the ground with sin and reaped with a sickle the ears of slothfulness; in thick sheaves. I garnered my actions, but winnowed them not on the threshing floor of repentance. But I beg Thee, my God, the preëternal husbandman, with the wind of Thy loving-kindness winnow the chaff of my works, and grant to my soul the corn of forgiveness; shut me in Thy heavenly storehouse and save me (*Twice*).

Brethren, let us learn the meaning of this mystery. For when the Prodigal Son ran back from sin to his Father's house, his loving Father came out to meet him and kissed him. He restored to the Prodigal the tokens of his proper glory, and mystically He made glad on high, sacrificing the fatted calf. Let our lives, then, be worthy of the loving Father who has offered sacrifice, and of the glorious Victim who is the Saviour of our souls (*Twice*).

Glory to the Father...

### *Tone Two*

Of what great blessings in my wretchedness have I deprived myself! From what a kingdom in my misery have I fallen! I have wasted the riches that were given to me, I have transgressed the commandment. Alas, unhappy soul I Thou art henceforth condemned to the eternal fire. Therefore before the end cry out to Christ our God:

Receive me as the Prodigal Son, O God, and have mercy upon me.

Both now...

*Then the Theotokion (Dogmatikon) in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, followed by the Entrance, O Gentle Light, and the Prokimenon of the day, The Lord is King.*

*At the Litya we sing the stichera of the patron saint of the church or monastery, and then:*

Glory to the Father...

### *Tone Four*

As the Prodigal Son I come to Thee, merciful Lord. I have wasted my whole life in a foreign land; I have scattered the wealth which Thou gavest me, O Father. Receive me in repentance, O God, and have mercy upon me.

Both now...

### *Theotokion*

The mystery hidden from all ages and unknown to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth: God is made flesh in a union without confusion, and willingly on our behalf accepts the Cross. Through it He raises Adam and saves our souls from death.

*We sing the Aposticha in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, and then:  
Glory to the Father...*

*Tone Six*

I have wasted the wealth which the Father gave to me, and in my wretchedness I have fed with the dumb beasts. Yearning after their food, I remained hungry and could not eat my fill. But now I return to the compassionate Father and cry out with tears: I fall down before Thy loving-kindness, receive me as a hired servant and save me.

Both now...

*Theotokion*

Christ the Lord, my Maker and Deliverer, came forth from thy womb. all-hallowed Queen, and clothing Himself in me He delivered Adam from the curse of old. Therefore with never-silent voices we praise thee as true Mother of God and Virgin, .and with the salutation of the Angel we cry unto thee: Hail. Lady, guardian and protection and salvation of our souls.

*The troparion, O Theotokos Virgin (thrice), and the rest of Vespers.*

### Matins

*After the Six Psalms and the Great Litany we sing God is the Lord, followed by the troparion (apolytikion) of the Resurrection (twice), and the Theotokion in the Tone of the week and then come the readings from the Psalter with the sessional hymns in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos.*

*After the usual verses of the Polyeleos, we sing Psalm 136:*

By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and we wept when we remembered Sion. Alleluia.

Upon the willows in the midst thereof did we hang our instruments. Alleluia.

For there, they that had taken us captive asked us for words of song. And they that had led us away asked us for a hymn, saying: Sing us one of the songs of Sion. Alleluia.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Alleluia.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Alleluia.

Let my tongue cleave to my throat, if I remember thee not, If I set not Jerusalem above all other, as at the head of my joy. Alleluia.

Remember, O Lord, the sons of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem, Who said: Lay waste, lay waste to her, even to the foundations thereof. Alleluia.

O daughter of Babylon, thou wretched one, blessed shall he be who shall reward thee wherewith thou hast rewarded us. Alleluia.

Blessed shall he be who shall seize and dash thine infants against the rock. Alleluia.

*Then the Evlogitaria, the Ypakoe, the Hymns of Ascent and the Prokimenon in the Tone of the week, and the appointed Morning Gospel. We then sing Having Beheld the Resurrection of Christ, followed by Psalm 50, and then, as on the previous Sunday:*

Glory to the Father...

#### *Tone Eight*

The doors of repentance do Thou open to me, O Giver of life, / for my spirit waketh at dawn toward Thy holy temple, / bearing a temple of the body all defiled. / But in Thy compassion cleanse it / by the loving-kindness of Thy mercy.

Both now...

#### *Same Tone*

Guide me in the paths of salvation, O Theotokos, / for I have defiled my soul with shameful sins, / and have wasted all my life in slothfulness, / but by thine intercessions / deliver me from all uncleanness.

#### *Tone Six*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; / and according to the multitude of Thy compassions, / blot out my transgression.

When I think of the multitude of evil things I have done, / I, a wretched one, / I tremble at the fearful day of judgment; / but trusting in the mercy of Thy loving-kindness, / like David do I cry unto Thee: / Have mercy on me, O God, / according to Thy great mercy.

*The Canon*

*We use four troparia (including the irmos) from the Canon of the Resurrection, two troparia from the Canon of the Cross and the Resurrection, two troparia from the Canon to the Theotokos, all in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos; and then the Canon of the Triodion with six troparia, by Joseph.*

*Tone Two*

*Ode One*

*(Irmos)* Take up the song of Moses...

O Jesus my God, as the Prodigal Son now accept me also in repentance. All my life I have lived in carelessness and provoked Thee to anger.

The divine wealth that once Thou gavest me I have sinfully wasted. I have departed far from Thee and lived as the Prodigal, O compassionate Father. Accept me also now as I return.

Open Thy fatherly embrace now and accept me also as the Prodigal Son, O most merciful Lord, that I may glorify Thee with thanksgiving.

*Theotokion*

O God, bestow the fullness of Thy grace upon me. Be Thou my Benefactor, and at the holy prayers of Thy Mother pass over the multitude of my offences.

*(Katavasia)* Take up the song of Moses and cry aloud, my soul: He is my helper and protector, and is become my salvation; this is my God and I will glorify Him.

*Ode Three*

*(Irmos)* O God, the husbandman of all good trees...

Utterly beside myself, I have clung in madness to the sins suggested to me by the passions. But accept me, O Christ, as the Prodigal.

With the words of the Prodigal I cry aloud: I have sinned, O Father; like him, receive me now in Thine embrace and reject me not.

Open Thine arms, O Christ, and in loving-kindness receive me as I return from a far country of sin and passions.

*Theotokion*

O fair among women, my many sins have brought me to poverty: enrich me, O pure Virgin, with the vision of beauty, that I may glorify thee.

*(Katavasia)* O God, the husbandman of all good trees and fruit, make fruitful my barren mind in Thy compassion.

*Sessional Hymn*

*Tone One*

Make haste to open unto me Thy fatherly embrace, for as the Prodigal I have wasted my life. In the unfailing wealth of Thy mercy, O Saviour, reject not my heart in its poverty. For with compunction I cry to Thee, O Lord: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee.

Glory to the Father...

*Repeat.*

Both now...

*Theotokion*

O pure Theotokos Virgin who hast not known man, thou art the only guardian and protection of the faithful: deliver from danger and affliction and distress all who have put their hope in thee, O Maiden, and save our souls by thy divine intercession.

## Ode Four

*(Irmos)* Foreseeing Thy birth from a Virgin...

The wealth of blessings which Thou gavest me, heavenly Father, have I wrongly wasted and become the slave of strangers. Therefore I cry aloud to Thee: I have sinned against Thee; receive me like the Prodigal of old, opening Thine arms to me.

I have become enslaved to every evil and in my wretchedness I have bowed down before the demons that provoke the passions; through heedlessness I have lost possession of myself. O Saviour, heavenly Father, take pity on me as I flee for refuge to Thy many mercies.

I am filled with every shameful thing and dare not look up at the height of heaven, for I have foolishly bowed down to sin. But now I return and cry aloud in compunction: I have sinned against Thee; receive me, King of all.

*Theotokion*

Thou art the help of men, the sure hope of all Christians, O Virgin undefiled, .and the refuge of the saved. Save me by thy motherly intercessions and count me worthy of the life to come.

*(Katavasia)* Foreseeing Thy birth from a Virgin, the prophet cried aloud: I have heard the report of Thee and was afraid; for from Teman and the holy overshadowed mountain hast Thou come, O Christ.

## Ode Five

*(Irmos)* The night is far spent...

I was enslaved to strangers, an exile in the land of corruption, and I was filled with shame. But now I return, merciful Lord, and cry to Thee: I have sinned.

Accept me now, O heavenly Father, in Thy fatherly compassion as I return from evil, and reject me not in Thine exceeding mercy.

I have angered Thee beyond measure, O Christ, and I dare not look up at the height of heaven. But knowing Thy compassion, merciful Lord, I cry: I have sinned, be merciful to me and save me.

*Theotokion*

All-holy Virgin, full of grace, who hast borne the propitiation of all, by thy prayers lighten the heavy burden of my sins.

*(Katavasia)* The night is far spent, the day is at hand, and the light has shone forth on the world. Therefore the ranks of angels sing Thy praises and glorify Thee, Christ our God.

## Ode Six

*(Irmos)* I am held fast, Saviour, in the depth of sins...

The depth of sin ever holds me fast, and the tempest of transgressions overwhelms me. Pilot me, O Christ my God, to the haven of life and save me, King of glory.

I have wasted in evil living the riches which the Father gave me, and now am brought to poverty. I am filled with shame and enslaved to fruitless thoughts. Therefore I cry to Thee who lovest mankind: Take pity on me and save me.

I am wasted with hunger, deprived of every blessing, and an exile from Thy presence, O Christ supreme in loving-kindness. Take pity on me as I now return, and save me as I sing the praises of Thy love for mankind.

*Theotokion*

O Maiden who hast conceived Christ the Saviour and Master, though in my poverty I lack all good, count me worthy of salvation, O pure Virgin, that I may sing the praises of thy majesty.

*(Katavasia)* I am held fast, Saviour, in the depth of sin and overwhelmed by the sea of life: but as Thou hast brought out Jonah from the belly of the whale, bring me out from the passions and save me.

*Kontakion, Tone Three*

Foolishly have I run away from Thy glory, O Father, wasting in sin the wealth that Thou gavest me. Therefore with the words of the Prodigal I cry unto Thee: I have sinned before Thee, compassionate Father. Accept me in repentance and make me as one of Thy hired servants.

*Ikos*

Our Saviour teaches us every day with His own voice: let us therefore hearken to the Scriptures concerning the Prodigal who became wise once more, and with faith let us follow the good example of his repentance. With humbleness of heart let us cry out to Him who knows all secrets: We have sinned against Thee, merciful Father, and are not worthy ever again to be called Thy children as before. But since Thou art by nature full of love for man, accept me and make me as one of Thy hired servants.

Ode Seven

*(Irmos)* As the cherubim in heaven...

I have bowed down miserably to the pleasures of the body and have become wholly enslaved to the demons that provoke the passions; and I have become a stranger to Thee who lovest mankind. But now I cry with the voice of the Prodigal: I have sinned, O Christ, despise me not, for Thou alone art merciful.

I call out, "I have sinned," and I dare not look up at the height of heaven, O King of all; for in my foolishness I alone have angered Thee, rejecting Thy commandments. Therefore, since Thou alone art good, cast me not away from Thy presence.

At the prayers of the apostles, the prophets, the saints, the holy martyrs and the righteous, O Christ my Lord, forgive me all the offences which have provoked Thee to anger in Thy goodness, and I shall sing Thy praises for evermore.

*Theotokion*

O Theotokos, thou art more glorious than the cherubim and seraphim and all the heavenly hosts. With them, O Virgin undefiled, entreat Him who took flesh from thee, God the Word from the Father without beginning, that we may all be counted worthy of eternal blessings.

*(Katavasia)* As the cherubim in heaven, the Children sang together in the furnace: Blessed art Thou, O God, for in truth and judgement hast Thou brought all these things upon us because of our sins; and Thou art praised above all and glorified for ever.

Ode Eight

*(Irmos)* Let us praise Him who, in the bush of old...

O Thou who in great mercy hast come down upon earth to save the world through Thy voluntary poverty, in Thy compassion save me, for I am poor in all good works.

I have departed far from Thy commandments and in utter wretchedness I am enslaved to the deceiver. But now I turn back as the Prodigal of old: accept me as I fall before Thee, heavenly Father.

Ruled by corrupting thoughts, I am full of darkness and separated far from Thee, and I have lost all possession of myself, O merciful Lord. Therefore save me as I fall before Thee in repentance.

*Theotokion*

O pure Mother of God, the only restoration of the fallen, raise me up, for I am wholly crushed and humbled by every kind of sin.

*(Katavasia)* Let us praise Him who, in the bush of old, prefigured the miracle of the Virgin to Moses on Mount Sinai: let us bless and exalt Him above all for ever.

Ode Nine

*(Irmos)* Who among those born on earth has ever seen...

Behold, O Christ, the affliction of my heart; behold my turning back; behold my tears, O Saviour, and despise me not. But embrace me once again in Thy compassion and count me with the multitude of the saved, that with thanksgiving I may sing the praises of Thy mercy.

As the Thief I cry to Thee, "Remember me". As the Publican, with eyes cast down to earth, I beat my breast and say, "Be merciful". As the Prodigal deliver me from every evil, O King who pities all, that I may sing the praises of Thy boundless compassion.

Groan now, my soul, all-wretched, and cry aloud to Christ: O Lord who for my sake hast become poor of Thine own will, in my poverty I lack every good work: make me rich with the abundance of Thy blessings, for Thou alone art full of love and mercy. O loving Lord, once Thou hast rejoiced at the voluntary return of the Prodigal: rejoice now because of me, wretched though I am: open Thy holy embrace to me, that saved I may sing the praises of Thy boundless compassion.

*Theotokion*

I pray thee, Virgin, through thy light-giving intercessions enlighten the eyes of my mind darkened by evil, and lead me into the paths of repentance. So shall I sing thy praises as is right: for thou hast given flesh to the Word that is beyond all speech.

*(Katavasia)* Who among those born on earth has ever seen or heard of such a thing? That a Virgin should conceive and without pain of travail bear a Child. Beholding this thy wonder, O Mary, pure Mother of God, we magnify thee.

*The appointed exapostilarion of the Resurrection, and then:*

The wealth of grace that Thou hast given me, in my wretchedness I have wasted sinfully; all to no purpose I have left my true home, and as the Prodigal I have scattered my riches deceitfully among the demons. But now on my return accept me as the Prodigal, merciful Father, and save me.

Glory to the Father...

*Another Exapostilarion*

I have wasted and spent all Thy riches, O Lord, and in my misery have become the servant of the evil demons. But, compassionate Saviour, take pity on the Prodigal, cleanse me from filth, and give me back once more the robe of Thy Kingdom.

Both now...

*Theotokion*

O holy Virgin Mother of God, boast and glory of the apostles, martyrs, prophets and the saints, gain the gracious favour of thy Son and Lord towards us thy servants, when He shall sit to judge each man according to his due.

*Lauds. Five stichera of the Resurrection in the Tone of the week, from the Octoechos, and then the following three stichera from the Triodion:*

*Tone Two*

I come before Thee, Lord, with the cry of the Prodigal: I have sinned in Thy sight, gracious Master; I have wasted the riches of Thy gifts of grace. But receive me in repentance, Saviour, and save me.

Arise, O Lord my God, let Thy hand be lifted high; forget not Thy paupers to the end (*Psalm 9: 33*).

*Tone Four*

As the Prodigal Son I come to Thee, merciful Lord. I have wasted my whole life in a foreign land; I have scattered the wealth which Thou gavest me, O Father. Receive me in repentance, O God, and have mercy on me.

I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will tell of all Thy wonders (*Psalm 9: 2*).

*Tone Eight*

As the Prodigal I have wasted the riches which the Father gave me; I have spent them all and now am destitute, dwelling in the land of evil citizens. No longer can I bear to live among them, but turning back I cry to Thee, merciful Father: I have sinned against heaven and before Thee, and I am not worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants, O God, and have mercy upon me.

Glory to the Father...

*Tone Six*

O loving Father, I have departed far from Thee, but forsake me not, neither reject me from Thy Kingdom. The evil enemy has stripped me and taken all my wealth; I have wasted like the Prodigal the grace given to my soul. But now I have arisen and returned, and to Thee I cry aloud: Make me as one of Thy hired servants. For my sake on the Cross Thou hast stretched out Thy sinless hands, to snatch me from the evil beast and to clothe me once again in my first raiment, for Thou alone art full of mercy.

Both now...

Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Theotokos...

*Great Doxology, the two Litanies, and the Dismissal.*

### Liturgy

*The Typika (Psalms 102 and 145) and the Beatitudes. With the Beatitudes we sing four troparia in the Tone of the week from the Octoechos, and four troparia from Ode Six of the Canon in the Triodion.*

*Prokimenon, Tone One*

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee (*Psalm 32: 22*).

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright (*ibid.*, 1).

*Epistle: I Corinthians 6: 12-20.*

*Alleluia, Tone One*

It is God Who givest avengement unto me and hast subdued peoples under me (*Psalm 17: 48*).

It is He that magnifieth the salvation of His king (*ibid.*, 51).

*Gospel: Luke 15: 11-31.*

*Communion verse*

Praise the Lord from the heavens: praise Him in the highest. (*Psalm 148: 1*).

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*On Wednesday and Friday of the following week, the usual fast is observed.*