

## Forgiveness Vespers

*At the conclusion of the 9th hour:*

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

*Reader:* Amen.

O come, let us worship God our King.

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

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

### *Psalm 103*

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid. The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice. He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares. He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad. Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and

unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being. May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

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

*Great Litany*

*Deacon:* In peace let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

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

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God, and the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For this holy temple, and for them that with faith, reverence, and the fear of God enter herein, let us pray to the Lord

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For our Metropolitan and Father *Name*, our Archbishop and Father *Name*, our Bishop *Name*; for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For the suffering Russian land and its Orthodox people both in the homeland and in the diaspora, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For this land, its authorities and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

That He may deliver His people from enemies both visible and invisible, and confirm in us oneness of mind, brotherly love and piety, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For this city (*or this town, or this holy monastery*), for every city and country, and the faithful that dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

For seasonable weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

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

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

That we may be delivered from all tribulation, wrath, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

*Choir:* Lord, have mercy.

Calling to remembrance our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God.

*Choir:* To Thee O Lord.

*Priest:* For unto Thee is due all glory, honor and worship; to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

*Lord I Have Cried...*

*Reader:* In the \_\_\_ Tone: Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me.

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

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

*Reader:* Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips.

Incline not my heart unto words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins.

With men that work iniquity; and I will not join with their chosen.

The righteous man will chasten me with mercy and reprove me; as for the oil of the sinner, let it not anoint my head.

For yet more is my prayer in the presence of their pleasures; swallowed up near by the rock have their judges been.

They shall hear my words, for they be sweetened; as a clod of earth is broken upon the earth, so have their bones been scattered nigh unto hades.

For unto Thee, O Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes, in Thee have I hoped; take not my soul away.

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity.

The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone until I pass by.

With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication.

I will pour out before Him my supplication, mine affliction before Him will I declare.

When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths.

In this way wherein I have walked they hid for me a snare.

I looked upon my right hand, and beheld, and there was none that did know me.

Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul.

I have cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion art Thou in the land of the living.

Attend unto my supplication, for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from them that persecute me, for they are stronger than I.

*Reader: (10) Bring my soul out of prison: Choir: that I may confess Thy name.*

*And then is sung the first stichera, and likewise are sung the rest of the stichoi.*

(9) The righteous shall wait patiently for me / until Thou shalt reward me.

(8) Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; / O Lord, hear my voice.

(7) Let Thine ears be attentive / to the voice of my supplication.

(6) If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? / For with Thee there is forgiveness.

(5) For Thy name's sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, / my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

(4) From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch / let Israel hope in the Lord.

(3) For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; / and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

(2) O praise the Lord, all ye nations; / praise Him, all ye peoples.

(1) For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, / and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

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

*Sticheron (Doxasticon) from the Menaion, if there is one.*

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

*The Theotokion*

*There is an entrance with the Censer.*

*Deacon: Wisdom! Aright!*

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

*Deacon: Let us attend. Peace be unto all. Wisdom! The Great Prokimenon in the 8th Tone:*

*Turn not Thy countenance away from Thy servant, for I am afflicted; quickly hearken unto me. Attend unto my soul and deliver it.*

*Choir: Turn not Thy countenance away from Thy servant, for I am afflicted; quickly hearken unto me. Attend unto my soul and deliver it.*

*Deacon: May Thy salvation, O God, be quick to help me.*

*Choir: Turn not Thy countenance away...*

*Deacon: Let beggars behold it and be glad.*

*Choir: Turn not Thy countenance away...*

*Deacon: Seek after God, and your soul shall live.*

*Choir: Turn not Thy countenance away...*

*Deacon: Turn not Thy countenance away from Thy servant, for I am afflicted; quickly hearken unto me.*

*Choir: Attend unto my soul and deliver it.*

*During the following prayer, the priest removes his phelonion and puts on a dark epitrachilion:*

*Reader: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.*

*Amen.*

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master, give me understanding of Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes.

O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the work of Thy hands. To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

From this point on the responses are sung to the Lenten melody. The vestments in the Church are also changed to dark colors at this point.

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

*Choir: Lord, have mercy.*

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

*Choir: Lord, have mercy.*

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

*Choir: Grant this, O Lord.*

An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir: Grant this, O Lord.*

Pardon and remission of our sins and offences, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir: Grant this, O Lord.*

Things good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

*Choir: Grant this, O Lord.*

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

*Choir: Grant this, O Lord.*

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

*Choir: Grant this, O Lord.*

Calling to remembrance our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life unto Christ our God.

*Choir: To Thee, O Lord.*

*Priest: For a good God art Thou, and the Lover of Mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto*

the ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

*Priest:* Peace be unto all.

*Choir:* And to thy spirit.

*Deacon or Priest:* Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

*Choir:* To Thee, O Lord. (*Very Slowly.*)

*Priest or Bishop:* Blessed and most glorified be the dominion of Thy kingdom: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

### *The Aposticha*

*See Printout*

#### *The prayer of St. Symeon:*

*Choir:* Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

*Reader:* Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (*Thrice*)

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

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

Lord have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

*Priest:* For Thine 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 the ages of ages.

*Choir:* Amen.

#### *The Dismissal Troparia, Tone 4:*

O Theotokos and Virgin / Rejoice! O Mary, full of grace the Lord is with thee; / blessed art thou among women, / and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; // for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls. *Prostration*

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

O Baptizer of Christ, keep us all in remembrance, / that we may be delivered from our Iniquities; // for to thee was given grace to intercede for us. *Prostration*

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

Plead in our behalf, O holy apostles and all saints, / that we may be delivered from perils and afflictions; // for we have acquired you as fervent mediators before the Savior. *Prostration*

Beneath thy compassion do we take refuge, O Theotokos; / disdain not our supplication in times of affliction; // but do thou deliver us from perils, O only pure, O only

blessed one. *No prostration*

*Reader:* Lord, have mercy. *40 times*

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim; who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, Father bless.

*Priest:* He that is is blessed, Christ our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

*Reader:* Amen. O Heavenly King, strengthen Orthodox Christians, establish the faith, subdue the nations, give peace to the world, keep well this city; settle our departed fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous, and receive us in penitence and confession, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

*Priest:* O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. *Prostration*

But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. *Prostration*

Yea, O Lord King, grant me to see my own failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. *Prostration*

#### *The Dismissal*

*Priest:* Glory to Thee, O Christ God, our hope, glory to Thee.

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

Lord have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Father, bless.

*Priest or Bishop:* May Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His most pure Mother; through the mediations of the honorable, heavenly Bodiless Hosts; of the holy and glorious apostles; and Saint *Name (to whom the church is dedicated)*; and Saint *Name (of the day)*; 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 loveth mankind.

*Choir:* Amen.

*Then follows the ceremony of mutual forgiveness. The priest stands beside the analogion, and the faithful come up one by one and venerate the ikon, after which each makes a prostration before the priest, saying "Forgive me, a sinner." The priest also makes a prostration before each "May God forgive thee. Forgive me." The person responds, "May God forgive thee" and receives a blessing from the priest. Meanwhile the choir sings quietly the Irmoi of the Paschal Canon, or else the Paschal Aposticha. After receiving the priests blessing, the faithful also ask forgiveness of each other.*

*When all have asked forgiveness, the priest says:*

*"Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us."*

*And the Choir responds: "Amen."*