

Vespers

As a Reader Service

Note: The translation used is primarily that of Fr. Lawrence of Jordanville, though “O Gladsome Light...” has been modified slightly. The Psalter is that of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston. The order of service is based primarily on the Reader Service Typikon by Bishop Daniel (the Old Rite Bishop of the ROCA) and translated by Fr. George Lardas.

Vespers (when served alone) begins thus

For the order of Vespers when served as part of a Vigil, see [The All-Night Vigil](#)

Senior Reader: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

(If daily Vespers is not preceded by the Ninth Hour, then the following introductory prayers are said, but otherwise, these are skipped, and “O Come let us worship....” Is immediately read):

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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.

Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen. Lord have mercy. **Twelve 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.

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.**

Choir: Lord, have mercy. **Twelve Times**

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

Choir: Amen.

If it is a Monday through Friday evening, and a simple service, the appointed kathisma is read (on Sunday evenings no kathisma), unless it is a weekday and there was a vigil the night before, in which case the kathisma is omitted, and we immediately go to "Lord, I have cried."

If there is a polyeleos, we sing the selected verses of the first stasis of the first kathisma, i.e., "Blessed is the man." If there is a vigil, we sing either the first stasis of the first kathisma, or the select verse found below. If it is a feast of the Lord and it falls on a Monday, we chant only the first stasis of the first kathisma or the selected verses. If a feast of the Lord falls on a Tuesday through Saturday, there is no kathisma, and we immediately sing "Lord, I have cried."

If it is a Sunday vigil (Saturday evening), we sing the first stasis of the first kathisma and the other two stases are read. If a feast of vigil rank coincides with the Sunday vigil, we still follow the normal Sunday order. However, according to current Russian parish practice, only the selected verses are sung on Saturday evenings.

Choir: Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the ungodly shall perish. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Serve ye the Lord with fear, and rejoice in Him with trembling. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are all that have put their trust in Him. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Salvation is of the Lord, and Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy. **Thrice**

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

Choir: Amen.

And, regardless of the rank of the service, we sing "Lord, I have cried" in the tone of the first sticheron appointed

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.

And the rest of the verses are read (they can be sung at a vigil) down to the beginning of the stichoi, i.e. the point at which the stichera are inserted.

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.

If there are 10 stichera (Saturday evenings and Liturgies of the Presanctified):

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.

If there are 8 stichera (services of vigil or polyeleos rank):

(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.

If there are 6 stichera (all services of doxology rank, and all simple services, i.e., 6 stichera from the Menaion, or 3 from the Octoechos and 3 from the Menaion):

(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.

If there are 4 stichera (only at Small Vespers):

(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. If there is a feast of the Lord or of the Theotokos: "Glory... Both now..." and the Theotokion of the feast.

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

And the Theotokion. If it is a Saturday evening, we sing the Dogmaticon of the Sunday tone. If it be a Sunday through Thursday evening, we sing the Theotokion provided in the Menaion service, if there is one. If not, we sing the proper Theotokion from the back of the Menaion, depending of the rank of the service (i.e., either the Dogmaticon of the tone or the lesser Theotokion of the tone). If it is a Tuesday or Thursday evening and a simple service, we sing the Stavrotheotokion provided in the Menaion service of the day, or from the Octoechos. If it is a Friday evening, we sing the Dogmaticon of the tone of the week.

Senior Reader: O Gladsome Light.

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.

(If it is a simple service, the Vesper Hymn may be read)

Reader: The Prokimenon in the ___ Tone.

THE DAILY PROKIMENA

On Saturday evening, the Sixth Tone:

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty.

Stichos 1: The Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself.

Stichos 2: For He established the world which shall not be shaken.

Stichos 3: Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

On Sunday evening, the Eighth Tone:

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

Stichos: Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

On Monday evening, the Fourth Tone:

The Lord will hearken unto me when I cry unto Him.

Stichos: When I called upon Thee, O God of my righteousness, Thou didst hearken unto me.

On Tuesday evening, the First Tone:

Thy mercy, O Lord, shall pursue me all the days of my life.

Stichos: The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want. In a place of green pasture, there hath He made me to dwell.

On Wednesday evening, the Fifth Tone:

O God, in Thy name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me.

Stichos: O God, hearken unto my prayer, give ear unto the words of my mouth.

On Thursday evening, the Sixth Tone:

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

Stichos: I have lifted up mine eyes to the Mountains, from whence cometh my help.

On Friday evening, the Seventh Tone:

O God, my helper art Thou, and Thy mercy shall go before me.

Stichos: Rescue me from mine enemies, O God, and from them that rise up against me redeem me.

If there are Scriptural readings appointed for a feast:

Reader: The Reading is from_____.

If there is a vigil or polyeleos, and on September 1 and 13, in place of the Augmented Ektenia (which would be said, were a priest serving), the Senior Reader says “Lord, have mercy,” Forty times, followed by “Glory... Both now...”. But if it is a simple service, “Vouchsafe, O Lord” is read immediately after the Prokimenon.

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.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. **Twelve Times**

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

Choir: Amen.

[If there is a Litia: sing the stichera for the Litia as appointed; Instead of “O Lord, save Thy people...” “Lord, have mercy.” Forty times, Thirty times, and Fifty times, “Glory... Both now...” and then the Aposticha]

Then we sing the Aposticha. If it is simple service, we sing the Aposticha from the Octoechos, or during Great Lent from the Triodion, with the following stichoi:

Stichos 1: Unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes, unto Thee that dwellest in heaven. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid look unto the hands of her mistress, so do our eyes look unto the Lord our God, * until He take pity on us.

Stichos 2: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for greatly are we filled with abasement. Greatly hath our soul been filled therewith; let reproach come upon them that prosper, * and abasement on the proud.

If it is a Saturday evening, we sing the Aposticha of the Resurrection, with these stichoi:

Stichos 1: The Lord is King, * He is clothed with majesty.

Stichos 2: For He established the world * which shall not be shaken.

Stichos 3: Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, * unto length of days.

If there is a polyeleos (other than Saturday evening), we sing the Aposticha of the saint from the Menaion, with its stichoi. If the service is a great feast of the Lord, we sing the Aposticha appointed for the feast with its stichoi, no matter what day it falls on.

Then, regardless of the rank of service, after the Aposticha, the prayer of St. Symeon:

Reader [or the 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.

Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Choir: Amen. *Then we sing the Dismissal Troparion (or Troparia).*

If it is a simple service, we sing the troparion from the Menaion once; "Glory... Both now..." and the Theotokion from the lesser Theotokia in the back of the Menaion, in the same tone as the troparion. Then the dismissal. But if it is one of the twelve feasts, we sing the dismissal troparion thrice. [The Order of Divine Services](#) gives further instructions on the order of the Troparia when a Vigil is appointed, but Vespers is served separately from Matins.

The Dismissal

Choir: Establish, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith of Orthodox Christians unto the ages of ages.

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.

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*)

O Lord, Bless.

Senior Reader (Facing the East, rather than facing the people):

If it be Sunday: Thou that didst rise from the dead, O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, of _____ (*The Patron of the Temple*), of _____ (*saints of the day*), and all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

If not: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, of _____ (*The Patron of the Temple*), of _____ (*saints of the day*), and all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Choir: Amen.

The Orthodox episcopate of the Church of Russia; * our Lord the Very Most Reverend Metropolitan *N.*, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, * and our Lord the Most Reverend Archbishop (*or* Bishop) *N.*; * the brotherhood of this holy temple (*or* monastery), and all Orthodox Christians: * preserve, O Lord, for many years.

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