

HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY
AT VESPERS

The service begins about the ninth hour of the day (three o'clock in the afternoon). Before Vespers starts, the Plashanitsa (Epitaphion) is placed on the altar, and on top of it the Book of the Gospels, the Antimins is moved to the back of the Altar. After the Psalm of Introduction (Psalm 103) and the Great Litany, there is no Kathisma.

On "Lord, I have cried ...," 6 Stichera, in Tone I:

Verse: If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? * For with Thee there is forgiveness.

The whole of creation was transformed by fear, * when it saw Thee, O Christ, hanging upon the Cross. * The sun was darkened and the foundations of the earth were shaken; * all things suffered with the Creator of all. * Thou didst willingly endure this for our sakes: ** O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Verse: 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.

Repeat: The whole of creation ...,

Verse: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch * let Israel hope in the Lord.

Tone II: Why doth the wicked and transgressing people * imagine vain things? * Why have they condemned the Life of all to death? * O great wonder! * The Creator of the world hath been delivered into the hands of lawless men, * and He who is the Lover of mankind hath been raised up upon the Cross, * that He may free the prisoners in Hades, who cry aloud: ** O long-suffering Lord, glory be to Thee.

Verse: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; * and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

Tone II: Today, O Word, the immaculate Virgin * beheld Thee hanging upon the Cross; * and with a mother's love she lamented, * her heart bitterly wounded. * She groaned in anguish from the depth of her soul, * and in her grief she struck at her face and tore at her hair. * And, beating her breast, she cried aloud: * "Woe is me, O my divine Child! * Woe is me, Thou Light of the world! * Why dost Thou vanish from my sight, O Lamb of God?" * Upon which the hosts of bodiless powers seized with trembling, said: ** "O Lord transcending all understanding, glory be to Thee."

Verse: O praise the Lord, all ye nations; * praise Him, all ye peoples.

Tone VI: Seeing Thee hanging upon the Cross, * O Christ the Creator and God of all, * Thy Virgin Mother bitterly cried aloud: * “O my Son, where is the comeliness of Thy form to be found? I cannot bear to look upon Thee as one unjustly crucified. * Make haste, then, to arise, ** that I also may see Thy third day Resurrection from the dead.”

Verse: For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, * and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

Tone VI: Today the Master of Creation standeth before Pilate; * today the Maker of all things hath been given up to the Cross, * and of His own will He hath been led as a lamb to the slaughter. * He who bedewed the wilderness with manna * hath been transfixed with nails; * His side hath been pierced, and a sponge with vinegar put to His lips. * The Redeemer of the world hath been struck upon the face, * and the Creator of all hath been mocked by His own servants. * How great is the Master’s love for mankind! * For those who crucified Him, * He prayed to His Father, saying: ** “Forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do.”

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

How hath the lawless synagogue condemned to death * the King of Creation! * Showing no shame as He recalled His blessings, saying: * “O My people, what is it have I done unto you? * Have I not filled Judaea with a multitude of miracles? * Have I not raised the dead by My word alone? * Have I not healed every manner of sickness and disease? * How then have ye repaid Me? * Why have ye forgotten Me? * In return for healing, ye have given Me blows; * in return for life, ye put Me to death. * Ye hang upon the Cross your Benefactor as an evildoer, * your Lawgiver as a transgressor of the Law, * the King of all as one condemned.” ** O longsuffering Lord, glory be to Thee.

Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

A strange and marvelous mystery * do we see come to pass this day. * He whom none may touch is seized; * He who hath unloosed Adam from the curse is bound. * He who trieth the hearts and inner thoughts of man * is unjustly brought to trial. * He who hath closed the abyss is shut in prison. * He before whom the heavenly powers stand with trembling, * standeth before Pilate; * the Creator is struck by the hand of His creature. * He Who cometh to judge the living and the dead * is condemned to the Cross; * the Destroyer of Hades hath been placed in a tomb. * O Thou who dost endure all these things in Thy tender mercy, * who hast saved all mankind from the curse, ** O longsuffering Lord, glory be to Thee.

Entrance with the Gospel: “O joyous Light ...,”

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV:

Prokeimenon: They have parted my garments amongst themselves, * and for my vesture have they cast lots.

Verse: O God, My God, attend unto Me: why hast Thou Forsaken Me?

THE READING IS FROM THE BOOK OF EXODUS (33:11 - 23)

The LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV:

Prokeimenon: Judge them, O Lord, that do Me injustice: * war against them that war against Me.

Verse: They repaid me with evil things for good.

THE READING IS FROM THE BOOK OF JOB (42:12-17)

The LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.

THE READING IS FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH (52:13 - 54:1)

Thus saith the Lord: Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant

justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

Prokeimenon before the Epistle, in Tone VI:

Prokeimenon: They laid Me in the lowest pit: * in darkness and in the shadow of death

Verse: O Lord God of My salvation, by day I have cried, and by night before Thee.

THE 1st EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS: (1:18 - 2:2)

Brethren: the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Alleluia in Tone I:

Verse: Save Me, O God: for the waters are come in unto My soul

Verse: They gave Me gall for my food: and for My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.

Verse: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see.

Priest: Wisdom! Aright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

Choir: Glory to Thy Passion, O Lord, glory to thee.

Priest: Let us attend.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATHEW (27: 1-38 et. al.)

At the time: when the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, what is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marveled greatly. Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate

said unto them, whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, what shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. And they that

passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedees children. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had

hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulcher.

Choir: **Glory to Thy Longsuffering, O Lord, glory to Thee.**

Then the Augmented Litany,

Litany: **Let us all say ...,**

Vouchsafe, O Lord ...,

Then the Litany of Fervent Intercession,

Litany: **Let us complete our evening prayer ...,**

On the Aposticha, these Stichera in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “When from the Tree ...”:

When the Arimathæan took Thy dead body down from the Tree, * O Thou who art the Life of all, * he wrapped Thee, in a fine linen cloth with spices, O Christ, * Moved by love, he kissed Thy most pure body * with his lips and with his heart; * yet, drawing back in fear, * he cried to Thee rejoicing: * “Glory be to Thy condescension, ** O Thou Lover of mankind.

Verse: **The Lord is King, * He is clothed in majesty.**

When Thou, the Redeemer of all, wast laid in a new tomb * for the sake of all mankind, * Hades was brought to scorn, * and seeing Thee, was filled with fear. * The bars were broken and the gates shattered, * the tombs were opened and the dead arose. * Then Adam in thanksgiving rejoiced crying to Thee: * “Glory be to Thy condescension, ** O Lover of mankind.”

Verse: **For he established the universe, * which shall not be shaken.**

When Thou wast bodily enclosed within a tomb * of Thine own free will, * Thou didst remain uncircumscribed and unbounded * in Thy divine nature. * Thou didst lock up the treasury of Hades, O Christ, * having emptied all its kingdom. * Wherefore on this honored Sabbath * with Thy divine blessing, ** it hath been deemed worthy of Thy glory and Thy radiance.

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

When the noetic powers beheld Thee, O Christ, * falsely accused by lawless men as a deceiver, * they were filled with fear * at Thine ineffable longsuffering. * And seeing the stone before Thy tomb * sealed by the hands which had pierced Thy most pure side, * they rejoiced at our salvation, crying aloud to Thee: * “Glory be to Thy condescension, ** O Lover of mankind.”

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone V:

(Sung slowly - the rector begineth censuring the Plashanitsa thrice.)

Thou who arrayest Thyself with light as with a garment; * was taken down from the Tree by Joseph with Nicodemus, * and looking upon Thee dead, stripped naked, and without burial, * in his grief and tender compassion he lamented, saying: * “Woe is me, my sweetest Jesus, * when but a short while ago the sun saw Thee hanging on the Cross, * it clothed itself in darkness: * the earth quaked with fear and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. * And now I see Thee Who for my sake hath willingly submitted to death. * How shall I bury Thee, O my God? * How shall I wrap Thee in a winding sheet? * How shall I touch Thy most pure body with my hands? * What funeral lament shall I sing to Thee, O compassionate One? * I magnify Thy sufferings; * I sing the praises of Thy burial and Thy Resurrection, ** crying: O Lord, glory be to Thee.”

Then “Now lettest Thou Thy servant ..”: Trisagion through Our Father ...,

The following Troparions are then sung slowly, and with sweet melody:

Troparion in Tone II:

Noble Joseph, * taking down Thy most pure body from the Tree, * wrapped it in clean linen with sweet spices, ** and he laid it in a new tomb.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same Tone and melody:

The Angel stood by the tomb, * and to the women bearing spices he cried aloud: * “Myrrh is fitting for the dead, * but Christ hath shown Himself * a stranger to corruption.”

NOTE: During the Aposticha the senior priest puts on all his vestments, while the other priests put on the Epitrachelion and Phelonion. When the choir begins to sing: **T**hou who arrayest Thyself with light ..., the senior priest goes thrice round the Holy Table, censuring the Plashanitsa from the four sides. After the Lord’s Prayer, when the choir begins: **N**oble Joseph ..., the senior priest takes the Book of the Gospels and the other clergy take the Epitaphion which they hold above his head. (If there is only one priest, the Plashanitsa may be held by members of the laity.) They go round the Holy Table on the south side and out of the sanctuary through the north door. The Plashanitsa is preceded by processional candles, and by the deacon with the censor and a candle. The procession proceeds to the centre of the church where there stands a table decorated with flowers and often provided with a canopy. Here the Plashanitsa is placed, and on top of it the Gospel Book. The senior priest with the deacon goes round the Plashanitsa thrice, censuring it from the four sides.

When the choir hath finished chanting the Troparion: **T**he Angel ...,

Priest or Deacon: **W**isdom.

Choir: **B**less (Master).

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

Choir: **A**men. **E**stablish O Lord, the Orthodox faith and Orthodox Christians * unto the ages of ages

Priest: **M**ost Holy Theotokos save us.

Choir: **M**ore honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond more glorious than the Seraphim, * who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, * the very Theotokos thee do we magnify

Priest: **G**lory to Thee O Christ God, our hope, glory be to Thee

Choir: **G**lory ..., **N**ow & ever ..., **L**ord have mercy (Thrice), **B**less (master)

At the Dismissal

Priest: **M**ay Christ our true God, Who for us men and for our salvation deigned to suffer the dread Passion and the life-creating Cross, and voluntary burial in the flesh ...,

The Plashanitsa is then venerated by the clergy and by all the faithful, each making three great prostrations to the ground, before kissing it one after another. The priest blesses each of the faithful after they venerate it. During the veneration of the Plashanitsa if there is a great multitude in attendance, Small Compline (below) may be chanted.

AT SMALL COMPLINE

HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY EVENING

Priest: **B**lessed is our God, ...

Reader: **A**men. **G**lory to Thee our God ..., **H**eavenly King ..., **H**oly God ...,
Our Father.

Priest: **F**or thine is the kingdom ...

Reader: **L**ord Have Mercy (12 times)... **G**lory ..., **N**ow & ever ..., **O** come let us worship ..., and straightway the 50th psalm, (or the entire service may be chanted if the Rector so desires) and then the following Canon by St. Symeon the Logothete. The Irmoi are sung once. Before each of the Troparia we say: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

ODE I, in Tone VI:

Irmos: **W**hen Israel walked on foot in the sea as on dry land, * on seeing their pursuer Pharaoh drowned, * they cried: * Let us sing to God * a song of victory.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

When she beheld her Son and Lord hanging upon the Cross, the pure Virgin was torn by grief and lamented bitterly with the other women .

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“**I** see Thee, my dearest and beloved Child, hanging upon the Cross and my heart is wounded bitterly”, said the pure Virgin. “But O good one, speak Thou a word to Thy handmaiden.”

Glory ...,”**B**y Thine own will, my Son and Creator, Thou didst endure a fearful death upon the Tree”, said the Virgin, standing by the Cross with the Beloved Disciple.

Now & ever ..., **I** am now deprived of Him who is my hope, my joy, and my gladness, my Son and God. Woe is me! My heart hath been filled with anguish”, said the Most pure one weeping.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**here is none as holy as Thou, * O Lord my God, * who hast exalted the horn of The faithful O good One, * and strengthened us upon the rock * of Thy confession.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“**F**or fear of the Jews, Peter hid himself and all the Faithful fled, forsaking Christ”, said the Virgin lamenting.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“**S**trange and Fearful is Thy birth, O my Son, and I have been magnified above all mothers; but woe is me!, Inwardly I burn seeing Thee now upon the Cross.”

Glory ..., “**I** wish to take my Son down from the Tree and “hold Him in my arms, as once I held Him when He was a child”, said the Most pure one. “But alas! there is no-one to give Him to me.”

Now & ever ..., “**B**ehold! my sweet Light, my Hope and Life, my Son and God, hath been quenched upon the Cross, and within me I burn”, said the Virgin shedding tears.

ODE IV

Irmos: **C**hrist is my power, * my God and my Lord, * the holy Church divinely singeth, * crying with a pure mind, * keeping festival in the Lord.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“**O** never-setting Sun, pre-eternal God and Fashioner of all creation, how dost Thou endure suffering upon the Cross?” said the Most pure one weeping.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

Lamenting, the Unwedded one said to Joseph: “O Joseph, hasten Thou to Pilate, and ask that the Master be taken down from the Tree.”

Glory ..., **S**eeing the Most Pure one shedding bitter tears, Joseph was troubled and came weeping to Pilate, saying with tears: “Give me the body of my Lord.”

Now & ever ..., **I** see Thee bruised and wounded, without glory, and naked upon the Cross, O my Child, and my heart burneth within me”, said the Virgin sorrowing with a mother’s grief.

ODE V

Irmos: **I**lluminate with Thy divine light, I pray, O Good One, * the souls of those who with love rise early to pray to Thee, * that they may know Thee, O Word of God, * as the true God, * Who recalleth us from the darkness of sin.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

Broken, distraught, and lamenting, Joseph and Nicodemus took down the most pure body of the Master from the Cross, and kissing it, they lamented and sang His praises as their God.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

The Unwedded Mother wept as she took Him on her knees; praying to Him with tears, and kissing Him lamenting and crying out bitterly.

Glory ..., **“T**hou wast the only hope of Thine handmaiden, O My Son, my Lord and God, my life and the light of mine eyes; and now, alas, I have lost Thee, my sweet and most beloved Child.”

Now & ever ..., **“I** am in anguish and affliction, and sighing hath taken hold of me”, cried the pure Virgin, bitterly lamenting, “Woe is me! for I see Thee, my beloved Child, stripped, broken, and anointed for burial, a corpse.”

ODE VI

Irmos: **B**eholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, * I run to Thy calm haven, and cry to Thee: * Raise up my life from corruption, * O greatly Merciful One.

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“I behold Thee as one dead, O Lover of mankind, Thou who hast brought the dead to life; grievously is my heart wounded and I long to die with Thee”, said the Most pure one, “for I cannot bear to look upon Thee lifeless and without breath.”

Refrain: **G**lory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“I am filled with horror as I see Thee, O supremely Good One, Lord all-merciful, bereft of glory, without breath, bereft of comeliness, and I weep as I hold Thee. Woe is me! I never thought to look upon Thee thus, my Son.”

Glory ..., **“O** Word of God, hast Thou not a word for Thy handmaiden? Hast Thou no pity, O Master, for her who bore Thee?” said the Most pure one, lamenting and weeping and kissing the body of her Lord.

Now & ever ..., **“I** dwell upon the thought, O Master, that I shall never again hear Thy voice; never again shall Thy handmaiden see the comeliness of Thy face as in the past; for Thou, my Son, hath set before mine eyes.”

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

Come, and let us all sing the praises of Him who was crucified for us. * For when Mary beheld Him on the Tree she said: ** “Though Thou dost endure the Cross, yet Thou art my Son and God.”

Ikos: Seeing her own Lamb led to the slaughter, Mary His Mother followed Him with the other women, and in her grief she cried: “Where hast Thou gone, O my Child? Why dost Thou run so swiftly? Is there another wedding in Cana, to which Thou dost hasten to turn the water into wine? Shall I go with Thee, my Child, or shall I wait for Thee? Speak Thou a word to me, O Word; do not pass me by in silence, Thou Who hast preserved me in virginity, for Thou art my Son and God.”

ODE VII

Irmos: An Angel made the furnace bedew the holy Children. * But the command of God consumed the Chaldeans * and prevailed upon the tyrant to cry: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“Where, O my Son and God, are the good tidings of the Annunciation that Gabriel brought me? He called Thee King and God and the Son of the Most High; and now, O my sweet Light, I behold Thee naked, a wounded corpse.”

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“Release me from my agony and take me with Thee, O my Son and God. Let me also descend with Thee, O Master, into Hades. Leave me not to live alone, for I cannot bear to look upon Thee, my sweetest Light.”

Glory ... With the other women, the undefiled one lamented bitterly as she saw Christ carried to the sepulcher. “Woe is me!” she cried. “What do I see? Where art Thou going, O my Son? Hast Thou left me here alone?”

Now & ever ... In her despair and grief, the undefiled Virgin said to the myrrh-bearing woman: “Join with me to weep and bitterly lament: for see, my sweet Light and your Teacher hath been given over to a tomb.”

ODE VIII

Irmos: Thou didst make flame bedew the holy children, * and didst burn the sacrifice of a righteous man with water. * For Thou alone, O Christ, dost do all as Thou willest, * Thee do we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

Seeing the lamentation of the Virgin, Joseph was in distress and bitterly cried aloud: “How shall I Thy servant, O my God, prepare Thy body now for burial? How shall I wrap it in a winding-sheet?”

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

Transcending understanding is this strange sight: the Lord who upholdeth all creation hath been held as a corpse in the arms of Joseph and Nicodemus, carried to its burial.

Glory ..., “A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold”, the Virgin cried out. “My Son, how canst Thou be laid in a narrow tomb, when by Thy command Thou dost raise all the dead from those very tombs?”

Now & ever ..., “I shall not leave Thy tomb, my Child, nor shall I Thy handmaiden cease to shed tears, until I too descend into Hades. For I cannot bear to be deprived of Thee, O my Son.”

ODE IX

Irmos: It is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“Never again shall joy be mine”, cried the undefiled one lamenting. “My Light and my Joy hath gone down into the grave. But I shall not leave Him alone: here shall I also die and be buried with Him.”

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

“Heal now the wounds of my soul, O my Child”, cried the most-pure one weeping. “Rise and still my pain and bitter anguish. For Thou hast the power, O Master, to perform whatsoever Thou dost will, for even Thy burial is voluntary.”

Glory ..., “How hast thou not seen the depth of My compassion?” said the Lord secretly to His Mother. “Because I wish to save My creature, I have accepted death. But I shall rise again and as God shall magnify thee in heaven and on earth.”

Now & ever ..., “I sing in praise of Thy compassion, O Lover of mankind, and I worship the wealth of Thy mercy O Lord. For as God Thou hast willingly accepted to save that which Thou didst fashion”, said the most pure one. “But, O Savior, by Thy Resurrection do Thou have mercy on us all.”

Then, instead of, “It is truly meet ...,”

Katavasia: It is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

We make a full prostration before the Plashanitsa, and Continue with the Trisagion ..., through ..., Our Father ..., Then the Kontakion of the day:

Kontakion in Tone VIII:

Come, and let us all sing the praises of Him who was crucified for us. * For when Mary beheld Him on the Tree she said: ** “Though Thou dost endure the Cross, yet Thou art my Son and God.”

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40 times)

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners, Who callest all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy. (Thrice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., 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: May Christ our true God, Who for us men and for our salvation deigned to suffer the dread Passion and the life-creating Cross, and voluntary burial in the flesh ...,