Reader’s Great Vespers on Friday December 18th, 2020

Our Father Among the Saints Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker

(December 6th/19th)

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory to Thee O God, glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Good One!

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.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. 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.

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****.*

Lord, have mercy. ***Forty 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.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

Salvation belongs to the Lord: Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory to Thee, O God. ***Three Times***

Lord, have mercy ***Three 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.

In the 2nd Tone: Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me.

Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me. \* Hearken 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. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

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

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.

Bring my soul out of prison:  that I may confess Thy name.

The righteous shall wait patiently for me until Thou shalt reward me.

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

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

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

You were seen as an inhabitant of Myra,

but you were truly revealed as myrrh,

for you were anointed with spiritual myrrh,

Saint Nicholas, pre-eminent Hierarch of Christ.

And with myrrh you anoint the faces of those

who ever celebrate your all-honorable memory with faith and love;

and you free them, O Father, from misfortunes, dangers and afflictions//

by your intercessions to the Lord.

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.

O Holy Nicholas, true servant of Christ,

your very name means “Victory for the People”.

And so you were revealed

to be for them a mighty victory in trials.

For you are called on everywhere,

and you come speedily to help those who with love run to your protection,//

for night and day you appear and save them from adversities and trials.

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

In a dream, you appeared to Emperor Constantine and Ablabius,

and you threw them into panic,

for you said to them,

“Free at once from prison those you are holding unjustly,

for they are innocent of unlawful slaughter.

And if you disobey, O Prince,//

I will make petition against you in my pray’rs to the Lord.

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

With what garlands of praise shall we wreathe the Hierarch?

While present in the flesh in Myra,

he comes in the spirit to all who sincerely love him.

He is the encouragement of all the afflicted,

the refuge of all in danger,

the tower of piety,

the champion of the faithful,

through whom Christ threw down the pride of the ill-intentioned//

Christ, who has great mercy.

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

With what melodious songs shall we sing the praises of the Hierarch:

the antagonist of impiety;

the champion of piety;

the leader of the church;

both its defender and its teacher;

the one who put to shame those who held bad doctrines;

the destroyer of Arius, and his eager opponent in battle;

the one through whom Christ threw down the pride of that heretic//

Christ, who has great mercy.

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

With what prophetic songs shall we sing the praises of the Hierarch,

the one who saw things far off and wisely heralded them,

by foretelling them as if present;

the one who goes about all the inhabited world

and redeems by ransom those who are wronged;

the one who appeared in dreams to the godly-minded emperor

and saved from an unjust sentence of death those who had been imprisoned//

the one who enriches us with great mercy.

In the 6th Tone: Glory…:

Let us who love to celebrate the feasts come together,

and in songs of praise let us sing the fame of Nicholas,

the beauty of hierarchs,

the boast of the fathers,

the fountain of miracles,

the greatest helper of the faithful,

and let us say:

Rejoice, Guardian of Myra,

august first-citizen, and unshakable column.

Rejoice, brightly-shining star,

who by your miracles give light to the ends of the earth.

Rejoice, godly delight and eager defender of those suffering injustice.

And now, all-blessed Nicholas,

do not stop interceding with Christ God for us,

for with faith and love//

we ever celebrate your delightful and most festal memory.

In the 2nd Tone: Now and ever... :

The shadow of the Law passed when grace came!

As the bush burned, yet was not consumed,

so the Virgin gave birth, yet remained a virgin!

The Righteous Sun has risen instead of a pillar of flame! //

Instead of Moses, Christ, the Salvation of our souls!

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.

The Prokeimenon in the 7th Tone:

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

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

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

**The Reading is from the book of Proverbs!**

The memory of the righteous is with praise and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessèd is the man who has found Wisdom and the mortal who has understanding. For it is better to purchase her than treasuries of gold and silver. She is more precious than precious stones and all that is precious is unworthy of her. For length of days and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are riches and glory. Out of her mouth proceeds righteousness and she bears law and mercy upon her tongue.

Hear me, O child, for I will speak noble things. Blessèd is the man who keeps my ways, for my ways are the ways of life, and in them is prepared favor from the Lord. Therefore I pray you, and utter my voice to the sons of men: For I, Wisdom, have dwelt with counsel and knowledge and I have called upon understanding. Counsel and safety are mine, understanding and strength are mine. I love those who love me and those seeking me shall find grace.

Understand craftiness, O you who are simple, and imbibe knowledge, you who are untaught. Hear me again, for I will speak noble things: I will open my mouth and from my lips shall come what is right. For my throat shall meditate truth; false lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing in them that is twisted or perverse. They are all straight to him who understands and right to those who find knowledge. I shall instruct you in truth, so that your hope will be in the Lord and you shall be filled with the Spirit.

**The Reading is from the book of Proverbs!**

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverse. A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight. When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but with the humble is wisdom. The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them.

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust. When the wicked dies, his hope perishes, and the expectation of the godless comes to nought. The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked gets into it instead. With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbour, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered. When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness.

By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. He who belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent.

**The reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon!**

The righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, nor measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for men, and a blameless life is ripe old age.

There was one who pleased God and was loved by Him, and while living among sinners he was taken up. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore He took him quickly from the midst of wickedness.

Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, nor take such a thing to heart, that God’s grace and mercy are with His elect, and He watches over His holy ones.

Lord have mercy. ***Forty times***

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

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.

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.

In the 5th Tone:

Rejoice, saintly bishop, pure abode of the virtues,

holy example of the divine priesthood,

great shepherd and bright luminary who bear the name of victory!

You are compassionate to those who call on you in prayer,

and you bear the supplications of the weak;

you are a deliverer and protector of those who honor your glorious

memory in faith.//

Pray that Christ may grant the world great mercy!

Verse: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Rejoice, most sacred mind,

pure dwelling of the Trinity,

pillar of the Church and support of the faithful,

help of the fallen, star ever dispersing temptations and afflictions

through the radiance of your prayers, well-pleasing to God!

You are a calm haven, Bishop Nicholas,

where those who flee are saved from the threatening wave of life.//

Pray that Christ may grant our souls great mercy!

Verse: Your priests shall be clothed in righteousness, and Your saints shall rejoice.

Rejoice, O Nicholas, for you are filled with divine zeal!

By fearful visions and warnings in dreams

you delivered those about to die unjustly from an evil sentence.

You are a fount pouring forth myrrh abundantly in Myra,

and refreshing souls while expelling the stench of passions.

You were a scythe cutting the weeds of error;

a fan winnowing the chaff of Arius's teachings.//

Entreat Christ to send our souls great mercy!//

In the 6th Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

O man of God and faithful servant,

minister of the Lord and man of desires,

chosen vessel, pillar and foundation of the Church,

inheritor of the Kingdom,//

let your supplication for us to the Lord be unceasing!

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Unwedded Virgin, from where have you come?

Who has given you birth?

Who is your mother?

How can you carry your Creator in your arms?

How is your womb free from corruption?

Most holy one, we see great and fearful mysteries upon earth fulfilled in you;

we adorn the cave as a house worthy of you;

we ask the heavens to send us a star,

for behold, the Magi proceed from the East to the West,

desiring to see the Salvation of mortal men//

shining in your arms as a Pillar of Flame.

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.

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.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.

Tone 4:

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith,

an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence.

Because of your lowliness, heaven was opened to you,

because of your poverty, riches were granted to you. //

O holy bishop Nicholas pray to Christ our God to save our souls

Glory… now and ever... :

The mystery of all eternity

unknown even by angels

is revealed to those on earth, through you, O Theotokos,

God incarnate by union without confusion.

He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us

by which He resurrected the first-created man, //

saving our souls from death.

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, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless!

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, of Our Father Among the Saints Nicholas of Myra in Lycia, and of all the saints, Lord, Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.