Reader’s ‘Great’ Vespers on Saturday, February 6th

35th Sunday After Pentecost; Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia; Tone 2

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.

Come, let us worship the Word of God

begotten of the Father before all ages,

and incarnate of the Virgin Mary!

Having endured the cross,

he was buried as he himself desired,

and having risen from the dead, //

he saved me, an erring man.

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.

Christ our Savior

nailed to the cross the bond against us;

he voided it and destroyed the dominion of death! //

We fall down before his resurrection on the third day!

In the 1st Tone: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord.

With fervent supplication, O brethren, let us now begin to chant hymns to the new favorites of God; for, cleansed through fearsome torments, they have been shown to be branches of the true vine of Christ, abundantly watered with the sweetness of grace, set forth before us in the fragrance of their holiness. And edified by their struggle, with compunction let us also offer unto-God the fruit of repentance.

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

O ye mountains of Kiev which were blessed by the cross of the Apostle Andrew, praise ye the beginning of the dread baptism wherewith the land of Russia hath been baptized anew. For where grace shone forth upon the Russian people through water and the Spirit, unto the opening of the kingdom of God, there was it fitting for this renewal to begin, through the blood of the first slain among the Russian hierarchs, the namesake of the enlightener of the Russian land. For this new Vladimir, led forth from his vineyard through the gates of the sacred Lavra of the Caves, was vouchsafed the crown of Stephen, forgiving and blessing those who slew him, as a meek intercessor for our souls.

In the 4th Tone: O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye peoples.

Meek, yet steadfast, wast thou, O elect of the city of Peter, hieromartyr Benjamin, who wast condemned by new Copronymuses and betrayed by false pastors to an authority opposed to God. For then God revealed thee a fearless teacher. Behold, here is thy testament proclaimed from imprisonment: “For the sake of the Church, let us not spare ourselves, and let us not betray the holy Church for our own sake!” And at the lawless tribunal thy discourse was amazing to all: ''Ye offer me now death or life; but signing myself with the sign of the holy Cross, I say: Glory to Thee for all things, O Lord God!”

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

O victims for God who were buried live, cast down into a well-like pit! First of all the passion-bearer Elizabeth, the merciful princess who strove for the things of heaven, finding the pearl of Orthodoxy in her new homeland, who in accordance with the Gospel forgave the slayer of her husband, and who pleased God with prayer and benevolence, yet was not spared by the godless! Pray also for us, ye holy princes! Pray for all, ye venerable passion-bearers Elizabeth and faithful Barbara! Hearken unto us, ye who were buried in the Garden of Gethsemane. Give ear to us, ye whose place of burial is unknown! Hear us, ye holy seven, received together into the mansions of heaven, and pray to God on our behalf!

In the 8th Tone: Glory…:

Your steadfast courage is the glory of the Church of Russia, O new passion-bearers and confessors, for ye are the disciples of Philip and Hermogenes, and the servants of the much-suffering Patriarch Tikhon, who gave you your name. Persecuted and slain, ye remained in tribulations with patience. And who can reckon the number of your torments and bitter deaths? Yet ye showed yourselves to be preachers to those with you in bondage, enlighteners of those who before were unbelievers, performers of the holy Mysteries. Great is your love for Christ, great is your faith! In all things ye have shown yourselves to be servants of God!

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.

Prokeimenon in the 6th Tone:The Lord is King, He is robed in majesty!

The Lord is robed with strength, and has girded Himself

For He has established the world so that it should never be moved

Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore

The Lord is King,/ He is robed in majesty!

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles (4:5-31):

5 In those days, all the rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, “By what power or by what name have you done this?” 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it.* 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.” 18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. 22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed. 23 And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.’ 27 “For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

The Reading is from the Second Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to Timothy (4:1-8):

1 My Son Timothy, I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (11:33-40):

33 Brethren, who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth. 39 And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

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.

At the Apostikha: In the 2nd Tone:

Thy resurrection, O Christ our Savior,

has enlightened the whole universe,

recalling thy creation. *//*

Glory to thee, O almighty Lord!

Verse: The Lord is King; he is robed in majesty!

By the tree thou didst destroy the curse of the tree, O Savior.

By thy burial thou didst mortify the majesty of death.

Thou hast enlightened our race by thy resurrection. *//*

O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to thee!

Verse: For he has established the world so that it shall never be moved!

When thou wast seen nailed to the Cross, O Christ,

thou didst restore the beauty of thy creatures.

The soldiers showed their inhumanity

when they pierced thy side with a spear.

The Hebrews, not knowing thy power,

asked that thy tomb might be sealed.

But through the mercy of thy compassions,

thou didst accept the tomb

and didst rise on the third day. *//*

O Lord, glory to thee!

Verse: Holiness befits thy house, O Lord, forevermore!

O Christ, the Giver of Life,

for the sake of the dead thou didst voluntarily endure death,

descending into hell as the mighty one

to save those who awaited thy coming,

granting them the life of paradise instead of hell.

Grant also to us who glorify thy resurrection on the third day *//*

cleansing of our sins and great mercy.

In the 6th Tone: Glory …:

O holy and most humble priests and confessors, we see how during the dreadful time of persecutions ye were banished far from your homes. We see you starving, afflicted with scurvy, bereft of your comeliness, covered with bleeding sores, beaten and deprived of sleep by guardsmen, weeping over abandoned children and their defenseless mothers. And who can record all your names? Who can relate to the world all that ye have suffered? Yet God knoweth His elect who have preserved the pledge they had given, even unto death, therefore possessing the boldness to pray for us.

Now and ever... :

O Theotokos, thou help of the helpless! Help even now the suffering people of the Russian land, who are in prison, torment or grievous circumstances: We beseech thee, O Sovereign Lady, with all the holy new martyrs and confessors of our generation: pray that thy servants be delivered from many tribulations.

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, Son of God, have mercy on us. Amen.

In the 2nd Tone:

When thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,

thou didst slay hell with the splendor of thy Godhead.

And when from the depths thou didst raise the dead,

all the powers of heaven cried out: //

O Giver of Life, Christ our God, glory to thee!”

In the 4th Tone: Glory…:

O ye holy hierarchs, royal passion-bearers and pastors,/ monks and laymen,/ ye countless new martyrs and confessors,/ men, women and children,/ flowers of the spiritual meadow of Russia,/ who blossomed forth wondrously in time of grievous persecutions,/ bearing good fruit for Christ in your endurance:/ entreat Him as the One Who hath planted you,/ that He deliver His people from godless and evil men,/ and that the Church of Russia be made steadfast through your blood and suffering,// unto the salvation of our souls.

Now and ever...:

The mystery hidden from all ages/ and unknown to the ranks of Angels,/ hath been revealed to those on earth through thee, O Theotokos:/ God incarnate in an uncommingled union,/ Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake,/ and through it hath raised up the first-formed man,// and saved 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 the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, and of all the saints, O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us. Amen.