Reader’s ‘Great’ Vespers on Saturday, December 26th

29th Sunday After Pentecost –– Sunday of the Holy Forefathers –– Tone 4

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 4th 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.

We glorify thy resurrection on the third day, O Christ God,

by always honoring thy life-creating Cross.

By it, thou hast renewed the corrupted nature of man,

O almighty one!

By it, thou hast renewed our entrance to heaven, //

For thou art good and the Lover of 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.

Thou didst loose the tree’s verdict of disobedience, O Savior,

by being voluntarily nailed to the tree of the Cross!

By descending to hell, O almighty God,

thou didst break the bonds of death!

Therefore, we adore thy resurrection from the dead, singing in joy: //

“Glory to thee, O all-powerful Lord!”

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

Thou didst smash the gates of hell, O Lord,

and by thy death thou didst demolish the kingdom of death!

Thou didst deliver the race of men from corruption, //

granting to the world life, incorruption, and great mercy!

In the 8th Tone: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

Today, as we celebrate the forefathers’ memory,

let us the faithful praise Christ the Redeemer,

who magnified them in all the nations!

He is the Lord who does wondrous deeds,

for he is powerful and mighty!

Through them he has shown us the rod of his strength:

she is Mary, the only pure and Virgin Maiden of God.

From her Christ blossomed, //

bringing forth life, eternal salvation and unending bliss for all.

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

O Master, you delivered the Holy youths from the fire,

and Daniel from the mouths of lions;

You blessed Abraham, Isaac, your servant, and Jacob, his son;

You consented to become like us by being born of their seed,

to be crucified and buried,

in order to save our Forefathers, who fell of old.

Thus you crushed the bonds of death

and raised with yourself all the dead of ages past, //

who worship you, O Christ, King of the ages.

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

Walking amidst the flames as in a gentle shower of rain,

the Godly youths exulted in the dew of the Spirit.

By this they mystically prefigured the Trinity and Christ’s incarnation.

Wise through faith, they quenched the power of fire.

So also the righteous Daniel stopped the mouths of lions.

Through their intercessions we beseech you, O Savior, the Lover of

mankind:

“Deliver us from the unquenchable and eternal fire, //

and make us worthy of your heavenly Kingdom!”

In the 6th Tone: Glory…:

Today, let us the faithful acclaim

all the fathers before the Law:

Abraham, the friend of God,

Isaac, born of the promise,

Jacob and the twelve Patriarchs,

honoring with these the gentle David,

and Daniel, the Prophet of Desires,

and the three youths who changed the furnace into dew.

Let us ask forgiveness of Christ our God, //

who is glorified in his saints!

In the 4th Tone: now and ever... :

The prophet David was a father of the Lord through you, O Virgin!

He foretold in songs the one who worked wonders in you:

“At thy right hand stood the queen, thy mother, the mediatrix of life,

since God was freely born of her without a father!”

He wanted to renew his fallen image, made corrupt in passion;

so he took the lost sheep upon his shoulder,

and brought it to his Father,

joining it to the heavenly powers. //

Christ, who has great and rich mercy, has saved the world, O Theotokos.

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!

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 4th Tone:

By ascending the Cross, O Lord,

thou hast annulled our ancestral curse!

By descending to hell, thou hast freed the eternal prisoners,

granting incorruption to the human race! //

Therefore in songs we glorify thy life-creating and saving resurrection!

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

By hanging upon the tree, O only-powerful Lord,

thou didst shake all of creation!

By being laid in the tomb, thou hast raised those who dwelt in the tombs,

Granting life and incorruption to the human race! //

Therefore in songs we glorify thy rising on the third day!

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

The lawless people, O Christ,

handed thee over to Pilate, condemned to be crucified,

thus proving themselves ungrateful before their Benefactor.

But voluntarily thou didst endure burial,

rising by thine own power on third day as God, //

granting us life everlasting and great mercy.

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

With tears the women reached thy tomb, searching for thee;

but not finding thee, they wept with wailing and lamented:

“Woe to us! Our Savior, King of all,

How wast thou stolen?

What place can hold thy life-bearing body?”

An angel replied to them:

“Do not weep but go and proclaim that the Lord is risen, //

granting us joy as the only-compassionate One!

In the 3rd Tone: Glory …:

Come all who love the feast,

let us praise in psalms the assembly of the Forefathers:

Adam, our first Father,

Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek,

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;

and those who came after the Law:

Moses, Aaron, Joshua,

Samuel and David,

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel,

and with them the Twelve Prophets:

Elijah, Elisha, and all the rest,

Zachariah and John the Baptist:

all those who proclaimed Christ, //

the Life and Resurrection of the human race!

Now and ever... :

By the will of the Father,

without seed, of the Holy Spirit you conceived the Son of God!

He was born of the Father before eternity without a mother,

but now for our sake he came from you without a father! //

Do not cease entreating him to deliver our souls from harm!

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 4th Tone:

When the women disciples of the Lord

learned from the angel the joyous message of the Resurrection,

they cast away the ancestral curse

and elatedly told the Apostles:

“Death is overthrown!

Christ God is risen, //

granting the world great mercy!”

In the 2nd Tone: Glory… now and ever...:

Through faith you justified the forefathers,

betrothing through them the Church of the gentiles.

These saints exult in glory,

for from their seed came forth a glorious fruit:

she who bore you without seed. //

So by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us!

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 Forefathers, and of all the saints, O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us. Amen.