Reader’s ‘Great’ Vespers on Wednesday, May 27th

Service for the Feast of Ascension

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

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.

In the 6th 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.

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.

The Lord ascended to heaven,

to send the Comforter into the world.

The heavens prepared his throne; the clouds, his royal mount!

The angels were amazed, seeing a man exalted.

The Father awaits the Son who is eternally in his bosom!

The Holy Spirit commands the angels:

“Lift up your heads, O gates!

Clap your hands, all nations! //

For Christ has ascended to where he was before!”

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

The cherubim were amazed by your Ascension!

They beheld the God of angels ascending on clouds.

We glorify you, for your mercy is good: //

O Lord, glory to you!

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

We praise the radiance of your countenance,

seeing your Ascension upon the mount, O Christ,

the splendor of the Father’s glory!

We bow in worship before your Passion!

We honor your Resurrection!

We magnify your glorious Ascension! //

O Lord, have mercy on us!

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

At the sight your Ascension,

O Giver of Life,

the apostles mourned and wept:

“O Master, do not leave us, your servants, as orphans,

whom you have loved in your compassion,

but send down on us your Holy Spirit as you promised, //

who will illumine our souls!”

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

Beholding the mystery of your dispensation,

together with the disciples,

we sing to you, O Lord:

“For our sake you have ascended from the Mount of Olives,

and returned to the firmament of heaven, which you did not leave!

Send down upon us your most Holy Spirit, //

who will illumine our souls!”

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

Without leaving the bosom of the Father,

and having lived with men as a man,

today you have ascended in glory from the Mount of Olives.

And through your compassion

you have raised our fallen nature,

and have seated it with the Father!

The angelic hosts were amazed with awe,

seeing your great love for man!

With them, we glorify your condescension to us;

with them, we glorify your Ascension from us!

By it, you filled your disciples and your Mother with great joy!

By their prayers, and through your great mercy, //

make us, your chosen people, worthy of this joy!

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 5th Tone:

Save me, O God, by Thy name, and judge me by Thy strength.

Verse: O God hear my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth.

Save me, O God, by Thy name,/ and judge me by Thy strength.

**The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.**

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

**The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.**

Thus says the Lord: Go through and enter my gates; prepare my way and make a way for my people. Cast the stones out of the way; lift up an ensign for the nations. For, behold, the Lord has made it to be heard even to the ends of the earth, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your Savior comes, having his reward with him, and his work before him.’” And they shall call them, the Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord. And you shall be called, a City Sought Out, and Not Forsaken.

Who is this that comes from Edom, his garment red, from Bozrah? Beautiful in his apparel, he cried out with great strength, “I speak of righteousness and a judgment of salvation!” Why are your garments red, and your apparel like his that treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the nations no one was with me.”

I remembered the mercy of the Lord, the virtues of the Lord according to all that He has granted to us. The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel; He deals with us according to His mercies, and according to the abundance of His righteousness.

And He said, “Is it not My People? Children that will not be rejected?” And He became to them salvation out of all their afflictions. Not a mediator, nor an angel, but the Lord Himself saved them, because He loved them and spared them; He Himself redeemed them and accepted them, and lifted them up all the days of the age.

**The reading from the Prophecy of Zechariah.**

Thus says the Lord: Behold, the days of the Lord shall come, and his feet shall stand in those days on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem toward the east. And in those days living waters shall come forth out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the *eastern* sea and half of them toward the *western* sea; and so shall it be in the harvest time and in the spring.

And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in those days there shall be one Lord. His name shall be one, encompassing all the earth, and the wilderness, from Geba to Rimmon, opposite the crest of Jerusalem. And she shall be lifted up, and abide in her place; from the gates of Benjamin to the place of the former gates, and to the gate of the corners, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king’s winepresses, they shall dwell in her. And no longer shall there be a curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell securely.

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.

Litya

TONE 4

When you ascended in glory, O Christ God,

the disciples beheld the clouds raising you with your flesh.

The gates of heaven received you.

The angels rejoiced: “Lift up your heads, O gates!

The King of glory shall enter!”

The disciples cried: “Do not leave us, O good Shepherd,

but send down on us your Holy Spirit, //

who will guide, confirm, illumine and sanctify our souls!”

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

Having accomplished the mystery

hidden from eternity and for generations,

you came with your disciples to the Mount of Olives,

having with you the one who bore you,

the Creator and Fashioner of all things.

Because she was your Mother, O Master,

she endured more than all the others seeing your Passion

but it was fitting that she also enjoy the exceeding joy of the

glorification of your flesh,

and participate in your Ascension into heaven. //

We glorify the great mercy that was shown to us!

Aposticha

TONE 2

By your nativity you revealed yourself;

by your sufferings in the flesh, you arose from the dead,

trampling down death by death.

You ascended in glory, filling all things!

You sent us your divine Spirit, //

that we may praise and glorify your divinity.

Verse: Clap your hands, all peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy!

When the angels beheld you, ascending from the Mount of Olives, O

Christ,

they cried to one another: “Who is this?”

They were told: “He is strong and mighty!

He is mighty in battle!

He is truly the King of glory!”

“But why are his vestments purpled?”

“He is from Bozra, which is to say, ‘the flesh.’”

As God, you sat at the right hand of majesty. //

You sent us the Holy Spirit to guide and save our souls!

Verse: God has gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet!

You ascended in glory, O Christ God,

before your disciples from the Mount of Olives.

You sat at the right hand of the Father.

You fill all things with your Divinity:

You sent to your disciples the Holy Spirit, //

who sanctifies, illumines and strengthens our souls!

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

TONE 6

God has gone up with a shout;

the Lord with the sound of a trumpet,

in order to raise the fallen image of Adam,

and to send the comforting Spirit, //

who will sanctify our souls!

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:

You have ascended in glory, O Christ God,

granting joy to your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Through the blessing,

they were assured that you are the Son of God, //

the Redeemer of the world!

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