Reader’s Vespers on Thursday September 17th, 2020

The Holy Prophet Zachariah, Father of St. John the Baptist

 (September 5th/18th)

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.

In the 5th 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.

Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy

at the sight of your most precious Cross,

being favored by the passion of the Master.

The Cross shines forth grace like a flaming fire!

The Cross showers gifts upon all like living water!

The Cross enlightens souls and purifies minds!

The Cross washes away sickness and drives out evil passions!

The Cross chases unseen devils and is victorious over the Enemy! //

The Cross bestows upon the faithful blessings and great mercy.

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.

Let us fulfill the prophecy of the Psalmist;

Let us venerate the footstool of the Lord of Glory.

Let us glorify Christ who crucified our sins and destroyed the curse of the Tree;

For we were strangers and are now reconciled sons to the Father.

Let us venerate the nails in his hands and feet,

the reviling and the mockery,

the lance, the reed, the sponge and the crown of thorns, //

and all the rest to which he submitted,

by which we all have been saved.

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

Let us, who desire to follow in the steps of Christ our King,

crucify all our members in Christ – dying to the world,

and take his divine Cross upon our shoulders

by turning from the temptations of the flesh

and from the evil lusts that draw the world toward sin.

Remember that you stand before Him Who was nailed on the cross,

Where, with a sigh, He commended His soul into the hands of the Father //

That we might be with Him forever without separation.

In the 4th Tone: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

O glorious Zachariah,

you were anointed and wore the sacred vesture,

Like the angels you sacrificed to God, O blessèd one,

mediating between the Creator and His creation.

You received visibly manifestations of the divine Spirit!

Therefore we bless you

and as we divinely celebrate your holy feast //

we glorify the Savior!

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

O God-inspired Zachariah

you beheld the Child born of the Virgin,

co-eternal with the Father,

and you prophesied plainly to your son:

“You will be a prophet to prepare His ways!”

O all-blessèd God-bearing one //

With him we bless you and celebrate your holy feast.

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

O glorious Zachariah,

you were a living temple of the divine Spirit,

and in the midst of the Temple,

you conversed with God through purity of heart.

You completed a martyr’s course and were unjustly slain,

brought by the shedding of your own blood

to the heavenly temple //

where you intercede for those who honor you!

In the 8th Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

You were rightly robed in the vesture of the law,

serving according to the priesthood of Aaron.

While standing in the temple, O all-blessèd one,

you plainly beheld the form of an angel!

Therefore as we sing in honor of your translation, O Zachariah!

We praise you, for after the flesh you fathered the glorious John. //

Intercede for us with the Lord that we may be saved!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen:

"What is this sight which I see, \* which mine eyes behold, O Master? \* How is it that Thou Who dost sustain all creation, \* art lifted up upon the Tree and diest, \* granting life unto all? \* thus said the Theotokos weeping, \* upon seeing God and man \* Who had shone forth ineffably from her \*\* hanging upon the Cross.

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 6th Tone:

My help comes from the Lord, Who made Heaven and Earth.

Verse: I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where my help will come.

My help comes from the Lord,/ Who made Heaven and Earth.

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:

Moses, your prophet, stretched out his arms in the form of a cross,

and the forces of Amalek were destroyed.

Now that we have your Cross itself, we beseech you, O Lord,

Strengthen your Church and give her victory over the Enemy //

for the sake of your great mercy, O Lover of man!

Verse: Unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes, unto Thee that dwellest in heaven.  Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, as the eyes of the handmaid look unto the hands of her mistress, so do our eyes look unto the Lord our God, until He take pity on us.

Though your Cross appears to be only wood, O Christ,

it is arrayed with the power of your divinity,

and makes itself visibly felt in the world;

For by it you hast wrought the miracle of our salvation. //

Venerating it, we glorify you, O Savior.

Verse: Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us, for greatly are we filled with abasement.  Greatly hath our soul been filled therewith; let reproach come upon them that prosper, and abasement on the proud.

O martyrs worthy of all praise,

you cared nothing for the things of this earth

but bravely stood up to torture.

You attained the blessèd life for which you hoped.

You were made heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

Since you have boldness before God who loves mankind,

beseech him to grant peace to the world //

and to our souls great mercy!

In the 2nd Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As a pure priest thou didst enter into the holy of holies and, clad in sacred vesture, didst blamelessly minister unto God, observing the law like Aaron and leading the tribes of Israel like Moses, in the pure signaling of the little bells. Wherefore, thou wast slain. But thy righteous blood hath become for us a saving healing, and like fragrant myrrh it openeth deaf ears to the way of everlasting life. O thrice blessed Zacharias, father of John the Baptist and husband of Elizabeth: pray thou earnestly on behalf of our souls.

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

When the unblemished ewe-lamb beheld her Lamb \* willingly led as a man to the slaughter, \* she said, weeping: \* "Dost Thou now hasten to leave me childless who gave Thee birth O Christ,? \* What is this that Thou hast done, O Redeemer of all? \* Even so I will hymn and glorify Thine extreme goodness, \* which is beyond understanding and all telling, \*\* O Lover of mankind!"

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.

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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:

Arrayed in the vesture of the priesthood, \* and in accordance with the law, \* thou didst offer the sacrifice of oblation in a sacred manner O all-wise one, \* and wast manifestly a beacon and seer of sacred mysteries, \* who bore within thyself the tokens of grace, \* and thou wast slain by the sword in the Temple of God O prophet of Christ, \*\* together with the forerunner entreat Him that our souls be saved.

Glory….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 thus saved our souls from death.

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.

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