Reader’s Vespers on Wednesday, February 17th, 2021

Afterfeast of the Meeting –– Virgin Martyr Agatha of Palermo (Sicily) –– (February 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 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.

Now the Lover of man is brought into the temple.

Thus he fulfills ev’rything written in the law.

Simeon the Elder receives Him in his agèd arms and cries aloud:

“Now let me depart to the blessèdness of the world to come,

for today I behold You, clothed in mortal flesh: //

the Lord of life and Master of death.”

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.

As a Light of revelation for the nations,

You have appeared, O Sun of righteousness,

and shone forth enthroned upon a radiant cloud.

You have perfectly fulfilled the shadow of the ancient law,

and brought to light the beginning of new grace.

When Simeon received You, he cried aloud:

“Now release me from corruption, //

for I have seen You, my Master!”

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

You took flesh according to Your good pleasure,

not parted in Your divinity from the bosom of the Father,

and upheld in the arms of the Virgin.

You were placed in the hands of Simeon, the receiver of God,

though Your hands had fashioned both him and all creation!

Therefore, Simeon cried aloud:

“Now let me depart, O Good One, //

for today I have seen You, the Lover of mankind!”

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

O Agatha, bride of God,

you shone brightly with fair and virginal beauty

and kept your body pure for the Bridegroom, Christ.

Therefore, you have made your way to the divine bridal chamber,

shining with bright-flashing rays of martyrdom.

Now as we keep your universal feast,

we glorify Christ the Savior, //

who has Himself glorified you forever.

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

You bore the burning of the fire, O glorious Agatha,

the severing of your breasts and merciless carving of your body;

for you fixed the gaze of your heart with steadfastness

upon the everlasting rewards and the joy beyond,

and upon the crown which does not fade,

which Christ has now granted you, //

since you competed with brilliance for His sake, O all-praised martyr.

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

By your prayers, O Agatha,

you held into check the violence of Etna’s wild and unruly fire

and preserved the city that honors your most holy relics,

which now offer rivers of healing by the grace of the Spirit.

O most-blessèd namesake of goodness you are rightly named;

for when you contended you abased the despiteful foe //

and won crowns of martyrdom, O all-famed martyr Agatha.

In the 8th Tone: Glory…now and ever... :

He who is borne on high by the Cherubim

and praised in hymns by the Seraphim

is brought according to the law into the holy temple

and rests in the arms of the Elder as his throne.

From Joseph he receives gifts that are fitting for God:

a pair of doves as a symbol of the spotless Church

and of the newly chosen people of the gentiles,

and two young pigeons,

for He is the originator of the two covenants, both old and new.

Now granted the fulfillment of the prophesies concerning himself,

Simeon blesses Mary the Virgin and Theotokos.

He foretells in figures the passion of her Son.

From Him he begs release, crying aloud:

“Now let me depart as You have promised me, O Master, //

for I have seen the pre-eternal Light!”

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 Lord, hearken unto my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.

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

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your Name for ever. Amen. Let Your mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on You. Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes.

Blessed are You, O Master; make me to understand Your commandments. Blessed are You, O Holy One; enlighten me with Your precepts. Your mercy endures forever, O Lord! Do not despise the works of Your hands! To You belongs worship, to You belongs praise, to You belongs glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 1st Tone:

Today the pure Ark of God,

the radiant Mercy-seat,

carries the Messiah into the temple,

where He is enthroned in Simeon’s arms.

Therefore the Holy of Holies is sanctified, //

and rejoices with Him who alone is holy!

### Verse: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word: For

my eyes have seen Your salvation!

Today Simeon has been glorified.

He embraces Christ in his arms,

and is cleansed like Isaiah’s lips by the burning coal.

He confesses Him openly, and asks to depart in joy!

## Therefore, let us honor his memory in song, //

for he is truly blessed in righteousness!

### Verse: A Light to enlighten the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel!

Today the pure Virgin,

and living Gate of the King and Lord,

carries Him into the temple,

and enters through the gate that was formerly shut, as it is written.

Therefore as we all dance for joy before her, //

let us worthily sing her praise with divine hymns.

In the 4th Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Today the holy Mother, above every temple,

enters into the temple.

She reveals to the world its Creator and the Giver of the law.

Simeon the Elder receives Him in his arms.

He worships Him and cries aloud:

## “Now let Your servant depart, //

for I have seen You, the Savior of 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)***

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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:

Your lamb Agatha, O Jesus, calls out to You in a loud voice:

“I love You, O my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure suffering.

In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You,

and I died so that I might live with You.

Accept me as a pure sacrifice,

for I have offered myself in love!” //

Through her prayers, save our souls, since You are merciful!

In the 1st Tone: Glory… now and ever…:

Rejoice, O virgin Theotokos, full of grace!

From you shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God

enlightening those who sat in darkness.

Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder.

You accepted in your arms the Redeemer of our souls, //

who grants us the resurrection.

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 Virgin Martyr Agatha of Palermo, and all the saints, Lord, Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.