

## THE LENTEN OFFICE OF VESPERS

*The Lenten Office of Vespers is sung on every weekday during Great Lent when no Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is sung. If the Lenten Office of the Ninth Hour and the Lenten Office of the Typica were sung immediately prior, the reader begins at the \* with Come, let us worship... If those services have not been sung immediately prior, the Lenten Office of Vespers begins thus:*

*Priest:* Blessed is our God always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*Reader:* Amen. Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who art everywhere 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, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. 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, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*Priest:* For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*Reader:* Amen. Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)

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

\*Come, let us worship God our King. Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God. Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

## PSALM 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great. Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent, Who hast laid the beams of Thy chambers on the waters, Who makest the clouds Thy chariot, Who ridest on the wings of the wind, Who makest the winds Thy messengers, fire and flame Thy ministers. Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken. Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled; at the sound of Thy thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which Thou didst appoint for them. Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From Thy lofty abode Thou waterest the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy work. Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart. The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers. Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. Thou makest darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they get them away and lie down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan which Thou didst form to sport in it. These all look to Thee, to give them their food in due season. When Thou givest to them, they gather it up; when Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good things. When Thou hidest Thy face, they are dismayed; when Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the ground. May the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the Lord rejoice in His works, Who looks on the earth and it trembles, Who touches the mountains and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners

be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

*And again:*

The sun knows its time for setting. Thou makest darkness, and it is night. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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, glory to Thee, O God. (*thrice*)

*When the reader has finished the psalm, the priest begins the* Great Litany:

*Priest:* In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

℟. Lord, have mercy. (*after each petition*)

For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy Churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For our Metropolitan *N.*, for our Bishop [*or Archbishop*] *N.*, for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, and for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For this country, its President [*or the title of the highest civil authority*], for all civil authorities, and for the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For this city,<sup>1</sup> for every city and countryside, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For seasonable weather, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

For travelers by land, by sea, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord. ℟.

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<sup>1</sup> Or *village*, or *holy monastery*.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace. *℟*

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

*℟* To Thee, O Lord.

*Priest:* For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*℟* Amen.

*Then the appointed kathisma is read. At the conclusion of the kathisma, the priest says the Little Litany:*

*Priest:* Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

*℟* Lord, have mercy.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

*℟* Lord, have mercy.

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

*℟* To Thee, O Lord.

*Priest:* For Thine is the might, and Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*℟* Amen.

*And the choir begins Lord, I Call... in the appropriate tone (the tone of the first sticheron):*

*Choir:* Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me! Hear me, O Lord! Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me! Receive the voice of my prayer, when I call upon Thee! Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise in Thy sight as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice! Hear me, O Lord!

*The reader then reads the verses of Psalms 140, 141, 129, and 116 until the beginning of the stichera. The stichera are inserted between the reader's verses according to the number appointed.*

### **PSALM 140**

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips. Incline not my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with men who work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties. Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness, but let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head; for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds. When they are given over to those who shall condemn them, then they shall learn that the word of the Lord is true. As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land, so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol. But my eyes are toward Thee, O Lord God; in Thee I seek refuge; leave me not defenseless. Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me, and from the snares of evildoers. Let the wicked together fall into their own nets, while I escape.

### **PSALM 141**

I cry with my voice to the Lord, with my voice I make supplication to the Lord, I pour out my complaint before Him, I tell my trouble before Him. When my spirit is faint, Thou knowest my way. In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. I look to the right and watch, but there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me, no man cares for me. I cry to Thee, O Lord; I say, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Give heed to my cry; for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are too strong for me.

✠ (10) Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy Name.

✠ (9) The righteous will surround me, for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

### **PSALM 129**

✠ (8) Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!

✠ (7) Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

- ✠ (6) If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.
- ✠ (5) For Thy Name's sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.
- ✠ (4) From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord.
- ✠ (3) For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

### PSALM 116

- ✠ (2) Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!
- ✠ (1) For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*After the final sticheron, the choir proceeds immediately to Gladsome Light.*

*Choir:* Gladsome Light of the Holy Glory of the Immortal Father, Heavenly, Holy, Blessed: O Jesus Christ. Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for meet it is at all times to worship Thee with voices of praise, O Son of God and Giver of life: therefore, all the world doth glorify Thee.

*Priest:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* The Prokimenon in the \_\_\_ tone. *And he and the singers chant the first Prokimenon from the Triodion in the typical manner.*

*Priest:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* The reading from Genesis [or Exodus].

*Priest:* Let us attend.

*The first lesson is read.*

*Priest:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* The Prokimenon in the \_\_\_ tone. *And he and the singers chant the second Prokimenon from the Triodion in the typical manner.*

*Priest:* Wisdom.

*Reader:* The reading from Proverbs [or Job].

*Priest:* Let us attend.

*The second lesson is read. At the conclusion of the second lesson, the reader continues:*

*Reader:* Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master, make me to understand Thy commandments. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me with Thy precepts.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever: despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*The priest continues with the Evening Litany:*

*Priest:* Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

℟ Lord, have mercy.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

℟ Lord, have mercy.

That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

℟ Grant this, O Lord. *(after each petition)*

An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord. ℟

Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord. ℟

All things that are good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord. ℟

That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord. ℟

A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and a good defense before the dread Judgment Seat of Christ, let us ask. ℟

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

℟️ To Thee, O Lord.

*Priest:* For Thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

℟️ Amen.

*Priest:* Peace be unto all.

℟️ And to thy spirit.

*Priest:* Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

℟️ To Thee, O Lord.

*Priest:* O Lord our God, Who didst bow the heavens and come down for the salvation of mankind: Look upon Thy servants and Thine inheritance; for unto Thee, the fearful Judge Who yet lovest mankind, have Thy servants bowed their heads and submissively inclined their necks, awaiting not help from men but entreating Thy mercy and looking confidently for Thy salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil and from vain thoughts and from evil imaginations.

Blessed and glorified be the might of Thy Kingdom: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

℟️ Amen.

*The choir then sings the appointed Aposticha, with the following verses:*

℣️ To Thee I lift up mine eyes, O Thou Who art enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till He have mercy upon us. (*Ps 122:1-2*)

℣️ Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Too long our soul has been sated with the scorn of those who are at ease, the contempt of the proud. (*Ps. 122:3-4*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.



*After the final sticheron of the Aposticha, the reader continues with St. Symeon's Prayer followed by the Trisagion Prayers:*

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be 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, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. 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, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*Priest:* For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

✠ Amen.

*And the choir sings the Lenten Troparia:*<sup>2</sup>

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Mary full of grace: the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb; for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls. (*prostration*)

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

O Baptiser of Christ, remember us all, that we may be delivered from our iniquities; for to thee is given grace to intercede for us! (*prostration*)

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<sup>2</sup> *But on Friday evenings, the troparia of the day are sung, and Vespers is completed according to the normal order, with the usual dismissal.*

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

Intercede for us, O holy Apostles and all the saints, that we may be delivered from perils and sorrows; for we have acquired you as fervent intercessors before the Savior! (*prostration*)

Beneath thy compassion we take refuge, O Theotokos. Do not despise our supplications in adversity, but deliver us from perils, O only pure and only blessed one!

*Reader:* Lord, have mercy. (*forty times*)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

In the Name of the Lord, Father, bless.

*Priest:* Blessed be He Who Is, Christ our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

✠ Amen. O Heavenly King, establish the Orthodox Christians, confirm the Faith, quiet the heathen, give peace to the world, place our departed fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous, and accept us sorrowers and penitents, for Thou art good, and the Lover of mankind.

### THE PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM

*Priest:* O Lord and Master of my life, give me not a spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. (*prostration*)

But give rather a spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to thy servant. (*prostration*)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother: for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen. (*prostration*)

*And we make twelve bows from the waist, quietly saying O God, cleanse me a sinner each time.*

*And again, the whole prayer O Lord and Master... with only one prostration at the end.<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> If for any reason the Lenten Office of the Typica was not sung before Vespers, its ending (presented below) is not used here, but instead immediately following the Prayer of St. Ephraim, the priest says Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope... and the Dismissal.

*Reader:* Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. 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, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*Priest:* For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

*Reader:* Amen. Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)

O most Holy Trinity, Might one in essence, Kingdom undivided, the Cause of all good, have mercy even on me, a sinner. Confirm and instruct my heart and take away from me every defilement. Enlighten my mind that I may ever glorify, praise, and adore Thee, saying: One is holy, One is the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord, henceforth and forevermore! (*thrice*)

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

### PSALM 33

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together! I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to Him and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good! Happy is

the man who takes refuge in Him! O fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him have no want! The rich suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is there who desires life, and covets many days, that he may enjoy good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems the life of His servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

*Priest:* Wisdom!

✠ It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. (*prostration*)

*Priest:* Most holy Theotokos, save us.

✠ More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

*Priest:* Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

✠ 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 (*thrice*). Father, bless.

*The priest pronounces the appropriate Dismissal, after which the choir responds:*

✠ Amen.

## THE END OF THE LENTEN OFFICE OF VESPERS



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