

# Reader's Vespers for the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

## Sung on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

**Reader:** O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

### PSALM 103

**Reader:** 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 labour 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. (3 times)

*In place of the Great Litany:*

**Reader/Choir:** Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

**“LORD I CALL ...”**

**Tone 6**

[Music on website]

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!

*Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!*

**Tone 6**

[Music on website]

As the Cross is lifted on high,  
it urges all of creation  
to praise the undefiled Passion of Christ, Who was lifted up on it.  
For by the Cross He killed the one who killed us,  
and brought us back to life when we were dead.  
He adorned us in beauty,  
and in His compassion made us worthy to live in heaven.  
Therefore we rejoice and exalt His name,//  
and magnify His infinite condescension.

*Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

**Repeat: “As the Cross is lifted on high ...”**

*If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.*

**Repeat: “As the Cross is lifted on high ...”**

*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.*

Moses prefigured thee, O precious Cross,  
when he stretched out his hands on high,  
and put the tyrant Amalek to flight.  
Thou art the boast of the faithful, the support of those who suffer,  
the glory of the Apostles, the champion of the Righteous,  
and the preservation of all the Saints.  
Therefore, beholding thee raised on high,  
creation rejoices and celebrates,  
glorifying Christ Who has joined together through thee that which was divided//  
in His infinite goodness.

*From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

**Repeat: “Moses prefigured thee, O precious Cross ...”**

*For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

*Repeat: "Moses prefigured thee, O precious Cross ..."*

*Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

O most venerable Cross,  
attended by ranks of rejoicing angels,  
as thou art exalted today at the divine command,  
thou dost lift up again  
all those who through the stolen food had been cast out and were sunk in death.  
Therefore, as we venerate thee in faith with heart and lips,  
we draw sanctification from thee and cry aloud:  
"Exalt Christ, the God transcendent in goodness, //  
and venerate His divine footstool!"

*For His mercy is confirmed on us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.*

*Repeat: "O most venerable Cross ..."*

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

## **Tone 2**

[\[Music on website\]](#)

Come, all you nations,  
let us fall down in worship before the blessed Tree,  
by which eternal justice has come to pass!  
For he who deceived Adam by a Tree  
is caught by the lure of the Cross;  
and he who held under his tyranny the creature endowed by God with royal dignity  
is brought down in a headlong fall.  
The serpent's venom is washed away by the blood of God,  
and the curse of just condemnation is undone  
when the Just One is condemned by an unjust judgment.  
For it was fitting that the Tree should be healed by a Tree,  
and that by the Passion of the passionless God  
what was wrought on the Tree should destroy the passions of man, who was condemned.  
But glory to Thy dread dispensation for our sakes, O Christ the King,  
through which Thou hast saved us all //  
since Thou art good and the Lover of mankind!

## **O GLADSOME LIGHT**

O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed, 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, the Giver of Life; therefore all the world doth glorify Thee.

## **THE EVENING PROKEIMENON**

**Reader:** The Evening Prokeimenon.

**Reader:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

**Choir:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

**Reader:** Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

**Choir:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

**Reader:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord

**Choir:** all ye servants of the Lord.

## READINGS

### **A Reading from the Second Book of Moses, the Book of Exodus**

[Exodus 15:22-16:1]

Moses brought up the children of Israel from the Red Sea, and brought them into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water to drink. And they came to Marah, and could not drink of Marah, for it was bitter; therefore he named the name of that place, Bitterness. And the people murmured against Moses, saying: "What shall we drink?" And Moses cried to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, and he cast it into the water, and the water was sweetened. There He established to him ordinances and judgments, and there He proved him, and said: "If thou wilt indeed hear the voice of the Lord thy God, and do things pleasing before Him, and wilt hearken to His commands, and keep all His ordinances, no disease which I have brought upon the Egyptians will I bring upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, Who healeth thee." And they came to Elim, and there were there twelve fountains of water, and seventy stems of palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters. And they departed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sin.

### **A Reading from Proverbs**

[Proverbs 3:11-18]

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth, He rebuketh, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Blessed is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who knoweth prudence. For it is better to traffic for her, than for treasures of gold and silver. And she is more valuable than precious stones: no evil thing shall resist her; she is well known to all who approach her, and no precious thing is equal to her in value. For length of existence and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are wealth and glory: out of her mouth proceedeth righteousness, and she carrieth law and mercy upon her tongue. Her ways are good ways, and all her paths are peaceful. She is a tree of life to all who lay hold upon her; and she is a secure help to all who stay themselves on her, as on the Lord.

### **A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah**

[Isaiah 60:11-16]

Thus saith the Lord: Thy gates shall be opened continually, O Jerusalem; they shall not be shut day nor night; to bring in to thee the power of the gentiles, and their kings as captives. For the nations and the kings which will not serve thee shall perish; and those nations shall be made utterly desolate. And the glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, with the cypress, and pine, and cedar together, to glorify My holy place. And the sons of those who afflicted thee, and of those who provoked thee, shall come to thee in fear; and thou shalt be called Sion, the city of the Holy One of Israel. Because thou hast become desolate and hated, and there was no helper, therefore I will make thee a perpetual gladness, a joy of many generations. And thou shalt suck the milk of the gentiles, and shalt eat the wealth of kings; and shalt know that I am the Lord Who saveth thee and delivereth thee, the God of Israel.

*In place of the Evening Litany:*

**Reader/Choir:** Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

### **VOUCHSAFE, O LORD**

**Reader:** 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 forever. Amen. Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even 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 statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me with Thy statutes. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O 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.

*In place of the Litany of Supplication:*

**Reader/Choir:** Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

## APOSTICHA

### Tone 5

[Music on website]

Rejoice, O life-bearing Cross:  
the invincible trophy of godliness,  
door to Paradise, firm support of the faithful,  
a wall that encompasses the Church.  
Through thee corruption has been destroyed and abolished.  
The power of death has been swallowed up, and we are raised from earth to Heaven.  
Thou art a weapon that cannot be vanquished,  
the adversary of demons,  
the glory of martyrs, the true adornment of saints,  
and the haven of salvation, //  
which grants the world great mercy.

*v: Extol the Lord our God: worship at His footstool for He is holy!*

Rejoice, O Cross of the Lord,  
through which mankind has been delivered from the curse!  
Thou art a sign of true joy,  
Thou that shatterest our enemies by thine Elevation.  
O Cross, worthy of all honour,  
thou art our help, thou art the strength of kings.  
Thou art the power of the righteous.  
Thou art the majesty of priests.  
All who sign themselves with thee are freed from danger.  
O rod of strength, under which we like sheep are tended,  
thou art a weapon of peace around which the angels stand in fear.  
Thou art the divine glory of Christ, //  
Who grants the world great mercy.

*v: God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth!*

Rejoice, O guide of the blind,  
physician of the sick and resurrection of all the dead;  
thou hast raised us up when we were fallen into mortality, O precious Cross!  
Through thee corruption has been destroyed,  
and incorruption has blossomed forth.  
We mortals have been deified, and the devil is completely overthrown.  
Today, as we see thee exalted by the hands of bishops,  
we exalt Him Who was lifted up upon thee,  
and we fall down in worship before thee, //  
drawing rich streams of great mercy.

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

### Tone 8

Thy precious Cross, O Christ God,  
which Moses of old prefigured in his own person  
when he overthrew Amalek and put him to flight;  
which David commanded to be worshipped,  
calling it Thy footstool:  
this same Cross we sinners worship today with unworthy lips,  
and praise Thee Who deigned to be nailed upon it,  
and we cry to Thee: //  
"With the thief, make us worthy of Thy Kingdom, O Lord!"

## **THE PRAYER OF SAINT SIMEON, THE GOD-RECEIVER**

**Reader:** 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; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3 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.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, look upon and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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 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 the evil one.

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

## **TROPARION**

### **Troparion of the Cross in Tone 1**

[[Music on website](#)]

O Lord, save Thy people,  
and bless Thine inheritance!  
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians  
over their adversaries;  
and by the power of Thy Cross, //  
preserve Thy habitation.

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

*Repeat: "O Lord, save Thy people ..."*

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

*Repeat: "O Lord, save Thy people ..."*

## **DISMISSAL**

**Reader:** Establish, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Choir:** More honourable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without defilement gavest birth to God the Word, and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**Choir:** Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**Choir:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Bless, O Lord!

**Reader:** Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercessions of Thine all-immaculate and all-blameless Holy Mother; by the might of the precious and life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honourable bodiless powers of heaven; at the supplications of our Holy, Venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of

our Father among the Saints, Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Patron and Protector of this Community; of the Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.