

Reader's Vespers for the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple

Sung on Friday 20th November 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 forever 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 1

[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 1

[Music on website]

Today, let us dance, O faithful,
singing to the Lord in psalms and hymns
and honouring His sanctified Tabernacle, the living Ark,
that contained the Word Who cannot be contained;
for in wondrous fashion she is offered to the Lord
as a young child in the flesh,
and Zachariah, the great High Priest, joyfully receives her//
as the dwelling place of God.

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

Repeat: “Today, let us dance, O faithful ...”

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

Today the living Temple of the holy glory of Christ our God,
the pure Maiden who alone is blessed among women,
is offered in the Temple of the Law
that she may make her dwelling in the Holy Place.
Joachim and Anna rejoice with her in spirit,
and choirs of virgins sing to the Lord,//
chanting psalms, and honouring His Mother.

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.

Thou art the preaching of the prophets, O Virgin Mother of God;
the glory of the Apostles and the boast of Martyrs,
and the renewal of all the earth-born,
for through thee, we are reconciled to God.
Therefore, being saved by thine intercessions,
we honour thy coming into the Temple of the Lord;
and with the Angel we all cry out to thee in song://
“Rejoice, O all-revered Lady!”

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

Tone 4

Led by the Holy Spirit,
the holy Maiden without blemish is brought to dwell in the Holy of Holies,
where she is fed by an angel.

She is truly the most holy Temple of our holy God,
Who has made all things holy by dwelling in her, //
and has made God-like the fallen nature of mortals.

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

Repeat: "Led by the Holy Spirit ..."

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

The young girls rejoice today,
and with lamps in hand they go before the spiritual Lamp,
as she is led with reverence into the Holy of Holies.
They foreshadow the Brightness past telling
Who is to shine forth from her //
and enlighten by the Spirit those who sat in the darkness of ignorance.

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

Anna the all-praised cried out rejoicing:
"Receive, O Zachariah, her whom God's Prophets proclaimed in the Spirit,
and bring her into the holy Temple,
there to be brought up in reverence,
that she may become the divine throne of the Master of all, //
His palace and resting place and dwelling filled with light!"

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

Tone 8

After thy birth, O Lady and Bride of God,
thou didst come to the Temple of the Lord
to be brought up in the Holy of Holies, since thou thyself art holy.
And Gabriel then was sent to thee, all-blameless Maiden, to bring thee food.
All in heaven were amazed
to see how the Holy Spirit had made His abode in thee.
Therefore, O spotless and undefiled Mother of God,
glorified in heaven and on earth, //
save the human race!

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: Thou, O God, art my Helper; Thy mercy shall go before me.

Choir: Thou, O God, art my Helper; Thy mercy shall go before me.

Reader: Rescue me from mine enemies, O God; and from them that rise up against me, redeem me.

Choir: Thou, O God, art my Helper; Thy mercy shall go before me.

Reader: Thou, O God, art my Helper;

Choir: Thy mercy shall go before me.

READINGS

A Reading from the Second Book of Moses, the Book of Exodus [Exodus 40:1-5, 9, 10, 16, 34-35]

The Lord spake to Moses, saying: "On the first day of the first month, at the new moon, thou shalt set up the tabernacle of the witness, and thou shalt place therein the ark of the testimony, and shalt cover the ark with the veil. And thou shalt bring in the table and the candlestick; and thou shalt place the golden censer, to burn incense before the ark of the testimony; and thou shalt put a covering of a veil on the doors of the tabernacle of witness. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and shalt anoint the tabernacle, and all things therein; and shalt sanctify it, and all its furniture, and it shall be holy. And thou shalt hallow the altar, and the altar shall be most holy. And Moses did all things whatsoever the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, commanded him. And a cloud covered the tabernacle of witness, and the tabernacle was filled with the glory of the Lord. And Moses was not able to enter into the tabernacle of testimony, because the cloud overshadowed it, and the tabernacle was filled with the glory of the Lord.

A Reading from the Third Book of Kings [3 (1) Kings 7:51; 8:1, 3-7, 9-11]

It came to pass that Solomon finished building the house of the Lord. And he assembled all the elders of Israel in Sion, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Sion. And the priests took up the ark, and the tabernacle of testimony, and all the holy vessels which were in the tabernacle of testimony. And the king and all Israel stood before the ark. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord into its place, into the oracle of the house, even into the Holy of holies, under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark; and the cherubim covered the ark and its holy things above. There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which Moses put there in Horeb, which the Lord made. And it came to pass when the priests departed out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house. And the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord God Almighty filled the house.

A Reading from the Prophecy of Ezekiel [Ezekiel 43:27-44:4]

Thus saith the Lord: "It shall come to pass from the eighth day and onward, that the priests shall offer your whole burnt-offerings on the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you," saith the Lord. Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary that faceth eastward; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me: "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall pass through it; for the Lord God of Israel shall enter by it, and it shall be shut. For the Prince, He shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord; He shall go in by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go forth by the way of the same." And He brought me in by the way of the gate that faceth northward, in front of the house: and I looked, and, behold! the house was full of the glory of the Lord.

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]

Heaven and earth rejoice,
beholding the spiritual Heaven, the only Virgin without blemish,
as she enters the house of God, there to be reared in reverence.
Zachariah cried to her in amazement:
“O Gate of the Lord, to thee I open the gates of the Temple;
rejoice and go around it dancing.
For I know and believe that the deliverance of Israel
will now come to dwell openly in our midst,
and that from thee shall be born God the Word, //
Who grants the world His great mercy!”

Virgins shall be brought to the King after her; her companions shall be brought to Thee.

Anna, being the namesake of grace,
joyfully brings into the Temple of God
the pure and ever-Virgin who is full of grace,
and calls young girls to go before her with lamps in hand.
She says: “Go, child, to Him Who gave thee to me;
to be an offering and a sweet-smelling incense.
Go into the inner sanctuary that none may enter:
learn its mysteries,
and prepare thyself to become the pleasing and fair dwelling-place of Jesus, //
Who grants the world His great mercy!”

They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing; they shall be led into the Temple of the King.

The most holy Virgin, the Temple that is to contain God,
is dedicated within the Temple of God;
and young girls, bearing lamps, now go before her.
Her noble parents, Joachim and Anna, leap for joy and dance,
for they have borne her who is to bear the Creator.
And she who is all-pure dances around the divine habitations
and is fed by the hand of an angel.
She has been revealed as the Mother of Christ, //
Who grants the world His 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 6

Today let us, the crowds of the assembled faithful,
celebrate a spiritual feast:
let us reverently praise the Virgin Theotokos and child of God,
as she is brought into the Temple of the Lord!
She was forechosen from all generations
to be the dwelling-place of Christ, the Lord and God of all.
O Virgins, bearing lamps, go before her,
honouring the majestic advance of the ever-Virgin!
Mothers, lay aside every sorrow and accompany them with joy,

singing the praises of her who became the Mother of God,
the cause of joy for the world!
Therefore, let us all join with the angel,
and joyfully cry out: "Rejoice!" to her who is full of grace, //
and who ever intercedes for our souls.

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 Entrance in Tone 4

[Music on website]

Today is the preview of the good will of God,
of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.
The Virgin appears in the Temple of God,
in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.
Let us rejoice and sing to her:
"Rejoice, O Divine Fulfilment //
of the Creator's dispensation!"

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

Repeat: "Today is the preview of the good will of God ..."

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

Repeat: "Today is the preview of the good will of God ..."

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, whose Entrance into the Temple we celebrate; 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.