

# Forgiveness Vespers

Sung on the evening of Cheesefare Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> March for Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
The Holy Martyrs Agapius and his companions

*The online service will be served by a priest, so the litanies will be sung as normal. The parts of the service which are read or sung by the priest are shown in red. These are omitted if the service is used without a priest.*

*If you are serving the service at home without a priest, follow the marked sections shown in blue. The 'Reader' may be the most senior person present – e.g. a parent or grandparent, according to the situation – or simply the most confident reader or singer. The parts marked for the 'Choir' can be read or sung by everyone together, or by one person alone.*

*You may prefer to use parts of the service in your own language. If so, please make sure that the prayers are read from an Orthodox prayer book or service book.*

Available music may be found at [www.orthodoxcommunityrugby.com/choir](http://www.orthodoxcommunityrugby.com/choir)

## Before the Service

*Whether you are following the service online, or serving it at home without a priest, you should do so in front of the household icons – e.g. in the family icon corner. If you do not have an icon of Christ, you should place a Cross or a Book of the Gospels (or a copy of New Testament, or a Bible) on a table in front of the icons. If you have charcoal and incense, you may wish to light the charcoal before the service begins; you can then place incense on the lit charcoal during the hymn **Lord I call** at the words "Let my prayer arise". You may wish to prepare an **unlit** lamp or candle(s) which can be lit when the hymn **O Gladsome Light** is sung.*

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

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God. (x 3)

### **THE LITANY OF PEACE**

*In place of the Litany of Peace, the choir sings:*

Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

**“LORD I CALL ...”**

**Tone 7**

[[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!

*Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy Name.*

**Tone 7** (*Penitential stichera in the Tone of the week*)

Like the Prodigal I come and fall before Thee, O Lord:

accept me as one of Thy hired servants,//

and have mercy on me, O compassionate One!

*The righteous await me; for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.*

Like the man who fell among thieves and was wounded,  
I have fallen, and my soul is bruised by my many sins.  
To whom can I, the guilty one, run,  
if not to Thee, the only merciful Physician of our souls?//  
Pour out Thy great mercy on me, O God!

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

O Saviour, sinner that I am,  
do not cut me down like the barren fig tree!  
But grant me forgiveness all the year long,  
watering my soul with tears of repentance,//  
that I may bring forth acts of mercy as fruit for Thee!

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

Since Thou art the Sun of righteousness,  
enlighten and guide the hearts of those who cry out to Thee://  
"O Lord, glory to Thee!"

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

**Tone 2** *(From the Lenten Triodion)* [Music on website]

Let us humble the flesh by abstinence,  
as we follow the divine path of pure fasting!  
With prayers and tears let us seek the Lord, Who saves us!  
Let us put an end to anger, crying out:  
"Save us for we have sinned against Thee!  
Save us, O Christ our King, as Thou didst save the men of Nineveh,//  
and make us partakers of Thy heavenly Kingdom, O compassionate One!"

*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.*

When I think of my deeds, O Lord,  
I am filled with despair,  
and know that I am worthy of every torment.  
I have despised Thy commandments, O Saviour.  
I have spent my life as a prodigal.  
I pray to Thee, O only merciful One:  
"Cleanse me by repentance,  
enlighten me through prayers and fasting,//  
and despise me not, O most gracious Benefactor of all!"

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

**Tone 2** *(From the Lenten Triodion)*

Let us begin the fast with joy!  
Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts!  
Let us cleanse our soul and cleanse our flesh!  
Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!  
Let us rejoice in virtues of the Spirit and fulfil them in love,  
that we all may see the Passion of Christ our God,//  
and rejoice in spirit at the holy Pascha!

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

**Tone 8** *(For the Martyrs)*

O seven martyrs of Christ,  
you counted the assaults of the torturers and violent death to be nothing.  
You hastened to battle with readiness and courage,  
covering yourselves with the glory of victory.  
You are numbered among all the righteous;//  
we call you blessed, glorifying you with them forever.

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

O martyred athlete Agapius,  
thou didst love the Well-spring of good things and the Summit of desires.  
Thou didst hasten to drain the cup of martyrdom,  
calling on the Divine Name of the living God.  
What courage was thine; what endurance,//  
by which thou wast openly given the gift of glory and splendour!

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

O all-blessèd martyrs,  
you gave yourselves to voluntary slaughter;  
you sanctified the earth with your blood  
and illumined the air with your passing.  
Now in the image of God you live in the heavens, //  
ever praying for us to the never-fading Light.

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

### **Tone 8 (*Theotokion*)**

Rejoice, O godly chariot of the Light,  
temple and house of the Lord and tabernacle of holiness;  
rejoice, for from thy spotless womb, Light is risen on all,  
thus making the ends of the world exceedingly bright,  
for in His goodness, He has sanctified us.  
Rejoice, O pure Maiden, the crown of our salvation and life; //  
Rejoice, O report and fame of those who trust in thee!

### **THE ENTRANCE WITH THE CENSER**

**Priest:** *Wisdom! Stand upright!*

### **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**

**Priest:** *Let us attend! Peace be to all!*

**Choir:** *And to thy spirit.*

**Reader:** Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted: hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it!

**Choir:** Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted: hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it!

**Reader:** Let Thy salvation, O God, uphold me!

**Choir:** Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted: hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it!

**Reader:** Let the poor see and be glad!

**Choir:** Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted: hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it!

**Reader:** Seek God, and thy soul shall live!

**Choir:** Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted: hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it!

**Reader:** Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted:

**Choir:** hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul, and deliver it!

### **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.

## THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

*In place of the Litany of Supplication, the choir sings:*

Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

## THE PRAYER AT THE BOWING OF THE HEADS

**Priest:** Peace be to all!

**Choir:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** Bow your heads unto the Lord.

**Choir:** To Thee, O Lord.

*The Priest reads the Prayer at the Bowing of the Heads:*

**Priest:** ... now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**Choir:** Amen.

## APOSTICHA

**Tone 4** *(From the Lenten Triodion)*

[Music on website]

Thy grace hath shone forth, O Lord:

the grace which illumines our soul.

This is the acceptable time!

This is the time of repentance!

Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light,

that passing through the Fast as through a great sea

we may reach the Resurrection on the third day//

of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of our souls.

*v. 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.*

*Repeat: "Thy grace hath shone forth, O Lord..."*

*v. 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.*

**Tone 4** *(For the Martyrs)*

Thou art glorified

in the memory of Thy saints, O Christ God.//

At their supplications, send down on us Thy great mercy!

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

**Tone 4** *(From the Lenten Triodion)*

The angelic hosts glorify thee, O Mother of God,

for thou gavest birth to God,

co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,

Who, by His own desire, created the angelic hosts out of nothing.

Beseech Him to deliver from corruption and to enlighten//

the souls of those who rightly praise thee, O most pure one!

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

**Priest/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.

**Reader:** Holy God, Holy Mighty Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (x 3)

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.

**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 the ages of ages. Amen.

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

## THE LENTEN TROPARIA

### Tone 8

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 Saviour of our souls. *(All make a 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! *(All make a prostration)*

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 Saviour! *(All make a 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! *(No prostration)*

## THE BLESSING

**Reader:** Lord, have mercy. (x 40)

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

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.

**Bless, father, in the Name of the Lord.**

**Priest:** Christ our God, He Who is, is blessed, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**Reader:** Amen.

**Reader:** O Heavenly King, support the faithful; confirm the faith; guide the nations; give peace to the world; and preserve well our holy church and this city. Grant repose to our departed fathers and brethren in the dwelling-place of the righteous. Receive us in repentance and confession, for Thou art a good and merciful God and lovest mankind

## THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

*The Priest or Reader says the Prayer of Saint Ephraim:*

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. *(All make a prostration)*

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to me Thy servant. *(All make a prostration)*

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

**Priest:** *Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!*

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

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

*Father, give the blessing.*

*The Priest gives the blessing.*

Bless, O Lord.

Reader: Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother; by the protection of the honourable bodiless powers of heaven; at the supplications 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.

## THE CEREMONY OF MUTUAL FORGIVENESS

*All venerate the icon of Christ, (if there is one; otherwise, they kiss the Cross, or the Gospel Book, New Testament, or Bible placed on the table in front of the icons). Each person then makes a prostration towards each other person present, and asks his or her forgiveness, using these or similar words: **Forgive me, and pray for me, a sinner.** They then share a kiss of peace.*

*If no one else is present, and you are using the service alone, you should still forgive from your heart anyone who has wronged you, ask God's forgiveness for any wrong you have done to another, and pray for everyone with whom you need to be reconciled because of past wrongs done to one another. You may wish to say the *Prayer of Forgiveness*: **O God, remit, pardon and forgive our sins, whether voluntary or involuntary, whether by words or deeds, whether in knowledge or ignorance, whether by day or night, whether in mind or thought; forgive us all these, for Thou art good and lovest mankind.***

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