

The Meeting of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple

Great Vespers sung on Wednesday 1st February 2023

“LORD, I CALL ...”

Tone 1

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

Simeon, tell us, Whom dost thou bear in thine arms,
that thou dost rejoice so greatly in the Temple?
To Whom dost thou shout and cry aloud:
“Now am I set free, for I have seen my Saviour?”
This is He Who was born of a Virgin;
this is God the Word, Who came forth from God,
Who for our sakes has taken flesh and has saved man.//
Let us worship Him!

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

Repeat: “Simeon, tell us ...”

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

Repeat: “Simeon, tell us ...”

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.

Simeon, receive Him Whom Moses once beheld in darkness,
granting the Law on Sinai,
now that He has become a Babe subject to the Law!
This is He Who spoke through the Law.
This is He, of Whom the Prophets spoke,
Who for our sakes has taken flesh and has saved man.//
Let us worship Him!

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

Repeat: “Simeon, receive Him ...”

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

Repeat: “Simeon, receive Him ...”

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

Come, let us also go to meet Christ with divine songs!
Let us receive Him Whose salvation Simeon saw!
This is He Whom David announced;
this is He Who spoke in the Prophets,
Who, for our sakes, has taken flesh and Who speaks through the Law.//
Let us worship Him!

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

Repeat: "Come, let us also go to meet Christ ..."

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

Tone 6

Let the gate of heaven be opened today,
for the unoriginate Word of the Father
has made a beginning in time without forsaking His divinity.
As a Babe forty days old,
of His own will He is brought by the Virgin, His Mother,
as an offering in the Temple of the Law.
The Elder receives Him in his arms,
crying as a servant to his Master:
"Let me depart, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!"//
Glory to Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast come into the world to save the human race!

ENTRANCE WITH THE CENSER

O GLADSOME LIGHT

THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

Priest: The Evening Prokeimenon.

Reader: O God, in Thy Name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me.

Choir: O God, in Thy Name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me.

Reader: O God, hearken unto my prayer; give ear unto the words of my mouth.

Choir: O God, in Thy Name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me.

Reader: O God, in Thy Name save me,

Choir: and in Thy strength do Thou judge me.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The Reading from Exodus

The Lord spake to Moses in that day that He brought out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, saying: "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, first-produced, opening every womb among the children of Israel." And Moses went, and gathered all the people together, and said: Remember this day in which ye came forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for with a strong hand the Lord brought you forth from thence. And preserve ye His law. And it shall come to pass when the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as He promised to thy fathers, and thou shalt set apart every firstborn opening the womb, the males to the Lord. And if thy son should ask thee hereafter, saying: What is this? then thou shalt say to him: With a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And when Pharaoh hardened his heart so as not to send us away, he slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore do I sacrifice to the Lord every offspring that openeth the womb, the males to the Lord, and ever firstborn of my sons I will redeem. And it shall be for a sign unto thy hand, and immovable before thine eyes. For thus said the Lord God Almighty: The firstborn of thy sons thou shalt give to Me. And whosoever shall have borne a male child, on the eighth day she shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin. And for thirty-three days she shall not enter the sanctuary, unto the priest, until the days of her purification be fulfilled. And thereafter she shall bring a lamb of a year old without blemish for a whole-burnt offering, and a young pigeon or turtle-dove to the door of the tabernacle of witness, to the priest. And if she cannot afford a lamb, then shall she take two turtle-doves or two young pigeons, and the priest shall pray for him. For these are given to Me for a present out of the midst of the children of Israel: I have taken them, and have sanctified them to Myself instead of the firstborn of the Egyptians,

in the day in which I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt, whether of man or beast, said God Most High, the Holy One of Israel. [Exodus 12:51-13:3; Leviticus 12:2-7; Numbers 8:16-17]

The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah died, that I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, and the house was full of His glory. And seraphim stood round about Him: each one had six wings: and with two they covered their face, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one cried to the other, and they said: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory!" And the lintel shook at the voice they uttered, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! for I am pricked to the heart; for being a man, and having unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people having unclean lips; and I have seen with mine eyes the King, the Lord of hosts!" And there was sent to me one of the seraphim, and he had in his hand an ember, which he had taken off the altar with the tongs: and he touched my mouth, and said: "Behold, this hath touched thy lips, and will take away thine iniquities, and will purge off thy sins." And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom should I send, and who will go to this people?" And I said: "Behold, I am here, send me!" And He said: "Go, and say to this people: Ye shall hear indeed, but ye shall not understand; and ye shall see indeed, but ye shall not perceive. For the heart of this people hath become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." And I said: "How long, O Lord?" And He said: "Until the cities be deserted by reason of their not being inhabited, and the houses by reason of there being no men, and the land shall be left desolate. And after this God shall remove the men far off, and they that are left upon the land shall be multiplied." [Isaiah 6:1-12]

The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

Behold, the Lord sitteth on a light cloud, and shall come to Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and their heart shall faint within them. And their spirit shall be troubled within them; and I will frustrate their counsel. And I will deliver Egypt into the hands of men, of cruel lords: for the Lord and Master, the Holy One of Sabaoth, saith these things. And the Egyptians shall drink water that is by the sea, but the river shall fail, and be dried up. These things saith the Lord: "Where are now thy wise men? And let them declare to thee, and say: What hath the Lord of hosts purposed upon Egypt?" But in that day the Egyptians shall be in fear and trembling, because of the hand of the Lord of Sabaoth, which He shall bring upon them. In that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the land of the Egyptians, and a pillar to the Lord by its border. And it shall be for a sign to the Lord forever in the land of Egypt: for they shall presently cry to the Lord, and the Lord shall send them a Man who shall save them. The Lord shall be known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; and they shall offer sacrifices, and shall vow vows to the Lord. [Isaiah 19:1, 3, 4-5, 12, 16, 19-21]

THE EVENING LITANY

VOUCHSAFE, O LORD

THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

LITYA

Tone 1

The Ancient of Days, Who gave Moses the Law on Sinai in former times, today appears as a Child.

As Maker of the Law, He fulfils the Law.

He is brought into the Temple according to the Law, and given over to the Elder.

Simeon the righteous receives Him.

Beholding the fulfilment of the divine order now brought to pass, rejoicing aloud, he cries:

"Mine eyes have seen the mystery hidden from the ages made manifest in these latter days, the Light that disperses the foolishness of the faithless Gentiles, and the glory of the newly-chosen Israel!

Therefore let Thy servant depart from the bonds of this flesh to the life filled with wonder that knows no age or end, // for Thou dost grant the world great mercy!"

Tone 1

Today He Who once gave the Law to Moses on Sinai
submits Himself to the commandments of the Law,
becoming for our sakes like us in His compassion.
Now the God of purity as a holy Child has opened a pure womb,
and as God He is brought as an offering to Himself,
setting us free from the curse of the Law, //
and granting light to our souls.

Tone 2

Simeon now receives below in his earthly arms
Him Whom the ministers on high entreat with trembling.
He proclaims the union of God with mankind.
He sees the heavenly God as mortal Man.
He prepares to withdraw from earthly things,
and raises his cry in joy:
“Glory to Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast revealed to those in darkness //
the Light that knows no evening!”

Today Simeon takes in his arms the Lord of Glory,
Whom Moses saw of old in the darkness
when he received the Tablets of the Law on Mount Sinai.
This is He Who speaks through the Prophets
and Who is the Creator of the Law.
This is He Whom David announced; //
He is fearful to all, yet great and abundant in mercy.

The holy Virgin brought the Holy One to the priest in the sacred Temple.
Simeon, extending his arms, received Him with joy, and cried out:
“Now, Master, let Thy servant depart in peace, //
according to Thy word, O Lord!”

Today holy Simeon the Elder
lifted up in his arms the Creator of heaven and earth,
as he said in the Holy Spirit: //
“Now I am set free, for I have seen my Saviour.”

Today Simeon the Elder enters the Temple, rejoicing in the Spirit,
to take into his arms Him Who gave the Law to Moses
and Who Himself fulfilled the Law.
Moses was deemed worthy to see God through darkness and as an indistinct voice.
With veiled face he reprov'd the faithless hearts of the Hebrews;
while Simeon lifted up the pre-eternal Word of the Father in bodily form,
and revealed the Light of the Gentiles: the Cross and the Resurrection.
And Anna the Prophetess pointed out the Saviour,
proclaiming Him the Deliverer of Israel.
Let us cry out to Him: //
“O Christ our God, through the Theotokos, have mercy on us!”

Tone 4

Today the holy Mother who is even more exalted than the Temple,
has come into the Temple,
clearly showing to the world the Creator of the world and the Giver of the Law.
Simeon the Elder receives Him in his arms and honours Him, crying out:
“Now let Thy servant depart in peace, //
for I have seen Thee, the Saviour of our souls!”

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

Tone 5

Search the Scriptures, just as Christ our God said in the Gospels!
For in them we find Him being brought forth and wrapped in swaddling clothes,
laid in a manger, and nourished with milk,
receiving circumcision and held by Simeon,
neither in fancy nor in fantasy
but in truth appearing to the world.
Let us cry aloud to Him://
"O pre-eternal God, glory to Thee!"

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

Tone 5

The Ancient of Days, as a Child in the flesh,
is brought by His Mother the Virgin into the Holy Temple,
fulfilling the promise announced by His own Law.
Receiving Him, Simeon said:
"Now let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word,//
for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, O Lord!"

APOSTICHA

Tone 7

Adorn thy bridal chamber, O Zion,
and welcome Christ the King!
Salute Mary, the heavenly gate, fashioned as the throne of the Cherubim!
She carries the King of Glory!
The Virgin is a cloud of light:
she has borne in the flesh the Son begotten before the Morning Star.
Simeon, taking Him in his arms, proclaimed to the peoples://
"He is the Master of life and death; the Saviour of the world!"

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!

The unwedded Mother has brought into the Temple
Him Who shone forth before the ages from the Father.
In these latter times He was born from a Virgin womb.
He gave the Law on Mount Sinai, yet He makes Himself obedient to the commandment of the Law.
She has brought Him to the Priest and righteous Elder
whose appointed lot it was to see Christ the Lord.
Simeon, receiving Him in his arms, rejoiced greatly and cried aloud:
"This is God Who is co-eternal with the Father!//
He is the Redeemer of our souls!"

A Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

The Theotokos Mary carried in her arms
Him Who is borne aloft upon the chariot of the cherubim, and praised in song by the seraphim.
The Giver of the Law, Who fulfils the commandment of the Law,
was made flesh of the Unwedded Virgin.
She gave Him into the arms of the Priest and Elder.
Holding the Life, he asked to be released from life, saying:
"Now, Master, let me depart to declare to Adam
that I have seen the pre-eternal God and Saviour of the world,//
Who was made a Babe without undergoing change!"

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

Tone 8

He Who is borne on high by the Cherubim
and praised in hymns by the Seraphim
is brought today according to the Law into the holy Temple
and rests in the arms of the Elder as on a throne.
From Joseph He receives gifts fitting for God:
a pair of doves, 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.
Simeon, now granted the fulfilment of the prophesies concerning himself,
blesses the Virgin and Theotokos Mary.
He foretells in figures the Passion of her Son.
From Him he begs release, crying aloud:
“Now, Master, let me depart as Thou hast promised me,
for I have seen the pre-eternal Light//
and the Lord and Saviour of the people who bear the Name of Christ!”

THE PRAYER OF SAINT SIMEON, THE GOD-RECEIVER

TRISAGION PRAYERS

TROPARION

Troparion of the Meeting of the Lord in Tone 1

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace!
From thee shone the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,
enlightening those who sat in darkness.
Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder,
thou didst accept in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls,//
Who grants us the Resurrection!

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

Repeat: “Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos ...”

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

Repeat: “Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos ...”

THE DISMISSAL