

READER'S VESPERS SERVED ON GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY AFTERNOON

If you have a Crucifix or an Icon of Christ Crucified, you may wish to say or sing the Service in front of it. If you have access to a printer, you may also wish to print out an image of the Plaschanitsa / Epitaphios (burial shroud) to use during the Service. One can be found here:

<https://orthodoxcommunityrugby.files.wordpress.com/2023/04/epitaphios-plaschanitsa.pdf>

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

Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who art in all places and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O Good One.

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.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (12 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.

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: Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

“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!

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

Tone 1

All creation was changed by fear
when it saw Thee hanging upon the Cross, O Christ.

The sun was darkened,
and the foundations of the earth were shaken.

All things suffered with the Creator of all.//

O Lord, Who willingly didst endure this for us, glory to Thee!

For Thy name's sake have I waited for Thee, O Lord, my soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.

Repeat: “All creation was changed by fear... “

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

Tone 2

An impious and transgressing people –

why do they imagine vain things?

Why do they condemn to death the Life of all?

Oh, great wonder!

The Creator of the world is betrayed into the hands of lawless men.

He Who loves mankind is lifted up upon the Wood,

that He might free those bound in Hell, who cry://

“O long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee!”

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

Today the blameless Virgin
saw Thee suspended upon the Cross, O Word.
She mourned within herself and was sorely pierced in her heart.
She groaned in agony from the depth of her soul.
Exhausted from tearing her hair and cheeks and beating her breast,
She cried out, lamenting:
“Woe is me, O my divine Child!
Woe is me, O Light of the world!
Why hast Thou departed from mine eyes, O Lamb of God?”
Then the bodiless hosts were seized with trembling and cried:
“O incomprehensible Lord, glory to Thee!”

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

When she who bore Thee without seed
saw Thee suspended upon the Tree,
O Christ, the Creator and God of all,
she cried bitterly: “Where is the beauty of Thy form, O my Son?
I cannot bear to see Thee unjustly crucified!
Hasten and arise, //
that I too may see Thy Resurrection from the dead on the third day!”

For His mercy is abundant towards us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

Tone 6

Today the Master of creation stands before Pilate.
Today the Creator of all is condemned to die on the Cross.
Of His own will, He is led as a Lamb to the slaughter.
He Who fed His people with manna in the desert is transfixed with nails.
His side is pierced, and a sponge of vinegar touches His lips.
The Redeemer of the world is slapped on the face.
The Maker of all is mocked by His own servants.
How great is the Master’s love for mankind!
For those who crucified Him, He prayed to His Father, saying: //
“Forgive them this sin, for they know not what they do!”

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

Tone 6

See how the lawless assembly condemns the King of creation to death!
They are not ashamed, even when He reminds them of His mighty works:
“My people, what have I done to you?
Have I not filled Judea with miracles?
Have I not raised the dead by My Word alone?
Have I not healed every sickness and disease?
How have ye repaid Me?
Why have ye abandoned Me?
In return for healing, ye give Me blows;
In return for life, ye put Me to death.
Ye hang your Benefactor on the Cross as an evildoer;
your Lawgiver, as a transgressor;
the King of all, as one condemned.” //
O long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee!

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

Tone 6

We see a strange and fearful mystery accomplished today:
He Whom none may touch is seized.
He Who looses Adam from the curse is bound.
He Who tries the hearts of men is unjustly brought to trial.
He Who closed the abyss is shut in prison.
He before Whom the Hosts of Heaven stand with trembling stands before Pilate.
The Creator is struck by the hand of His creature.
He Who comes to judge the living and the dead is condemned to the Cross.
The Conqueror of Hell is enclosed in a tomb.
Thou Who hast endured all these things in Thy tender love,
hast saved all mankind from the curse. //
O long-suffering Lord, glory to Thee!

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, thou Giver of Life; therefore all the world doth glorify Thee.

THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

Reader: The Evening Prokeimenon

Reader: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Choir: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Reader: My God, My God, look upon me! Why hast Thou forsaken me?

Choir: They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots.

Reader: They divide my garments among them

Choir: and for my raiment they cast lots.

Reader: The reading is from the Book of Exodus (33:11-23)

Reader: So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle. Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, Thou dost say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, 'I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee and that I may find grace in Thy sight. And consider that this nation is Thy people." And He said, "My Presence will go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Then he said to Him, "If Thy Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Thy people and I have found grace in Thy sight, except Thou dost go with us? So we shall be separate, Thy people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth." So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that thou hast spoken; for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name." And he said, "Please, show me Thy glory." Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." But He said, "Thou cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put thee in the cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the Fourth Tone.

Reader: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me.

Choir: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me.

Reader: They rewarded me evil for good, my soul is forlorn.

Choir: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me; fight against those who fight against me.

Reader: Judge, O Lord, those who wrong me

Choir: fight against those who fight against me.

Reader: The Reading is from the Book of Job (42:12-17)

Reader: Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days. [It is written that he will rise with those whom the Lord resurrects. This man is described in the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausitis, on the border of Edom and Arabia. Previously his name was Jobab. He took an Arabian wife and begot a son named Ennon. But he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorra. Thus, he was the fifth son from Abraham.]

Reader: The reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah (52:13-54:1)

Reader: Thus says the Lord: Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at thee, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; so shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider. Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should

desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When Thou makest His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labour of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. “Sing, O barren, Thou who hast not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, Thou who hast not laboured with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD.

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the Sixth Tone.

Reader: They have laid Me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Choir: They have laid Me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Reader: O Lord God of my salvation, I call for help by day; I cry out in the night before Thee.

Choir: They have laid Me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Reader: They have laid Me in the depths of the pit

Choir: in the regions dark and deep.

EPISTLE

Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 1:18-2:1)

Ye Brethren: The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will thwart.” Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, “Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord.” When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Reader: Save me, O God; for the waters have come up to my neck.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: They gave me gall for food, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

THE GOSPEL

Reader: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Choir: Glory to Thy Passion, O Lord; O Lord.

Reader: When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." They said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me." Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." And he said, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified." So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for

them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah

will come to save him." And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

[If possible, the Image of the Body of Christ is taken down from the Cross, and wrapped in a white cloth.]

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

[Matthew 27:1-38, Luke 23:39-43, Matthew 27:39-54, John 19:31-37, Matthew 27:55-61]

Choir: Glory to Thy long-suffering, O Lord; O Lord.

In place of the Litany:

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

THE EVENING PRAYER

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, O Lord, be upon us 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 Commandments! Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me with Thy Precepts! Thy mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Do not despise the works of Thy hands. To Thee is due praises. To Thee is due a song. To Thee is due 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 Fervent Supplication:

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (12 times)

THE APOSTICHA

During the Aposticha, you may wish to place an image of the Plaschanitsa / Epitaphios (burial shroud), or another icon of Christ on a cloth and lay it reverently on a table in your home Altar (e.g. in your icon corner).

Tone 2

Joseph of Arimathea took Thee down from the tree,
the Life of all, cold in death.

Bathing Thee with sweet and costly myrrh,
he gently covered Thee with finest linen,
and, with sorrow and tender love in his heart,
he embraced Thy most pure body.

Trembling at this awesome sight,
he cried out to Thee, O Christ://

"Glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of man!"

v: The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty!

When Thou, the Redeemer of all, wast placed in a tomb
all Hell's powers quaked in fear.

Its bars were broken, its gates were smashed.
Its mighty reign was brought to an end,

for the dead came forth alive from their tombs,
casting off the bonds of their captivity.
Adam was filled with joy!
He gratefully cried out to Thee, O Christ://
“Glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of man!”

v: For He has established the world so that it shall never be moved.

In the flesh Thou wast willingly enclosed in the tomb,
Who art boundless and infinite in Thy divinity.
Thou didst close the chambers of death, O Christ.
Thou hast emptied all the palaces of Hell.//
Thou hast honoured this Sabbath with Thy blessing, glory, and
splendour.

v: Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore.

The Powers of Heaven shook with fear,
when they saw Thine ineffable forbearance.
They beheld Thee slandered by lawless men,
mocked as a deceiver by transgressors.
They beheld the stone that closed Thy tomb,
sealed by the same hands that pierced Thy side,
but they knew that Thy death would be our life,
and joyfully they cried out to Thee, O Christ://
“Glory to Thy condescension, O Lover of man!”

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

Tone 5

Joseph, together with Nicodemus,
took Thee down from the Tree,
Who clothest Thyself with light as with a garment.
He gazed on Thy body – dead, naked, and unburied,
and in grief and tender compassion he lamented:
“Woe is me, my sweetest Jesus!
A short while ago, the sun beheld Thee hanging on the Cross,

and it hid itself in darkness.
The earth quaked in fear at the sight.
The veil of the Temple was torn in two.
Lo, now I see Thee willingly submit to death for our sake.
How shall I bury Thee, O my God?
How can I wrap Thee in a shroud?
How can I touch Thy most pure body with my hands?
What songs can I sing for Thine Exodus, O compassionate One?
I magnify Thy Passion.
I glorify Thy burial,
and Thy holy Resurrection,//
crying, O Lord, glory to Thee!”

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 peoples; a light to enlighten the Gentiles,
and 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.

TROPARIA

Tone 2

The noble Joseph,
when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the Tree,
wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, //
and placed it in a new tomb.

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

Tone 2

The Angel came to the myrrh bearing women at the tomb and said:
“Myrrh is fitting for the dead;
but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption.”

During or after the Troparia, all venerate the Plaschanitsa / Epitaphios.

THE DISMISSAL

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

More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more
glorious than the Seraphim; who without defilement gavest birth to God
the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

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

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Bless, O Lord.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have
mercy upon us and save us. Amen.