

## Holy Week at Home: Vespers of Great and Holy Friday

*Gather in a quiet room standing before icons and a cross.*

Leader: Through the Prayers of our Holy Fathers and Mothers, Lord, Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

All: Amen.

O heavenly King, the Comforter and Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and filles all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of life: Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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

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

Most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your Name; Your kingdom come; Your 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 evil.

Amen. Come, let us worship God, our King!

Come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ, our King and our God!

(Psalm 104) Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, You are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty, Who covers Yourself with light as with a garment; Who has stretched out the heavens like a tent. Who hast laid the beams of Your chambers on the waters, Who makes the clouds Your chariot, Who rides on the wings of the wind. Who makes Your angels spirits, and Your ministers a fiery flame. You set the earth on its foundations so that it should never be shaken. You covered it with the deep as with a garment. The waters stood above the mountains. At Your rebuke they fled, at the sound of Your thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which You appointed for them. You set a bound which they should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. You make springs gush forth in the valleys, they

flow between the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From Your lofty abode You water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your work. You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, fodder for the animals that serve man. That he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart. The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers. You have made the moon to mark the seasons. The sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they get them away, and lie down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom hast You made them all! The earth is full of Your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and the Leviathan which You formed to sport in it. These all look to You, to give them their food in due season. When You give it to them, they gather it up; when You open Your hand, they are filled with good things. When You hide Your face, they are dismayed; when You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When You send forth Your Spirit, they are created and You renew the face of the earth! May the glory of the Lord endure forever! May the Lord rejoice in His works. Who looks on the earth and it trembles! Who touches the mountains and they smoke! I will sing praises to my God while I have being! May my meditation be pleasing to Him for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul! The sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness and it is night. O Lord, how manifold are Your works. In wisdom have You made them all.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to You, O God. (3x)

*The five readings follow. Chant or recite the readings.*

**[READING 1]** The reading from the Book of Exodus.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Then Moses said to the LORD, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’ <sup>13</sup> Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people.”

<sup>14</sup> And He said, “My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest.”

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup> For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth.”

<sup>17</sup> So the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.”

<sup>18</sup> And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”

<sup>19</sup> Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” <sup>20</sup> But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” <sup>21</sup> And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. <sup>22</sup> So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. <sup>23</sup> Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”

**[READING 1]** The reading from the Book of Job.

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. <sup>13</sup> He also had seven sons and three daughters. <sup>14</sup> And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. <sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren *for* four generations. <sup>17</sup> So Job died, old and full of days. And it was also written that he will rise with those whom our Lord shall raise.

[READING 3] The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord: Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;

He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

<sup>14</sup> Just as many were astonished at you,

So His visage was marred more than any man,

And His form more than the sons of men;

<sup>15</sup> 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?

<sup>2</sup> 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.*

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> Surely He has borne our griefs

And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.  
8 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.  
9 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.  
10 Yet it pleased the LORD to <sup>[q]</sup>bruise Him;  
He has put *Him* to grief.  
When You make 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.  
11 He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.  
By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,  
For He shall bear their iniquities.  
12 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,  
You *who* have not borne!  
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,  
You *who* have not labored with child!  
For more *are* the children of the desolate  
Than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD.

**Prokeimenon (*sing together, chant, or recite*):**

*The Prokeimenon in the 6<sup>th</sup> tone: You have put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions dark and deep.*

*Verse: O Lord, the God of my salvation: I call for help by day, I cry out in the night before You.*

**[READING 4]** The reading from the first epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Brethren:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

<sup>20</sup> Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. <sup>2</sup> For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

*All sing: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.*

**[READING 5]** The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew:

*All: Glory to your Passion, o Lord.*

And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, <sup>34</sup> they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink.

<sup>35</sup> Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

“They divided My garments among them,  
And for My clothing they cast lots.”

<sup>36</sup> Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. <sup>37</sup> And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>38</sup> Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

<sup>39</sup> And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, “You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

<sup>41</sup> Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, <sup>42</sup> “He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. <sup>43</sup> He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ”

<sup>44</sup> Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

<sup>45</sup> Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. <sup>46</sup> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

<sup>47</sup> Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, “This Man is calling for Elijah!” <sup>48</sup> Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

<sup>49</sup> The rest said, “Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.”

<sup>50</sup> And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

<sup>51</sup> Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, <sup>52</sup> and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the

saints who had fallen asleep were raised; <sup>53</sup> and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

<sup>54</sup> So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

<sup>55</sup> And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, <sup>56</sup> among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

*All: Glory to Your longsuffering, o Lord.*

Leader: Vouchsafe o Lord to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed are You o Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen. Let Your mercy be upon us, o Lord, for we have set our hope in You.

Blessed are You, o Lord, teach me Your statutes.

Blessed are You o Master, make me to understand Your commandments.

Blessed are You, o Holy One, enlighten me with Your precepts.

Your mercy, Lord, endures forever. Despise not the works of Your hands. To You belong worship, to You belong praise, to you belong glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*Everyone recites or sings the Canticle of Simeon together:*

All: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace

According to Your word

For my eyes have seen your salvation

Which You have prepared before the face of all people

A light to lighten the Gentiles

And the glory of Your people Israel.

*Then, all sing the Troparion before a cross. If you made a burial shroud, kneel before it.*

The Noble Joseph, when he had taken down Your 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.

The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said: Myrrh is meet for the dead; but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!

Leader: O Lord Almighty, we pray for our Metropolitan N., our Bishop N., for our civil authorities and armed forces. We pray for deliverance from the coronavirus, for the healing of those infected and of all who are sick, for the health and safety of all doctors, nurses, and medical workers, and for all your people.

All: Amen.

*Spend the rest of the evening in quiet thanksgiving as our Lord begins his sabbath rest.*