

Readers Vespers on Wednesday, September 23rd, 2020
AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE MOTHER THEODORA OF
ALEXANDRIA COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR AUTONOMUS

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

Choir: Amen.

Come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.
Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.
Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God

THE PSALM OF INTRODUCTION—PSALM 103

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. Man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor 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, wherein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this leviathan, 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; 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 ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. (THRICE)

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*forty times*)

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

Choir: Amen.

“O LORD I HAVE CRIED” IN TONE IV

Choir: O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me; hear Thou me, O Lord. O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me. Give ear to the voice of my supplication when I cry out unto Thee: hear Thou me, O Lord.

Choir: Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as the incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; hear Thou me, O Lord.

- + Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a protecting door round about my lips.
- + Incline not my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins.
- + With men that work iniquity; and I will not communicate with the choicest of them.
- + The just man shall correct me in mercy and shall reprove me; but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head.
- + For my prayer also shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased; their judges falling upon the rock have been swallowed up.
- + They shall hear my words, for they are sweet; as when the thickness of the earth is broken upon the ground, their bones are scattered by the side of hell.
- + But to Thee, O Lord, Lord, are mine eyes; in Thee have I put my trust, take not away my soul.
- + Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the traps of the workers of iniquity.
- + Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst I alone escape.
- + I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord, did I make my supplication.
- + I poured out my supplication before Him; I showed before Him my trouble.
- + When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path.
- + In the way wherein I walked have they secretly laid a snare for me.
- + I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.
- + Refuge failed me; no one cared for my soul.
- + I cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

- + Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low.
 - + Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.
- Verse 10. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.*
Verse 9. The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.
Verse 8. Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.
Verse 7. Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

For the venerable one in Tone IV

Verse 6. If Thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

In a woman's body * but in the guise of a man, * thou didst undertake manly struggles, * living in the midst of men, * causing the passions to wither, * and utterly restraining the raging of lust * by fasting and constant supplications, O Theodora, * and by thy divine and never-ceasing ** contemplation of God.

Verse 5. Because of Thy Name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

The sun, setting beneath the earth, * never saw thee sin; * and the Lord, Who knoweth men's hearts and seeth hidden things, * knew thee to be untiring * and illumined the eyes of thy heart * with the light of repentance. * Wherefore, thou didst diligently strive to please Him * through painful abstinence ** and the perfection of the virtues.

Verse 4. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord.

In nowise understanding * the ways of the enemy's thoughts, * thou didst love the child * whom thou didst not beget * nurturing him with paternal kindness, * O Theodora, * enduring with true piety of mind * the undeserved abuse and censure of men. ** Wherefore, we celebrate thine honored solemnity.

For the hieromartyr in Tone IV

Verse 3. For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

Shining with the virtues, * adorned with piety, * thou wast a godly hierarch, * and didst pass over the world like the brilliant sun, * sowing the preaching of the Faith everywhere * and cutting down falsehood * with the scythe of thy tongue, * O divinely wise hierarch Autonomus, ** thou great preacher.

Verse 2. Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people.

Thou didst not hesitate to endure * painful sufferings, manly struggles, * wounds and sores; * for, buried under a multitude of stones, * O Autonomus, * thou didst make them into * a stairway and ladder, * ascending thereby to God as one crowned; * and thou didst join the armies of the incorporeal ones, ** praying for the world.

Verse 1. For His mercy is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

Thou didst make thy vesture bright * through the blood of thy martyrdom * and the grace of the divine Spirit; * and in a sacred manner * didst enter into the holy of holies on high, * where Jesus, our Forerunner, entered in, * receiving from God a crown of victory * with all who died by shedding their blood in martyrdom, ** O Autonomus.

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

In accordance with the angel's prophecy, thou didst issue forth from the righteous Joachim and Anna, as a most pure fruit, heaven and the throne of God, a receptacle of purity, heralding forth joy to all the world, O Virgin, mediatrix of our life, removal of the curse, bestowal of blessing. Wherefore, on the feast of thy nativity, O divinely called Virgin, ask peace for the world and great mercy for our souls.

O GLADSOME LIGHT

O gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy and blessed Father: O Jesus Christ. Lo now that we have come to the setting of the sun, as we behold the evening light, we hymn Thee: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God. Meet it is for Thee at all times to be magnified by joyous voices, O Son of God and Giver of life. Wherefore the whole world doth glorify Thee.

PROKEIMENON, IN TONE V:

O God, in Thy name save me, * and in Thy strength do Thou judge me

Verse: O God, hearken unto my prayer, give ear unto the words of my mouth

O God, in Thy name save me, * and in Thy strength do Thou judge me

THE EVENING PRAYER

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.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Forty times*)

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

Choir: Amen.

APOSTICHA - TONE II

Thou didst weep tears from the depths of thy soul, * lamenting thy childlessness, * desiring children; * yet thou hast given birth to a babe ** who is the boast of our whole race.

*Verse: Harken, O daughter, and see, * and incline thine ear*

With voices of hymnody let us honor * the honored nativity * of the all-holy Virgin, * because of whom ** the world hath been renewed.

*Verse: The rich among the people * shall entreat thy countenance.*

Rejoice, O wise prophets, * ye divinely eloquent ones; * for the Virgin is born, * through whom the Salvation of the world ** will be given birth..

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

Today let the barren and childless Anna clap her hands with splendor, let those on earth bear lamps, let kings leap for joy, let hierarchs be glad in blessing, and let all the world keep festival; for, behold, the Queen, the immaculate Bride of the Father, hath sprung forth from the root of Jesse. No longer will women bear children in grief, for Joy hath blossomed forth and Life shall live amongst mortals in the world. No longer will the offerings of Joachim be rejected, for the lamentation of Anna hath been changed to joy, and she saith: "Rejoice with me, all ye chosen Israel, for, lo! the Lord hath given me the animate palace of His divine glory, for our common gladness and joy, and the salvation of our souls!"

THE HYMN OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER

Choir: 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, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (THRICE)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto 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 evil one.

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

Choir: Amen.

TROPARION, IN TONE VIII:

In thee, O mother, the image of God was preserved, * for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow after Christ; * by activity thou didst learn to disdain the flesh, as something transient, * but to care for thy soul as something immortal. ** Wherefore, with the angels thy spirit doth rejoice, O venerable Theodora.

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

Thy nativity, O Virgin Theotokos, * hath proclaimed joy to all the world; * for from thee hath shone forth Christ our God, the Sun of righteousness, * Who, having annulled the curse, hath given His blessing, ** and having abolished death, hath granted us life everlasting.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Forty times*)

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

Choir: Amen.

THE DISMISSAL FOR READERS VESPERS

Choir: Preserve, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without corruption bearest God the Word and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

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