

MATINS OF THE BRIDEGROOM

SERVED ON HOLY TUESDAY EVENING

After the Dismissal of the Midnight Office the Priest, having made the customary metania to the Superior, or to his stall, enters the sanctuary and makes three bows before the holy Table. He puts on the Epitrachelion and, standing in front of the holy Table, intones:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and for ever, and to ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Priest: Glory to you....Heavenly King...

The Priest blesses the incense and begins to cense with the katzion the sanctuary and the whole church as usual.

Reader: Holy God. Holy Mighty. Holy Immortal. Have mercy on us. (x3)

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

All-Holy Trinity: Have mercy on us. Lord: Cleanse our sins. Master: Pardon our transgressions. Holy One: watch over and heal our infirmities, for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (x3)

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 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 Yours 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 ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Lord, have mercy (x12). Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

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

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

With three metanias. Then the following two Psalms.

Psalm 19

May the Lord hear you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob shield you. May he send you his help from the holy place, and support you from Sion. May he remember your every sacrifice, and accept with favour your whole burnt offering. May the Lord give you your heart's desire, and fulfil your every purpose. We shall rejoice in your salvation, and be magnified in the name of our the Lord our God. May the Lord fulfil all your petitions. Now I know that the Lord has saved his Christ. He will hear him from his holy heaven; in mighty acts is the salvation of his right hand. Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will call on the name of the Lord our God. They were fettered and fell, but we have risen and been set upright. Lord, save the king, and hear us on the day we call upon you.

Psalm 20

The king will rejoice in your power, O Lord, he will exult exceedingly in your salvation. You gave him his heart's desire; you did not deny him the request of his lips. For you came to meet him with blessings of goodness; you placed a crown of precious stones upon his head. He asked you for life, and you gave him length of days for age on age. Great is his glory because of your salvation; you will place on him glory and majesty. For you will give him blessing for age on age, and make him glad with the joy of your countenance. For the king puts his hope in the Lord, and through the mercy of the Most High he will not be shaken. May your hand light upon all your enemies, and your right hand find out all who hate you. You will make them like a blazing oven at the time of your presence. The Lord will confound them in his wrath and fire will devour them. You will destroy their offspring from the earth, and their seed from among the children of humankind. Because they intended evils against you, and devised plans by which they can in no way succeed. For you will put them to flight; among your remnants you will prepare their presence. Be exalted, Lord, in your power; we will sing and praise your mighty acts.

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

Holy God. Holy Mighty. Holy Immortal. Have mercy on us. (x3)

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

All-Holy Trinity: Have mercy on us. Lord: Cleanse our sins. Master: Pardon our transgressions. Holy One: watch over and heal our infirmities, for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (x3)

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 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 Yours 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 ages of ages.

The priest must take care that he is standing beneath the Polyeleos to say this conclusion. He then enters the sanctuary, puts away the censer and takes his stand in front of the Holy Table.

Reader: Amen.

And the following Troparia:

Lord, save your people, and bless your inheritance, granting your faithful people victory over their enemies, and guarding your commonwealth by your Cross.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Lifted up on the Cross of your own will, grant you mercies, Christ God, to the new commonwealth called by your name. Make your faithful people glad by your power, giving them victory over their enemies. May they have your help in battle, a weapon of peace, an invincible trophy.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Theotokion.

Dread Champion that cannot be put to shame, do not despise our petitions, O Good One. All-praised Mother of God establish the commonwealth of the Orthodox, save your people and give them victory from heaven, for you gave birth to God, O only blessed one.

Deacon/Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your great mercy. We pray you, hear us and have mercy.

Reader: Lord have mercy (x3).

Priest: For you are a merciful God who love mankind, and unto you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. In the Name of the Lord, Father, bless!

Priest: Glory to the holy and consubstantial and life-creating and undivided Trinity, always now and ever and unto ages of ages. **Reader:** Amen.

THE SIX PSALMS

During the first three psalms the priest takes the SKOUFIA OFF and reads the first six prayers of the light from before the holy table. And we begin the Six Psalms, listening with complete silence and compunction. The Superior, or the designated reader, with devotion and fear of God says:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, Good Will among men. (3x)

Lord, you will open my lips and my mouth will proclaim your praise. (2x)

Psalm 3

Lord, why have those who afflict me been multiplied? Many rise against me. Many say to my soul, 'There is no salvation for him in his God'. But you, Lord, are my helper, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head. With my voice, I cried to the Lord, and he heard me from his holy mountain. I lay down and slept; I awoke, because the Lord will assist me. I will not be afraid of tens of thousands of people who surround me. Rise, Lord, save me, my God; because you have struck all who are vainly my foes. You have smashed the teeth of sinners. Salvation is the Lord's, and your blessing is upon your people. I lay down and slept; I awoke because the Lord will assist me.

Psalm 37

Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, nor chastise me in your wrath. For your arrows have been stuck fast in me, and you have laid a heavy hand upon me. There is no healing in my flesh on account of your wrath, nor peace in my bones on account of my sins. My iniquities flooded over my head; like a heavy burden they weighed heavily upon me. My wounds stank and festered on account of my foolishness. I was wretched and utterly bowed down; I went about mourning all day long. For my loins were filled with mockings, and there is no healing in my flesh. I was maltreated and humiliated exceedingly; I howled from the groaning of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before you, and my groaning was not hidden from you. My heart was troubled, my strength failed me; and even the light of my eyes had gone from me. My friends and my neighbours drew near and stood against me, and those nearest me stood far away. Those who sought my life used force, and those who sought evils for me spoke vanities, and meditated trickeries all day long. But I, like a deaf man, heard nothing; like one who is dumb, who does not open his mouth. So I became like one who cannot hear, and in whose mouth there are no rebukes. For in you, Lord, I have hoped; you will answer me, O Lord my God. For I said: Let my foes never exult over me. When my foot slipped they crowed over me. For I am ready for blows and my pain is with me continually. For I will declare my iniquity and be troubled at my sin. But my enemies live and have prevailed over me, and those who hate me unjustly have been multiplied. Those who repay me with evils in place of good have slandered me, since I pursued goodness. Do not forsake me, Lord; my God, do not go far from me. Hasten to help me, Lord of my salvation. Do not forsake me, Lord; my God, do not go far from me. Hasten to help me, Lord of my salvation.

Psalm 62

O God, my God, I watch for you at dawn; my soul has thirsted for you, my flesh how often in a desert, untrodden and waterless land. Thus I appeared before you in the holy place, to see your power and your glory. For your mercy is better than life; my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. May my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness; my mouth will praise you with joyful lips. When I remembered you upon my bed, every dawn I meditated upon you. For you became my helper, and in the shelter of your wings I shall rejoice. My soul clung to you; and your right hand upheld me. But those who vainly sought my life will go down to the deepest parts of the earth, they will be delivered to the power of the sword, they will be portions for foxes. But the king will rejoice in God, and all who swear by him will be praised; for the mouths of those who speak iniquities have been stopped. Every dawn I meditated upon you, for you became my helper, and in the shelter of your wings I shall rejoice. My soul clung to you; and your right hand upheld me.

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. (x3)

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

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

When the people finish the third psalm and say “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. . .” the priest exits the sanctuary and reads the remaining prayers of the light from before the icon of Christ.

Psalm 87

Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried by day, and by night also before you. Let my prayer come into your presence, and turn you ear to my supplication. For my soul was filled with evils, and my life drew near to Hell. I was reckoned among those that go down to the Pit; I became as one that has no help, free among the dead. Like the slain that sleep in the tomb, whom you remembered no more; and they were cut off from your power. They placed me in the lowest Pit; in darkness and in the shadow of death. Your wrath lay heavy upon me, and you brought all your waves against me. You put my friends far from me, and made me an abomination to them. I was handed over and I came out; my eyes grew weak because of my beggary. I cried to you, Lord, all the day; I stretched out my hands towards you. Will you work wonders for the dead; or will physicians raise them up again to praise you? Will any declare your mercy in the tomb, or your truth in the place of destruction? Will your wonders be known in the dark, or your justice in a land that has been forgotten? But to you, Lord, I have cried, and in the morning my prayer will come before you. Why have you rejected my soul, Lord; why do you turn away your face from me? I am poor and in toils since my youth; exalted, I was humbled and brought to despair. Your fierce anger overwhelmed me, and your terrors appalled me. They surrounded me like water all day long; they closed in upon me

from every side. Friend and neighbour you have put far from me, and my companions because of my misery. Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried by day; and by night also before you. Let my prayer come into your presence, and turn your ear to my supplication.

Psalm 102

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of his benefits. He forgives all your iniquities; he heals all your diseases; he redeems your life from corruption and crowns you with mercy and compassion; he satisfies your desire with good things; your youth will be renewed like an eagle's. The Lord performs deeds of mercy and judgement for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his wishes to the children of Israel. The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and full of mercy. He will not always be wrathful, nor will he be enraged for ever. He has not dealt with us according to our iniquities, nor rewarded us according to our sins. For, like the height of heaven above the earth, the Lord has made his mercy prevail over those that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he taken our sins from us. As a father takes pity on his children the Lord has taken pity on those who fear him. For he knows of what we are made; has remembered that we are but dust. As for man, his days are but as grass, he will blossom like a flower of the field; for when a wind has place no longer. But the mercy of the Lord is for ever and ever upon those who fear him; and his justice upon their children's children, upon those who keep his covenant and remember his commandments to do them. The Lord has prepared his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, all you his Angels, powerful in strength, who perform his word, and listen to the voice of his words. Bless the Lord, all you his Powers, his Ministers who do his will. Bless the Lord, all you his works. In every place of his dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul! In every place of his dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul!

Psalm 142

Lord, hear my prayer; in your truth give ear to my supplication, and in your justice hear me. Do not enter into judgement with your servant, for in your sight no one living can be justified. For the enemy pursued my soul; humbled my life to the ground; made me dwell in darkness, like those for ever dead. My spirit in me grew weary, and my heart was troubled within me. I remembered days of old; I meditated on all your works. I made the works of your hands my meditation. I stretched out my hands towards you; my soul thirsted for you like a waterless land. Hear me swiftly, O Lord; my spirit has failed. Do not turn your face from me, or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit. Make me hear of your mercy in the morning, for I have hoped in you. Make known to me the way in which I should walk, for to you I have lifted up my soul. Deliver me from my enemies, Lord; I have run to you for shelter. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Your good Spirit will guide me in an upright land. For your name's sake, O Lord, you will give me life. In your justice you will bring my soul out of trouble; in your mercy slay my enemies, and destroy all those who afflict my soul, for I am your servant. In your justice hear me, O Lord; and do not enter into judgement with your servant. In your justice hear me, O Lord; and do not enter into judgement with your servant. Your good Spirit will guide me in an upright land.

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).

When the psalms are finished, the priest puts the SKOUFIA ON and, if there is a deacon, enters the sanctuary while the deacon says the litany from before the holy doors. If there is no deacon, the priest himself says the great litany from before the holy doors.

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Deacon/Priest: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (and after each petition)

For the peace from above and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the holy Churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy house and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

For our archbishop and father ____, for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For the civil authorities of this country and for those serving in its armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city, for every monastery, city, and countryside, and for those who in faith dwell in them, let us pray to the Lord.

For good temperance of the air, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful seasons, let us pray to the Lord.

For travelers by land, sea, and air, the sick, the suffering, the imprisoned, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by your grace.

Remembering our all-holy, pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Birthgiver of God and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ God.

Reader: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For unto you are due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Deacon/Priest: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! From nightfall my spirit is awake for you, O God, for your commands are light upon the earth.

Reader: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Deacon/Priest: Learn justice, inhabitants of the earth.

Reader: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Deacon/Priest: Jealousy will seize an untaught people, and now fire devours their adversaries.

Reader: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Deacon/Priest: Bring evils upon them, O Lord, bring evils upon them, the glorious ones of the earth.

Reader: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Then the following Troparion is sung solemnly 3 times as the priest stands at the icon of the Bridegroom censing it.

Tone 8 Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom he finds watching; but unworthy is the one whom he finds slothful. Take care then, my soul, not to be overcome with sleep, lest you be given up to death, and be shut out of the kingdom; but rouse yourself and cry: Holy, holy, holy are you, O God; through the power of Your cross, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom he finds watching; but unworthy is the one whom he finds slothful. Take care then, my soul, not to be overcome with sleep, lest you be given up to death, and be shut out of the kingdom; but rouse yourself and cry: Holy, holy, holy are you, O God; through the prayers of the Archbishop Nicholas, have mercy on us.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Behold, the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom he finds watching; but unworthy is the one whom he finds slothful. Take care then, my soul, not to be overcome with sleep, lest you be given up to death, and be shut out of the kingdom; but rouse yourself and cry: Holy, holy, holy are you, O God; through the Mother of God, have mercy on us.

The priest enters the altar.

[According to the Russian Typikon the ending is the same each time: through the Mother of God have mercy on us. The modern Greek books place a small Litany here, with the ekphonesis, For yours is the might...]

[Then we recite Kathisma 14 [Psalms 101-104] of the Psalter. After the Psalter the following Kathisma:]

READ. Tone 3. Awed by the beauty.

A harlot came to you, emptying with her tears sweet myrrh upon your feet, O Lover of humankind; and from the foul stench of her sins at your command she was released; but though he breathed your grace, the ungrateful disciple threw it all away, and with filth he was defiled, selling you for love of money. Glory, O Christ, to your compassion!

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

A harlot came to you, emptying with her tears sweet myrrh upon your feet, O Lover of humankind; and from the foul stench of her sins at your command she was released; but though he breathed your grace, the ungrateful disciple threw it all away, and with filth he was defiled, selling you for love of money. Glory, O Christ, to your compassion!

[Then Kathisma 15 [Psalms 105-108] of the Psalter is read, and after it the following Kathisma to the same melody.]

READ. Tone 4. Your Martyr, O Lord.

The cunning Judas, in his love for money, cunningly thought to betray you, Lord, the treasury of life. Therefore like a drunkard he runs to the Jews, says to the lawless: What are you willing to give me, and I shall hand him over to you for you to crucify him?

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

The cunning Judas, in his love for money, cunningly thought to betray you, Lord, the treasury of life. Therefore like a drunkard he runs to the Jews, says to the lawless: What are you willing to give me, and I shall hand him over to you for you to crucify him?

[Then Kathisma 16 [Psalms 109-117] of the Psalter is read, and after it the following Kathisma:] The priest puts on the phelonion.

READ. Tone 1. The soldiers watching.

The harlot cried aloud with weeping and eagerly wiped your immaculate feet, O Merciful, with the hairs of her head, as she groaned from the depth of her heart, 'Do not reject me, do not loathe me, my God, but accept as I repent, and save me, as you alone love humankind'.

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

The harlot cried aloud with weeping and eagerly wiped your immaculate feet, O Merciful, with the hairs of her head, as she groaned from the depth of her heart, 'Do not reject me, do not loathe me, my God, but accept as I repent, and save me, as you alone love humankind'.

The priest opens the holy doors.

[The Russian Typikon prescribes three readings, one after each Kathisma, from St John Chrysostom's commentary on St Matthew's Gospel, without specifying the references precisely, and from St Ephrem the Syrian 'On the Harlot'. We give a hyperlink to St John's homily – Homily 80 – on St Matthew's account of the supper in Bethany, which will be read at Vespers.]

Deacon/Priest: And that we be accounted worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us implore the Lord our God.

Reader: Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Wisdom! Upright, let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace to all.

Reader: And to your Spirit.

Priest: The reading from the holy Gospel according to John. [12:17-50]

Reader: Glory to you, Lord, glory to you!

Deacon/Priest: Let us attend.

Priest: At that time the crowd that had been with Jesus when he called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead bore witness. For this reason also the crowd went to

meet him: because they heard that he had performed this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, 'You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!' Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the feast. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and made this request to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life will lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone would serve me, let them follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone would serve me, the Father will honour them. Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say? Father, save me from this hour. But it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name'. Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it had thundered. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has not come for my sake, but for yours. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.' He said this to signify the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, that the darkness may not overtake you. One who walks in the darkness, does not know where they are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.' After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them. Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him, that the word spoken by the prophet Isaias might be fulfilled, 'Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?' And so they could not believe, because Isaias also said, 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn back, and I will heal them.' Isaias said this when he saw his glory and spoke about him. Nevertheless many, even of the rulers, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human glory more than the glory of God. Then Jesus cried out and said, 'Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in the One who sent me. And whoever sees me sees the One who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. And if anyone who hears my words and does not believe, I do not judge them, for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has one who judges them; the word that I have spoken will judge them on the last day, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.'

Reader: Glory to you, Lord, glory to you!

And at once:

Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy, and according to the magnitude of your compassions blot out my transgression.

More thoroughly wash me from my lawlessness, and cleanse me from my sin. For I do know my lawlessness, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only I have sinned and have done the evil before you, so that you are righteous in your words and conquer in your judging.

For, behold, in iniquities I was conceived, and in sins my mother bore me. For, behold, you have loved truth, the unseen and hidden things of your wisdom you have shown me.

You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be cleansed; you will wash me and I will be made whiter than snow.

You will make me hear joy and gladness; the humbled bones will rejoice. Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my transgressions.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right Spirit in my inward parts. Do not cast me away from your Face, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Give me back the joy of your Salvation, and make me steadfast with a governing Spirit.

I will teach the lawless your ways, and the ungodly will turn around to you.

Deliver me from blood, O God, God of my salvation, and my tongue will rejoice in your righteousness. Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise.

For if you had wanted a sacrifice, I would have given it; you will not be well-pleased in whole burnt offerings.

A sacrifice to God is a shattered spirit; a shattered and humbled heart God will not despise.

Do good, Lord, to Sion in your good pleasure and the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt!

Then you will be well-pleased in sacrifice of righteousness, offering and whole-burnt offerings.

Then they will offer calves upon your altar.

The priest closes the holy doors.

We READ the Canon by St Kosmas, of which the Acrostic is:

On Wednesday I shall sing.

In each Ode the Irmos is sung twice and the troparia repeated to make 12. The Irmos is repeated as Katavasia.

Ode 3. Tone 2. Irmos.

'Establishing me on the rock of the faith, you have broadened my mouth against my foes; for my spirit has rejoiced to sing: None is holy as our God, and none is just but you, O Lord.'

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

In vain is the Sanhedrin of the lawless being assembled with evil intent, O Christ, to pass sentence of condemnation on you the Deliverer, to whom we sing: You are our God, and there is none holy but you, O Lord.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The dread council of the lawless, their souls making war on God, plans how to slay as a malefactor Christ, the just, to whom we sing: You are our God, and there is none holy but you, O Lord.

Katavasia

Establishing me on the rock of the faith, you have broadened my mouth against my foes; for my spirit has rejoiced to sing: None is holy as our God, and none is just but you, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Reader: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by your grace.

Reader: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Remembering our all-holy, pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ God.

Reader: To you, O Lord.

Priest: for you are the king of peace and the Savior of our souls, and unto you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

After the small litany the Kontakion

Tone 4. Lifted up on the Cross

I have transgressed far more than the harlot, O Good One, yet have never brought you showers of tears; but entreating in silence, I fall before you, as I kiss your immaculate feet with love, that as Master you may grant me forgiveness of offences, as I cry out, O Saviour: deliver me from the filth of my works.

READ. The Ikos

The woman, who before was dissolute, suddenly appeared temperate, hating the works of shameful sin and the pleasures of the body, as she thought on the great shame and the judgement of punishment, to which harlots and the dissolute bring themselves. Of them I am first, and I tremble, but I continue in my evil way, fool that I am; while the harlot, trembling and hastening with zeal, came crying to the Redeemer, 'Merciful Lover of humankind, deliver me from the filth of my works'.

READ.

On holy and great Wednesday the most godly fathers ordered that the commemoration be kept of the harlot who anointed the Lord with sweet myrrh, because this occurred shortly before the saving passion.

Verses.

A woman casting myrrh upon Christ's body.
Anticipates Nikydemos' anointing.

On Holy and Great Wednesday the divine Fathers ordained a commemoration to be kept of the woman who was a harlot and who anointed the Lord with myrrh, inasmuch as this took place a short time before the saving Passion.

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, when He was in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came and poured most precious myrrh on the head of Christ and wiped His feet with her hair, rendering Him service at a very great cost to herself. This event is set forth here that, according to the Savior's word, her act of great fervor may be proclaimed to everyone everywhere, and because it occurred a short time before the Passion. What moved her to act thus? She had seen how merciful Christ was and how accessible to all; now, in particular, she saw Him enter the house of a leper, whom the Law deemed unclean and unfit for society. She thought to herself that He would heal the man's leprosy and likewise the illness of her own soul. Thus, while He was seated, she poured on the top of His head a quantity of myrrh, which was worth about "three hundred thirteen denarii in silver coin," that is, sixty assaria, and she wiped His feet with her hair. She placed her head at His feet, showing her zeal for repentance, but the disciples rebuked her, particularly Judas Iscariot. Christ, however, welcomed her, not allowing them to frustrate her good intention. He further mentioned His burial, dissuaded Judas from becoming a traitor, and honored the woman by saying that her good deed would be related everywhere, throughout the whole world.

Let it be known that there are two women who anointed the Lord with myrrh, as the divine Chrysostom says. He said that in the three Evangelists there is a certain woman who is also called a harlot, while in Saint John there is another woman, Mary the sister of Lazarus, who was not a harlot but a friend of Christ. Thus, the woman in St. John's Gospel is not the same as the one mentioned by the other Evangelists. Whether both of them anointed Christ on the same day - this is not mentioned. Others, however, assert that there was a third woman: the one who was at the house of Simon the Pharisee; a second, Mary the sister of Lazarus; and a third woman, a different one who was at the supper. Although this opinion is added as a supplement, it is not known whether it can be held as accurate, since one of these women is not she who is now set before us.

That nard, or rather myrrh, with which the harlot anointed Christ, was very costly. It belonged to that type of compound called myrrh, which Moses was commanded by God to make for the anointing of priests and chief priests. It is of this that David says, "It is like the precious oil on the head, running down to the beard, to Aaron's beard, running down to the edge of his garment" (Ps. 132:2). It was a compound of four substances: myrrh, flowers, fragrant cinnamon, and oil. It was called true or genuine, because skilled and trusted men were appointed to prepare that which God had in a mysterious manner revealed to Moses alone. An alabaster jar is a glass vessel made with no handle, which is also called a vykion.

We should know that today the deceitful Judas, that lover of money, that whelp of Satan, began the negotiations with the wicked Sanhedrin to betray the Master for thirty pieces of silver. Being indignant after Christ rebuked him for showing concern for the cost of the oil of myrrh, he sought out the Jews who were at the court of Caiaphas. After taking council with the Jewish High Priests, he searched for an opportunity to betray the Lord when He was alone, for the Sanhedrin feared the multitude that followed Christ.

We see in today's Gospel (Matt. 26:6-16) that the sinful woman brought oil of myrrh to anoint Christ, while Judas brought his greed to the Sanhedrin. She spread out her hair to wipe the Lord's feet, while Judas stretched out his hands for the money. She rejoiced to pour out the very precious oil on the Lord, while Judas made plans to sell the One who is above all price. By anointing Christ, she acknowledged Him as Lord, while Judas severed himself from the Master. She was set free of her sins, while Judas was entrapped and became a slave of the devil. She tenderly kissed the feet of Christ, asking for forgiveness, while Judas plotted to betray the Lord with a kiss, anticipating the silver.

Because the betrayal of Christ occurred on a Wednesday, the Orthodox Church has received the tradition from Apostolic times to observe Wednesday as a fast day throughout the entire year.

But, Christ our God, anointed with the spiritual myrrh, free us from the flowing passions, and have mercy on us, as you alone are good and love mankind. Amen.

Ode 8. Irmos.

'Since the word of the tyrant prevailed, the furnace was once heated seven times. In it the youths, having trampled on the king's decree, were not consumed by flames, but cried aloud, 'All you works of the Lord praise the Lord, and highly exalt him to all the ages.'

Glory to you, O God, glory to you.

A woman emptied out precious ointment on your royal, divine and awesome head, O Christ; with her polluted palms laid hold on your immaculate feet and cried aloud, 'All you works of the Lord praise the Lord, and highly exalt him to all the ages.'

We praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: the Lord.

Guilty of sins, she washed with tears the feet of the Creator and wiped them with her hair; and so she did not fail to find redemption of all that she had done in life, but cried aloud, 'All you works of the Lord praise the Lord, and highly exalt him to all the ages.'

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Redemption was ministered to the grateful woman from the Saviour's compassion and the fountain of her tears. Washed clean by which, through her confession, she was not ashamed, but cried aloud, 'All you works of the Lord praise the Lord, and highly exalt him to all the ages.'

We praise, we bless, we worship the Lord, praising and supremely exalting Him unto all ages.

Katavasia Since the word of the tyrant prevailed, the furnace was once heated seven times. In it the youths, having trampled on the king's decree, were not consumed by flames, but cried aloud, 'All you works of the Lord praise the Lord, and highly exalt him to all the ages.'

The Magnificat is not sung, but instead the 9th Ode. The priest censes the icon of the Mother of God ninefold, and then the whole church.

Priest: The Birthgiver of God and the Mother of Light, let us magnify in song.

Ode 9. The Irmos.

With pure souls and undefiled lips, come, let us magnify the unsullied and all-pure Mother of Emmanuel, as through her we offer intercession to the one born of her, 'Spare our souls, Christ God, and save us'.

Glory to you, O God, glory to you.

Revealed as ungrateful, wicked and envious, the wretched Judas calculates the price of a gift worthy of God, through which she was released from the debt of her sins, and he traffics in the grace of God's love. Spare our souls, Christ God, and save us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Judas goes to the lawless rulers and says, 'What are you willing to give me, and I shall hand over to you who want him Christ whom you seek?' So he exchanged Christ's fellowship for gold. Spare our souls, Christ God, and save us.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Unrelenting in blind avarice, why have you forgotten that the world is not equal to the soul, as you were taught; for in despair, traitor, you hanged yourself. Spare our souls, Christ God, and save us.

Katavasia

With pure souls and undefiled lips, come, let us magnify the unsullied and all-pure Mother of Emmanuel, as through her we offer intercession to the one born of her, 'Spare our souls, Christ God, and save us'.

Deacon/Priest: Again and again in peace let us pray to the Lord.

Reader: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by your grace.

Reader: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Remembering our all-holy, pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ God.

Reader: To you, O Lord.

Priest: for all the powers of heaven praise you and unto you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

**After the small litany, the Exapostilarion sung slowly and solemnly:
Tone 3. Model Melody.**

Your bridal chamber, O my Saviour, I see all adorned, but I have no garment so that I may enter it. Make bright the mantle of my soul, O Giver of light, and save me! (x3)

At Lauds we READ 4 Idiomel Stichera, doubling them. Tone 1

Psalm 148

[A] Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the highest. To you praise is due, O God.

[B] Praise him, all his angels: Praise him, all his Powers. To you praise is due, O God.

[A] Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars and light.

[B] Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord.

[A] For he spoke and they came into being; he commanded and they were created.

[B] He established them for ever and ever; he made an ordinance, and it shall not pass away.

[A] Praise the Lord from the earth; praise him, you sea-monsters and all deeps;

[B] Fire and hail, snow and ice and storm-wind; things that do his word.

[A] Mountains and all hills, fruiting trees and all cedars;

[B] Beasts of the wild, and all cattle, creeping things and winged birds;

[A] Kings of the earth and all peoples, rulers and all judges of the earth;

[B] Young men and maidens: old men and youths together, let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone has been exalted.

[A] His praise is above earth and heaven, and he will exalt the horn of his people.

[B] A hymn for all his holy ones; for the children of Israel, a people that draws near him.

Psalm 149

[A] Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the Church of the holy ones.

[B] Let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Sion be joyful in their king.

[A] Let them praise his name in the dance; let them sing his praise with timbrel and with harp.

[B] For the Lord is well-pleased with his people; he will exalt the meek with salvation.

[A] His holy ones will exult in glory, and rejoice upon their beds.

[B] The high praises of God in their mouths, and two-edged swords in their hands,

[A] To exact vengeance among the nations, punishments among the peoples.

[B] To bind their kings in fetters; and their nobles in shackles of iron.

[A] To execute upon them the judgement that is decreed; such glory will be for all his holy ones.

Psalm 150

[B] Praise God in his saints; praise him in the firmament of his power.

[A] Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to the greatness of his majesty.

READ. By Monk Kosmas. Tone 1

A harlot knowing you, the Son of the Virgin, to be God, imploring you with weeping, for she had done things worthy of tears, said, 'Loose my debt, as I unloose my hair; love one who loves, though justly hated, and along with tax-collectors I shall proclaim you, O Benefactor, who love humankind'.

[B] Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with lute and harp.

The harlot mixed the sweet myrrh of great price with tears, poured it over your immaculate feet and kissed them. Her you justified at once, but grant us pardon, who suffered for us and save us.

[A] Praise him with timbrel and dance; praise him with strings and pipe.

When the sinful woman offered myrrh, then the disciple made an agreement with the lawless. The one rejoiced as she emptied out something of great price, while the other hurried to sell the One beyond price. She acknowledged the Master; he was parted from the Master. She was set free while Judas became the slave of the foe. Dreadful is sloth! Great is repentance! Grant it to me, Saviour, who suffered for us, and save us.

[B] Praise him with tuneful cymbals; praise him with loud cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

O the wretchedness of Judas! He watched the harlot kissing your feet and began plotting with guile the kiss of betrayal. She untied her locks and he was being bound by rage,

bringing foul-smelling wickedness instead of myrrh; for envy does not know how to prefer its advantage. O the wretchedness of Judas! From it, O God, deliver our souls.

[A] Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Tone 2

The sinful woman ran for the myrrh, to buy myrrh of great price, to anoint with myrrh the Benefactor, and to the myrrh-seller she cried, 'Give me the myrrh, that I may anoint the One who has wiped away all my sins'.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Tone 6. Rejected.

The woman drowned by sin found you, the harbour of salvation, and emptying out myrrh with tears, she cried out to you, 'See, the one who has authority to pardon sins. See, the One who waits for the repentance of the sinful. But, Master, save me from the tempest of my sin through your great mercy'.

Then the Superior says:

To you glory is due, O Lord, our God, and to you we give glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and to ages of ages. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, Good Will among men. We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you, we thank you for your great glory. O Lord, heavenly King, God the almighty Father. O Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Lord God, lamb of God, Son of the Father, who takes up the sin of the world, have mercy upon us, who takes up the sins of the world. Receive our prayer, you who sit on the right hand of the Father and have mercy upon us. For you alone are holy, you alone are Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every day I will bless you, and praise your name for ever and ever. I said, Lord, have mercy upon me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against you. Lord, I have run to you for refuge; teach me to do your will for you are my God. For with you is the source of life, and in your light we shall see light. O continue your merciful kindness toward those who know you.

Grant, Lord, this day to keep us without sin. Blessed are you, Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is your name for to the ages. Amen. May your mercy, Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in you. Blessed are you, Lord, teach me your statutes. Blessed are you, Master, make me understand your statutes. Blessed are you, Holy One, enlighten me with your statutes. Lord, your mercy is for ever; do not scorn the work of your hands. To you praise is due, to you song is due, to you glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Litany of Supplication

Deacon/Priest: Let us complete our morning supplication to the Lord.

Reader: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us and keep us, O God, by your grace.

Reader: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: The whole day perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

Reader: Grant it, O Lord. **(and after the next petitions)**

An angel of peace, faithful guide, guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

The things good and profitable for our souls, and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

To complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

The completions of our life to be Christian, painless, blameless, and peaceful; and a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask.

Remembering our all-holy, pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ God.

Reader: To you, O Lord

Priest: For you are a God of mercy, compassions, and love for mankind, and unto you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Bowing of heads

Priest: Peace to all.

Reader: And to your spirit.

Deacon/Priest: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Reader: To You, O Lord.

Priest: Holy Lord, who dwell on high and regard the lowly and with your all-seeing eye watch over all creation, to you we have bent the neck of our soul and body, and we implore you, Holy of holies: stretch forth your invisible hand from your holy dwelling place and bless us all, and, whether we have sinned voluntarily or involuntarily, forgive as a good God who loves mankind, granting us your earthly and heavenly good things, for yours it is to have mercy and to save us, our God, and unto you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

After the Litany and the Prayer at the Bowing down of heads, the priest enters the altar and the Reader READS the Aposticha:

Tone 6

Today Christ comes to the house of the Pharisee and a sinful woman draws near and flings herself at his feet, crying, 'See one who has been drowned by sin, without hope because of her deeds, yet not rejected with loathing from your goodness, and give me, Lord, forgiveness of my evil deeds and save me'.

Verse 1. We have been filled in the morning with your mercy, O Lord, and we have rejoiced and been glad in all our days.

The harlot spread out her hair for you, the Master; Judas spread out his hands to the lawless: she to receive forgiveness, he to receive silver. And so we cry to you, sold and who set us free, 'Lord, glory to you!'

Verse 2: Let us be glad, for all the days you have afflicted us, for the years we have suffered adversity. Look upon your servants and your works, and guide their children.

A woman foul-smelling and defiled drew near, pouring tears upon your feet, O Saviour, and proclaiming your passion. 'How can I gaze upon you, Master? For you have come yourself to save a harlot. You roused Lazarus from the tomb after four days, raise me who am dead from the deep. Accept me in my misery, Lord, and save me'.

Verse 3. And may the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us. Direct the work of our hands, O direct the work of our hands.

By Monk John. Same Tone. Model melody.

Rejected because of her life, well-known because of her ways, she approached you carrying sweet myrrh and crying, 'You, who were born of a Virgin, do not cast me out, who am a harlot. Joy of the Angels, do not despise my tears; but, Lord, as I repent, accept me, whom you did not thrust from you when I sinned, through your great mercy'.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Tone 8. By the Nun Kassiani.

Lord, the woman who had fallen into many sins,
perceiving your divinity, took up the role of myrrh-bearer,
and with lamentation brings sweet myrrh to you before your burial.
'Alas!', she says, 'for night is for me a frenzy of lust,
a dark and moonless love of sin.
Accept the fountains of my tears,
you who from the clouds draw out the water of the sea;
bow yourself down to the groanings of my heart,
you who bowed the heavens by your ineffable self-emptying.
I shall kiss your immaculate feet,
and wipe them again with the locks of my hair,
those feet whose sound Eve heard at dusk in Paradise,
and hid herself in fear.
Who can search out the multitude of my sins
and the depths of your judgements, my Saviour, saviour of souls?
Do not despise me, your servant, //
for you have mercy without measure'.

Then the Superior says:

How good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High. To declare your love in the morning, and your truth every night.

Reader: Holy God. Holy Mighty. Holy Immortal. Have mercy on us. (x3)

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

All-Holy Trinity: Have mercy on us. Lord: Cleanse our sins. Master: Pardon our transgressions. Holy One: watch over and heal our infirmities, for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (x3)

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 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 Yours 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 ages of ages. **Reader:** Amen.

After the Our Father, we say the following Apolytikion:

Standing in the temple of your glory, we think we stand in heaven, O Mother of God. O gate of heaven, open to us the door of your mercy.

[The modern Greek books replace this with the Kontakion of the day: Think, miserable soul, on the hour of the end, and made fearful by the cutting down of the fig tree, work with love of toil at the talent given you, as you watch and cry: May we not be left outside Christ's bridal chamber!]

Then

Lord have mercy (x40).

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Birthgiver of God, we magnify you! In the name of the Lord, Father, bless.

Priest: Blessed is He-who-is, Christ our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

The Superior: Heavenly King, establish our rulers: strengthen the faith: calm the nations: make the world peaceful: guard well this holy church: assign our fathers and brothers who have gone before us to the tents of the just, and accept us in repentance and confession, as you are good and love humankind.

Then the prayer of St Ephrem with 4 full and 12 small metanias

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. **(Prostration)**

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. **(Prostration)**

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. **(Prostration)**

We then make 12 small metanias saying

God, cleanse me, the sinner.

then one further great metania as we repeat the prayer entirely.

The Dismissal

Priest: Glory to you, Christ God, our hope, glory to you!

Reader: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. (x3) Father, bless!

Priest: He who is coming to his voluntary passion for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-pure and all-blameless holy mother; of the holy and all-laudable apostles; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, as one who is good and loves mankind.

Reader: Amen.

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

Translation taken from Archimandrite Ephrem Lash and Ieratikon: Volume I (Cherubim Press).