

WEDNESDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK
AT MATINS

The usual beginning, with the Six psalms, the great Litany and then, in place of “God is the Lord ...,” we chant, in the Tone of the week:

Choir: Alleluia (Thrice)

Verse: Out of the night my spirit waketh at dawn unto Thee, O God, for Thy commandments are light upon the earth. (Alleluia x3)

Verse: Learn righteousness, ye that dwell upon the earth. (Alleluia x3)

Verse: Zeal shall lay hold upon an uninstructed people. (Alleluia x3)

Verse: Add more evils upon them, O Lord; add more evils upon them that are glorious upon the earth. (Alleluia x3)

Then the Choir chanteth the Triadicon (Hymns to the Trinity) in the Tone of the week, each one only once, followed by the 1st chanting of the Psalter (Kathisma XIX), the Sessional Hymns from the Oktoechos, in the Tone of the week. After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter (Kathisma XX), the Sessional Hymns:

In Tone VI:

Before us layeth the divine and all-honored Cross, * sanctifying the season of abstinence, * awaiting our veneration, * Let us approach it with a pure conscience: * let us draw from it sanctification and enlightenment, * and let us cry aloud with reverent fear: ** O Lover of mankind and our Savoir, Glory be to Thy loving-kindness.

Glory ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Both now ..., in Tone VI:

Stavrotheotokion: **S**tanding by the Cross, * the unwedded Mother of Him who was seedlessly born from her * cried aloud saying: * “A sword hath pierced my heart, O my Son, * and I cannot bear to behold hanging upon the Wood, * Thee before Whom all things tremble, * as their Creator and their God. ** O longsuffering Lord, glory be to Thee.”

After the 3rd chanting of the Psalter (Kathisma I, the Sessional Hymns:

In Tone I:

Radiantly enlightened with the virtues and cleansed by abstinence, * let us draw near and worship the precious Cross, * crying aloud saying: * Sanctify our souls and bodies, O only God of all, * and count us worthy to celebrate Thy most pure Passion, ** and grant us Thy mercy.

Glory ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Both now ..., in Tone I:

Stavrotheotokion: Beholding Thee stretched out dead upon the Cross, O Christ, Thine all-immaculate Mother cried aloud: “O my Son, Who with the Father and the Spirit, art beginningless, what is this ineffable dispensation, wherewith Thou hast saved the work of Thy most pure hands, O Compassionate One?”

Then Psalm 50, after which we chant the canon from the Menaion, and the two three-canticle canons from the Triodion; for those ODES we chant the ODE of the second Triodion canon as Katavasia.

The Canons

ODE I

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, * and be filled with the Spirit, * and utter discourse to the Queen and Mother; * and be seen radiantly keeping festival, * joyfully praising her wonders.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Let us venerate the holy Wood upon which Christ stretched out His hands, putting to flight the hostile powers, and cleansed by the fast, let us praise and glorify the Lord Almighty.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Beholding before us the salvific Cross, which sanctifieth all, let us draw near purified in soul and body, and draw from it saving grace.

Glory ..., Cleanse me with the fire of Thy commandments, O Lover of mankind, and grant that with love I may behold and worship Thy saving Passion, fortified and preserved by Thy Cross.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** When Thy Mother saw Thee nailed to the Cross O Lover of mankind, she lamented crying aloud: “How doth the Lord of glory and the Judge of all hang as one condemned?”

ODE III

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and plentiful fount, * establish in spiritual fellowship those who sing hymns to thee, * and in thy divine glory * grant them crowns of glory.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Having cleansed our hearts with the waters of fasting, with faith let us embrace the Wood of the Cross upon which Christ was hung, granting us the waters of forgiveness, since Thou art the wellspring of goodness.

Refrain: *Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.*

With the Cross as our sail, our boat hath reached the middle of the salvific Fast. By Thy Cross, O Jesus, Messiah and God, grant us to reach the safe-haven of Thy Passion.

Refrain: *Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.*

Upon the mountain, O Cross, Moses prefigured thee when he overthrew his enemies; and we beholding Thee, make the sign of the Cross in our hearts, and by Thy might, worshiping Thee, we overthrow our bodiless enemies.

Refrain: *Most holy Theotokos save us.*

Stavrotheotokion: “**B**y Thine own will Thou didst become a man, the God and Creator of all, and now, O Christ my Son, I behold Thee hanging on the Cross, and my heart is deeply wounded.”

First tri-ode canon, by Joseph, in Tone VI:

Irmos: **O Lord Thou art the God and Creator of all ...,**

Refrain: *Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.*

O God the Lord and Creator of all, Thou wast raised up upon the Cross in the midst of the earth, raising up with Thyself the nature of man, which had fallen through the wicked counsel of the enemy. Strengthened by Thy Passion, in faith we glorify Thee.

Refrain: *Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.*

O ye faithful, having purified our senses with the light of the Fast, let us be illumined by the spiritual radiance of the Cross. Gazing upon it with reverent fear as it lay before us this day, let us venerate it with pure lips and heart.

Refrain: *Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.*

At the place where the feet of Christ stood, let us fall down and worship the Divine Cross. Let us ask that the feet of our souls be established on the rock of God’s commandments, and that divine grace guide our noetic footsteps on the path of peace.

Refrain: *Most holy Theotokos save us.*

Stavrotheotokion: **T**hou didst come forth from a maiden who knew not a man, O Christ, assuming human flesh with a mind and soul from her. By Thy Cross Thou hast destroyed the enemy and renewed corrupted human nature, wherefore I glorify Thy loving-kindness.

Second tri-ode canon, by Theodore, in Tone I:

Irmos: **Firmly establish Thy Church, O Lord ...,**

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Let all the ends of the earth rejoice with hymns, beholding the veneration of the Wood whereon Christ was hung and through which the devil hath been mortally wounded.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

The lifegiving Cross is set before us today. Come, with joy and fear let us fall down and worship the precious Cross of the Lord, that we may receive the Holy Spirit.

Glory ..., O Sun with threefold ray, thrice-glorious Light, O God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, beginningless essence and Glory, deliver from all dangers those who sing Thy praises.

Both now ..., Stavrotheotokion: The ranks of angels hymn thee, O blessed Theotokos, and all praised Virgin; and with them all mankind glorifieth thee, O unwedded Bride.

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

Approaching to touch thee, O lifegiving Cross, my tongue and understanding tremble, for I noetically behold the divine Blood of my Lord shed upon thee.

Katavasia: Firmly establish Thy Church, O Lord, * which Thou hast made Thine own by the power of Thy Cross: * for by the Cross Thou didst triumph over the enemy * and bring light to the whole world.

Sessional Hymns of the precious Cross, in Tone VI:

Today the words of the Prophet have been fulfilled: * for behold, we worship at the place on which Thy feet have stood, O Lord; * and, partaking of the Tree of salvation, * we have been delivered from our sinful passions ** by the prayers of the Theotokos, ** O Thou only Lover of mankind.

Glory ..., O Lord Thy Cross is sanctifying, * bringing healing to those infirm from their sins, * by it we fall down before Thee: ** have mercy upon us.

Both now ..., As soon as the wood of Thy cross was raised, O Christ, * the foundations of death were shaken O Lord. * Hades eagerly swallowed Thee * but trembling, let Thee go. * Thou hast shown us Thy salvation, O Holy One, * and we glorify Thee, O Son of God; ** have mercy upon us.

ODE IV

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: He who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, * Jesus the true God, * is come in a swift cloud * and with His sinless hands he hath saved those who cry: * Glory to Thy power, O Christ.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Crossing his hands as he stretched them out to bless his grandchildren, the Venerable Jacob foreshadowed the sign of the cross, signifying the blessing of Salvation that hath been granted to us all.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Preserved by the seal of the Cross, and kissing it with joyful spirit as it lay before us, let us hasten to the saving Passion, and slay the deadly passions of the flesh.

Glory ..., **O** all-honored cross, weapon of Salvation, unconquerable ensign of victory, token of joy whereby death hath been slain, we embrace thee and share in the glory of Him who was nailed thereon.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** “**N**o angel can approach Thee, Jesus my Son, yet Thou hast manifest Thyself to me in visible form, assuming flesh from me,” said the Mother of Christ “And now I see Thee nailed upon the Cross, and I lament.”

ODE V

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: All creation stands in awe of thy divine glory; * for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, * didst contain within thy womb the God of all, * and gave birth to the timeless Son, * bestowing peace, upon all who hymn thee.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Thou wast nailed to the Cross, and accounted dead O Saviour, but since Thou art the Life and Salvation of all, grant that with a purified soul we may embrace Thy Cross and gaze upon Thy saving Passion with joy.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

The ranks of angels tremble as they stand before thee, O lifegiving Cross: for Christ poured forth His Precious Blood upon thee, chasing far away the noetic and eternally damning inspirations of demons.

Glory ..., **P**ierced by the sword of the adversary, do Thou heal me by Thy Blood, O Word, hasten I pray Thee O Saviour, and with Thy lance tear up the record of my sins, and as Thou art compassionately loving, write my name in the book of the saved.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** “**O** ripe Cluster of grapes, how dost Thou hang upon the Tree? O Sun of glory, how art Thou raised on high, darkening the sun’s light by Thy Passion?” Thus did Thy Mother, cry aloud in her grief to Thee her Lamb.

ODE VI

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial * Prophet Jonah praying in the belly of the sea-monster cried aloud: * Deliver me from corruption * O Jesus Thou King of hosts.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Fixed upon the earth, O all-honored Cross of the Lord, thou hast shaken the dwellings of Hades; and become the foundation and sure protection of the faithful.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Having become fruitful in the virtues, let us partake of the life-giving fruits of the divine Tree, borne by Jesus Who was stretched out upon it.

Glory ..., O Jesus, we praise Thy bountiful goodness, and fall down and worship Thy Cross, together with the lance and reed. For through them, O compassionate One, Thou hast broken down the middle wall of partition and hatred.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** The all-pure One bore Thee, the life-giving fount of our restoration; and stretching Thyself out upon the Cross, Thou hast poured forth the waters of salvation.

Katavasia: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial * Prophet Jonah praying in the belly of the sea-monster cried aloud: * Deliver me from corruption * O Jesus Thou King of hosts.

Kontakion of the precious Cross, in Tone VII:

The fiery sword no longer guardeth the gates of Eden, * for it hath been wondrously quenched by the wood of the Cross. * The sting of death and the victory of Hades have been vanquished, * for Thou art come, O my Savior, crying unto those in Hades: ** “Enter again into Paradise.”

Ikos of the Cross: Pilate set up three crosses in the place of the Skull, two for the thieves and one for the Giver of Life. Seeing Him, Hades cried to those below: “O my servants and my powers! Who is this that hath fixed a nail in my heart? A wooden spear hath suddenly pierced me, and I am rent asunder. Inwardly I am in pain; and anguish hath seized my senses. My spirit is troubled, and I am constrained to cast out Adam and his posterity. A tree brought them to me, but now the Tree of the Cross leadeth them back again to Paradise.”

ODE VII

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: Refusing to worship created things * in place of the Creator, * the divinely wise youths bravely trampled down the threatening fire * and rejoicing they sang aloud: * O supremely hymned Lord and God of our Fathers, Blessed art Thou.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

The axe-head that Elisha drew forth from the Jordan, O Christ, signified the Cross, whereby Thou hast drawn forth the nations from the depths of ignorance, and chanting they hymn: “O Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

At Thy veneration O Cross, the heavens rejoice, together with the Earth, for through thee, mankind hath been united with the angels, and chanting they hymn: “O Lord God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.”

Glory ..., As a cypress of sweet compassion, and a sweet smelling cedar, and as fragrant pine, let us the faithful fall down and worship the Cross of the Lord, bringing our sincere love, and let us glorify our Redeemer who wast nailed thereon.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** Without shaking heavenly things, God came down to dwell within thy womb, O chosen city of God; but, when He was hung upon the Cross, He shook all of creation; beseech Him to set me firmly on His unshakable rock.

ODE VIII

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: The Offspring of the Theotokos * saved the holy children in the furnace. * He who was then prefigured hath now been born on earth, * and He gathereth all creation to hymn thee: * all ye works praise ye the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Thou didst stretch out Thine hands upon the Tree, O Lord, freeing us from the sin of him who stretched out his hand in greed. Thou wast pierced by a spear, and with that spear mortally wounded the adversary. Thou hast tasted gall, taking away the sweet temptation of wickedness, and Thou who art the Joy of all, wast given vinegar to drink.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

With a pure mind and radiant conscience, let us joyfully draw near and worship the precious and holy Wood that lay before us, upon which Christ hath submitted to a shameful death, raising us who had fallen into shameful dishonor through the transgression, to the highest honor.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

I have been slain by the wood of sin, and through tasting from the pleasures I have buried myself. Bring me to life, O Lord; raise me up from where I lie, and make me a worshiper of Thy Passion and a sharer in Thy divine Resurrection, becoming a fellow heir with those who love Thee.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos save us.

Stavrotheotokion: “**I** see Thee lifted on high,” cried the all-pure Virgin, “and because of Thy suffering there is neither form nor beauty in Thee; O Only-begotten Son, Whom we comprehend as incarnate, Thou wast fairer than all the sons of men, manifest Thy glory, O salvation of all.”

First tri-ode canon, by Joseph, in Tone VI:

Irmos: Suffering affliction for the sake of the laws of their fathers ...,

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Thou wast willingly crucified in the middle of the day, in the midst of the earth, and didst thereby pluck the ends of the world from the midst of the dragon’s jaws, O compassionate One. Wherefore in this middle week of the holy Fast we worship and glorify Thy precious Cross, crying aloud: “Praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout the ages.”

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

O sign of joy, unconquerable weapon, rampart of the Church, glory of martyrs, adornment of apostles, firm support of bishops, strengthen my enfeebled soul, and deem me worthy to worship Thee and to sing Thy praises, crying aloud: “O ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.”

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

O longsuffering Lord, I mourn and weep and lament, when I contemplate my condemnation before the dread judgment seat. Wherefore spare me, and lighten the yoke which doth weigh heavily upon my soul, that with rejoicing I may cry: “O ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.”

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos save us.

Stavrotheotokion: **O** all-immaculate Virgin, the bush prefigured the mystery of thine incomprehensible childbearing. For like the bush of old, thou didst remain unconsumed by fire having conceived Christ the Savior, who was lifted up upon the Cross. Beseech Him that I may be delivered from eternal fire as I cry aloud: "Praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages."

Second tri-ode canon, by Theodore, in Tone I;

Irmos: **This chosen and holy day ...,**

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Cleansed by fasting, let us come to the Cross of Christ set before us, and with love adore it, for it is a treasury of strength and our sanctification, and through it we hymn His praises throughout the ages.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Before us stands the great and threefold Cross: though it appeareth small, it is wider than the heavens in its power, raising us to God: through it we bless Christ throughout the ages.

Refrain: We bless the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Lord.

I glorify one Essence in three distinct Beings: the Father, Son and Spirit, neither commingled in Hypostasis nor divided in Essence; for there is one God in Trinity, ruling over all.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** **A**lone among mothers, Mary Bride of God, and Virgin, without knowing a man thou hast given birth to the Saviour Christ, keeping the seal of Thy purity intact; with all the faithful we call thee blessed throughout the ages.

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

Let us honor this all-holy Wood, which, as the Prophet of old hath said, was put into the bread of Christ by the Israelites who crucified Him; Whom we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Verse: We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord ...,

Katavasia: **D**aniel, great among the prophets, * was cast into the lions' den; * but, stretching out his hands in the form of the Cross, * he was delivered from their mouths and kept unharmed, * blessing Christ our God throughout the ages.

ODE IX

Canon of the precious Cross, in Tone IV:

Irmos: Let every mortal born on earth, * radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy; * and let the host of the angelic powers * celebrate and honor the holy feast of the Mother of God, * and let them cry aloud: * Rejoice! O all-blessed Theotokos, * thou pure Ever-Virgin.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

We hymn Thine opened Rib, from whence the fount of forgiveness floweth unto us: for nailed to a tree Thou didst destroy in the midst of the earth the ancient condemnation O Lover of mankind, Whom on this middle day of the Fast, we now adore singing the praises of Thine exceeding goodness.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

O sweetness of the mountains, and joy of the little hills, be ye transformed with love. Ye trees of the plain and cedars of Lebanon, rejoice today at the veneration of the lifegiving Cross. Prophets and martyrs, apostles and spirits of the righteous, dance ye in gladness.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

O Lord, look upon Thy people and Thine inheritance, who sing Thy praises with reverent fear, and for whose sake Thou didst suffer a voluntary death. Let not the multitude of our wicked deeds vanquish Thy loving-kindness, but save us O supremely Good One by Thy Cross and Thy love for mankind.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos save us.

“Crucified according to thine own will, Thou didst shake the visible world, and yet remained hanging upon the Cross”, said the Theotokos weeping. “For it is Thy desire, O Christ, that the passionate mind of the first-formed man be freed, and healed of its deformity by Thine exceeding goodness.”

First tri-ode canon, by Joseph, in Tone VI:

Irmos: Every tongue is at a loss... ..,

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Of old Elisha didst draw an axe-head from the river by means of a piece of wood, prefiguring thee, O life-giving Cross, and by thee hath Christ drawn the nations from the depths of the madness of idolatry, being nailed upon thee. We therefore fall down and worship thee and we glorify His power.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

By Thy Crucifixion, O Savoir, the radiance of the sun was transformed into darkness, the light of the moon was quenched, and with trembling all the elements were changed. Wherefore I cry unto Thee: My thoughts have been darkened by the passions; do Thou transform me by Thy right hand, O Word, enlighten and save me.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

By the lacerations of Thy body, cure Thou the passions of my soul; and by Thy wounded side, heal Thou the painful wounds inflicted by the demons. By Thy nails, O Christ, uproot my sensual lusts; and grant that, freed from passions, I may worship at Thy Holy Passion and Resurrection.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos save us.

Stavrotheotokion: A fair Maiden gave birth to Thee, O Lord fair in beauty; but, seeing neither form nor beauty in Thee at Thy Passion, she said lamenting: "I am filled with wonder, O my Son, at this Thy strange abasement, whereby Thou hast saved the humbled nature of mankind."

Second tri-ode canon, by Theodore, in Tone I;

Irmos: Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem ...,

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

Draw near O ye people of God; and with gladness behold the Wood of the Cross that lieth before you, with reverent fear come and adore it, and receive joy, ever praising the Lord of glory who hath been crucified thereon.

Refrain: Glory to Thy precious Cross O Lord.

O Cross, thou art a divine weapon protecting my life; the Master ascended thee bringing salvation to me: His side was pierced pouring forth blood and water; and partaking thereof, I rejoice and glorify Him.

Glory ..., I worship Thee, O holy God, as a Trinity of Hypostases in a single Essence, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: one Power and Kingdom, ruling over all.

Both now ..., **Stavrotheotokion:** Thou art a great mountain, O Virgin, wherein Christ made His abode, as the holy prophet David said. By thee we ascend to heaven, O all-blessed One, receiving through the Spirit the adoption of sonship.

Refrain: Glory to Thee our God, glory to Thee.

O Cross, thou divine scepter of the King, and manly courage of His army, putting our trust in thee we conquer the adversary. Grant now unto us who worship thee victory over enemies.

Katavasia: O Virgin Mother and true Theotokos, * without seed didst thou bear Christ our God, * Who wast lifted upon the Cross in the flesh. * We and all the faithful, as is meet, * magnify thee with thy Son.

The small litany.

The Exapostilarion of the day from the Oktoechos; Glory ..., the Exapostilarion from the Menaion, if such is appointed; Both now ..., the Theotokion.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone VIII:

Having come to the middle of the Fast, * on the path that leads to Thy precious Cross, * may we see that day prefigured by Abraham, * in which he rejoiced on the mountain, * having received Isaac back alive as if from a tomb. * that delivered from the enemy by faith, * we may share in Thy mystical supper, * calling upon Thee in peace: ** O Our light and Saviour, glory be to Thee.

Verse: We were filled in the morning with Thy mercy, O Lord, and we rejoiced and were glad. In all our days, let us be glad for the days wherein Thou didst humble us, for the years wherein we saw evils. And look upon Thy servants, and upon Thy works, * and do Thou guide their sons.

Repeat: **H**aving come to the middle of the Fast ...,

Verse: And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us, and the works of our hand do Thou guide aright upon us, * yea, the works of our hands do Thou guide aright.

Of the holy martyrs, in Tone VIII:

O ye invincible martyrs of Christ, * having triumphed over falsehood by the power of the Cross, * ye gained the reward of the grace of eternal life. * Ye felt no terror when threatened by the tyrants, * and when ye suffered torment ye rejoiced; * and now your blood hath become the healing of our souls. ** Pray ye that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., Both now ..., in Tone VIII:

Stavrotheotokion: **H**aving reached the middle of the sea of abstinence, * let us look forward to the haven of salvation, * the season of Thy voluntary Passion, O Lord. * But since Thou art lovingly compassionate and merciful, * grant that we also may behold in peace ** the day of Thy glorious Resurrection.

Then: It is good to give thanks unto the Lord ..., Trisagion through Our Father .., then:

Reader: Amen. Standing in the temple of thy glory as though seemingly in heaven; O Theotokos thou gate of heaven, open the door of thy compassion.

Lord have mercy. (40 Times)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Amen.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim; who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, father (master) bless.

Priest: He that is blessed, Christ our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. O Heavenly King, strengthen Orthodox Christians, establish the Faith, subdue the nations, give peace to the world, keep well this city (or habitation, or town); settle our departed fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the righteous, and receive us in penitence and confession, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Then the Prayer of St Ephraim:

Priest: O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. (Prostration)

But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. (Prostration)

Yea, O Lord King, grant me to see my own failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. (Prostration)

O God, cleanse me a sinner. (Twelve times)

O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. Yea, O Lord King, grant me to see my own failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. (Prostration)

Then the reader immediately begineth the first hour. With the reading of the 2nd Kathisma. The 3rd Kathisma is read at the Third Hour, the 4th at the Sixth Hour, the 5th at the Ninth Hour.

FIRST HOUR

In place of Order my steps ..., we chant thrice, making three prostrations:

We venerate Thy Cross, O Master, * and we glorify Thy holy Resurrection.

(At this point it is also common to sing “Come, ye faithful and let us venerate ...,” with the verses that follow, as on Sunday, while the faithful come up to venerate the Cross.)

During the Hours after Our Father ..., we chant the Kontakion:

Kontakion of the precious Cross, in Tone VII:

The fiery sword no longer guardeth the gates of Eden, * for it hath been wondrously quenched by the wood of the Cross. * The sting of death and the victory of Hades have been vanquished, * for Thou art come, O my Savior, crying unto those in Hades: ** “Enter again into Paradise.”

SIXTH HOUR

Troparion of the prophecy, in Tone I:

We venerate Thy Cross, O Master, * and we glorify Thy holy Resurrection.

Glory ..., Both now ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Prokeimenon, in Tone VI:

Prokeimenon: Let them be glad and rejoice in Thee * all that seek after Thee, O God.

Verse: O God, be attentive unto helping me; O Lord, make haste to help me.

THE READING IS FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH (26: 21 - 27:9)

Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world

with fruit. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him? In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.

Prokeimenon, in Tone VI:

Prokeimenon: In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, * let me not be put to shame in the age to come.

Verse: In Thy righteousness deliver me and rescue me.

WEDNESDAY IN THE FOURTH WEEK
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 10 Stichera:

6 Stichera from the Triodion, by Joseph, in Tone IV:

The Fast which bringeth us good things * hath now brought us to its middle point: * having helped us receive God’s grace in the days gone past, * it will bring us more good things in the days yet to come. * Wherefore let us cry to Christ, the Giver of all good things: * “O Thou who for our sakes didst fast and endure the Cross, * grant us to partake of Thy divine Pascha uncondemned; * that we may pass the time of our lives in peace ** and rightly glorify Thee with the Father and the Spirit.

Tone V: Awaiting spiritual recompense, * let us do virtuous deeds in secret; * and not proclaim them in the streets but keep them hidden in our hearts. * Then He who seeth the secrets of all, * will reward us for our abstinence. * Let us complete the Fast, not with a sad countenance, * but praying in the inner chamber of our souls; * without ceasing let us cry aloud: * “Our Father, who art in the heavens, * lead us not into temptation we pray, ** but deliver us from the evil one.”

To the Martyrs, in Tone V: Your souls, O holy martyrs, * filled with an insatiable love; * did not deny Christ, but endured great sufferings and torments, * whereby ye cast down the pride of tyrants. * Ye kept the faith without change and unblemished, * and now ye have gone to dwell in the heavens. * Wherefore ye have acquired boldness before Christ, * pray that peace be given to the world, ** and to our souls great mercy.

To the Cross in Tone I: Let us all wash our souls clean in the waters of the Fast, * and, approaching the precious and life-creating Cross of the Lord, * let us fall down and worship it with faith; * drawing from it divine enlightenment, ** gathering the fruit of eternal salvation, peace and great mercy.

O Cross, thou art the glory of the apostles, * attended by principalities, powers and archangels, * keep safe from all harm those who fall down and worship thee. * Grant us to follow the divine path of abstinence, ** and to reach the day of salvation in which we shall be saved.

In Tone VII: Today as we fall down and worship the Cross of the Lord, * let us cry aloud: * Rejoice, thou Tree of Life, conqueror of Hades; * Rejoice, joy of all the world and slayer of corruption; * Rejoice, for by Thy power thou hast scattered the demons! * O thou strong support of the faithful, and unshakable weapon, ** we pray thee, guard and sanctify those who honor thee.

And 4 Stichera from the Menaion (repeating the first).

Glory ..., Both now ..., in Tone VIII:

Today He Who is in essence unapproachable, * becometh approachable for me and suffers His Passion, delivering me from the passions. * He Who doth grant light unto the blind is spat upon by the mouths of transgressors, * giving His back over to scourging for the sake of those that are held captive. * When the pure Virgin His Mother saw Him on the Cross, she cried aloud in pain: * “Woe is me, O my Child! What is this that Thou hast done? * Thou Who wast in beauty fairer than all mortal men, * dost now appear without life and form, having neither shape nor comeliness. * Woe is me, my Light! * I cannot bear to look upon Thee sleeping, and I am inwardly wounded, * a harsh sword hath pierced my heart. * I sing the praises of Thy Passion, I venerate Thy merciful loving-kindness: ** O long-suffering Lord, glory be to Thee!

“O joyous Light ...”:

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV:

Prokeimenon: Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, * Who alone doeth wonders.

Verse: O God, give Thy judgment to the king, and Thy righteousness to the son of the king.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS (9:18 - 10:1)

And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died. Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV:

Prokeimenon: It is good for me to cleave unto God, * to put my hope in the Lord.

Verse: How good is God to Israel, to them that are upright of heart.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS (12:23 - 13:9)

A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor: but the way of the wicked seduceth them. The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious. In the way of righteousness is life: and in the pathway thereof there is no death. A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner. There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke. The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

And the rest of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.