

THE 1st DAY OF THE MONTH OF AUGUST
THE FEAST OF THE MOST MERCIFUL SAVIOR & THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS
AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, “Blessed is the Man ...,” the first antiphon.

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 8 Stichera: 4 to the Savior, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast given a sign ...”:

We honor Thy heavenly city, O most merciful Lord, celebrating Thy festival with gladness, for Thou hast divinely taught us through the choir of the apostles; and lifting our eyes unto Thee with fear and joy, we beg for the ineffable food, for Thou Thyself art the living food which came down from heaven, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls. (Twice)

Without leaving the bosom of the Father, Thou didst dwell with Thy disciples in that Thou art most merciful, for Thou art the Bread of life of which the world partaketh, and Thou remainest for us inexhaustible food which, when partaken of, enliveneth mankind unto incorruption, doing away with the evil of death, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls.

O most merciful Christ, we, the faithful, sing the praises of Thy festival, for Thou didst come from the Father to save us. Wherefore, we hymn Thee with songs of thanksgiving, for as God Thou hast revealed Thy divine power, most gloriously working a miracle for the salvation of us who do good. Therefore, we glorify Thy dispensation, O Merciful One, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls.

And 4 Stichera of the Cross, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “As one valiant among the martyrs ...”:

Today the godly multitudes of the faithful rejoice, * for the heavenly Cross hath appeared to the ends of the world, * illumining the firmament with unapproachable light, * it maketh the air brilliant * and adorneth the face of the earth. * And the Church of Christ hymneth it in divine songs, * worshiping it with veneration, * and the divine and supremely wondrous Cross * preserveth it from on high. * By its power are we strengthened; * wherefore, let us approach the Master, saying: ** Grant peace to the world and enlighten our souls!

Let creation leap up and rejoice, * for the Cross hath shone forth today from heaven, * illumining those on earth, * and revealing those who have been scattered to be unified. * Today the angelic choirs join chorus with mortals, * for the rampart of resistance * hath been destroyed by the Cross, * which hath manifestly united all into one. * Wherefore, shining forth more brightly than the sun, * it illumineth all creation with grace, * saving and making radiant ** those who honor it with faith.

Behold! the divine Cross clearly shineth forth upon the ends of the earth * more brightly than the radiance of the sun, * as the precious scepter * of Christ the King. * It hath raised the human race up from Hades, * sending hell into great captivity, * and, casting down the enemy, * it hath utterly destroyed the pride of the demons. * And now having revealed the resurrection of the Savior * it saveth those who cry: * Grant peace to the world ** and enlighten our souls!

Glory ..., Idiomelon, in Tone IV:

Christ, our most merciful Savior, Who was born in the flesh of thy virginal womb, hath shown thee as a life-bearing wellspring unto those who praise thee. Wherefore, cease thou never to pray to Him on behalf of those who hymn and praise thee, making steadfast our homeland and armed forces by thy supplications and mercy.

Both now ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone IV:

To Thy precious Cross, O Christ God, which Moses prefigured in himself of old when he cast down and vanquished Amalek, and of which David the psalmist commanded, saying: "Worship the footstool of His feet", do we sinners now offer homage today with unworthy lips; and chanting, we entreat Thee Who wast well - pleased to be nailed thereto: O Lord, grant unto us a place with the thief in Thy kingdom!

Entrance. Prokeimenon of the day. Three Lessons:

A READING FROM PROVERBS

My child, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth, He rebuketh, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Blessed is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who knoweth prudence. For it is better to traffic for her, than for treasures of gold and silver. And she is more valuable than precious stones: no evil thing shall resist her: she is well known to all that approach her, and no precious thing is equal to her in value. For length of existence and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are wealth and glory: out of her mouth proceedeth righteousness, and she carrieth law and mercy upon her tongue. Her ways are good ways, and all her paths are peaceful. She is the tree of life to all that lay hold upon her; and she is a secure help to all that stay themselves on her, as on the Lord.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

Thus saith the Lord: Thy gates shall be opened continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; to bring in to thee the power of the gentiles, and their kings as captives. For the nations and the kings which will not serve thee shall perish; and those nations shall be made utterly desolate. And the glory of Lebanon shall come to thee, in the cypress, and pine, and cedar together, to glorify My holy place, and I shall glorify the place of my feet. And the sons of those who afflicted thee, and of those who provoked thee, shall come to thee in fear; and thou shalt be called Sion, the city of the Holy One of Israel. Because thou hast become desolate and hated, and there was no helper, therefore I will make thee a perpetual gladness, a joy of many generations.

And thou shalt suck the milk of the gentiles, and shalt eat the wealth of kings; and shalt know that I am the Lord Who saveth thee and delivereth thee, the God of Israel.

A READING FROM PROVERBS

Wisdom hath built a house for herself, and set up seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine in a bowl, and prepared her table. She hath sent forth her servants, calling with a loud proclamation to the feast, saying: “Whoso is foolish, let him turn aside to me.” And to those who want understanding she saith: “Come, eat of my bread, and drink wine which I have mingled for you. Leave folly, that ye may reign forever; and seek wisdom, and improve understanding by knowledge. He that reproveth evil men shall get dishonor to himself; and he that rebuketh an ungodly man shall disgrace himself. Rebuke not evil men, lest they should hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give an opportunity to a wise man, and he will be wiser: instruct a just man, and he will receive more instruction. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel of saints is understanding: for to know the law is the character of a sound mind. For in this way thou shalt live long, and years of thy life shall be added to thee.”

At Litiya, these Stichera, the composition of Andrew of Jerusalem, in Tone I:

Today the holy words of David have received their fulfillment; for, lo! we manifestly worship the footstool of Thy most pure feet, O most Compassionate One, and cry out to Thee, placing our trust in the shelter of Thy wings: Let the light of Thy countenance be shined upon us! Exalt Thou the horn of Thine Orthodox people through the elevation of Thy Cross, O greatly merciful Christ!

Elevated today, the Tree of life, which was planted in the place of the skull, whereon the pre-eternal King wrought salvation in the midst of the earth, sanctifieth the ends of the earth; and the temple of the Resurrection is renewed. The angels rejoice in heaven, and mortals make merry on earth, crying like David and saying: Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship the footstool of His feet, for He is holy, granting great mercy to the world!

Prefiguring Thy Cross, O Christ, in giving his blessing to his grandsons, the Patriarch Jacob crossed his hands over their heads. And raising it aloft today, O Savior, we cry out: Grant victory to all Orthodox Christians over their adversaries, as Thou gavest the victory to Constantine.

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

Beholding Thee, the Creator and Fashioner of all, hanging naked upon the Cross, all creation was moved by fear and lamented; the sun darkened its light; the earth quaked and the stones split asunder; the splendor of the temple was rent in twain; the dead arose from the graves; and the angelic hosts were filled with awe, saying: “O the wonder! The Judge is judged and suffereth, desiring the salvation and restoration of the world!”

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Rejoice, thou Life-bearing Cross, invincible victory of piety, door to paradise, confirmation of the faithful, rampart of the Church, whereby corruption hath been utterly destroyed, the dominion of death trampled down, and we have been lifted up from earth to those who are in Heaven, invincible weapon, contender against the demons, glory of the martyrs, true adornment of the venerable, haven of salvation, which grantest the world great mercy.

Verse: Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship the footstool of His feet, * for He is holy.

Rejoice, thou Cross of the Lord, whereby mankind hath been loosed from the curse, most honorable standard of joy which disperseth the enemy in thine exaltation, our helper, might of kings, strength of the righteous, splendor of priests, which, when traced, doth deliver from misfortune, staff of power whereby we are tended, weapon of peace which the angels surround with fear, divine glory of Christ Who granteth the world great mercy.

Verse: God is our King before the ages; * He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.

Rejoice, thou guide of the blind, physician of the ailing, resurrection of all the dead, which hast raised us up who had fallen into corruption, O precious Cross, whereby the curse was annulled and incorruption budded forth, and the earthly have been deified, and the devil utterly cast down! Beholding thee raised on high today in the hands of the high priest, we exalt Him that was exalted in thy midst, and bow down before thee, plenteously drawing forth from thee great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone IV:

Without leaving the bosom of the Father, Thou didst dwell with Thy disciples in that Thou art most merciful, for Thou art the Bread of life of which the world partaketh, and Thou remainest for us inexhaustible food which, when partaken of, enliveneth mankind unto incorruption, doing away with the evil of death, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls.

Both now ..., in Tone IV:

O God, the words of Moses Thy prophet have been fulfilled, who said: "Ye shall see your life hanging before your eyes!" Today the Cross is exalted, and the world is freed from deception. Today the resurrection of Christ is renewed, and the ends of the earth rejoice, offering to Thee a hymn on cymbals, like David, and saying: "Thou hast wrought salvation in the midst of the earth, O God: the Cross and resurrection! For their sake Thou hast saved us, O Good One Who lovest mankind! O Almighty Lord, glory be to Thee!"

Troparion, in Tone VIII:

Looking down from on high and receiving the poor, O most merciful Master, * visit us who are afflicted by sins, ** and through the supplications of the Theotokos grant great mercy to our souls.

Glory ..., Another Troparion, in Tone IV:

O most merciful Savior, Thou sun-like Luminary: * through the light of Thine effulgence grant us discourse, * that with a pure conscience we may sing praises * on Thy supremely divine feast, * glorifying Thee, the only-begotten Son, * and the consubstantial Spirit; ** for Thou hast granted us peace and great mercy.

Both now ..., Troparion of the Cross, in Tone I:

Save O Lord Thy people * and bless Thine inheritance, * grant now unto the faithful * victory over adversaries, * and by the power of Thy Cross ** do Thou preserve Thy commonwealth.

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the first Troparion of the feast, in Tone VIII:
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After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VI:

No sooner was the tree of Thy Cross planted, O Christ our Lord, than the foundations of death were shaken, for that which Hades swallowed greedily it spewed forth, trembling. Thou hast revealed to us Thy salvation, O Holy One, and we glorify Thee; O Son of God, have mercy upon us!

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

After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VI:

Today the words of the prophet have been fulfilled! For, behold! we bow down before the place where Thy feet stood, O Lord, and, receiving the Tree of salvation, we have achieved liberation from sinful passions through the supplications of the Theotokos, O Thou Lover of mankind.

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

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify Thee, O Christ, Bestower of life, and we honor Thy holy Cross, whereby Thou hast saved us from slavery to the enemy.

Selected Psalm verse:

A: Judge them, O God, that do me injustice; war against them that war against me.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Alleluia ..., Glory to Thee, our God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “That which was mystically commanded ...”:

Of old, in paradise, a tree stripped me naked, the enemy bringing about mortality through eating; but the tree of the Cross, bearing for all mankind the vesture of life, hath been planted in the ground, and the whole world hath been filled with all manner of joy. Beholding it uplifted, O ye people, let us cry out to God together: Fill Thou Thy house with glory!

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

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV:

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: All the ends of the earth * have seen the salvation of our God.

Verse: O sing unto the Lord a new song, for the Lord hath wrought wondrous things.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN, §42 (MIDPOINT) (JN 12:28-36)

The Lord said: “Father, glorify Thy name.” Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die. The people answered Him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

Then, “Having beheld the resurrection of Christ ...”:

And after Psalm 50, this Sticheron, in Tone VI:

O Cross of Christ, hope of Christians, guide of the lost, haven of the tempest-tossed, victory amid battles, confirmation of the whole world, physician of the ill, resurrection of the dead: Have mercy upon us!

The canon of the feast, with 8 Troparia, the Irmos being chanted twice; and the canon of the precious Cross, with 6 Troparia.

ODE I

The canon of the most merciful Savior & the most pure Theotokos;

In Tone VIII

Irmos: Thou didst make the sea a wall; * Thou didst overwhelm boastful Pharaoh in the deep * together with his chariots. * Thou didst save the people dry-shod, O Lord, * and didst lead them forth to a mountain of sanctification, as they cried: * We shall sing a song of victory to Thee, our God, * for Thou hast been glorified.

To the Savior: Come, ye faithful, and, blessing with praises and hymns the radiant Church which hath shone forth upon those who hold fast to piety, let us glorify therein Christ, our most merciful God, crying: We hymn Thee, our God, for Thou hast been glorified!

Let the mind of all the faithful be uplifted to heaven, unto Him Who sitteth on high, and, joining chorus with faith in His all-divine church, let us honor the divine festival of Him Who hath humbled those on earth and those of heaven.

Of the Theotokos: Thy womb, O Theotokos, was a divinely inscribed tablet whereon was written the Word of the Father, to Whom thou hast for us given birth in the flesh. Him do thou entreat, that He deliver us from all want and sorrow.

Isaiah, the foremost of the prophets, rejoiceth splendidly in thee, O Virgin, and, beholding thy birthgiving which was accomplished without the aid of a man, he prophesieth:

Having given birth for us to the Word of the Father, thou hast remained a virgin even after giving birth.

Canon of the Cross, the acrostic whereof is: “I bow down before the Cross, the salvation of the faithful”, in Tone VI:

Irmos: When Israel walked on foot in the sea as on dry land, * on seeing their pursuer Pharaoh drowned, * they cried: * Let us sing to God * a song of victory.

I bow down before the Cross, the salvation of the faithful, and kissing it fervently, and, embracing it, I cry aloud: O most blessed Tree of Christ, illumine my soul and mind, I pray!

Today the sign of the Cross hath revealed itself to be victorious over the passions and the demons. Wherefore, O ye faithful, radiantly illumined in soul, let us all kiss it now.

The precious Cross emitteth brilliant rays and illumineth those who bow down before it with faith today, sanctifying our souls and bodies.

Laying visibly before us, the life-giving Cross sendeth forth brilliant rays of grace. Offering praise unto the Lord, let us approach and receive enlightenment, gladness, salvation and forgiveness.

Theotokion: **O** most holy Virgin who hast given birth in the flesh unto Christ Who of His own will suffered for our sake on the Cross: by thine entreaties save those who bless thee with honor.

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Katavasia: The Irmoi of the canon of the Exaltation of the Cross.

ODE III

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **My heart is established in the Lord, * my horn is exalted in my God, * my mouth is enlarged against mine enemies, * and I rejoice in Thy salvation.**

To the Savior: **All** the angelic captains join chorus with us today, surrounding Thy Holy Church, O Master, not physically, but spiritually. And do Thou grant us Thy peace from on high, in that Thou art most merciful.

The choir of the prophets and that of the apostles and all the choirs of the martyrs, O Savior, join chorus with us today, gazing in spirit upon Thee, the God of many names, Who art glorified by the faithful.

Of the Theotokos: **By** David thou wast called the rich mountain, O Virgin, who received in thy womb the timeless Word of the Father Who became a little babe, and who hast given birth in the flesh unto the hypostatic Wisdom of God.

The noetic tyrant was crushed, receiving an incurable wound from the heavenly Stone, Christ our God, Who issued forth from thy womb and joined those on earth to those in heaven.

Canon of the Cross

Irmos: **There is none as holy as Thou, * O Lord my God, * who hast exalted the horn of Thy faithful O good One, * and strengthened us upon the rock * of Thy confession.**

Of old, a sword was given to guard the blessed tree of life after the disobedience of Adam the first-formed man; but the Cross hath opened a path thereto.

With eyes, mouth and soul, with our faces and hearts, let us all bow down before the most holy Cross of Christ, the Bestower of life, whereby the whole world is sanctified.

Becoming temples of God today, as the prophets said, bowing down before the wood of the most holy Cross, all of us who are the heirs thereto kiss it with fear.

We chant hymns to thee, O Christ, and with faith entreat thy power: Rescue us from the snares of the enemy, and direct all of us who hymn thee to the haven of salvation.

Theotokion: As a virgin thou hast given birth to the Son Who before thee was begotten of God the Father without mother before time began, and hath been crucified in the flesh, that He might save those who had sinned before.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast appeared today ...”:

I have become a committer of every abomination, * O most merciful Savior, * and have fallen into the pit of despair; * yet I groan from the depths of my heart and cry out to Thee, O Word: * Hasten Thou, O Compassionate One, * and speed Thou to our aid, ** in that Thou art merciful!

Ikos: **H**aving Thee, O most merciful Savior, as a mighty confirmation, and Thy most pure Mother as an indestructible rampart and calm haven, we never fear the assaults of the enemy; for, shielded by Thine invisible providence and protection, we vanquish foes, visible and invisible. And possessing Thy most pure Mother as our helper, we elude the snares of the enemy as though they were spiders’ webs; and we joyfully chant hymns of surpassing joy: Haste Thou, O Compassionate One, and speed Thou to our aid, in that Thou art merciful!

Sessional hymn of the feast, in Tone IV:

O most Merciful One, we pray, falling down with contrite heart: Send speedy, steadfast and mighty consolation unto us, that we may send up to Thee the thrice holy hymn with a voice of praise. O Savior of the whole world, Thou art the God of the penitent!

Glory ..., Both now ..., Sessional Hymn of the Cross, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “That which was mystically commanded ...”:

Of old, Joshua, the son of Nun, mystically prefigured the image of the Cross when he stretched forth his arms in the form of the Cross, O my Savior; and the sun stood still until he had cast down all the enemy which was opposed to Thee, O God. And now Thou hast raised with Thee the whole world, which saw Thee set upon the Cross, destroying the might of death.

ODE IV

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **W**ith noetic eyes the Prophet Habbakuk * foresaw Thy coming, O Lord; * wherefore he cried aloud: * ‘God shall come out of Theman!’ Glory to Thy power! * Glory to Thy condescension!

To the Savior: **T**he six-winged and many-eyed cherubim, standing before Thy throne, O merciful Master, render glory. Send them unto us, the faithful, and sanctify Thy divine Church and those who cry: Glory to Thy power! Glory, O Christ, to Thy condescension!

David was exalted, O Savior, and, shining forth through Thy divine Spirit, he proclaimed Thy nativity from the Virgin. As Thou art most merciful, exalt and raise on high Thy holy and divine Church.

Of the Theotokos: **T**he bow of the mighty prince of this world was broken by thy pregnancy, O Lady; for thou didst splendidly provide flesh for the divine Incarnation, a lure for the Word of the Father wherewith to hook the enemy of our first parents. Wherefore, we cry unto Him: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Like David thou wast exalted, O Virgin, and by the voices of the prophets thou wast revealed as the rich mountain of God. And unto Christ God, the Stone which was quarried from thy womb, we chant: Glory to Thy power! Glory, O Christ, to Thy condescension!

Canon of the Cross

Irmos: **Christ is my power, * my God and my Lord, * the holy Church divinely singeth, * crying with a pure mind, * keeping festival in the Lord.**

Let the whole earth drop forth joy, and let the trees of the forest be glad, deified today by the most precious Cross which illumineth the ends of the world.

O most glorious Cross, who wast intended to be an instrument of execution, but didst become an invincible weapon of victory bearing life into the world: illumine our hearts!

O most honored Cross, thou art the divine conquest, thou art the accomplishment of our salvation, thou art the victory of the faithful and the divine sacrifice: Sanctify those who hymn thee!

With all the earth is heaven gladdened. The passion-bearers, martyrs and apostles, and the souls of the righteous now joyfully rejoice, and the life-imparting Tree, which lay visibly in our midst, saveth all and sanctifieth the faithful with grace.

Theotokion: **T**ruly hast thou appeared! Truly didst thou give birth to the Most High as thy Son, Who stretched forth His hands upon the Cross and summoned the world to Him, O Virgin Mother Mary.

ODE V

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **O Lord our God, bestow Thy peace upon us; * O Lord our God, take us for Thy possession; * O Lord, besides Thee we know none other: * and we call upon Thy Name.**

To the Savior: **T**he supremely divine name of Thee - the Father, the Word and the Spirit - reigneth throughout all ages. As Thou art merciful, send forth from on high a peaceful life for those who love Thee.

As the Creator of the ages, in Thy dispensation Thou didst draw nigh unto the flesh, that, having deified the flesh, thou mightest lead it up to the Father and Thy desire.

Of the Theotokos: **O** Mary who knewest not wedlock, we, the faithful, who through the fruit came to fall headlong, have understood thee to be the table of the Word of life; and we been brought to the noetic light by the Fruit of thy womb.

The voices of the prophets shine forth, emitting most radiant beams like the sun, proclaiming beforehand thy birthgiving which was without a man, O Virgin, for thus it was the will of the Father, and the Son by His own desire, to become a babe in thy womb through the action of the Spirit; and Thou remainest a virgin.

Canon of the Cross

Irmos: **I**lluminate with Thy divine light, I pray, O Good One, * the souls of those who with love rise early to pray to Thee, * that they may know Thee, O Word of God, * as the true God, * Who recallesh us from the darkness of sin.

With joy let us uplift the most blessed Cross which is set forth in the churches and cities, and let us bow down before it, that we may receive forgiveness of our debts.

The wicked serpent is now slain, the prince of darkness, unable to bear the radiance emitted by the life-bearing Cross, the precious scepter of the divine King.

Like a most brilliant star, like a magnificent pearl and the most radiant sun doth the Cross of the Lord, which we venerate, illumine all the ends of the earth. Lift up your voices in jubilation, O ye nations!

Leap up, ye tribes, and chant unto God Who hath given us the indestructible confirmation of the Cross, which He now setteth before us! Rejoice, all ye faithful, receiving good things for its sake!

Theotokion: **K**nowing thee to be the origin of salvation, O pure one, all the faithful bless thee; for thou hast given birth in the flesh to Him Who existed from the beginning, and by His own will was nailed to the Cross.

ODE VI

Canon of the feast

Irmos: **T**he billows of life trouble me like the waters of the sea, * O Lover of Mankind. * Wherefore, like Jonah I cry unto Thee, O Word: * Raise up my life from corruption, O compassionate Lord.

To the Savior: **T**he city of great renown keepeth glad festival today, and the Christian people ask of Thee great gifts from on high, O Savior. In that Thou art good and most merciful, preserve Thou Thy flock.

O Christ our Savior, send down mighty confirmation upon those who know Thee to be the mighty and most merciful God, and in that Thou art omnipotent make steadfast the Christian Church.

Of the Theotokos: Deliver me from evils, O Virgin, entreating the Vanquisher of the wicked enemy; and grant that I may be found worthy to stand at the right hand of thy Son.

Having given birth unto God, O Lady, thou hast deified me and called my mortal essence from death to life, that the curse of my transgression may be annulled through the divine love of Him Who blesseth thee.

Canon of the Cross

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, * I run to Thy calm haven, and cry to Thee: * Raise up my life from corruption, * O greatly Merciful One.

Seeing the Cross set forth today as a divine vessel, as a radiant lamp in churches, temples and cities, we hymn Him Who hath caused it to shine.

Death is slain, corruption is put to death, and the hordes of the demons flee, beholding the victorious and awesome Cross of Christ set forth today, unable to endure its touch.

Hymning Thee, God the King and Lord, in that Thou hast given us the Cross as an impregnable bulwark, we now kiss it with joy and thus escape evils.

Theotokion: Our first mother in Eden was poisoned by eating of the serpent's venom; but the Virgin, having given birth to the Author of life, hath poured forth incorruption and resurrection upon the world.

Kontakion of the Cross, in Tone IV:

O Thou Who wast willingly lifted up upon the Cross, * bestow Thy compassions upon the new community named after Thee, O Christ God; * gladden by Thy power Orthodox Christians, * granting them victory over all adversaries. ** May they have as an ally the invincible trophy, the weapon of peace.

Ikos: He who was caught up to the third heaven of paradise and heard unspeakable and divine words which the human tongue cannot utter, what was it hath he wrote to the Galatians, which, as lovers of the Scriptures, ye have both read and come to understand? - God forbid, saith he, that I should glory, save only in the Cross of the Lord, - whereon having suffered He slew the passions. Let us all then firmly hold this boast, the Cross of the Lord; for this Wood is our salvation, the invincible trophy, the weapon of peace!

ODE VII

Canon of the feast

Irmos: The Chaldean furnace, burning with fire, * was bedewed by the Spirit * through the presence of God; * and the children chanted: * O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

To the Savior: Thou art the Creator of the vault of heaven, O Lord, and, knowing Thee to be most merciful, we fall down before Thee, crying aloud: Haste Thou, O Compassionate One, and speed Thou to the help of us who chant like the youths: Blessed is the God of our Fathers!

With tender compassion Thou hast opened unto us the door of ineffable food, O most merciful Savior; disclose now Thy divine gifts from on high unto those who with faith cry to Thee: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Triadicon: We glorify the Father, the Son and the Spirit in one Godhead - the Essence in three Hypostases, the indivisible Substance, uncreated, beginningless and consubstantial.

Theotokion: The youths who, cooled by the fire of the Godhead, were not consumed by the fiery furnace, prefigured thine unconsumed womb. And receiving the Word of God, thou hast given birth unto Him for those who chant: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Canon of the Cross

Irmos: An Angel made the furnace bedew the holy Children. * But the command of God consumed the Chaldeans * and prevailed upon the tyrant to cry: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

O ye faithful, let us bow down before the saving Tree, the most holy Cross, which all the armies of the angels serve, beholding it displayed, pouring forth sanctification and life upon us.

The most holy Cross of Christ, the Bestower of life, hath been revealed to be victorious, from on high driving away a multitude of the demons and the audacity of the barbarians, and showing forth our Orthodox hierarchs as conquerors of all heresies.

We hymn, glorify, magnify and bow down before Thy might, O Christ, for Thou hast given Thy divine Cross to us, Thy servants, as an inexhaustible sweetness and a guardian for our souls and bodies.

Theotokion: The furnace did not consume the three youths, prefiguring thy birthing; for the divine Fire, dwelling within thee, did not consume thee, teaching all to chant: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Canon of the feast

Irmos: Seated upon the throne of glory, * and unceasingly glorified as God, * O ye angels and heavens bless, ** hymn and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

To the Savior: Through the supplications of our forefathers preserve our land, O Word, in that Thou art most merciful, and by Thy mighty power grant us strength and power in abundance against the adversary, that we may cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Offering Thee divine hymnody in Thy most pure church, O most Merciful One, Thy chosen people praise Thee. And as Thou art most merciful, overshadow us with Thy heavenly power, that we may cry unto Thee: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Of the Theotokos: O pure Virgin, Who produced the unploughed divine Grain of life and hast given birth within time unto the timeless Word of the Father, the Effulgence of the threefold Godhead: as thou art His Mother, pray to Him on behalf of us who hymn thee.

He Who did not leave the bosom of the beginningless Father made His abode within the womb of the Virgin and was born in the flesh, cleansing my flesh and my fallen soul. Unto Him do we chant: Bless, praise and supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Canon of the Cross

Irmos Be thou astonished and afraid, O heaven, * and let the foundations of the earth be shaken; * for lo! He Who of old burnt the sacrifice of the righteous man with water * doth clothe Himself in water! * Him do ye children bless, ye priests hymn, * ye people supremely exalt throughout all ages!

Prefiguring Thy Cross, Jacob once laid his arms cross-wise over his grandsons, blessing them and teaching grace among the nations. Ye children bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt God throughout the ages!

O Thine ineffable condescension and Thine indescribable good things, O Christ! Thou didst become incarnate, and, being crucified and accepting death, didst decide to release mankind from the curse, pouring forth incorruption upon the thrice-blessed Tree, the supremely glorious Cross, throughout the ages.

Let us praise today the most holy Cross of the Lord, the divine victory, the origin of life, the destroyer of falsehood, the annihilator of the demons, the repeller of barbarians, the protector and champion of kings.

Theotokion: Beholding Christ pierced with nails, His incorrupt side run through with a spear, beaten about the head with a reed, and given gall to eat, the Virgin cried aloud: “Whither hath Thy beauty departed, O most comely Word, more glorious than all the children of mankind?”

ODE IX

Canon of the feast

Irmos: Virginité is alien to motherhood, * and childbearing is a thing strange to virgins: * yet in thee, O Theotokos, both have come to pass. * Therefore we, and all the nations of the earth, * without ceasing call thee blessed.

To the Savior: The divine choirs, monks and layfolk and the assemblies of the clergy, sensibly praise Thee today in Thy most wondrous church, O Master. As Thou art merciful, save us, that all of us, the peoples of the earth, may magnify Thee unceasingly.

Today we, the faithful, offer up hymnody to Thee, O Christ of many names, the God of all; and spiritually celebrating Thy festival, O most Merciful One, we ask of Thee that Thou make our homeland immovably steadfast.

Of the Theotokos: **T**hou hast been shown to be the Mother of Emmanuel, God and man, the Word of the beginningless Father, O Virgin. Look down upon the dominion which calleth upon thee, and make it steadfast, routing the enemy on the day of battle by the hand of our armed forces.

Remove corrupt matter from my mind, O Virgin who hast given birth in the flesh to the Word of the Father; enlighten the deep darkness of mine ignorance; and grant that I may come to the serenity of the divine will on noetic wings.

Canon of the Cross

Irmos: **I**t is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

Through disobedience we became corrupt, being shown to be violators of the commandment of God; wherefore, death came upon mankind. For this cause immortality hath blossomed forth today; the victorious Cross of Christ, which we venerate.

Lo! the most holy Tree hath appeared; the mighty hope of the faithful, the deliverance from the curse; and it setteth joy before us, denouncing the prince of darkness. O ye faithful, let us bow down before it with gladness.

The desired Tree, the invincible weapon, the origin of blessing, the confirmation and bulwark of Christians, the steadfast aid, the deliverance from the curse, hath appeared to us; and it hath illumined and sanctified us who bow down before it.

Theotokion: **O** temple and portal of sanctity, O throne of God, cloud and most radiant lamp, O all-immaculate one, thou ark of grace; protect and preserve those who offer veneration to the precious image of thine only-begotten Son.

Exapostilarion of the Savior:

Spec. Mel.: “Hearken, ye women ...”:

O Christ, Thou never-waning Light, illumine us with the radiance of Thy countenance, and through the supplications of the Theotokos who gave birth to Thee, grant unto us the splendor of the saints, when Thou shalt sit to render unto each according to his works.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Exapostilarion of the Cross:

The Cross is the guardian of the whole world! The Cross is the beauty of the Church! The Cross is the dominion of kings! The Cross is the confirmation of the faithful! The Cross is the glory of the angels and the wounding of the demons!

On the Praises, 6 Stichera: 3 of the feast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Thou hast given a sign ...”:

We honor Thy city, O most merciful Lord, celebrating Thy festival with gladness, for Thou hast divinely taught us through the choir of the apostles; and lifting our eyes unto Thee with fear and joy, we beg for ineffable food, for Thou Thyself art the living food come down from heaven, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls.

Without leaving the bosom of the Father, Thou didst dwell with Thy disciples in that Thou art most merciful, for Thou art the Bread of life of which the world partaketh, and Thou remainest for us inexhaustible food which, when partaken of, enliveneth mankind unto incorruption, doing away with the evil of death, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls.

O most merciful Christ, we, the faithful, sing the praises of Thy festival, for Thou didst come from the Father to save us. Wherefore, we hymn Thee with songs of thanksgiving, for as God Thou hast revealed Thy divine power, most gloriously working a miracle for the salvation of us who do good. Therefore, we glorify Thy dispensation, O Merciful One, O almighty Jesus, Savior of our souls.

And 3 Stichera of the Cross, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: “Joy of the ranks of heaven ...”:

The precious Cross maketh the paths of heaven * ready for all to cross * who bow down before it with steadfast faith; * and He Who was nailed thereto * joineth those who hymn it with love ** to the choirs of the immaterial hosts.

Bowing down with faith * before the precious Cross, * we hymn the Master Who was crucified thereon, * purifying our lips and souls at His behest; * and, praising Him, ** we are illumined with its noetic radiance.

Sweetening the bitter waters of old, * Moses delivered Israel, * using an image of the Cross; * and we, O ye faithful, * mystically and divinely tracing its image in our hearts, ** are ever saved by its might.

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the Cross, in Tone IV:

O Lord Who enabled the meek David to conquer the foreigner, ally Thyself also with our pious Orthodox hierarchs and enable them to bring down all proponents of heresy and schism with the weapon of the Cross. O Compassionate One, show forth upon us Thine ancient mercies, that they may truly know that Thou art God, and that we who set our hope on Thee may triumph, entreating Thy most pure Mother, as is our wont, that we be granted great mercy.

Great Doxology. Veneration of the precious Cross. Litanies. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from ODE III of the canon of the feast, and 4 from ODE VI of the canon of the Cross.

All the angelic captains join chorus with us today, surrounding Thy Holy Church, O Master, not physically, but spiritually. And do Thou grant us Thy peace from on high, in that Thou art most merciful.

The choir of the prophets and that of the apostles and all the choirs of the martyrs, O Savior, join chorus with us today, gazing in spirit upon Thee, the God of many names, Who art glorified by the faithful.

By David thou wast called the rich mountain, O Virgin, who received in thy womb the timeless Word of the Father Who became a little babe, and who hast given birth in the flesh unto the hypostatic Wisdom of God.

The noetic tyrant was crushed, receiving an incurable wound from the heavenly Stone, Christ our God, Who issued forth from thy womb and joined those on earth to those in heaven.

Seeing the Cross set forth today as a divine vessel, as a radiant lamp in churches, temples and cities, we hymn Him Who hath caused it to shine.

Death is slain, corruption is put to death, and the hordes of the demons flee, beholding the victorious and awesome Cross of Christ set forth today, unable to endure its touch.

Hymning Thee, God the King and Lord, in that Thou hast given us the Cross as an impregnable bulwark, we now kiss it with joy and thus escape evils.

Theotokion: Our first mother in Eden was poisoned by eating of the serpent's venom; but the Virgin, having given birth to the Author of life, hath poured forth incorruption and resurrection upon the world.

Troparion of the feast, in Tone VIII:

Looking down from on high and receiving the poor, O most merciful Master, * visit us who are afflicted by sins, ** and through the supplications of the Theotokos grant great mercy to our souls.

Glory ..., Another Troparion, in Tone IV:

O most merciful Savior, Thou sun-like Luminary: * through the light of Thine effulgence grant us discourse, * that with a pure conscience we may sing praises * on Thy supremely divine feast, * glorifying Thee, the only-begotten Son, * and the consubstantial Spirit; ** for Thou hast granted us peace and great mercy.

Both now ..., Troparion of the Cross, in Tone I:

Save O Lord Thy people * and bless Thine inheritance, * grant now unto the faithful * victory over adversaries, * and by the power of Thy Cross ** do Thou preserve Thy commonwealth.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone IV:

I have become a committer of every abomination, * O most merciful Savior, * and have fallen into the pit of despair; * yet I groan from the depths of my heart and cry out to Thee, O Word: * Hasten Thou, O Compassionate One, * and speed Thou to our aid, ** in that Thou art merciful!

Kontakion of the Cross, in Tone IV:

O Thou Who wast willingly lifted up upon the Cross, * bestow Thy compassions upon the new community named after Thee, O Christ God; * gladden by Thy power Orthodox Christians, * granting them victory over all adversaries. ** May they have as an ally the invincible trophy, the weapon of peace.

Prokeimenon, in Tone VI: Save O Lord, Thy people, * and bless Thine inheritance.

Verse: Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry; O my God, be not silent unto me.

EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, § 125 (I COR. 1: 18-24)

Brethren: The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Alleluia, in Tone I: Remember Thy congregation which Thou hast purchased from the beginning.

Verse: God is our King before the ages, He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN; §60 (JN. 19: 6-11, 13-20,25-28,30-35)

At that time, the high priests and elders took council against Jesus to put Him to death. And they delivered Him to Pilate saying: “Away with Him! away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said unto them: “Take ye Him, and crucify Him: for I find no fault in Him.” The Jews answered him: “We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.” When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and said unto

Jesus: “Whence art Thou?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then said Pilate unto Him: “Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?” Jesus answered: “Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above.” When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he said unto the Jews: “Behold your King!” But they cried out: “Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said unto them: “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered: “We have no king but Caesar.” Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led Him away. And He bearing His Cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, on either side, and Jesus in the midst. And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the Cross. And the writing was: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleo ph as, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His Mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He said unto His Mother: “Woman, behold thy son!” Then said He to the disciple: “Behold thy Mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bore record, and his record is true.

Communion Verse: The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, hath been signed upon us.

Be It Known: On this day, in monasteries, cathedrals and parish churches, the Lesser Blessing of Water is performed. This service is set forth in the Euchologion.