

Great Vespers

St Catherine Orthodox Church

Revision: Jun 29, 2026

Great Vespers (Instructions)

Preparation

The Archdiocese provides at <https://www.antiochian.org/liturgicday> the entire service of Great Vespers for Saturdays and for most festal occasions on which it might be celebrated. If desired, you can print the entire service. However, only a few things are actually needed as variables:

- The tone of the week (for the tone in which "O Lord I Have Cried" will be sung). This is optional as Tone 8 is provided in this book and can be used regardless.
- The stichera at ("O Lord I Have Cried"). These are listed in the variables sheet beginning after ("Deliver me from my persecutors..."). Also, the Doxasticon (on "Glory...") and the Theotokion (on "Both now...") are also needed. (p. 14)
- The prokeimenon, if something other than the normal one for Saturdays ("The Lord is King...").
- Whether or not there are Old Testament Readings.
- The stichera for the aposticha. Also, the Doxasticon (on "Glory...") and the Theotokion (on "Both now...") are also needed (just like the Stichera for "O Lord I Have Cried").
- The hymns for the day.

Setup

Based on the variables, the following steps should be taken during setup.

1) If using a tone other than 8 for ("O Lord, I Have Cried") on pp. 10-11, mark it one of the hymnals.

2) Place the verses for the stichera at ("O Lord, I Have Cried") in p. 13. If there are 10 stichera provided as variables (the norm for Saturday), the first stichera follows verse 10. If there are less stichera provided, they start later on the v matching verse. Also note whether or not there is a stanza between ("Glory...") and ("Both now..."). If not, ("Glory... both now...") is chanted as one verse followed by the Theotokion.

- 3) If it is not a Saturday, find the default prokeimenon for the day of the week in the hymnal and use that in place of p. 15.
- 4) If there are Old Testament readings, mark the Prophetologion for use on p. 16.
- 5) Place the verses for the aposticha in p. 26. The first stichera comes before the first verse in this book. Also note whether or not there is a stanza between ("Glory...") and ("Both now..."). If not, ("Glory... both now...") is chanted as one verse followed by the Theotokion.
- 6) Prepare for the hymns of the day on p. 29. On a normal Saturday, there will be the resurrection hymn for the tone of the week (in the hymnal) and a Theotokion after ("Glory.. both now..."). Sometimes there may be additional hymns, including one between ("Glory...") and ("Both now..."). On major feasts, the only hymn may be the hymn of the feast chanted 3 times.

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Come Let Us Worship

1

Russian
Traditional Melody

Adapted into English by
Priest Michael G. H. Gelsinger
(1890-1980)

Priest: Blessed is our God always ages of ages.

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

A - men. Come, let us worship and fall down before

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

Christ our King and our God. Come, let us worship and

fall down before Christ him - self, our King and our God.

Psalm 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly.

Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment,

Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters,

Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds,

Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire,

Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever.

The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand.

At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid.

The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them.

Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth.

He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run.

They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst.

Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice.

He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men,

To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man.

To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted.

There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them.

The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.

He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.

Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad.

Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God.

The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens.

But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening.

How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation.

So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great.

There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein.

All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it.

When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled.

Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return.

Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works.

Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being.

May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord.

O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

O our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!

The Litany of Peace

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

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God and the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For this holy house and those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For our father and Metropolitan SABA, the honorably presbytery, the diaconate in Christ, all the clergy and all the people, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For our country, its president, civil authorities, and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For this city and every city and countryside and the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For healthful seasons, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For travelers by sea, by land, and by air, the sick, the suffering, the captive, and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most [*People, quietly: "Most Holy Theotokos, save us"*] blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

People/Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: For unto Thee 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.

People/Choir: Amen.

O Lord, I Have Cried

This is usually sung in the tone of the week. Tone 8 is provided here on the following page. Sing together through "and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; hear Thou me, O Lord." Then, turn to the following page and intone the verses rotationally.

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

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

PSALM 140

99

Byzantine Tone 8

Basil Kazan
(1915 - 2001)

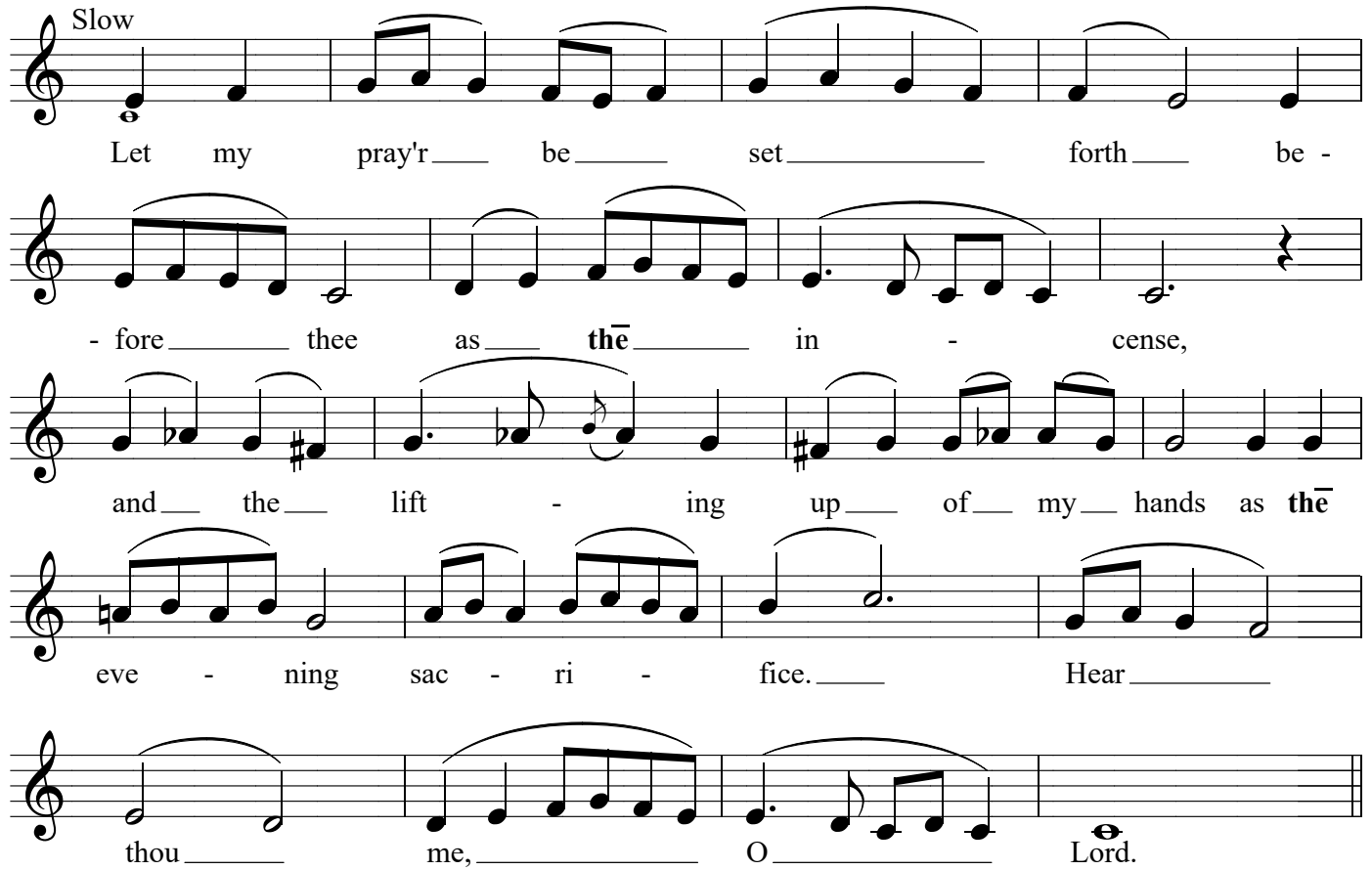
Slow

O Lord, I have cried out
un - to thee. Hear thou me. Hear
thou me, O Lord.
O Lord, I have cried out un - to thee.
Hear thou me. Give ear to the
voice of my sup - pli - ca - tion,
when I cry out un - to thee. Hear
thou me, O Lord.

100

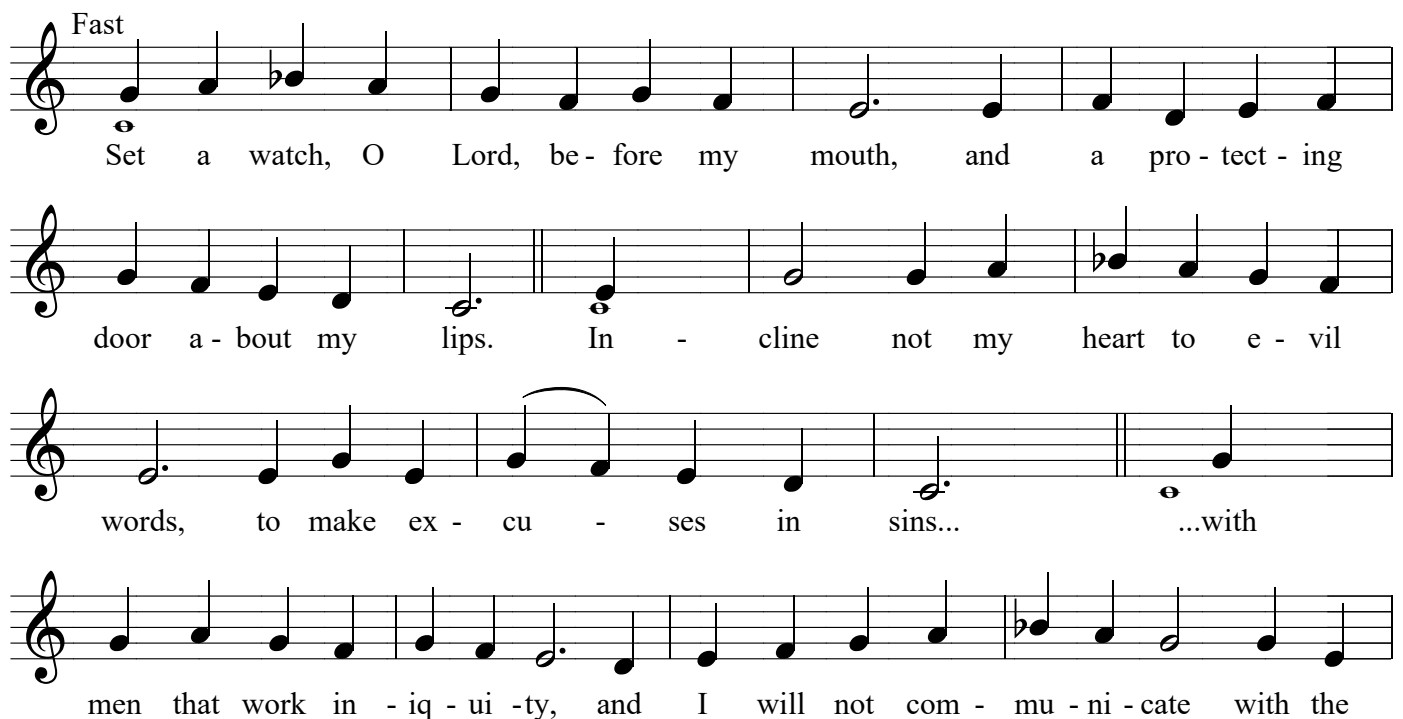
Psalm 140
Tone 8
Basil Kazan

Slow



Let my pray'r be set forth before thee as the incense,
and the lifting up of my hands as the
evening sacrifice. Hear
thou me, O Lord.

Fast



Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a protecting
door about my lips. Incline not my heart to evil
words, to make excuses in sins... with
men that work iniquity, and I will not communicate with the

Verses

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

Verses with Stichera

Note: Continue chanting rotationally. A variables sheet will list stichera. On Saturdays evenings, there are nearly always 10. On other days, there may be 8, 6, or 4. Start those after the verse matching the number.

- 10) Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.
- 9) The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.
- 8) Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.
- 7) Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.
- 6) If Thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.
- 5) Because of Thy Name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.
- 4) From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord.
- 3) For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.
- 2) Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people.
- 1) For His mercy is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

Note: There may be a "doxasticon" between "Glory" and "Both now" Otherwise, "Glory... Both now..." is chanted as one verse. Either way, the theotokion or other hymn follows "Amen."

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

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Gladsome Light

Byzantine Chant Tone 5

Antiochian Village Version
Adapted by Christopher Holwey*

Unison *G* *F*

O Glad-some Light of the ho - ly glo - ry of the im - mor - tal,
heav - en - ly, ho - ly, _____ bless - ed Fa - ther:
O _____ Je - sus _____ Christ! Now that we have come _____ to the
set - ting of the sun, _____ and be - hold the
light of eve - ning, we praise _____ God: _____ Fa - ther, Son and
Ho - ly Spir - it. For meet it is at all _____ times to
wor - ship Thee _____ with voic - es of praise, _____
O _____ Son of _____ God and Giv - er _____ of _____ Life; _____
there - fore all the world doth glo - ri - fy Thee. *F* *G*

(*Ed. Note: This translation is slightly different from the previous one. In the Greek, the words "immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed" apply to the Father, and not the Son. The proper understanding, then, is that Jesus Christ is the Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy & blessed Father, and the text and music should reflect that.)

Saturday Evening Prokeimenon

Byzantine Chant Tone 6

Antiochian Village version
Adapted by Rassem El Massih

Ison Refrain

The Lord ___ is King, and hath clothed Him-self with

6

maj - es - ty.

*Verse: The Lord is robed; He is girded with strength. **Refrain***

*Verse: For He has established the world so that it shall never be moved. **Refrain***

7

The Lord _____ is ___ King, and hath clothed Him - self with

11

maj - es - ty. _____

Readings

Readings may be appointed. If so, there are usually three Old Testament readings.

Priest/Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: *Announces the reading.*

Priest/Deacon: *Let us attend.*

Reader: *Reads or intones the appointed reading.*

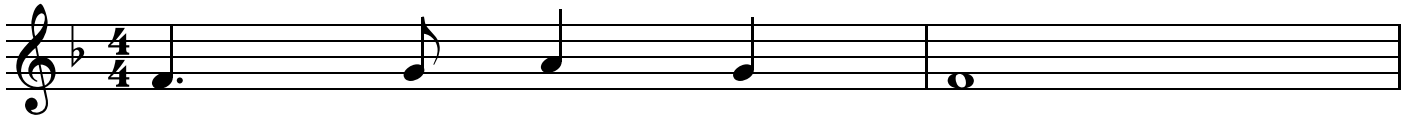
Priest: Peace be to thee that readest.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Ektenia Responses

Antiochian Village

Lord, have mercy (Odd)



Lord, have mer - cy

3 Lord, have mercy (Even)



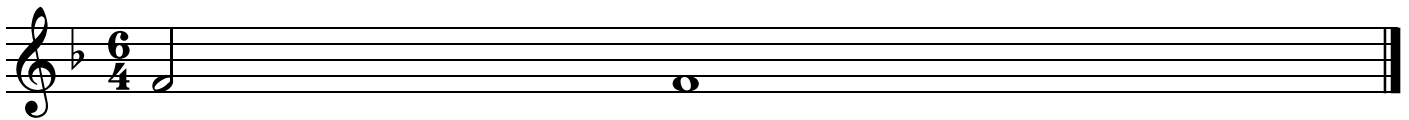
Lord, have mer - cy

5 Lord, have mercy 3x (Tone 4)



Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have _ mer - cy. Lord, _ have _ mer - cy.

8 Amen



A - men.

The Litany of Fervent Supplication

Deacon/Priest: Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind, let us say.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, we pray thee hearken and have mercy.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Again we pray for our father and Metropolitan SABA.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Again we pray for our brethren: the priests, hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, visitation, pardon and remission of sins for (the servants of God, *NN.*, and) all Orthodox Christians of true worship, who live and dwell in this community.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church (and for the servants of God, *NN.*,) and all of our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: Again we pray for those who bear fruit and do good works in this holy and allvenerable temple, those who serve and those who sing and all the people here present, who await thy great and rich mercy.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People/Choir: Amen.

Evening Prayer

People: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy statutes.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Litany of Supplication

Deacon/Priest: Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

People/Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon/Priest: That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

People/Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

People/Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

People/Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: All things good and profitable for our souls and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

People/Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

People/Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

People/Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon/Priest: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most [*People, quietly: "Most Holy Theotokos, save us"*] blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves

and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

People/Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: For thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

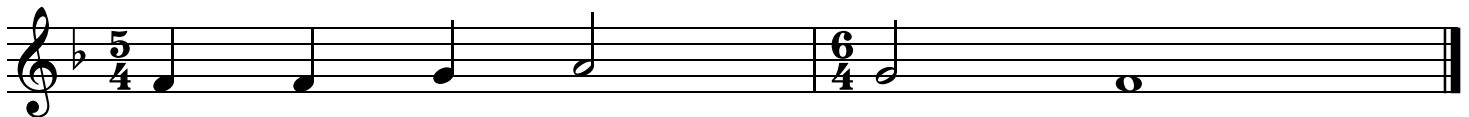
People/Choir: Amen.

The Peace

(Vespers)

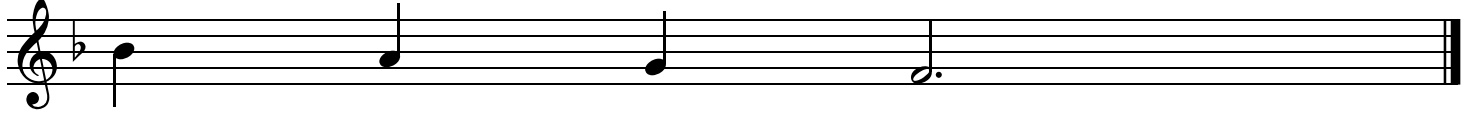
Priest: Peace be to all

$\text{♩} = 120$



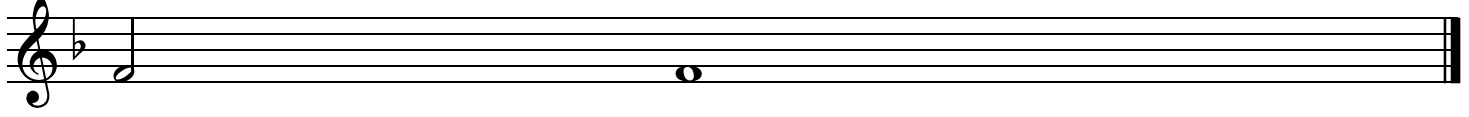
And to thy spi - rit.

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



To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: Blessed and glorified be the might of Thy kingdom: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.



A - men.

NOTE: IF THE SERVICE OF LITIA AND ARTOKLASIA IS TO BE DONE, IT IS INSERTED HERE!

Aposticha

Note: Chant rotationally. A variables sheet will list stichera. On Saturdays evenings, the following verses are used. Otherwise, different ones may be appointed.

Note: The first stichera comes before the first verse.

1) The Lord is King, and hath clothed Himself with majesty. The Lord is robed; He is girded with strength.

2) For He has established the world so that it shall never be moved.

3) Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore.

Note: There may be a "doxasticon" between "Glory" and "Both now" Otherwise, "Glory... Both now..." is chanted as one verse. Either way, the theotokion or other hymn follows "Amen."

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

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

St. Simeon's Prayer

159-A

Byzantine Tone 6

Basil Kazan
(1915 - 2001)

Ison Lord, now let - test thou thy serv - vant de - part in
peace ac - cord - ing to thy word, for mine eyes have
seen thy sal - va - tion, which thou hast pre -
pared be - fore the face of all peo - ple,
a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the
glo - ry of thy peo - ple Is - ra - el.

To "Holy God..." --> pg. 160

Trisagion Prayers

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

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

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

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Priest: For Thine 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.

Amen.

Hymns of the Day

Sing the appropriate hymns of the day. The usual Saturday pattern follows.

Resurrection Hymn for the Tone of the Week

Note: There may be a festal between "Glory" and "Both now" Otherwise, "Glory... Both now..." is chanted as one verse. Either way, the theotokion or other hymn follows "Amen."

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

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Dismissal

Deacon/Priest: Wisdom!

People/Choir: Father, bless.

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

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

Priest: Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

People/Choir: More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without corruption didst bear God the Word and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

People/Choir: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Father, bless.

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

People/Choir: Amen.