

HOLY AND GREAT SATURDAY

MATTINS

About the seventh hour of the night (one o'clock in the morning) we begin Mattins in the usual way. After the Six Psalms and the Great Litany, we sing The Lord is God, with the following troparia:

TONE TWO

Noble Joseph, taking down Thy most pure body from the Tree, wrapped it in clean linen with sweet spices, and he laid it in a new tomb.

Glory be to the Father...

Going down to death, O Life immortal, Thou hast slain hell with the dazzling light of Thy divinity. And when Thou hast raised up the dead from their dwelling place beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven cried aloud: 'Giver of Life, O Christ our God, glory to Thee.'

Both now....

The Angel stood by the tomb, and to the women bearing spices he cried aloud: 'Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption.'

During the singing of these troparia the clergy come out from the sanctuary and stand in front of the Epitaphion. The senior priest, accompanied by the deacon, or else the deacon alone, censes the Epitaphion from the four sides and then the sanctuary and whole church. Then the following troparia, known as 'The Praises', are sung between the verses of Psalm 118.

The Praises are divided into three sections or staseis:

FIRST STASIS

TONE FIVE

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

Ÿ. Blessed art those that are blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Thou who art the Life wast laid in a tomb, O Christ; and the hosts of angels were amazed and glorified Thy self-abasement.

Ÿ. Blessed are they that search out His testimonies, and seek Him with their whole heart.

O Life, how canst Thou die? How canst Thou dwell in a tomb? Yet Thou dost destroy death's kingdom and raise the dead from hell.

Ÿ. For they that work wickedness have not walked in His ways.

We magnify Thee, Jesus our King: we honour Thy burial and Thy sufferings, whereby Thou hast saved us from corruption.

Ÿ. Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently.

O Jesus, King of all, who hast set measures to the earth, Thou dost go this day to dwell in a narrow grave, raising up the dead from their tombs.

Ÿ. O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!

O Jesus, my Christ and King of all, why hast Thou come to those in hell? Is it to set free the race of mortal men?

Ÿ. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I give heed unto all Thy commandments.

The Master of all is seen lying dead, and in a new tomb He is laid, who empties the tombs of the dead.

Ÿ. I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned the judgements of Thy righteousness.

Thou who art Life wast laid in a tomb, O Christ: by Thy death Thou hast destroyed death and art become a fountain of life for the world.

Ÿ. I will keep Thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

Numbered with the transgressors, O Christ, Thou dost free us all from the guilt brought upon us of old by the deceiver.

Ÿ. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By keeping Thy words.

Fairer in His beauty than all mortal men, He appears now as a corpse without form or comeliness, He who has made beautiful the nature of all things.

Ÿ. With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy commandments.

How could hell endure Thy coming, O Saviour? Was it not shattered and struck blind by the dazzling radiance of Thy light?

Ÿ. Thy words have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.

O Jesus, my sweetness and light of salvation, how art Thou hidden in a dark tomb? O forbearance ineffable, beyond all words!

Ÿ. Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The spiritual powers and the angelic hosts are amazed, O Christ, at the mystery of Thy burial past utterance and speech.

Ÿ. With my lips have I declared all the judgements of Thy mouth.

O strange wonder, new to man! He who granted me the breath of life is carried lifeless in Joseph's hands to burial.

Ÿ. I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

Thou hast gone down into the tomb, O Christ, yet wast Thou never parted from Thy Father's side. O marvellous wonder!

Ÿ. I will meditate on Thy precepts, and I will understand Thy ways.

Though Thou wast shut within the narrowest of sepulchres, O Jesus, all creation knew Thee as true King of heaven and earth.

Ÿ. My study shall be in Thy statutes: I will not forget Thy words.

When Thou wast laid in a tomb, O Christ the Creator, the foundations of hell were shaken and the graves of mortal men were opened.

Ÿ. O reward Thy servant: give me life, and I shall keep Thy words.

He who holds the earth in the hollow of His hand is held fast by the earth; put to death according to the flesh, He delivers the dead from the grasping hand of hell.

Ÿ. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things of Thy law.

O Saviour, my Life, dying Thou hast gone to dwell among the dead: yet Thou hast shattered the bars of hell and arisen from corruption.

Ÿ. I am but a sojourner upon the earth: hide not Thy commandments from me.

The flesh of God is hidden now beneath the earth, like a candle underneath a bushel, and it drives away the darkness in hell.

Ÿ. My soul is consumed with the longing that it has for Thy judgements at all times.

The multitude of the heavenly powers makes haste with Joseph and Nicodemus, and within a narrow sepulchre they enclose Thee whom nothing can contain.

Ÿ. Thou hast rebuked the proud: and cursed are they that do err from Thy commandments.

With Thine own consent slain and laid beneath the earth, O my Jesus, Fountain of Life, Thou hast brought me back to life when I was dead through bitter sin.

Ÿ. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have sought Thy testimonies.

The whole creation was altered by Thy Passion: for all things suffered with Thee, knowing, O Word, that Thou holdest all in unity.

Ÿ. Princes also did sit and speak against me: but Thy servant did meditate on Thy statutes.

All-devouring hell received within himself the Rock of Life, and cast forth all the dead that he had swallowed since the beginning of the world.

Ÿ. Thy testimonies also are my study: and Thy statutes are my counsellors.

Thou wast laid in a new tomb, O Christ, and hast made new the nature of mortal man, rising from the dead by Thy divine power.

Ÿ. My soul has cleaved unto the dust: quicken Thou me according to Thy word.

To earth hast Thou come down, O Master, to save Adam: and not finding him on earth, Thou hast descended into hell, seeking him there.

Ÿ. I have declared my ways, and Thou heardest me: teach me Thy statutes.

The whole earth quaked with fear, O Word, and the daystar hid its rays, when Thy great Light was hidden in the earth.

Ÿ. Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts: so shall I talk of Thy wondrous works.

Willingly Thou diest as a mortal man, O Saviour, but as God Thou dost raise up the dead from the grave and from the depths of sin.

Ÿ. My soul is grown drowsy from heaviness: strengthen me with Thy words.

Tears of lamentation the pure Virgin shed over Thee, Jesus, and with a mother's grief she cried: 'How shall I bury Thee, my Son?'

Ÿ. Remove from me the way of lying: and take pity on me with Thy law.

Buried in the earth like a grain of wheat, Thou hast yielded a rich harvest, raising to life the mortal sons of Adam.

Ÿ. I have chosen the way of truth: Thy judgements have I not forgotten.

Now art Thou hidden like the setting sun beneath the earth and covered by the night of death: but, O Saviour, rise in brighter dawn.

Ÿ. I have stuck unto Thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.

As the moon hides the circle of the sun, O Saviour, now the grave has hidden Thee, bodily eclipsed in death.

Ÿ. I have run the way of Thy commandments: for Thou hast enlarged my heart.

Christ the Life, by tasting death, has delivered mortal men from death, and now gives life to all.

Ÿ. Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes; and I shall seek it always.

Adam was slain of old through envy, but by Thy dying Thou hast brought him back to life, O Saviour, revealed in the flesh as the new Adam.

Ψ. Give me understanding, and I shall seek Thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

When the ranks of angels saw Thee, O Saviour, laid out dead for our sake, they were filled with wonder and veiled their faces with their wings.

Ψ. Make me to go in the path of Thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

Taking Thee down dead from the Tree, O Word, Joseph now has laid Thee in a tomb: but rise up as God to save us all.

Ψ. Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Thou art the Joy of the angels, O Saviour, but now Thou art become the cause of their grief, as they see Thee in the flesh a lifeless corpse.

Ψ. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken Thou me in Thy way.

Uplifted on the Cross, Thou hast uplifted with Thyself all living men; and then descending beneath the earth, Thou raisest all that lie buried there.

Ψ. Stablish Thy word in Thy servant, that I may fear Thee.

As a lion hast Thou fallen asleep in the flesh, O Saviour, and as a young lion hast Thou risen from the dead, putting off the old age of the flesh.

Ψ. Take away my reproach which I fear: for Thy judgements are good.

O Thou who hast fashioned Eve from Adam's side, Thy side was pierced and from it flowed streams of cleansing.

Ψ. Behold, I have longed after Thy precepts: quicken me in Thy righteousness.

Of old the lamb was sacrificed in secret; but Thou, longsuffering Saviour, wast sacrificed beneath the open sky and hast cleansed the whole creation.

Ψ. Let Thy mercy come also upon me, O Lord, even Thy salvation, according to Thy word.

Who can describe this strange and terrible thing? The Lord of Creation today accepts the Passion and dies for our sake.

Ψ. So shall I give an answer to them that reproach me: for I trust in Thy word.

'How do we see the Giver of Life now dead?' the angels cried in amazement. 'How is God enclosed within a tomb?'

Ψ. And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in Thy judgements.

Pierced by a spear, O Saviour, from Thy side Thou pourest out life upon Eve, the mother of all the living, who banished me from life; and Thou quickenest me also with her.

Ψ. So shall I keep Thy law continually for ever and ever.

Stretched out upon the Wood, Thou hast drawn mortal men to unity; pierced in Thy life-giving side, O Jesus, Thou art become a fountain of forgiveness unto all.

Ÿ. And I walked at liberty: for I have sought Thy precepts.

With fear and reverence noble Joseph lays Thee out for burial as a corpse, O Saviour, and he looks with wonder on Thy dread form.

Ÿ. I spoke of Thy testimonies also before kings, and was not ashamed.

Of Thine own will descending as one dead beneath the earth, O Jesus, Thou ledest up the fallen from earth to heaven.

Ÿ. And my study was in Thy commandments, which I have loved exceedingly.

Dead in outward appearance, yet alive as God, O Jesus, Thou ledest up the fallen from earth to heaven.

Ÿ. My hands also have I lifted up unto Thy commandments, which I have loved.

Dead in outward appearance, yet alive as God, Thou hast restored dead mortals to life and slain him that slew me.

Ÿ. And I have meditated in Thy statutes.

How great the joy, how full the gladness, that Thou hast brought to those in hell, shining as lightning in its gloomy depths.

Ÿ. Remember Thy words unto Thy servant, in which Thou hast caused me to hope.

I venerate Thy Passion, I sing the praises of Thy burial, and I magnify Thy power, O loving Lord: through them I am set free from corrupting passions.

Ÿ. This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy word has quickened me.

A sword was sharpened against Thee, O Christ: but the sword of the strong was blunted, and the sword that guards Eden was turned back.

Ÿ. The proud have transgressed exceedingly: yet have I not turned aside from Thy law.

The Ewe, seeing her Lamb slaughtered, was pierced with anguish: and she cried aloud in grief, calling the flock to lament with her.

Ÿ. I remembered Thy judgements of old, O Lord; and was comforted.

Though Thou art buried in a grave, though Thou goest down to hell, O Saviour Christ, yet hast Thou emptied the graves and stripped hell naked.

Ÿ. Discouragement has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.

Willingly, O Saviour, Thou hast gone down beneath the earth, and Thou hast restored the dead to life, leading them back to the glory of the Father.

Ÿ. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

One of the Trinity endures a shameful death in the flesh on our account; the sun trembles and the earth quakes.

Ÿ. I have remembered Thy Name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept Thy law.

Offspring from a bitter source, the children of the tribe of Judah have cast into a pit Jesus who fed them with manna.

Ÿ. This has been my reward, because I sought Thy precepts.

The Judge stood as one accused before the judgement-seat of Pilate, and He was condemned to an unjust death upon the wood of the Cross.

Ÿ. Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep Thy law.

O arrogant Israel, O people guilty of blood, why hast thou set free Barabbas but delivered the Saviour to be crucified?

Ÿ. I entreated Thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to Thy word.

With Thy hand Thou hast fashioned Adam from the earth; and for his sake Thou hast become by nature man and wast of Thine own will crucified.

Ÿ. I thought on Thy ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.

In obedience to Thine own Father, O Word, Thou hast descended to dread hell and raised up the race of mortal men.

Ÿ. I made ready, and I was not troubled: that I might keep Thy commandments.

'Woe is me, Light of the world! Woe is me, my Light! Jesus, my heart's desire!' cried the Virgin in her bitter grief.

Ÿ. The cords of the wicked have entangled me: but I have not forgotten Thy law.

O bloodthirsty people, jealous and vengeful! May the very grave-clothes and the napkin put you to shame at Christ's Resurrection.

Ÿ. At midnight I rose to give thanks unto Thee because of the judgements of Thy righteousness.

Come, evil disciple, murderer of thy Lord, and show me the manner of thy wickedness, how thou hast become Christ's betrayer.

Ÿ. I am a companion of all them that fear Thee and keep Thy commandments.

O blind fool, utterly wicked, implacable in hatred, thou dost make a pretence of love for men, yet thou hast sold for money the sweet Myrrh.

Ÿ. The earth, O Lord, is full of Thy mercy: teach me Thy statutes.

What price hast thou received for the heavenly Myrrh? What wast thou given in exchange for Him who is precious? Thou hast gained folly and madness, O accursed Satan.

Ÿ. Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according unto Thy word.

If thou lovest the poor and dost grieve over the ointment emptied out in cleansing propitiation for a soul, how canst thou sell the Giver of Light for gold?

Ÿ. Teach me goodness, discipline and knowledge: for I have believed in Thy commandments.

‘O my God and Word, my Joy, how shall I endure Thy three days in the tomb? Now is my heart torn in pieces by a mother’s grief.’

Ÿ. Before I was humbled I went astray: but now have I kept Thy word.

‘Who will give me water and springs of tears,’ cried the Virgin Bride of God, ‘that I may weep for my sweet Jesus?’

Ÿ. Thou art good, O Lord: in Thy goodness teach me Thy statutes.

‘O hills and valleys, the multitude of men, and all creation, weep and lament with me, the Mother of our God.’

Ÿ. The injustice of the proud is multiplied against me: but I will seek Thy commandments with my whole heart.

‘When shall I see Thee, Saviour, Light eternal, the joy and gladness of my heart?’ cried the Virgin in her bitter grief.

Ÿ. Their heart is curdled like milk; but my study has been in Thy law.

Thy side was pierced, O Saviour, like the rock of flint in the wilderness; but Thou hast poured forth a stream of living water, for Thou art the Fount of Life.

Ÿ. It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me: that I might learn Thy statutes.

Out of Thy side, as from a single source, there flows a double stream; and drinking from it we gain immortal life.

The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Of Thine own will, O Word, Thou wast laid dead in the tomb: yet dost Thou live, my Saviour, and, as Thou hast foretold, Thou shalt raise up mortal men by Thy Resurrection.

Glory be to the Father...

O Word and God of all, in our hymns we praise Thee with the Father and Thy Holy Spirit, and we glorify Thy divine burial.

Both now...

Theotokion

We bless thee, O pure Theotokos, and with faith we honour the three-day burial of thy Son and our God.

And we repeat the first troparion:

Thou who art Life wast laid in a tomb, O Christ, and the hosts of angels were amazed and glorified Thy self-abasement.

Small Litany, with the exclamation: For blessed is Thy Name and glorified is Thy Kingdom, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

At the beginning of the second stasis, the priest or deacon censes the Epitaphion from the four sides, the ikonostasis and the people.

SECOND STASIS

TONE FIVE

It is right to magnify Thee, Giver of Life, who hast stretched out Thine arms upon the Cross and broken the power of the enemy.

Ψ. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, and I shall learn Thy commandments.

It is right to magnify Thee, Creator of all, for through Thy Passion we are freed from passions and corruption.

Ψ. They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me: because I have hoped in Thy words.

The earth trembled with fear, O Saviour Christ, and the sun hid itself, seeing Thee, the Light that knows no evening, sinking in Thy body down into the tomb.

Ψ. I know, O Lord, that Thy judgements are right, and that with truth Thou hast humbled me.

Thou hast slept, O Christ, a life-giving sleep in the tomb, and aroused mankind from the heavy slumber of sin.

Ψ. O let Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy word unto Thy servant.

‘Alone among women without pain I bore Thee, my Child’, said the Holy Virgin. ‘But now at Thy Passion I suffer unbearable pain.’

Ψ. Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, and I shall live: for Thy law is my study.

The seraphim, O Saviour, beheld Thee on high, united inseparably with the Father, yet they saw Thee below lying dead in the tomb; and they trembled with fear.

Ψ. Let the proud be ashamed, for they have transgressed against me unjustly: but I will meditate on Thy commandments.

The veil of the temple is rent in twain at Thy Crucifixion, O Word, and the lights of heaven hide their radiance, when Thou, the Sun, art hidden beneath the earth.

Ψ. Let those that fear Thee turn unto me, and those that know Thy testimonies.

He who at the beginning by His will alone set the earth upon its course, now descends dead beneath the earth. Tremble, O heaven, at this sight.

Ψ. Let my heart be blameless in Thy statutes: that I be not ashamed.

O Thou who hast fashioned Adam with Thine own hand, Thou hast gone down beneath the earth, to raise up fallen men by Thine almighty power.

Ψ. My soul faints for Thy salvation: and I have hoped in Thy words.

Come, and as the women bearing myrrh let us sing a holy lament to the dead Christ, that like them we too may hear Him say 'Rejoice!'

Ψ. Mine eyes have grown dim with waiting for Thy word; they say: when wilt Thou comfort me?

Thou art in very truth, O Word, the myrrh that never fails: yet the women with their spices brought myrrh to Thee, the living God, to anoint Thee as a corpse.

Ψ. For I am become like a wineskin in the frost; yet have I not forgotten Thy statutes.

Through Thy burial, O Christ, Thou dost destroy the palaces of hell: by Thy death Thou slayest death, and dost deliver from corruption the children of the earth.

Ψ. How many are the days of Thy servant? When wilt Thou execute judgement on them that persecute me?

Source of the river of life, the Wisdom of God descends into the tomb and gives life to all those in the depths of hell.

Ψ. The transgressors told me idle tales, which are not after Thy law, O Lord.

'To renew the broken nature of mortal men, willingly have I been wounded in the flesh by death. O Mother, do not strike thy breast in grief.'

Ψ. All Thy commandments are true: they persecute me wrongfully; help Thou me.

O Morning Star of righteousness, Thou art gone down beneath the earth and hast raised up the dead as if from sleep, dispersing all the darkness of hell.

Ψ. They had almost made an end of me upon earth; but I forsook not Thy commandments.

The life-giving Seed, twofold in nature, today is sown with tears in the furrows of the earth; but springing up He will bring joy to the world.

Ÿ. Quicken me according to Thy mercy; so shall I keep the testimonies of Thy mouth.

Adam was afraid when God walked in Paradise, but now he rejoices when God descends to hell. Then he fell, but now he is raised up.

Ÿ. For ever, O Lord, Thy word endures in heaven.

Seeing Thy body laid in the tomb, O Christ, Thy Mother brings Thee the offering of her tears, and she says: 'Arise, my Child, as Thou hast foretold.'

Ÿ. Thy truth also remains from one generation to another: Thou hast established the earth, and it abides.

Joseph hid Thee reverently in a new tomb, O Saviour, and lamenting sang to Thee a funeral hymn fitting for God.

Ÿ. The day continues according to Thine ordinance: for all things are Thy servants.

Seeing Thee, O Word, pierced with nails upon the Cross, Thy Mother was wounded in her soul with the nails and arrows of bitter grief.

Ÿ. Unless Thy law had been my study, I should have perished in my humiliation.

Thy Mother saw Thee drink the bitter vinegar, O Sweetness of the world, and her cheeks were wet with bitter tears.

Ÿ. I will never forget Thy precepts: for with them Thou hast quickened me.

'I am grievously wounded and my heart is torn, O Word, as I behold Thee slain unjustly', said the All-pure Virgin weeping.

Ÿ. I am Thine, save me; for I have sought Thy precepts.

'How shall I close Thy sweet eyes and Thy lips, O Word? And how shall I lay Thee out for burial as a corpse?' cried Joseph trembling.

Ÿ. Sinners have waited for me to destroy me: but I have understood Thy testimonies.

Joseph and Nicodemus now sing hymns of burial to the dead Christ; and with them sing the seraphim.

Ÿ. I have seen the outcome of all perfection: but Thy commandment is exceeding broad.

O Saviour, Sun of Righteousness, Thou dost set beneath the earth: therefore the Moon, Thy Mother, is eclipsed in grief, seeing Thee no more.

Ÿ. O how I have loved Thy law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day.

Hell trembled, O Saviour, when he saw Thee, the Giver of Life, despoiling him of his wealth and raising up the dead from every age.

Ÿ. Thou through Thy commandment hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for it is mine for ever.

After the night the sun shines out again in brightness; and after death do Thou, O Word, arise once more and shine in Thy glory, as a bridegroom coming from his chamber.

Ÿ. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation.

When she received Thee in her bosom, O Creator and Saviour, the earth shook in fear, and with her quaking she awoke the dead.

Ÿ. I understand more than my elders, because I have sought Thy commandments.

In a new and strange way Nicodemus and noble Joseph buried Thee with spices, and they cried aloud: 'Tremble, all the earth!'

Ÿ. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy words.

Thou hast gone down beneath the earth, O Creator of light, and with Thee the sun's light has also set; creation is seized with trembling and proclaims Thee the Maker of all.

Ÿ. I have not departed from Thy judgements: for Thou hast taught me.

A stone hewn from the rock covers the Cornerstone; and a mortal man now buries God in the grave as one dead. Tremble, O earth!

Ÿ. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

'Behold the disciple whom Thou hast loved and Thine own Mother, O my sweetest Child, and do Thou speak to them', cried the pure Virgin weeping.

Ÿ. Through Thy commandments I have gained understanding: therefore have I hated every evil way.

Since Thou art Life-giver, O Word, when stretched out upon the Cross, Thou hast not slain the Jews but raised their forefathers from the dead.

Ÿ. Thy law is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

At Thy Passion, O Word, there was neither form nor beauty in Thee: but Thou hast risen in glory, and with Thy divine light Thou hast given beauty to mortal men.

Ÿ. I have sworn, and am steadfastly purposed, that I will keep the judgements of Thy righteousness.

Daystar without evening, Thou hast gone down in the flesh beneath the earth; and the sun grew dark at height of noon-day, for it could not bear to look upon Thee.

Ÿ. I have been very greatly humbled: quicken me, O Lord, according unto Thy word.

The sun and moon grew dark together, O Saviour, like faithful servants clothed in black robes of mourning.

Ÿ. Accept, I beseech Thee, the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me Thy judgements.

‘The centurion knew Thee to be God, though Thou wast dead. How, then, my God, shall I touch Thee with my hands? I am afraid’, cried Joseph.

Ÿ. My soul is continually in Thy hands: yet have I not forgotten Thy law.

Adam slept, and from his side there came death; now Thou dost sleep, O Word of God, and from Thy side there flows a fountain of life for the world.

Ÿ. Sinners have laid a snare for me: yet have I not gone astray from Thy commandments.

Thou hast slept a little while, and brought the dead to life; Thou hast arisen, O loving Lord, and raised up those that from the beginning of time had fallen asleep.

Ÿ. Thy testimonies have I received as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

O life-giving Vine, Thou wast lifted up from the earth, yet hast Thou poured out the wine of salvation. I glorify Thy Passion and Thy Cross.

Ÿ. I have inclined my heart to perform Thy statutes: for therein is an everlasting reward.

When the chief captains of the heavenly hosts saw Thee, Saviour, stripped, bloodstained and condemned, how could they bear the boldness of Thy crucifiers?

Ÿ. I have hated transgressors: but Thy law have I loved.

Perverse and crooked people of the Hebrews, ye knew how the temple would be raised again: why then did ye condemn Christ?

Ÿ. Thou art my helper and defender: I have hoped in Thy words.

In a robe of mockery ye clothe Him who ordered all things, who adorned the heavens with stars and the earth with wonders.

Ÿ. Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will seek the commandments of my God.

Wounded in Thy side, O Word, through the life-giving drops of Thy blood as the pelican Thou hast restored Thy dead children to life.

Ÿ. Uphold me according unto Thy word, and give me life: and turn me not away in shame from mine expectation.

Of old Joshua made the sun stand still, as he smote the heathen tribes; but Thou hast blotted out its light, whilst casting down the prince of darkness.

Ÿ. Help me, and I shall be saved: and my study shall be ever in Thy statutes.

Without leaving Thy Father's side, O merciful Christ, Thou hast consented in Thy love to become a mortal man, and Thou hast gone down to hell.

Ÿ. Thou hast brought to nothing all them that depart from Thy statutes: for their inward thought is unrighteous.

He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross. As a lifeless corpse He is laid in the earth, and it quakes in terror, unable to endure His presence.

Ÿ. I have regarded all the wicked of the earth as transgressors: therefore I love Thy testimonies.

'Woe is me, my Son!' laments the Virgin. 'I see Thee now condemned upon the Cross, whom I had hoped to see enthroned as King.'

Ÿ. Nail my flesh with the fear of Thee: for I am afraid of Thy judgements.

'Such were the tidings Gabriel brought me when he flew down from heaven: for he said that the Kingdom of my Son Jesus would be eternal.'

Ÿ. I have done judgement and justice: O give me not over unto mine oppressors.

'Alas! the prophecy of Simeon has been fulfilled: for Thy sword has pierced my heart, Emmanuel.'

Ÿ. Be surety for Thy servant for good: let not the proud accuse me falsely.

Be ashamed, O Jews, for the Life-giver raised your dead, yet ye slew Him out of envy.

Ÿ. Mine eyes have failed with waiting for Thy salvation, and for the word of Thy righteousness.

Seeing Thee, my Christ, the Light invisible, hidden lifeless in the tomb, the sun trembled and darkened its light.

Ÿ. Deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy, and teach me Thy statutes.

Thine all-blameless Mother wept bitterly, O Word, when she beheld Thee in the grave, God ineffable and without beginning.

Ÿ. I am Thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies.

Thine undefiled Mother, seeing Thy death, O Christ, cried to Thee in bitter sorrow: 'Tarry not, O Life, among the dead.'

Ψ. It is time for the Lord to act: for they have made void Thy law.
Cruel hell trembled when he saw Thee, O immortal Sun of glory, and in haste he yielded up his prisoners.

Ψ. Therefore have I loved Thy commandments above gold or topaz.
Great and fearful is the sight now before our eyes, O Saviour: for of His own will the Cause of life submits to death, that He may give life to all.

Ψ. Therefore I walked uprightly according unto all Thy commandments: and I hated every evil way.

Thy side is pierced, O Master, and Thy hands are transfixed with nails; so Thou healest the wound of our first parents and the sinful greed of their hands.

Ψ. Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore has my soul sought them.
Once they wept in every house for Rachel's child; and now the company of Christ's disciples with His Mother lament for the Virgin's Son.

Ψ. The revelation of Thy words shall give light and understanding unto the simple.

With their hands they struck Christ in the face, though He it was who formed man with His hand and crushed the teeth of the beast.

Ψ. I opened my mouth, and drew in my breath: for I longed for Thy commandments.

In our hymns, O Christ, with all the faithful we worship now Thy Crucifixion and Thy Sepulchre, for by Thy burial we are set free from death.

Glory be to the Father...

O God without beginning, Word coeternal, and Holy Spirit, in Thy love strengthen the power of our rulers against their enemies.

Both now....

Theotokion

O Virgin pure and undefiled, who hast given birth to our Life, bring to an end the scandals of the Church and in thy love grant her peace.

And we repeat the first troparion of the second stasis:

It is right to magnify Thee, Giver of Life, who hast stretched Thine arms upon the Cross and broken the power of the enemy.

Small Litany, with the exclamation: For holy art Thou, our God, who dost rest upon the glorious throne of the cherubim, and to Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thine eternal Father and Thy most holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

As we begin the third stasis, the priest or deacon once more censes the Epitaphion, the ikonostasis and the people.

THIRD STASIS

TONE THREE

Every generation, O my Christ, offers praises at Thy burial.

Ÿ. Look Thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, according to the judgement of those that love Thy Name.

Taking Thee down from the Tree, Joseph of Arimathaea lays Thee in a sepulchre.

Ÿ. Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Providently bringing Thee sweet spices, O my Christ, the Myrrhbearers drew near.

Ÿ. Deliver me from the false accusation of men: so will I keep Thy commandments.

Come, and with the whole creation let us offer a funeral hymn to the Creator.

Ÿ. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and teach me Thy statutes.

Understanding what we do, with the Myrrhbearers let us all anoint the Living as a corpse.

Ÿ. Rivers of water have run down from mine eyes, because I kept not Thy law. O thrice-blessed Joseph, bury the body of Christ, the Giver of Life.

Ÿ. Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgements.

Those He fed with manna have lifted up their heel against their Benefactor.

Ÿ. Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

Those He fed with manna offer to the Saviour vinegar and gall.

Ÿ. My zeal has consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten Thy words.

O the folly of those who killed the prophets and slew Christ!

Ÿ. Thy word is tried in the fire to the uttermost: therefore has Thy servant loved it.

Like a foolish servant, the disciple has betrayed the Abyss of Wisdom.

Ÿ. I am young and despised: yet have I not forgotten Thy statutes.

Judas the traitor has sold his Deliverer and himself become a captive.

Ÿ. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth.

As Solomon said, the mouth of the transgressing Hebrews is a deep pit.

Ψ. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet Thy commandments are my study.

In the crooked paths of the transgressing Hebrews there are thorns and snares.

Ψ. The righteousness of Thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

Joseph and Nicodemus bury the Creator with the honours that befit the dead.

Ψ. I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will seek Thy statutes. Life-giver and Saviour, Thou hast destroyed hell: to Thy power be glory!

Ψ. I cried unto Thee; save me, and I shall keep Thy testimonies.

When she saw Thee lying dead, O Word, the all-pure Virgin wept with a mother's grief.

Ψ. I rose up before it was dawn, and cried: I have hoped in Thy word.

'O my sweet springtime, O my sweetest Child, where has all Thy beauty gone?'

Ψ. Mine eyes woke before the morning: that I might meditate in Thy words.

When Thou, O Word, wast dead, Thine all-pure Mother raised a lamentation for Thee.

Ψ. Hear my voice according unto Thy loving-kindness, O Lord: quicken me according to Thy judgement.

The women came with myrrh to anoint Christ, the Myrrh of God.

Ψ. They draw nigh that persecute me unlawfully: they are far from Thy Law.

By dying, O my God, Thou putttest death to death through Thy divine power.

Ψ. Thou art near, O Lord; and all Thy ways are truth.

The deceiver is deceived, and those he misled are set free by Thy wisdom, O my God.

Ψ. Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them for ever.

The traitor was cast down to the depths of hell, and to the pit of destruction.

Ψ. Behold my humiliation, and deliver me: for I have not forgotten Thy law.

Thorns and snares beset the path of Judas the foolish and the thrice-wretched.

Ψ. Judge my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to Thy word.

All that crucified Thee shall be destroyed together, O Word, Thou Son of God and King of all.

Ψ. Salvation is far from the wicked: for they have not sought Thy statutes.

In the pit of destruction shall all the men of blood be destroyed together.

Ÿ. Many are Thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to Thy judgement.

O Son of God and King of all, my God and my Creator, how hast Thou accepted suffering?

Ÿ. Many are they that persecute and afflict me: yet have I not turned aside from Thy testimonies.

As the mother of a foal, the Virgin gazed on Thee in grief when she saw Thee hanging on the Tree.

Ÿ. I beheld the foolish and was grieved; because they kept not Thy words.
Joseph and Nicodemus bury the body that is the Source of life.

Ÿ. See how I have loved Thy commandments: quicken me, O Lord, in Thy mercy.

Pierced to the heart, the Virgin shed warm tears and cried aloud.

Ÿ. The beginning of Thy words is truth: and every one of Thy righteous judgements endures for ever.

'O Light of mine eyes, my sweetest Child, how art Thou hidden now in the sepulchre?'

Ÿ. Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart stands in awe of Thy words.

'Weep not, O Mother, for I suffer this to set at liberty Adam and Eve.'

Ÿ. I will rejoice at Thy words, as one that finds great spoil.

'O my Son, I glorify Thy supreme, compassion, that causes Thee to suffer so.'

Ÿ. I have hated and abhorred injustice: but Thy law have I loved.

Thou hast drunk vinegar and gall, in Thy compassion, to loose us from the guilt of the forbidden fruit.

Ÿ. Seven times a day have I praised Thee because of the judgements of Thy righteousness.

Thou art nailed upon the Cross, who of old hast sheltered Thy people with a pillar of cloud.

Ÿ. Great peace have they that love Thy law: and for them there is no stumbling-block.

The women bearing myrrh came, O Saviour, to Thy tomb and offered Thee sweet spices.

Ÿ. Lord, I have looked for Thy salvation, and loved Thy commandments.

Arise, O merciful Lord, and raise us from the depths of hell.

Ψ. My soul has kept Thy testimonies: and loved them exceedingly.
'Arise, O Giver of Life', the Mother who bore Thee said with tears.

Ψ. I have kept Thy commandments and Thy testimonies: for all my ways are before Thee, O Lord.

Make haste to arise, O Word, and take away the sorrow of Thy Virgin Mother.

Ψ. Let my prayer draw near to Thee, O Lord; give me understanding according to Thy word.

All the powers of heaven were filled with fear and wonder when they saw Thee dead.

Ψ. Let my supplication come before Thee, O Lord: deliver me according to Thy word.

With love and fear we honour Thy Passion: grant us the forgiveness of our sins.

Ψ. Let my lips speak of Thy praise: for Thou hast taught me Thy statutes.

Strange and dreadful wonder! How art Thou now hidden in the earth, O Word of God?

Ψ. Let my tongue speak of Thy words: for all Thy commandments are righteousness.

Joseph once fled with Thee, O Saviour, and now another Joseph buries Thee.

Ψ. Let Thine hand be near to save me: for I have chosen Thy commandments.
Thine all-holy Mother weeps for Thee lamenting, O my Saviour, at Thy death.

Ψ. I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord; and Thy law is my study.

The spiritual powers tremble at Thy strange and fearful burial, O Maker of all.

Ψ. My soul shall live, and it shall praise Thee: and Thy judgements shall help me.

Early in the morning the myrrh-bearers came to Thee and sprinkled myrrh upon Thy tomb.

Ψ. I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek Thy servant, for I have not forgotten Thy commandments.

By Thy Resurrection give peace to the Church and salvation to Thy people.
Glory be to the Father....

O my God in Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, grant Thy mercy to the world.

Both now....

Theotokion

Grant to us thy servants to behold, O Virgin, the Resurrection of thy Son.

This is immediately followed by the Evlogitaria if the Resurrection, during which the priest with the deacon censes the Epitaphion, the sanctuary and the whole church.

TONE FIVE

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The company of angels was amazed, beholding Thee, O Saviour, numbered among the dead, who hast destroyed the power of death and raised up Adam with Thyself, setting all men free from hell.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

‘Why mingle ye sweet-smelling ointment with tears of pity, O ye women disciples?’ cried the angel who shone as lightning within the tomb to the women bearing myrrh. ‘Behold the tomb and rejoice: for the Saviour has risen from the grave.’

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The women bearing myrrh hastened early in the morning to Thy tomb, lamenting; but the angel came to them and said: ‘The time for lamentation is ended; weep not: but tell the apostles of the Resurrection.’

Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.

The women bearing myrrh came with sweet spices to Thy tomb, O Saviour. But they heard an angel say to them: ‘Why count ye the Living among the dead? For as God He has risen from the tomb.’

Glory be to the Father....

To the Trinity

We worship the Father together with His Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, one in Essence, and we cry with the seraphim: Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O Lord.

Both now....

Theotokion

O Virgin, who hast borne the Giver of Life, thou hast delivered Adam from sin, and to Eve thou hast brought joy in place of sorrow. He that took flesh from thee, who is both God and man, has restored the fallen unto life.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God (*three times*).

Small Litany, with the exclamation: For Thou art the King of peace, O Christ our God, and to Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thine eternal Father, and Thy most holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Then we sing the following sessional hymns:

TONE ONE

Joseph begged Thy holy body from Pilate and, anointing it with sweet-smelling spices, he wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in a new tomb; and early

in the morning the women bearing myrrh cried out: 'As Thou hast foretold, O Christ, show to us the Resurrection.'

Glory be to the Father...

As Thou hast foretold, O Christ, show to us the Resurrection.

Both now...

Another sessional hymn

The angelic choirs are filled with wonder, beholding Him who rests in the bosom of the Father laid in the tomb as one dead, though He is immortal. The ranks of angels surround Him, and with the dead in hell they glorify Him as Creator and Lord.

The Canon

We do not sing We have seen the Resurrection of Christ ..., *but at once we read Psalm 50 and then begin the Canon. In each canticle the irmos is sung twice, and then the troparia are repeated four times. The irmos is sung at the end as katavasia. Before the troparia we say Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee. The first, third, fourth, and fifth canticles of this canon are the work of Mark the Monk, Bishop of Hydrous, and the last four canticles are by Kosmas of the Holy City. The irmoi are the work of Kassiani.*

TONE SIX

CANTICLE ONE

(Irmos) He who in ancient times hid the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, is hidden beneath the earth by the children of those whom once He saved. But as the maidens let us sing unto the Lord, for He is greatly glorified.

O Lord my God, I will sing to Thee a funeral hymn, a song at Thy burial: for by Thy burial Thou hast opened for me the gates of life, and by Thy death Thou hast slain death and hell.

All things above and all beneath the earth quaked with fear at Thy death, as they beheld Thee, O my Saviour, upon Thy throne on high and in the tomb below. For beyond our understanding Thou dost lie before our eyes, a corpse yet the very Source of Life.

To fill all things with Thy glory, Thou hast gone down into the nethermost parts of the earth: for my person that is in Adam has not been hidden from Thee, but in Thy love for man Thou art buried in the tomb and dost restore me from corruption.

CANTICLE THREE

(Irmos) When the creation beheld Thee hanging in Golgotha, who hast hung the whole earth freely upon the waters, it was seized with amazement and it cried: 'There is none holy save Thee, O Lord.'

Signs and tokens of Thy burial Thou hast disclosed in a multitude of visions; and now, O Master, as both God and man, Thou hast revealed Thy hidden secrets unto those in hell who cry: 'There is none holy save Thee, O Lord.'

Thou hast stretched out Thine arms and united all that before was separated; wrapped in a winding-sheet, O Saviour, and buried in a tomb, Thou hast loosed the prisoners, and they cry: 'There is none holy save Thee, O Lord.'

O Thou whom nothing can contain, of Thine own will Thou wast enclosed and sealed within the tomb: but through Thine energies Thou hast as God revealed Thy power to those who sing: 'There is none holy save Thee, O Lord who lovest mankind.'

Small Litany.

Sessional Hymn

TONE ONE

The soldiers keeping watch over Thy tomb, O Saviour, became as dead men in the presence of the shining angel, who proclaimed the Resurrection to the women. We glorify Thee, for Thou hast destroyed corruption. We fall down before Thee, risen from the tomb, our only God.

Glory be to the Father.... Both now....

Repeat.

CANTICLE FOUR

(Irmos) Foreseeing Thy divine self-emptying upon the Cross, Habakkuk cried out marvelling: 'Thou hast cut short the strength of the powerful, O gracious and almighty Lord, and preached to those in hell.'

Today Thou dost keep holy the seventh day, which Thou hast blessed of old by resting from Thy works. Thou bringest all things into being and Thou makest all things new, observing the sabbath rest, my Saviour, and restoring Thy strength.

Thou hast gained the victory by Thy greater strength: Thy soul was parted from Thy body, yet by Thy power, O Word, Thou hast burst asunder the bonds of death and hell.

Hell was filled with bitterness when it met Thee, O Word, for it saw a mortal deified, marked by wounds yet all-powerful; and it shrank back in terror at this sight.

CANTICLE FIVE

(Irmos) Isaiah, as he watched by night, beheld the light that knows no evening, the light of Thy Theophany, O Christ, that came to pass

from tender love for us; and he cried aloud: 'The dead shall arise and they that dwell in the tomb shall be raised up, and all those born on the earth shall rejoice exceedingly.'

Becoming a creature formed from dust, O Creator, Thou makest new those born on earth. The winding-sheet and tomb point, O Word, to the mystery that is within Thee. For the honourable counsellor fulfils the counsel of Thy Father, who has gloriously refashioned me in Thee.

By death dost Thou transform mortality, and by Thy burial, corruption. With divine power Thou makest incorruptible the nature Thou hast taken, rendering it immortal; for, O Master, Thy flesh saw not corruption, nor was Thy soul left in hell as that of a stranger.

Coming forth from a birth without travail and wounded in Thy side with a spear, O my Maker, Thou hast brought to pass the recreation of Eve. Becoming Adam, Thou hast in ways surpassing nature slept a life-giving sleep, awakening life from sleep and from corruption by Thine almighty power.

CANTICLE SIX

(Irmos) Jonah was enclosed but not held fast in the belly of the whale; for, serving as a figure of Thee, who hast suffered and wast buried in the tomb, he leapt forth from the monster as from a bridal chamber and he called out to the watch: 'O ye who keep guard falsely and in vain, ye have forsaken your own mercy.'

Thou wast torn but not separated, O Word, from the flesh that Thou hadst taken. For though Thy temple was destroyed at the time of Thy Passion, yet the Person of Thy Godhead and of Thy flesh is but one; in both Thou art one Son, the Word of God, both God and man.

The fall of Adam brought death to man but not to God. For though the earthly substance of Thy flesh suffered, yet the Godhead remained impassible; that which was corruptible in Thy human nature Thou hast transformed to incorruption, and by Thy Resurrection Thou hast revealed a fountain of immortal life.

Hell is king over mortal men, but not for ever. Laid in the sepulchre, mighty Lord, with Thy life-giving hand Thou hast burst asunder the bars of death. To those from every age who slept in the tombs, Thou hast proclaimed true deliverance, O Saviour, who art become the firstborn from the dead.

Small Litany.

Kontakion

TONE SIX

He who closed the abyss lies before us dead; and as a corpse the Immortal is wrapped in linen with sweet spices and laid in a tomb. The women come to

anoint Him with myrrh, weeping bitterly and crying: 'This is the most blessed Sabbath on which Christ sleeps, but on the third day He shall rise again.'

Ikos

He who holds all things in unity was lifted on the Cross, and the whole creation wept to see Him hanging naked on the Tree. The sun hid its rays and the stars cast aside their brightness; the earth shook in mighty fear, the sea fled and the rocks were rent, and many graves were opened and the bodies of the saints arose. Hell groaned below and the Jews considered how to spread false tidings against Christ's Resurrection. But the women cried aloud: 'This is the most blessed Sabbath on which Christ sleeps, but on the third day He shall rise again.'

CANTICLE SEVEN

(Irmos) Wonder past speech! He who delivered the holy Children from the fiery furnace, is laid a corpse without breath in the tomb, for our salvation who sing: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou.

Hell was wounded in the heart when it received Him whose side was pierced by the spear; consumed by divine fire it groaned aloud at our salvation who sing: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou.

O happy tomb! It received within itself the Creator, as one asleep, and it was made a divine treasury of life, for our salvation who sing: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou.

The Life of all submits to be laid in the tomb, according to the law of the dead, and He makes it a source of awakening, for our salvation who sing: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou.

In hell and in the tomb and in Eden, the Godhead of Christ was indivisibly united with the Father and the Spirit, for our salvation who sing: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou.

CANTICLE EIGHT

(Irmos) Be ye astonished, O ye heavens, be ye horribly afraid, and let the foundations of the earth be shaken. For lo, He who dwells on high is numbered with the dead and lodges as a stranger in a narrow tomb. Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all for ever.

The most pure Temple is destroyed, but raises up the fallen tabernacle. The second Adam, He who dwells on high, has come down to the first Adam in the depths of hell. Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all for ever.

The disciples' courage failed, but Joseph of Arimathaea was more bold; for seeing the God of all a corpse and naked, he asked for the body and buried Him,

crying: Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all for ever.

O strange wonders! O love and infinite forbearance! He who dwells on high is sealed beneath the earth with His own consent, and God is falsely accused as a deceiver. Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all for ever.

We praise, bless and worship the Lord....

CANTICLE NINE

We do not sing the Magnificat and Greater in honour than the cherubim....

(Irmos) Weep not for Me, O Mother, beholding in the sepulchre the Son whom thou hast conceived without seed in thy womb. For I shall rise and shall be glorified, and as God I shall exalt in everlasting glory those who magnify thee with faith and love.

‘O Son without beginning, in ways surpassing nature was I blessed at Thy strange birth, for I was spared all travail. But now beholding Thee, my God, a lifeless corpse, I am pierced by the sword of bitter sorrow. But arise, that I may be magnified.’

‘By Mine own will the earth covers Me, O Mother, but the gatekeepers of hell tremble as they see Me, clothed in the bloodstained garment of vengeance: for on the Cross as God have I struck down Mine enemies, and I shall rise again and magnify thee.’

‘Let the creation rejoice exceedingly, let all those born on earth be glad: for hell, the enemy, has been despoiled. Ye women, come to meet Me with sweet spices: for I am delivering Adam and Eve with all their offspring, and on the third day I shall rise again.’

Small Litany.

Exapostilarion, TONE TWO: Holy is the Lord our God. This is repeated three times, as at Mattins on Sunday.

Lauds. Four stichera are sung:

TONE TWO

Today a tomb holds Him who holds the creation in the hollow of His hand; a stone covers Him who covered the heavens with glory. Life sleeps and hell trembles, and Adam is set free from his bonds. Glory to Thy dispensation, whereby Thou hast accomplished all things, granting us an eternal Sabbath, Thy most holy Resurrection from the dead.

What is this sight that we behold? What is this present rest? The King of the ages, having through His Passion fulfilled the plan of salvation, keeps Sabbath in the tomb, granting us a new Sabbath. Unto Him let us cry aloud: Arise, O Lord,

judge Thou the earth, for measureless is Thy great mercy and Thou dost reign for ever.

Come, let us see our Life lying in the tomb, that He may give life to those that in their tombs lie dead. Come, let us look today on the Son of Judah as He sleeps, and with the prophet let us cry aloud to Him: Thou hast lain down, Thou hast slept as a lion; who shall awaken Thee, O King? But of Thine own free will do Thou rise up, who willingly dost give Thyself for us. O Lord, glory to Thee.

TONE SIX

Joseph asked for the body of Jesus and he laid it in his own new tomb: for it was fitting that the Lord should come forth from the grave as from a bridal chamber. O Thou who hast broken the power of death and opened the gates of Paradise to men, glory to Thee. Glory be to the Father...

TONE SIX

Moses the great mystically prefigured this present day, saying: 'And God blessed the seventh day.' For this is the blessed Sabbath, this is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works. Suffering death in accordance with the plan of salvation, He kept the Sabbath in the flesh; and returning once again to what He was, through His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life, for He alone is good and loves mankind.

Both now....

TONE TWO

Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Theotokos....

Great Doxology.

During the stichera of Lauds, the senior priest puts on all his vestments, and as the choir sings Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Theotokos ..., he comes out of the sanctuary with the rest of the clergy and stands before the Epitaphion. During the singing of the Doxology he goes three times round the Epitaphion, censuring it from the four sides. Then, while the choir sings the concluding Holy God ... to a slow and solemn melody, as at the Burial Service, he takes the Book of the Gospels and the other clergy take the Epitaphion which they hold above his head. They go in procession round the outside of the church, the choir meanwhile continuing to sing Holy God to the funeral melody as often as is necessary. The Cross with the processional candles is carried at the head of the procession; then comes the choir; then the deacon with the incense, the clergy with the Epitaphion, and after them all the members of the congregation, holding lighted candles. The procession returns to the interior of the church, and stopping before the Holy Doors with the Epitaphion the senior priest says, Wisdom, let us attend. The choir then sings the troparion Noble Joseph ..., and the clergy replace the Epitaphion on the table in the centre of the church, putting the Book of the Gospels on it, as before. The senior priest goes once round the Epitaphion, censuring it from the four sides.

When the singing of Noble Joseph ... is completed, there follows the troparion of the prophecy:

TONE TWO

O Christ, who holdest fast the ends of the earth, Thou hast accepted to be held fast within the tomb, to deliver man from his fall into hell; and as immortal God Thou hast conferred upon us immortality and life.

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

Repeat.

Prokimenon (Psalm 43):

TONE FOUR

Arise, Lord, and help us: and deliver us for Thy Name's sake.

Ÿ. We have heard with our ears, O God, and our fathers have told us.

Lesson: Ezekiel 37:1–14.

Prokimenon (Psalm 9):

TONE SEVEN

Arise, O Lord my God, lift up Thine hand: forget not Thy poor for ever.

Ÿ. I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will speak of all Thy marvellous works.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 5:6–8; Galatians 3:13–14.

Alleluia:

TONE FIVE

Ÿ 1. Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered (*Psalm 67:2*).

Ÿ 2. As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish: as wax melts before the fire (*ibid.*, 3).

Ÿ 3. So shall sinners perish at the presence of God (*ibid.*).

Gospel: Matthew 27:62–66.

Then the two Litanies and the conclusion of Mattins, with the same Dismissal as at the end of Vespers.

After the Dismissal the faithful come up to venerate the Epitaphion, while the choir sings:

TONE FIVE

Come and let us bless Joseph of everlasting memory, who came to Pilate by night and begged for the Life of all: 'Give me this stranger, who has no place to lay His head. Give me this stranger, whom His evil disciple delivered to death. Give me this stranger, whom His Mother saw hanging on the Cross, and with a mother's sorrow she cried weeping: "Woe is me, my Child! Woe is me, Light of mine eyes and beloved fruit of my womb! For what Simeon foretold in the temple is come to pass today: a sword pierces my heart, but do Thou change my grief to gladness by Thy Resurrection." '

We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ.

We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ.

We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ, and Thy Holy Resurrection.

The First Hour is then said in the narthex. The other Hours, the Third, the Sixth and the Ninth, and also the Typika, are likewise said in the narthex at the appointed time. They are read simply and without singing.