Reader’s ‘Great’ Vespers on Saturday, May 30th

Service for the Sunday of the Holy Fathers of First Ecumenical Council

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. ***(Thrice)***

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. ***(Thrice)***

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Lord have mercy. ***Twelve Times***

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

O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

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 labor 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 the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.  Glory to Thee, O God. ***Thrice****.*

Lord, have mercy. ***Forty Times***

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

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in Him with trembling. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Arise O Lord, save me, O my God! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Salvation belongs to the Lord: Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Glory to Thee, O God. ***Three Times***

Lord, have mercy ***Three Times***

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

In the 6th Tone: Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me.

Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord. \* Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me; \* attend to the voice of my supplication, \* when I cry unto Thee. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be set forth \* as incense before Thee, \* the lifting up of my hands \* as an evening sacrifice. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips.

Incline not my heart unto words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins.

With men that work iniquity; and I will not join with their chosen.

The righteous man will chasten me with mercy and reprove me; as for the oil of the sinner, let it not anoint my head.

For yet more is my prayer in the presence of their pleasures; swallowed up near by the rock have their judges been.

They shall hear my words, for they be sweetened; as a clod of earth is broken upon the earth, so have their bones been scattered nigh unto hades.

For unto Thee, O Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes, in Thee have I hoped; take not my soul away.

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity.

The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone until I pass by.

With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication.

I will pour out before Him my supplication, mine affliction before Him will I declare.

When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths.

In this way wherein I have walked they hid for me a snare.

I looked upon my right hand, and beheld, and there was none that did know me.

Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul.

I have cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion art Thou in the land of the living.

Attend unto my supplication, for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from them that persecute me, for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison:  that I may confess Thy name.

The righteous shall wait patiently for me until Thou shalt reward me.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Possessing victory over Hell, O Christ,

since thou art free among the dead,

thou didst ascend the Cross,

raising with thyself those who sat in the shades of death! //

Drawing life from thy light, O almighty Savior, have mercy on us!

For Thy name’s sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

Today Christ tramples on death,

for he is risen as he said!

Let us all sing this song,

for he has granted joy to the world:

“O Light unapproachable, O Fountain of Life! //

O Savior almighty, have mercy on us!”

From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord.

The Lord ascended to heaven,

to send the Comforter into the world.

The heavens prepared his throne; the clouds, his royal mount!

The angels were amazed, seeing a man exalted.

The Father awaits the Son who is eternally in his bosom!

The Holy Spirit commands the angels:

“Lift up your heads, O gates!

Clap your hands, all nations! //

For Christ has ascended to where he was before!”

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; \* and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

The cherubim were amazed by your Ascension!

They beheld the God of angels ascending on clouds.

We glorify you, for your mercy is good: //

O Lord, glory to you!

O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye peoples.

You were begotten from the Father before the morning star,

but Arius taught wrongfully that you were created:

In his ignorance he designated you as a creature,

yet the fathers of the council proclaimed you as Son of God, //

co-enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit!

For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

Who has torn your spotless vesture, O Savior?

Who has challenged the unity of the triune Godhead?

It is Arius, for he denied that you are equal to the Father.

Those who follow him do not believe that God took flesh for our sake,

but the fathers of the council proclaimed you as Son of God, //

co-enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit!

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

Today let us praise the mystical trumpets of the Spirit,

the God-bearing fathers, who stand in the midst of the Church, singing

true theology,

and who praise the changeless Trinity.

They laid low the errors of Arius and upheld the Orthodox Faith! //

They always entreat the Lord to have mercy on our souls!

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

Who will not bless you, O most-holy Virgin?

Who will not sing of your most pure childbearing?

The Only-begotten Son shone timelessly from the Father,

but from you he was ineffably incarnate:

God by nature, yet man for our sake,

not two persons, but one, known in two natures!

Entreat Him, O pure and all-blessèd Lady, //

to have mercy on our souls!

O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father, O Jesus Christ: Having come to the setting of the sun, having beheld the evening light, we praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: God.  Meet it is for Thee at all times to be praised with reverent voices, O Son of God, Giver of life.  Wherefore, the world doth glorify Thee.

Prokeimenon in the 6th Tone:The Lord is King, He is robed in majesty!

 The Lord is robed with strength, and has girded Himself

 For He has established the world so that it should never be moved

 Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore

 The Lord is King,/ He is robed in majesty!

The Reading is from Genesis

When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus.

Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his goods, and the women and the people. After his return from the defeat of Ched-or-lao’mer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).

And Mel-chiz’edek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, “Blessèd be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessèd be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.”

The Reading is from Deuteronomy

“’Behold, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them.’

 At that time I said to you, ‘I am not able alone to bear you; the LORD your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. May the LORD, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are, and bless you, as He has promised you!’

 So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and set them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officers, throughout your tribes. And I charged your judges at that time, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien that is with him. You shall not be partial in judgment; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God’s; and the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’”

The Reading is from Deuteronomy

“Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the LORD set His heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.

Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him and cleave to Him, and by His name you shall swear. He is your praise; He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen.”

Lord have mercy. ***Forty times***

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

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 unto the ages.  Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee.  Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.  Blessed art Thou, O Master, give me understanding of Thy statutes.  Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes.

O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the work of Thy hands.  To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.  Amen.

Lord, have mercy. ***Twelve Times***

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

In the 6th Tone:

Thy resurrection, O Christ our Savior,

the angels in Heaven sing!

Enable us on earth //

to glorify thee in purity of heart!

Verse: The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty!

Destroying the gates of Hell,

breaking the chains of death,

thou didst resurrect the fallen human race as almighty God! //

O Lord who didst rise from the dead, glory to thee!

Verse: For he has established the world so that it shall never be moved!

Desiring to return us to Paradise,

Christ was nailed to the Cross and placed in a tomb.

The myrrh-bearing women sought him with tears, crying:

“Woe to us, O Savior!

How dost thou deign to descend to death?

What place can hold thy life-bearing body?

Come to us as thou didst promise!

Take away our wailing and tears!”

Then the angel said to them:

“Stop your lamentations!

Go, proclaim to the Apostles:

The Lord is risen, //

Granting us purification and great mercy!”

Verse: Holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore!

Having been crucified as thou didst will,

by thy burial thou didst capture death, O Christ,

and arise on the third day as God in glory, //

granting the world unending life and great mercy!

In the 4th Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Today we celebrate the annual memory

of the God-bearing fathers who assembled in Nicaea.

They laid low the godless doctrines of Arius,

driving him from the unity of the Catholic Church,

and teaching us how to confess the consubstantial and co-eternal Son

of God!

They expressed this clearly in the Symbol of Faith,

and we follow their divine doctrines,

believing in and serving the Son with the Father and the all-Holy

Spirit, //

the consubstantial Trinity and one Divinity!

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

Having accomplished the mystery

hidden from eternity and for generations,

you came with your disciples to the Mount of Olives,

having with you the one who bore you,

the Creator and Fashioner of all things.

Because she was your Mother, O Master!

she endured more than all the others seeing your Passion

but it was fitting that she also enjoy the exceeding joy of the

glorification of your flesh,

and participate in your Ascension into heaven. //

We glorify the great mercy which was shown to us!

Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. ***(Thrice)***

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. ***(Thrice)***

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us. Amen.

In the 6th Tone:

The angelic powers were at thy tomb;

The guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by thy grave,

seeking thy most pure body.

Thou didst capture Hell, not being tempted by it.

Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.

## O Lord who didst rise from the dead, //

Glory to thee!

In the 8th Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:

You are most glorious, O Christ our God!

You have established the holy fathers as lights on the earth!

Through them you have guided us to the true Faith! //

O greatly compassionate One, glory to you!

In the 4th Tone: Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

You have ascended in glory, O Christ God,

granting joy to your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Through the blessing,

they were assured that you are the Son of God, //

the Redeemer of the world!

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

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

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless!

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, of our Father among the Saints, and of all the saints, O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us. Amen.