

## Vespers on Great and Holy Friday

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*There is no kathisma reading.*

### **AT PSALM 140**

*In Tone 1*

6.

The whole creation was changed by fear,  
when it saw You, O Christ, hanging on the Cross.  
The sun was darkened,  
and the foundations of the earth were shaken.  
All things suffered with the Creator of all.  
Of Your will You have endured this for our sakes.  
O Lord, glory to You.

5.

The whole creation was changed by fear,  
when it saw You, O Christ, hanging on the Cross.  
The sun was darkened,  
and the foundations of the earth were shaken.  
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O Lord, glory to You.

*In Tone 2*

4.

Why do the impious and transgressing people imagine vain things?  
Why have they condemned to death the Life of all?  
O mighty wonder! The Creator of the world is delivered into the hands of lawless men,  
and He who loves mankind is raised upon the Cross,  
that He may free the prisoners in hell who cry:  
O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!

3.

Today the most pure Virgin  
saw You hanging on the Cross, O Word,  
and with a mother's love, she wept,  
and bitterly her heart was wounded.  
She groaned in anguish from the depth of her soul.  
And in her grief she struck her face  
and tore her hair,  
and beating her breast, she cried, lamenting:  
Woe is me, my Divine Child!  
Woe is me, O Light of the world!  
Why do You vanish from my sight, O Lamb of God?  
Then the hosts of angels were seized with trembling,  
and they said:

O Lord beyond our understanding, glory to You!

2.

Seeing You hanging on the Cross,  
O Christ and Creator and God of all,  
bitterly Your Virgin Mother cried:  
O my Son, where is the beauty of Your form?  
I cannot bear to look upon You crucified unjustly.  
Make haste, then, to arise,  
that I, too, may see  
Your Resurrection on the third day from the dead.

*In Tone 6*

1.

Today the Master stands before Pilate,  
today the Maker of all things is given up to the Cross,  
and of His own will is led as a lamb to the slaughter.  
He who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails.  
His side is pierced,  
and sponge with vinegar touches His lips.  
The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face  
and the Creator of all is mocked by His own servants.  
How great is the Master's love for mankind!  
For those who crucified Him,  
He prayed to His Father, saying:  
Forgive them this sin,  
for in their wickedness, they know not what they do.

*Glory...*

See how the lawless synagogue has condemned to death the King of the Creation!  
They were not ashamed when he recalled His blessings, saying:  
O My people, what have I done to you?  
Have I not filled Judea with miracles?  
Have I not raised the dead by My word alone?  
Have I not healed every sickness and disease?  
How then, have you repaid me?  
Why have you forgotten Me?  
In return for healing, you have given Me blows;  
in return for life, you are putting Me to death.  
You hang upon the Cross your benefactor as an evildoer,  
your Lawgiver as a transgressor of the Law,  
the King of all as one condemned.  
O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!

*Now...*

A dread and marvellous mystery we see come to pass this day:  
He whom none may touch is seized.  
He who looses Adam from the curse is bound.

He who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial.  
He who closes the abyss is shut in prison,  
He before whom the powers of heaven stand, with trembling stands before Pilate.  
The Creator is struck by the hand of His creature,  
he who comes to judge the living and the dead is condemned to the Cross,  
the destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb.  
O You who endure all these things in Your tender love  
who have saved all men from the curse,  
O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!

## READINGS

### ***Prokeimenon, Tone 4 (Psalm 24)***

They parted my garments among them,\* and cast lots upon my vesture.  
verse: O God, my God, look upon me; why have you forsaken me?

### ***Reading I***

Exodus 33:11-23

### ***Prokeimenon, Tone 4 (Psalm 34)***

Judge them, O Lord, that wrong me,\* fight against them that fight against me.  
verse: They rewarded me evil for good.

### ***Reading II***

Job 42:12-17

### ***Reading III***

Isaiah 52:13-54:1

### ***Prokeimenon, Tone 6 (Psalm 87)***

They laid me in the lowest pit, in dark places,\* and in the shadow of death.  
verse: O Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before You.

### ***Epistle***

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2

### ***Alleluia, Tone 6 (Psalm 68)***

verse: Save me, O God, for the waters are come in, even unto my soul.  
verse: They gave me gall to eat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.  
verse: Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see.

### ***Gospel***

Matthew 27:1-38; Luke 23:39-43; Matthew 27:39-54; John 19:31-37; Matthew 27:5-61

## APOSTICHA

*In Tone 2*

Down from the Tree Joseph of Arimathea

took You dead who are the Life of all,  
and he wrapped You, O Christ, in a linen cloth with spices.  
Moved in his heart by love,  
he kissed Your most pure body with his lips;  
yet drawing back in fear, he cried to You, rejoicing:  
Glory to Your self-abasement, O Lover of mankind!

*The Lord reigns,\* he is clothed in majesty.*

When you, the Redeemer of all  
were laid for the sake of all in a new tomb,  
hell was brought to scorn,  
and seeing You, drew back in fear.  
The bars were broken and the gates were shattered,  
the tombs were opened and the dead arose.  
Then Adam in thanksgiving and rejoicing cried to You:  
Glory to Your self-abasement, O Lover of mankind.

*For He has made the word firm,\* which shall not be moved.*

In the flesh You were of Your own will  
enclosed within the tomb,  
yet in Your divine nature You remain uncircumscribed and limitless.  
You have shut up the treasury of hell, O Christ,  
and emptied all his palaces.  
You honoured this Sabbath with Your divine blessing,  
with Your glory and Your radiance.

*Holiness befits Your house, O Lord,\* for length of days.*

The powers of heaven beheld You, O Christ,  
falsely accused by lawless men as a deceiver,  
and they saw the stone before the tomb  
sealed by the hands which pierced Your most pure side,  
and they were filled with fear at Your ineffable forbearance.

*In Tone 5, Glory... Now...*

You were naked and cold in death,  
O You who wear light as a robe,  
and the noble Joseph and Nicodemus  
removed You from the Cross,  
with grief and tears so tender.  
And Joseph mourned and prayed:  
O what has happened, O gentle Jesus?  
The sun saw You suspended on the Cross  
and shrouded itself in darkness.  
The earth quaked with fear  
and the temple veil was rent asunder!  
For my sake, O Saviour, You willingly endured the Passion.  
How then shall I array Your Body, O my God?

How then shall I wrap You in this shroud?  
How then shall I hymn Your burial?  
O my Lord most merciful,  
Your death and rising shall I praise  
as I sing: O Lord, glory be to You!

**TROPARION**

The noble Joseph took Your most pure Body down from the Cross.\* He wrapped it in a clean linen with aromatic spices\* and sadly laid it in a new tomb. (*thrice*)