

GREAT VESPERS FOR THE SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICEA (325)

KATHISMA

Blessed is the man... is sung.

AT PSALM 140

In Tone 6

10.

O Christ, You won the victory over Hades,
You ascended the Cross so that You might raise up with Yourself
all those who dwelt in the darkness of death.
Almighty Saviour, You are free from death
and bestow life by Your divine light.
We, therefore, beseech You to have mercy on us.

9.

Today Christ has conquered Death.
He has risen from the grave as He had foretold,
bestowing great joy upon the world.
Therefore, let us all lift up our voices and sing:
O Fount of Life, O Light whom no one can approach,
Almighty Saviour, have mercy on us.

8.

O Lord, where can we sinners flee from You,
for You are present in all creation?
You are present in heaven, for it is Your dwelling place.
Your power prevails in Hades where You conquered Death.
O Master, Your sustaining hands touches even the depths of the sea.
Where, then, can we take refuge except in You?
We, therefore, prostrate ourselves before You and pray:
O Lord, risen from the dead, have mercy on us.

7.

The Lord ascended into heaven
to send the Comforter into this world.
The heavens prepared His throne and the clouds were His ladder;
the angels marvelled at the sight of a man more exalted than themselves.
Today, the Father receives again in His bosom
the One who was in Him from all eternity,
and the Holy Spirit gives a command to all the angels:
Lift up your lintels, O you gates!
O you nations of the earth, clap your hands,
for Christ ascends to the place
where He had been from all eternity.

6.

O Lord, the Cherubim were amazed at Your Ascension;
they were seized with wonder as they beheld You, O God, rising upon the clouds,
for You are the One who is seated above the clouds.
We sing a hymn of praise to You:
Glory to You for Your tender mercy.

5.

O Christ, splendour and glory of the Father,
when we behold Your Ascension on the holy mountain,
we sing a hymn of praise to the beauty of Your countenance.
We bow down to Your Passion,
we venerate Your holy Resurrection,
and we glorify Your noble Ascension.
O Lord, have mercy on us!

4.

Before the morning star You were begotten of the Father;
before the ages You were conceived without a mother,
even though Arius believed You to be created, and not God.
He shamelessly confused the Creator with his creatures,
thus deserving eternal punishment.
Yet the Council of Nicea proclaimed You as the Son of God
who is enthroned with the Father and the Spirit.

3.

Who has severed Your garment, O Saviour?
It was Arius who divided the Trinity
who is equal in glory and eternal majesty.
For he denied that You are one of the most Holy Trinity.
He taught the transgressing Nestorius
to say that the Virgin is not the Mother of God;
but the Council of Nicea proclaimed You as the Son of God
who is enthroned with the Father and the Spirit.

2.

Declaring that the Light could not be seen,
Arius fell into the pit of the impious ones;
his body was torn apart by the justice of God,
and he gave up his soul in a violent manner.
He was another Judas by his thoughts and deeds.
But the Council of Nicea proclaimed You as the Son of God
who is enthroned with the Father and the Spirit.

1.

The foolish Arius divided the unity of the Holy Trinity
into three different and unequal substances.
But the God-bearing Fathers came together in Council.
Burning with the zeal of Elijah the Tishbite
and with the sword of the Holy Spirit,
they cut down these shameful blasphemies;

for they were directed by the Spirit.

Glory...

Let us honour today those mystical trumpets of the Spirit,
namely, the God-mantled Fathers,
who speaking of divine things,
sang in the midst of the Church a hymn in unison,
teaching that the Trinity is one,
not differing in substance or Godhead,
refuting Arius and defending the orthodox faith.
They always intercede with the Lord
to have mercy on our souls.

Now...

(Dogmatikon, Tone 6) Who would not call you blessed, O Virgin most holy? Who would not sing a hymn of praise to the glory of your giving birth without pain or travail? The Only-begotten Son Himself, begotten of the Father before all ages, was made flesh out of you in a manner that cannot be explained, O Woman most pure! And for our sake, He Who is God by nature assumed the nature of a man. He is not divided into two persons; He is understood to have two natures without commixion or confusion. O noble and blessed Woman, intercede with Him that He may mercy on our souls.

READINGS

Genesis 14:14-20

Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17

Deuteronomy 10:14-21

APOSTICHA

In Tone 6

O Christ our Saviour,
the angels in heaven sing the praises of Your Resurrection;
make us, on earth, also worthy
to extol and glorify You with a pure heart.

The Lord reigns, He is clothed in majesty. Robed is the Lord, and girt about with strength.

Almighty God, You destroyed the brazen gates and bars of Hades
and raised up fallen mankind.
Therefore, with one accord, we cry out:
O Lord, risen from the dead, glory to you!

For He has made the world firm, which shall not be moved.

Christ willed to renew us from our corruption of old
by being nailed to a Cross and placed in a tomb.

When the women came to anoint His body, they tearfully cried out:
O, what sorrow afflicts us!
O Saviour of all, how could You consent to occupy a grave?
If You truly willed this, then why did You allow Your body to be stolen?
How were You removed?
What place now conceals Your life-bearing body?
O Lord, appear to us as You promised
and put an end to our tears.
As they were lamenting, an angel appeared and cried out to them:
Do not weep, but tell the apostles that the Lord is risen,
granting sanctification and great mercy to the world.

Holiness befits your house, O Lord, for length of days.

O Christ, You were crucified of Your own free will,
and by Your burial You imprisoned Death.
As God, You rose in glory on the third day,
granting life and great mercy to the world.

In Tone 4

Glory...

O believers, let us come together today
to celebrate in faith and true worship
the remembrance of the God-inspired Fathers
who had come together from throughout the world,
in the splendid city of Nicea.
They rejected the doctrine of the impious Arius
and banished him from the universal Church
by a decree of the Council.
They instructed all to openly profess the Son of God,
that He is consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father before eternity,
and they clearly wrote this in the Symbol of Faith.
Therefore, following their divine doctrines,
let us worship the Son in true faith,
together with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
the Trinity consubstantial in one Godhead.

Now...

O Lord most merciful,
after fulfilling the mystery hidden from all eternity,
You, the Creator and Master of all,
went up to the Mount of Olives with Your disciples and Your Mother.
For the one who, at the sight of Your Passion,
had suffered more than anyone else in her motherly heart,
had more than anyone else the right to share the joy that fills us
as we witness Your ascending into heaven.
We glorify Your infinite mercy overflowing upon us.

TROPARIA

In Tone 6

Angelic powers were upon Your tomb* and the guards became like dead men;* Mary stood before Your tomb* seeking Your most pure body.* You captured Hades without being overcome by it.* You met the Virgin and granted life.* O Lord, risen from the dead,** glory to You!

In Tone 4

Glory... Now...

You ascended in glory, O Christ our God;* giving joy to Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit,* and assuring them through Your blessing* that You are the Son of God,** the Redeemer of the world.