

Vespers sung on Saturday 31st May 2025 for Sunday 1st June 2025

Afterfeast of the Ascension

The Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

At the beginning:

Reader: Though the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *(x 3)*

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, look upon and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

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

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

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

Though the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *(x 12)*

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 our God.

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

The Reader continues with Psalm 103, as usual.

"LORD, I CALL ..."

Tone 6

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Hear me, O Lord!

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Receive the voice of my prayer,

when I call upon Thee!//

Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise

in Thy sight as incense,

and let the lifting up of my hands

be an evening sacrifice!//

Hear me, O Lord!

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy Name.

Tone 6 (For the Resurrection)

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 Saviour, have mercy on us!

The righteous will surround me, for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

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 Saviour almighty, have mercy on us!

Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!

Where shall we sinners flee from Thee, Who art in all creation?
In heaven Thou dweldest!
In hell Thou didst trample on death!
In the depths of the sea?
Even there is Thy hand, O Master!
To Thee we flee, and falling before Thee, we pray://
O Thou Who didst rise from the dead, have mercy on us!

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

Tone 6 (From the Pentecostarion, for the Ascension)

The Lord has ascended into heaven
that He might send the Comforter into the world.
The heavens prepared His throne, and the clouds His mount.
Angels marvel to see a Man high above them.
The Father receives Him Whom He holds, co-eternal, in His bosom.
The Holy Spirit commands all His Angels:
“Lift up your gates, you princes!
All you nations, clap your hands://
for Christ has gone up to where He was before!”

If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.

The Cherubim were amazed at Thine Ascension, O Lord,
beholding Thee, the God Who dost sit enthroned upon them,
ascending upon the clouds;
and we glorify Thee, for Thy mercy is good.//
Glory to Thee!

For Thy Name's sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.

Beholding Thine Ascension on the holy mountain,
O Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory,
we hymn the radiant appearance of Thy countenance;
we worship Thy Passion,
we honour Thy Resurrection,
as we glorify Thy glorious Ascension.//
Have mercy on us!

From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!

Tone 6 (From the Pentecostarion, for the Fathers)

Thou wast begotten from the Father before the Morning Star,
but Arius taught wrongfully that Thou wast created:
in his ignorance he designated Thee as a creature,
yet the Fathers of the Council proclaimed Thee as Son of God, //
co-enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

O Saviour, who has torn Thy garment?
Who has challenged the unity of the triune Godhead?
It is Arius, for he denied that Thou art 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 Thee as Son of God, //
co-enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!

Arius fell into the abyss of sin,
pretending blindness that he might not see the Light.
By his purpose he became the image of Judas.
But the Council at Nicaea proclaimed Thee as Son of God, //
co-enthroned with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

The foolish Arius blasphemed the All-holy Trinity,
dividing the Persons into three different unequal substances,
but the God-bearing Fathers denounced his confusion:
they assembled with the zeal of Elijah,
destroying error with the sword of the Spirit, //
as they were directed by the inspiration of God.

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

Tone 6 (From the Pentecostarion, for the Fathers)

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,
praising 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.

Tone 6 (Theotokion – Dogmatikon)

Who will not bless thee, O most holy Virgin?
Who will not sing of thy most pure childbearing?
The only-begotten Son shone timelessly from the Father,
but from thee 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-blessed Lady, //
to have mercy on our souls!

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The reading from the book of Genesis.

[Genesis 14:14-20]

When Abram heard his brother Lot was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. So he divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked and pursued them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. So he brought back all the cavalry of Sodom, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. Then the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings with him. Now Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. He blessed Abram and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hands."

The reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17]

Moses spoke to the sons of Israel: "Behold, I am delivering the land in your presence; go in and inherit the land I swore to your fathers – to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to give it to them and their seed after them. So I spoke to you at that time, saying, 'I alone am not able to bear you. The Lord your God multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you, just as He said.' So I took from you wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men and made them leaders over you: leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens; judges to interpret the law for you. Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the resident alien with him. You shall not show partiality in judgement; you shall judge the small and the great; you shall not shrink before any man's presence, for the judgement is God's. The case too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.'"

The reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

[Deuteronomy 10:14-21]

Moses spoke to the sons of Israel: "Indeed, heaven and heaven of heaven belong to the Lord your God, also the earth and everything in it. The Lord chose your fathers to love them; and He chose their seed after them, you above all nations, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and hold fast to Him, and take oaths in His name. He is your boast and your God, who did these great and glorious things for you, the things you saw with your own eyes."

APOSTICHA

Tone 6 (*For the Resurrection*)

Thy Resurrection, O Christ our Saviour,
the Angels in heaven sing!
Enable us on earth//
to glorify Thee in purity of heart!

V. 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!

V. 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 Myrrhbearing Women sought Him with tears, crying,
"Woe to us, O Saviour!"

[How dost Thou deign to descend to death?]

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 appeared to them:
"Stop your lamentations!
Go, proclaim to the Apostles:
"The Lord is risen,//
granting us purification and great mercy!"

V. Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore!

Having been crucified as Thou didst will,
by Thy burial Thou didst capture death, O Christ,
rising on the third day as God in glory,//
granting the world unending life and great mercy!

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

Tone 4 *(From the Pentecostarion, for the Fathers)*

Come, all Orthodox Churches,
let us celebrate today in faith and true worship
the yearly commemoration of the divinely-arrayed Fathers
who gathered at Nicaea from throughout the world!
There they refuted the godless teaching of Arius,
banishing him from the Catholic Church by a decree of the council.
They taught all to confess openly the Son of God,
consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father,
proclaiming this with precision and true worship in the Symbol of Faith.
Therefore, as we faithfully follow their divine doctrines,
let us worship the Father, the Son, and the most Holy Spirit,//
the consubstantial Trinity in one Godhead!

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

Tone 4 *(From the Pentecostarion, for the Ascension)*

Fulfilling, O Lord, in Thy goodness,
the mystery hidden from ages and generations,
Thou didst come with Thy Disciples to the Mount of Olives,
together with the Mother who bore Thee, the Maker and Creator of all;
for it was fitting that she who as a mother had been grieved beyond all at Thy Passion,
should also be filled with exceeding joy at the glory of Thy flesh.
In this joy we also partake
at Thine Ascension into heaven, O Master,//
and we glorify Thy great mercy that has come upon us.

TROPARIA

Troparion of the Resurrection in Tone 6

[Music on website / Green Book page 12]

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.

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

Troparion of the Holy Fathers in Tone 8

[Music on website / Green Book page 106]

Most glorious art Thou, O Christ our God,
Thou hast established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth.
Through them Thou hast guided us to the True Faith.//
O greatly compassionate One, glory to Thee!

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

Troparion of the Ascension in Tone 4

[Music on website / Green Book page 103]

O Christ God, Thou hast ascended in glory,
granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing, they were assured
that Thou art the Son of God,//
the Redeemer of the world!
