

## GREAT VESPERS (Reader)

This service can be read at home on Saturday evenings. If desired, variable parts of the text can be found online at <https://www.oca.org/liturgics/service-texts> - note that, as Vespers is the first service of the following liturgical day, the texts are found under the next day's date. E.g., to read Vespers at home on Saturday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, the texts are found listed under the Sunday, the 26<sup>th</sup>.

The Usual Beginning: Services often begin with a common set of prayers. Between Pascha and Pentecost, these prayers vary slightly. On page 2 is the version for use from now until the Eve of Ascension; on page 3 is the version for use from Ascension to Pentecost; on page 4 is the version for all other times.

## BOOK OF HOURS

### GREAT VESPERS

#### **(on Saturday evening when there is no Priest)**

*From Pascha to the Eve of Ascension:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Christ is risen from the dead, by death he has trampled down death, and to those in the tombs he has given life. *(Three times)*

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

Lord, cleanse us from our sins.

Master, pardon our iniquities.

Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for your 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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, may your name be hallowed. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

Lord, have mercy *(twelve times)*.

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship the King, our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, the King, our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ himself, the King and our God.

*Then, Psalm 103 on Page 5.*

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*From Ascension to the Eve of Pentecost:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

Lord, cleanse us from our sins.

Master, pardon our iniquities.

Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for your 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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, may your name be hallowed. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

Lord, have mercy (*twelve times*).

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship the King, our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, the King, our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ himself, the King and our God.

*Then, Psalm 103 on page 5.*

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*At all other times of year:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Glory to you, O God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Paraclete, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere and filling all things, treasury of blessings and giver of life, come and dwell in us, cleanse us from every stain and, O Good One, save our souls.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

Lord, cleanse us from our sins.

Master, pardon our iniquities.

Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for your 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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, may your name be hallowed. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

Lord, have mercy (*twelve times*).

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Come, let us worship the King, our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, the King, our God.

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ himself, the King and our God.

*Them, Psalm 103 on page 5.*

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### *Psalm 103:*

Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you have been greatly magnified. You have clothed yourself with praise and majesty, wrapping yourself in light as in a cloak, stretching out the heavens like a curtain, roofing his upper chambers with waters, placing clouds as his mount, walking on the wings of the wind, making spirits His angels and a flame of fire his Ministers, establishing the earth on its sure base; it will not be moved to age on age. The deep, like a cloak, is its mantle; waters will stand upon the mountains. At your rebuke they will flee; they will quail at the voice of your thunder. The mountains will rise and the plains descend to the place which you have established for them. You fixed a limit that they will not pass, nor will they return to cover the earth. You send out springs into the valleys; waters will run between the mountains. They will give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will await them to quench their thirst. Beside them the birds of the air will make their dwelling and sing among the rocks. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth will be filled from the fruit of your works. He makes grass spring up for the cattle, and green herb for the service of mankind; to bring food out of the earth, and wine makes glad the human heart; to make the face cheerful with oil, and bread strengthens the human heart. The trees of the plain will be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon that you planted. There the sparrows will build their nests: the heron's dwelling is at their head. The high mountains are for the deer; rocks a refuge for hares. He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knew the hour of its setting. You appointed darkness, and it was night, in which all the beasts of the forest will prowl: young lions roaring to plunder and to seek their food from God. The sun rose and they were gathered together and they will lie down in their dens. Man will go out to his labour, and to his labouring until evening. How your works have been magnified, O Lord. With wisdom you have made them all, and the earth was filled with your creation. See, this great, wide sea; in it there are creeping things without number, living creatures small and great. There ships go to and fro; this dragon which you fashioned to sport in it. All things look to you to give them their food in due season. When you give it them, they will gather it. When you open your hand all things will be filled with goodness. But when you turn away your face they will be troubled. You will take away their spirit, and they will perish and return to their dust. You will send forth your spirit, and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure to the ages. The Lord will rejoice at his works. He looks upon the earth, and makes it tremble. He touches the mountains, and they smoke. I will sing to the Lord while I live: I will praise my God, while I exist. May my words be pleasing to him, while I shall rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners might perish from the earth, and the wicked, so that they are no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul! The sun knew the hour of its setting: you made darkness, and it was night. How your works have been magnified, O Lord. With wisdom you have made them all.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

Lord, have mercy (*twelve times*).

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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### *FIRST KATHISMA*

#### *Psalm 1:*

Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the pestilent. But his will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he will meditate day and night. He will be like a tree that has been planted beside streams of water, which will give its fruit in its season, and its leaves will not fall; and whatever he does will prosper. Not so the ungodly, not so; but like the chaff that the wind blows away from the face of the earth. Therefore the ungodly will not rise in judgement, nor sinners in the council of the just. Because the Lord knows the way of the just, but the way of the ungodly will perish.

#### *Psalm 2:*

Why were the nations insolent and why did the peoples meditate vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were assembled together against the Lord and against his anointed. "Let us break through their bonds and cast away their yoke from us." He that dwells in heaven will laugh them to scorn, and the Lord will mock them. Then he will speak to them in his anger, and panic them in his fury. But I was established as king by him, on Zion his holy mountain, announcing the Lord's decree. The Lord said to me: "You are my Son. Today I have begotten you. Ask me, and I shall give you nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession. You will shepherd them with an iron rod; like a potter's vessels you will smash them." And now, kings, understand; be corrected, all who judge the earth. Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice in him with trembling. Accept correction, lest the Lord be angry, and you perish from the right way whenever his fury is suddenly kindled. Blessed are all who have put their trust in him.

#### *Psalm 3:*

Lord, why have those who afflict me been multiplied? Many rise up against me. Many say to my soul: "There is no salvation for him in his God." But you, Lord, are my helper, my glory, and the one who lifts up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, and he heard me from his holy mountain. I lay down and slept; I have been roused, because the Lord will protect me. I shall not be afraid of tens of thousands of people who attack me from every side. Arise, Lord; save me, my God: because you have struck all who are vainly my foes, you have smashed the teeth of sinners. Salvation is the Lord's, and your blessing is upon your people.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

#### *Psalm 4:*

When I called you heard me, God of my justice, when I was in trouble you set me at large; have pity on me and hear my prayer. Children of men, how long will you be heavy-hearted? Why do you love vanity and seek falsehood? Know too that the Lord has made his

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Holy One wonderful. The Lord will hear me when I cry to him. Be angry, and do not sin; for what you say in your hearts, feel compunction on your beds. Sacrifice a sacrifice of righteousness and hope in the Lord. Many say: 'Who will show us good things?' The light of your countenance has been signed upon us, O Lord. You have given joy to my heart; from the fruit of their wheat, wine and oil they have been filled. I shall lie down in peace and sleep at once, because you alone, Lord, have made me dwell in hope.

### *Psalm 5:*

Give ear to my words, O Lord, understand my cry. Attend to the voice of my supplication, my King and my God; for to you I shall pray, O Lord. In the morning you will hear my voice. In the morning I shall stand before you, and you will watch over me; because you are not a God who wills iniquity. One who does evil will not dwell with you, nor will the lawless remain before your eyes. You have hated all who work iniquity; you will destroy all who speak falsehood. The Lord abhors a man of bloodshed and deceit. But I, in the multitude of your mercy, will enter your house, I will bow down towards your holy temple in fear of you. Lord, guide me in your justice, because of my foes make my way straight before you. Because truth is not in their mouth; their heart is vain. Their throat is an opened tomb, they have deceived with their tongues. Judge them, O God. Let them fall through their counsels; cast them out in accordance with the multitude of their ungodly deeds, because they have provoked you, O Lord. And let all who hope on you be glad in you; they will rejoice for ever, and you will dwell in them, and all those who love your name will boast in you. Because you will bless the just, O Lord, as with a shield of good pleasure you have crowned us.

### *Psalm 6:*

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, nor chastise me in your wrath. Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am weak; heal me for my bones have been troubled and my soul exceedingly troubled; but you, Lord, how long? Turn back, O Lord, deliver my soul; save me for your mercy's sake. For in death no one remembers you, and in Hell who will confess you? I have toiled in my groaning, every night I shall wash my bed and drench my couch with my tears. My eye has been troubled through anger, I have grown old among all my foes. Depart from me all you evil doers, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord has heard my supplication, the Lord has accepted my prayer. Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled, let them be turned back and speedily be utterly ashamed.

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

### *Psalm 7:*

O Lord my God I have hoped in you; save me from all those who persecute me, and deliver me. Lest he ever seize my soul like a lion, when there is none to deliver me or save me. O Lord my God, if I have done this, if there is injustice in my hands; if I have repaid with evils those who repaid me, let me fall empty before my foes. Let the foe pursue my soul and seize it, trample down my life and make my glory dwell down there in the dust. Arise, Lord,

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in your anger, be exalted in the furthest boundaries of your foes. Rise up, O Lord my God, by the decree which you commanded, and an assembly of peoples will surround you, and for this return on high. The Lord will judge peoples. Judge me, Lord, according to my justice and according to the innocence that is in me. Let the evil of sinners be brought to an end and you will keep the just straight, O God the searcher of hearts and reins. Just is my help from God, who saves the upright of heart. God is a judge, just and strong and patient, not producing anger every day. If you do not return he will burnish his sword, he has drawn and prepared his bow. And on it he has prepared the instruments of death, he has made ready his arrows for those who are burning. Behold he has been in labour with injustice, he has conceived toil and given birth to iniquity. He has dug a pit and scooped it out, and he will fall into the hole which he has made. His toil will return upon his own head and his injustice will come down upon his crown. I will give thanks to the Lord in accordance with his justice and I will sing to the name of the Lord Most High.

*Psalm 8:*

O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is your name in all the earth! For your majesty is raised up above the heavens. From the mouth of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise, because of your enemies, to destroy the enemy and the avenger. For I will look at the heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you fixed. What is man that you remember him? Or a son of man that you visit him? You have made him a little lower than the Angels; you have crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of your hands. You have subjected all things under his feet, sheep and all cattle and even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that pass through the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is your name in all the earth!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to you, O God.

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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

*Then "Lord, I have cried" in the appointed tone.*

*Psalm 140:*

Lord, I have cried to you, hear me: hear me, O Lord. Lord, I have cried to you, hear me. Give heed to the voice of my supplication, when I cry to you. Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be directed like incense before you: the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice. Hear me, O Lord.

Set a guard, O Lord, on my mouth; and a strong door about my lips.

Do not incline my heart to evil words to make excuses for my sins  
with those who work iniquity; do not let me unite with their elect.

The just will chastise me with mercy and reprove me, but do not let the oil of sinners anoint my head.



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For yet my prayer shall be in their pleasures; their judges have been swallowed up near the rock.

They will hear my words, for they are sweet; as a clod of earth is crushed upon the ground their bones have been scattered at the mouth of Hell.

For my eyes look to you, O Lord, my Lord; I have hoped in you, do not take away my soul.

Keep me from the snare that they have hidden for me, and from the traps of evildoers.

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

*Psalm 141:*

With my voice I cried to the Lord; with my voice I entreated the Lord.

I will pour out my entreaty before him, and tell him all my trouble.

When my spirit was faint you knew my path.

In the way where I walked they had hidden a snare for me.

I looked to my right hand and saw, but there was none who knew me.

Escape is gone from me, and there is none who seeks for my soul.

I cried to you, Lord, I said: 'You are my hope: my portion in the land of the living'.

Give heed to my supplication for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from those who persecute me for they are too strong for me.

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

*Ten verses begin here.*

The just will await me until you reward me.

*Psalm 129:*

Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.

*Eight verses begin here.*

O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If you, Lord, should mark iniquities: O Lord, who will stand? But there is forgiveness with you.

*Six verses begin here.*

For your name's sake I have waited for you, O Lord; my soul has waited on your word, my soul has hoped in the Lord.

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

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption; and he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

*Psalm 116:*

Praise the Lord, all you nations; praise him, all you peoples.

For his mercy has been mighty towards us; and the truth of the Lord endures to the ages.

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*And we sing the Evening Hymn by Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem:*

O joyful light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father, O Jesus Christ. Now that we have come to the setting of the sun and see the evening light, we hymn as God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is right at all times to hymn you with holy voices, Son of God, giver of life: therefore the world glorifies you.

*Prokeimenon of the day.*

*On Saturday evening, Tone 6:*

The Lord is King; \* he has robed himself with majesty.

*Verse 1:* The Lord has robed and girded himself with power.

*Verse 2:* He has established the world, which will not be shaken.

*Verse 3:* Holiness befits your house, O Lord, to length of days.

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*[On certain Feasts readings from the Old Testament follow here.]*

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Lord, have mercy. (40 times)

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

Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Grant, Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is your name to the ages. Amen.

Let your mercy, Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in you.

Blessed are you, Lord: teach me your statutes.

Blessed are you, Master: make me understand your statutes.

Blessed are you, Holy One: enlighten me with your statutes.

Lord, your mercy is for ever; do not scorn the work of your hands. To you is due praise, to you is due song, to you glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to 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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*Then sing the Aposticha.*

*After the Aposticha, the Song of Symeon who received God:*

Now you let your servant depart in peace, O Master, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light for revelation to the nations, and the glory of your people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

Lord, cleanse us from our sins.

Master, pardon our iniquities.

Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for your 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 for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen

Our Father in heaven, may your name be hallowed. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

*The Troparion of the day.* Glory. Both now. *Theotokion.*

*Then:*

Strengthen, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith of Orthodox Christians to the ages of ages.

Greater in honour than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word, truly the Mother of God, we magnify you.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Both now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.  
Amen.

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