Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

The Vespers of Cheesefare Sunday Evening
Being the Vespers of Forgiveness
at which Beginneth the Great and Holy Fast
Forgiveness Sunday Vespers

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and unto ages of ages.
Reader: AMEN. Come, let us worship God our King. Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God. Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

(As Psalm 104 is chanted, the priest stands in front of the holy doors and quietly reads the Prayers of Light.)

Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great. Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment; Who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent. Who hast laid the beams of Thy chambers on the waters, Who makest the clouds Thy chariot, Who ridest on the wings of the wind. Who makest Thy angels spirits, and Thy ministers a flame of fire. Thou didst set the earth on its foundations so that it should never be shaken. Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment.

The waters stood above the mountains. At Thy rebuke they fled, at the sound of Thy thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which Thou didst appoint for them. Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. Thou makest springs gush forth in the valleys, they flow between the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.

From Thy lofty abode Thou waterest the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy work. Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, fodder for the animals that serve man. That he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man’s heart.

The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork
has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers. Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons. The sun knows its time for setting. Thou makest darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they get them away, and lie down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all! The earth is full of Thy creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and the Leviathan which Thou didst form to sport in it. These all look to Thee, to give them their food in due season. When Thou givest it to them, they gather it up; when Thou openest Thy hand, they are filled with good things. When Thou hidest Thy face, they are dismayed; when Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created and Thou renewest the face of the earth! May the glory of the Lord endure forever! May the Lord rejoice in His works. Who looks on the earth and it trembles! Who touches the mountains and they smoke! I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have being! May my meditation be pleasing to Him for I rejoice in the Lord. Let sinners be consumed from the earth and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul! The sun knows its time for setting. Thou makest darkness and it is night. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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. Glory to Thee, O God. (3 times)
O Lord, our Hope, glory to Thee!

Then, the Great Litany (next page)
The Great Litany

A -men.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
To Thee, O Lord. A-men.

B -Wide Harmony

A- men.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
To Thee, O Lord. A-men.
Psalm 140

“Lord, I Call Upon Thee” is sung in the tone of the week. When the choir concludes “Let My Prayer Arise,” the reader chants the verses of the Psalm:

Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, keep watch over the door of my lips! Incline not my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deed in company with men who work iniquity, and let me not eat of their dainties! Let a good man strike or rebuke me in kindness, but let the oil of the wicked never anoint my head; for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds. When they are given over to those who shall condemn them, then they shall learn that the Word of the Lord is true. As a rock which one cleaves and shatters on the land, so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol, but my eyes are toward Thee. O Lord God; in Thee I seek refuge; let me not be defenseless! Keep me from the trap which they have laid for me, and from the snares of evil doers! Let the wicked together fall into their own nets, while I escape.

Psalm 141

cry with my voice to the Lord, with my voice I make supplication to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before Him, I tell my trouble before Him. When my spirit is faint, Thou knowest my way! In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me. I look to the right and watch, but there is none who takes notice of me. No refuge remains to me, no man cares for me. I cry to Thee, O Lord; I say, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Give heed to my cry; for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are too strong for me.

Online Note: the music for “Lord, I Call,” the 4 Stikhera of Repentance, the 3 hymns (+Doxastikhon, where applicable) from the Menaion, and subsequent Theotokion vary year to year. For this music/text, please email Alexander at alfec55@gmail.com.
But there is forgiveness with Thee.

Let us humble the flesh by abstinence! As we follow the divine path of pure fasting! With prayers and tears let us seek the Lord Who saves us! Let us put an end to anger, crying out: Save us who have sinned against Thee! Save us, O Christ our King!
as Thou didst save the men of Nineveh! And make us partakers of Thy Heavenly Kingdom,

O Compassionate One!

My soul has hoped on the Lord! When I think of my deeds, O Lord!

I am filled with despair! And know that I am worthy of every torment! I have despised Thy Commandments, O Savior!

5. For Thy name's sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word:
I have spent my life as a prodigal! I pray to Thee, O only merciful One: Cleanse me by repentance!

Enlighten me through prayers and fasting!// And despise me not,

O most gracious Benefactor of all!

4. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch:

Let Israel hope on the Lord!
Let us begin the Fast with joy! Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts! Let us purify our souls and cleanse our flesh! Let us abstain from ev’ry passion as we abstain from food!

Let us rejoice in virtues of the spirit and fulfill them in love!

That we may all see the Holy Passion of Christ our God!!
And rejoice in spirit at the Holy Pascha!

And He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities!

Let us begin the Fast with joy! Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts! Let us purify our souls and cleanse our flesh! Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!

3. For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is redemption:

Note: it is a local tradition to sing "Let us begin the Fast with joy" twice, omitting one of the Menaion hymns on this day as necessary.
Then, the Hymns from the Menaion are sung.

Let us rejoice in virtues of the spirit and fulfill them in love!

That we may all see the Holy Passion of Christ our God!

And rejoice in spirit at the Holy Pascha!

**Online Note:** the music for “Lord, I Call,” the 4 Stikhera of Repentance, the 3 hymns (+Doxastikhon, where applicable) from the Menaion, and subsequent Theotokion vary year to year. For this music/text, please email Alexander at alfec55@gmail.com.
O Gladsome Light

The immortal Father; Heavenly, Holy, Blessed

Jesus Christ! Now that we have come to the setting

Of the sun and behold the light of evening,

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we praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For meet it is at all times to worship Thee

with voices of praise. O Son of God! and Giver of life:

Therefore all the world doth glorify Thee!
O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal
Father; Heavenly, Holy, Blessed Jesus Christ.
Now that we have come to the setting of the sun and see the light of evening, we praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
For meet it is at all times to worship Thee with voi-
O Son of God and Giver of life:

therefore all the world doth glorify Thee!

O Gladsome Light

Byzantine Chant

O Glad-some Light of the Ho-ly Glo-ry of the im-mor-tal Fa-th-er, heav-en-

ly, ho-ly, bless-ed, Je-sus Christ! Now that we have come to the set-ting of the

sun and be-hold the light of even-ing, we praise God: Fa-th-er, Son, and

Ho-ly Spi-rit. For meet it is at all times to wor-ship Thee with voic-es
of praise, O Son of God and Giver of Life! Therefore all

the world doth glorify Thee!

The Great Prokeimenon (Tone 8)

Turn not away Thy face from Thy child for I am afflicted;

hear me speedily, draw near unto my soul and deliver it!

Verses: 1. Thy salvation, O God, hath upheld me!
(Deacon) 2. Let the poor see and be glad!
3. Seek ye God and your soul shall live!
The Great Fast Begins

(The vestments of the clergy and servers and the altar cloths are changed from light to dark. The Royal Doors are closed. At the Evening Litany, the choir begins using the Lenten melody in the responses.)

As the church bell is tolled, the Reader chants, slower than usual:

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified be Thy name for ever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statues.

Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy commandments.

Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy precepts.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endures forever. O despise not the work of Thy hands.

To Thee belongs worship. To Thee belongs praise. To Thee belongs glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Then, the Evening Litany (next page)
The Evening Litany – LENTEN Melody

Lord, have mercy.
Grant this, O Lord.
To Thee, O Lord.

Amen.
And to thy spirit.
To Thee, O Lord.

The Apostikha – Tone 4, Kievan Chant

Prayerfully:

Amen. Thy grace has shown forth, O Lord!
The grace which illumines our soul!
This is the acceptable time!
This is the time of “repentance!”
repentance! Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light! That passing through the Fast as through a great sea, We may reach the Resurrection on the Third Day, //

Of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of our souls!
Reader: To thee I life up mine eyes, O Thou Who art enthroned in the heavens! Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master; as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God:

Till He have mercy upon us!

And again, with strength:

Thy grace has shown forth, O Lord! The grace which illumines our soul! This is the acceptable time! This is the time of repentance! Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on “...the armor of light!”
Verse: Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Too long our soul has been sated with the scorn of those who are at ease:

Thou art glorified!

The contempt of the proud!
In the memory of Thy saints, O Christ God! At their supplications, // Send down upon us Thy great mercy!

Reader: (“Glory, Now and ever…” in the same tone)

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

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The angelic hosts glorify thee, O Mother of God!
For thou gavest birth to God! Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who created out of nothing the angelic hosts!

Beseech Him to deliver from corruption and to enlighten,

The souls of those who rightly praise thee, O all-pure one!

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according
to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people, Israel.
Reader:

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! (3 times)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O most-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our
sins. O Master, pardon our transgressions. O Holy One, visit and heal
our infirmities, for Thy name’s sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3 times)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and
ever and unto 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 debts, as we
forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver
us from the evil one.

Priest: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the
Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and
unto ages of ages.

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The Lenten Troparia

 Prayerfully A. Arkhangelsky

A-MEN. RE-JOICE, O VIR-GIN THEOTOKOS! MARY, FULL OF

GRACE THE LORD IS WITH THEE; BLES-SED ART THOU A-MONG

---
WO-MEN AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB.// FOR

THOU HAST BORNE THE SAV-IOR OF OUR SOULS. PROSTRATION

GLO-RY TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE

HO-LY SPI-RIT. O BAP-TI-ZER OF CHRIST RE-MEM-BER US ALL,

THAT WE MAY BE DE-LIV-ERED FROM OUR IN-I QUI-TIES; // FOR
TO THEE IS GIVEN GRACE TO INTERCEDE FOR US.

NOW AND EVER AND UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN.

INTERCEDE FOR US O HOLY APOSTLES AND ALL THE SAINTS, THAT WE MAY BE DELIVERED FROM PERILS AND SORROWS; FOR WE HAVE ACQUIRED YOU AS FERVANT INTERCESSORS BEFORE THE SAVIOR.
Then, slowly; with compunction:

BE-NETH THY COM-PAS-SION WE TAKE REFUGE O THE-O-TO-

KOS. DO NOT DES-PISE OUR SUPPLICATIONS IN AD-VER-SI-TY,/

BUT DELIVER US FROM PER-ILS O ON-LY PURE AND

ON-LY BLES-SED ONE.
Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40 times)

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: true Theotokos we magnify thee!

In the name of the Lord, bless, father.

Priest: He Who is, Christ our God, is blessed always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Reader: AMEN. O Heavenly King, establish the Orthodox Christians, confirm the Faith, quiet the heathen, give peace to the world, place our departed fathers and brethren in the tabernacles of the Righteous, and accept us sorrowers and penitents, for Thou art good, and the Lover of mankind.

Priest: The Prayer of St. Ephraim

Dismissal – LENTEN Melody

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ, our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!

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

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy;

Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy. Father, bless.
Priest: (Pronounces the proper dismissal.)

Then follows the ceremony of mutual forgiveness. (Often a sermon is given before the exchange of forgiveness.) The priest stands beside the analogion, and the faithful come up one by one, making a prostration before the priest, and saying: Forgive me, a sinner. The priest also makes a prostration before each, saying the same words; and then the other receives his blessing and kisses his hand. After receiving the priest’s blessing, the faithful also ask forgiveness of one another. Meanwhile the choir sings the Paschal Apostikha, “Let God Arise.”

**Let God Arise**

*Znamenny Chant*

trans. H. Benigsen

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---
AND HOLY PASCHA! A MYSTICAL PASCHA,

A PASCHA WORTHY OF VENERATION! A PASCHA WHICH IS CHRIST THE REDEEMER! A BLAMELESS PASCHA!

A GREAT PASCHA! A PASCHA OF THE FAITHFUL!

A PASCHA WHICH HAS OPENED FOR US THE GATES OF PAR-
- A-DISE! A PAS-CHA WHICH SANC-TI-FIES ALL THE FAITH-

- FUL! AS SMOKE VAN-ISH-ES SO LET THEM VAN-ISH! COME

FROM THAT SCENE O WO-MEN BEAR-ERS OF GLAD TI-DINGS,

AND SAY TO ZI-ON: RE-CIEVE FROM US THE GLAD TI-DINGS

OF JOY, OF CHRIST'S RE-SUR-REC-TION: EX-ULT AND BE
NEAR TO THE TOMB OF THE LIFE-GIVER. THERE THEY FOUND AN ANGEL!
- CHA, RAN-SOM FROM AF-FLIC-TION! FOR TO-DAY AS FROM A

BRI-DAL CHAM- BER, CHRIST HAS SHONE FORTH FROM THE

TOMB! AND FILLED THE WOMEN WITH JOY SAY-ING: PRO-

- CLAIM THE GLAD TI-DINGS TO THE A-POS-TLES! GLORY

TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HO-LY SPI-RIT, NOW
AND EVER AND UNTO AGES OF AGES. AMEN. THIS IS

THE DAY OF RESURRECTION! LET US BE ILLUMINED BY

THE FEAST! LET US EMBRACE EACH OTHER! LET US

CALL "BROTHERS" EVEN THOSE THAT HATE US, AND FORGIVE

ALL BY THE RESURRECTION, AND SO LET US CRY:

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CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, TRAMP-LING DOWN DEATH

BY DEATH, AND UP-ON THOSE IN THE TOMBS BESTOW-ING

LIFE! CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, TRAMP-LING

DOWN DEATH BY DEATH, AND UP-ON THOSE IN THE TOMBS BESTOW-ING

- STOW-ING LIFE! CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD! TRAMP-
LING DOWN DEATH BY DEATH! AND UP-ON THOSE IN THE TOMBS

BESTOW-ING LIFE!!!
Forgiveness Sunday Vespers
Hymns Pointed for OBIKHOD Tones

“Lord I Call” (in the Tone of the Week)

- Four Verses from the Penitential Stikhera in Tone of the Week
  (see Lenten Triodion pgs. 184-188)
- Three Verses from the Triodion – Tone 2:

Let us humble the flesh by abstinence!
As we follow the Divine path of pure fasting!
With prayers and tears let us seek the Lord Who saves us!
Let us put an end to anger, crying out:
Save us who have sinned against Thee!
Save us, O Christ our King!
As Thou didst save the men of Ninevah!
And make us partakers of Thy Heavenly Kingdom, //
O Compassionate One!

When I think of my deeds, O Lord!
I am filled with despair!
And know that I am worthy of every torment!
I have despised Thy Commandments, O Savior!
I have spent my life as a prodigal!
I pray to Thee, O only merciful One:
Cleanse me by repentance!
Enlighten me through prayers and fasting! //
And despise me not, O most gracious Benefactor of all!

Let us begin the Fast with joy!
Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts!
Let us purify our souls and cleanse our flesh!
Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!
Let us rejoice in virtues of the Spirit and fulfill them in love!
That we may all see the Passion of Christ our God! //
And rejoice in spirit at the Holy Pascha!
Forgiveness Sunday Vespers  (at “Lord, I Call,” continued)

“Glory…” in the same tone: (Tone 2)

Let us begin the Fast with joy!
Let us prepare ourselves for spiritual efforts!
Let us purify our souls and cleanse our flesh!
Let us abstain from every passion as we abstain from food!
Let us rejoice in virtues of the Spirit and fulfill them in love!
That we may all see the Passion of Christ our God! //
And rejoice in spirit at the Holy Pascha!

“Now and Ever…” – Theotokion from the Menaion
(Note: if the Theotokion from the Menaion is not available, the following general Theotokion for Sunday evenings may be used.)

Tone 4:

Verily, Gabriel the Archangel
Did offer his greeting and peace to Her,
Who was brought up in the Temple of holiness of the saints!
Who is wrapped in faith, wisdom and blameless virginity!
Saying, Rejoice, O blessed one! //
Rejoice, O glorified one, the Lord is with thee!

Forgiveness Sunday Vespers – Apostikha:

Apostikha – Tone 4

Thy grace has shown forth, O Lord!
The grace which illumines our soul!
This is the acceptable time!
This is the time of repentance!
Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light!
That passing through the Fast as through a great sea,
We may reach the Resurrection on the Third Day! //
Of our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior of our souls!
Forgiveness Sunday Vespers  (Apostikha, continued)

V. To thee I life up mine eyes, O Thou Who art enthroned in the heavens! Behold as eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till He have mercy upon us!

Thy grace has shown forth, O Lord! The grace which illumines our soul! This is the acceptable time! This is the time of repentance! Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light! That passing through the Fast as through a great sea, We may reach the Resurrection on the Third Day! // Of our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior of our souls!

V. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Too long our soul has been sated with the scorn of those who are at ease, the contempt of the proud.

Thou art glorified! In the memory of Thy Saints, O Christ God! // At their supplications, send down upon us Thy great mercy!

Glory...Now and Ever in the Same Tone  (Tone 4)

The Angelic hosts glorify thee, O Mother of God! For thou gavest birth to God! Co-Eternal with the Father and the Spirit! Who created out of nothing the Angelic hosts! Beseech Him to deliver from corruption and to enlighten // The souls of those who rightly praise thee, O All-Pure one!

- The Prayer of St. Simeon
- The Trisagion Prayers
- The Lenten Troparia  (see music)