**APRIL 16**

**Great and Holy Wednesday**

**Bridegroom Matins (sung on Tuesday)**

*(The Matins of the first three days of Holy Week are commonly called the “Bridegroom Service.” This service is customarily served in anticipation on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings. Vespers with the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts in most places is celebrated early on the following day.)*

**Tone 8 Troparion**

Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight,

and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching;

and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless.

Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep,

lest thou be given up to death,

and lest thou be shut out of the Kingdom!

But rouse thyself, crying: “Holy, holy, holy, art Thou, O our God!”//

Through the Theotokos have mercy on us!

**Tone 3[[1]](#footnote-1) Kathisma Hymn (following Kathisma 14)**

The harlot came to Thee, O Lover of mankind,

pouring myrrh and tears on Thy feet.

At Thy command she was delivered from the stench of her evil deeds,

but Thy graceless Disciple, though breathing Thy grace,

rejected it and wallowed in filth,

selling Thee in his love of money.//

Glory, O Christ, to Thy compassion!

**Tone 4 Kathisma Hymn (following Kathisma 15)**

Deceitful Judas,

burning with love of money,

deceitfully plotted to betray Thee, O Lord,

the treasury of life.

He drunkenly runs to the Jews

and says to those transgressors://

“What will you give me, and I shall deliver Him to you, that He may be crucified?”

**Tone 1 Kathisma Hymn (following Kathisma 16)**

In tears the harlot cried out, O compassionate One,

as she fervently wiped Thy most pure feet with the ^hair of her head,

and she groaned from the depths of her soul:

“Cast me not away, neither abhor me, O my God,

but receive me in my repentance and ^save me,//

for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind!”

**Gospel**

(41-ctr) John 12:17-50

**The Three-Ode Canon**

**Tone 2 Ode 3 – Heirmos**

Thou hast established me on the rock of faith.

Thou hast opened wide my mouth against my enemies,

for my spirit rejoices in singing:

“None is holy but our God, and none is righteous but Thou, O Lord.”

*Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!*

*The assembly of lawless men gathers together for empty discussion and with evil intent,*

*to pronounce sentence upon Thee, O Christ the Deliverer.*

*But we sing to Thee:*

*“Thou art our God, and none is holy but Thou, O Lord.”*

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

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

*The fearful council of lawless men, with souls full of hatred toward God,*

*intends to kill the righteous Christ as an evildoer.*

*But we sing to Thee:*

*“Thou art our God, and none is holy but Thou, O Lord.”*

(Katavasia: “Thou hast established…”)

**Tone 4 Kontakion**

Though I have transgressed more than the harlot, O Good One,

I have not offered Thee a flood of tears,

but praying in silence I fall down before Thee.

With love I embrace Thy most pure feet.

As Master, grant me remission of sins,

when I cry to Thee, O Savior://

“Deliver me from the filth of my evil deeds!”

**Ikos**

*The woman who was once a profligate suddenly is wise.*

*She hates her shameful deeds and carnal pleasures,*

*remembering the magnitude of her shame*

*and the verdict of condemnation which awaits profligates and harlots.*

*Of these, I am indeed the first, and though in terror,*

*I foolishly remain in my evil ways.*

*But the harlot, though in terror, hastens to the Deliverer to cry:*

*“In Thy compassion and love for mankind,*

deliver me from the filth of my evil deeds!”

**Tone 2 Ode 8 – Heirmos**

The command of the tyrant prevailed;

the furnace was heated seven-fold.

But the Youths were not burned in it.

Trampling on the king’s decree, they sang:

“Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord!

Sing and exalt Him throughout all ages!”

*Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!*

*The woman poured precious myrrh upon Thy kingly, divine and awesome head, O Christ.*

*She grasped Thy most pure feet with her impure hands and cried:*

*“Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord!*

*Sing and exalt Him throughout all ages!”*

*Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!*

*The woman who was guilty of an abundance of sins,*

*washed Thy feet with the abundance of her tears and wiped them with her hair.*

*Therefore she was not deprived of absolution for the many sins of her life, but cried:*

*“Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord!*

*Sing and exalt Him throughout all ages!”*

*Let us bless the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Lord,*

*now and ever and unto ages of ages! Amen.*

*A sacred rite of redemption, wrought of saving compassion and a flood of tears,*

*is administered to the right-minded woman.*

*Washed in this fountain by her confession, she is not ashamed, but cries out:*

*“Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord!*

*Sing and exalt Him throughout all ages!”*

*We praise, bless, and worship the Lord,*

*singing and exalting Him throughout all ages.*

(Katavasia: “The command of the tyrant…”)

**Tone 2 Ode 9 – Heirmos**

With pure souls and blameless lips,

come, let us magnify the all pure and spotless Mother of Emmanuel!

Through her, let us offer prayers to Him Who was born of her:

“Spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us!”

*Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!*

*Envious Judas proved himself both ignorant and evil.*

*He sold the divine Gift through Whom our debt of sin is loosed.*

*This miserable man sold the grace of God’s love.*

*But spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us!*

*Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!*

*Judas went to the lawless rulers and said:*

*“What will you give me if I betray to you Christ Whom you seek?”*

*From intimate companionship with Christ, Judas is drawn away by gold.*

*But spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us!*

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

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

*O blind and greedy avarice! Hast thou forgotten what thou wast taught,*

*that the whole world is not worth thy soul?*

*Yet thou, O traitor, didst despair of thy life, and made a noose and hanged thyself.*

*But spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us!*

(Katavasia: “With pure souls…”)

**Exapostilarion**

Thy bridal chamber I see adorned, O my Savior,

and I have no wedding garment that I may enter.

O Giver of Light,

enlighten the vesture of my soul, and save me!

**The Praises** *(Psalms 148, 149, 150)*

V. *Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His exceeding*

*greatness! (Ps. 150:2)*

**Tone 1**

A harlot recognized Thee as God, O Son of the Virgin.

With tears equal to her past deeds, she besought Thee, weeping:

“Loose my debt, as I have loosed my hair!

Love the woman who, though justly hated, loves Thee!

Then with the publicans will I proclaim Thee,//

O Benefactor, Who lovest mankind.”

V. *Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with lute and harp! (Ps. 150:3)*

The harlot mingled precious myrrh with her tears.

She poured it on Thy most pure feet and kissed them.

At once Thou didst justify her.

O Lord, Who didst suffer for our sakes,//

forgive us also and save us!

V. *Praise Him with timbrel and dance; praise Him with strings and pipe! (Ps. 150:4)*

As the sinful woman was bringing her offering of myrrh,

the disciple was scheming with lawless men.

She rejoiced in pouring out her precious gift.

He hastened to sell the priceless One.

She recognized the Master, but Judas parted from Him.

She was set free, but Judas was enslaved to the Enemy.

How terrible his slothfulness!

How great her repentance!

O Savior, Who didst suffer for our sakes,//

grant repentance to us also and save us!

V. *Praise Him with sounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! (Ps. 150:5)*

Oh, the wretchedness of Judas!

He saw the harlot kiss the footsteps of Christ,

but deceitfully he contemplated the kiss of betrayal.

She loosed her hair while he bound himself with wrath.

He offered the stench of wickedness instead of myrrh,

for envy cannot distinguish value.

Oh, the wretchedness of Judas!//

Deliver our souls from it, O God!

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

**Tone 2**

The sinful woman ran to buy the precious myrrh

with which to anoint her Savior.

She cried to the merchant: “Give me myrrh,//

that I may anoint Him Who has cleansed all my sins!”

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

**Tone 6**

The woman who was engulfed in sin

found in Thee a haven of salvation.

She poured out myrrh with her tears and cried to Thee:

“Behold the One Who brings repentance to sinners!

Rescue me from the tempest of sin, O Master,//

through Thy great mercy!”

**Aposticha**

**Tone 6**

Today Christ comes to the house of the Pharisee.

A sinful woman crawls to His feet and cries:

“Look at me who am engulfed in sin,

in despair because of my evil deeds!

But in Thy goodness do not despise me!

Grant me forgiveness of my evil deeds, O Lord,//

and save me!”

V. *Satisfy us in the morning with Thy steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad as many days as Thou hast afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil. Let Thy work be manifest to Thy servants, and Thy glorious power to their children.* *(Ps. 89:16-18)*

The harlot spread out her hair to Thee, O Master,

Judas spread out his hands to lawless men:

she in order to receive forgiveness;

he in order to receive some silver.

We cry to Thee, Who wast sold for us and yet didst set us free://

“O Lord, glory to Thee”

V. *Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it.* *(Ps. 89:19)*

The corrupt and filthy woman

drew near to Thee, O Savior.

She poured out her tears on Thy feet

and thus announced Thy Passion.

“How can I gaze on Thee, O Master?

Yet Thou didst come to save the harlot.

Raise me from the depths, for I am dead in sin,

as Thou didst raise Lazarus from the tomb after four days.

Accept me in my misery, O Lord,//

and save me!”

V. *I will thank Thee, O Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all Thy wondrous works. (Ps. 9:1)*

Despairing for her life, and despaired of for her deeds,

the woman came bearing myrrh to Thee and cried:

“O Son of the Virgin,

though I am a harlot, do not cast me aside!

O Joy of the angels,

do not despise my tears!

As Thou didst not reject me as a sinner,//

accept me now as a penitent, in Thy great mercy!”

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

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

**Tone 8** *(The Hymn of Cassia)*

The woman had fallen into many sins, O Lord,

yet, when she perceived Thy divinity,

she joined the ranks of the myrrh-bearing women.

In tears she brought Thee myrrh before Thy burial.

She cried: “Woe is me!

For I live in the night of licentiousness,

shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin.

But accept the fountain of my tears,

Thou Who didst gather the waters of the sea into clouds!

Bow down Thine ear to the sighing of my heart,

O Thou Who didst bow the heavens in Thine ineffable condescension!

Once Eve heard Thy footsteps in Paradise in the cool of the day,

and in fear she ran and hid herself.

But now I will tenderly embrace those pure feet

and wipe them with the hair of my head.

Who can measure the multitude of my sins,

or the depth of Thy judgments, O Savior of my soul?//

Do not despise Thy servant in Thine immeasurable mercy!”

Liturgical texts for this service represent modified versions of translations provided by the Department of Religious Education, Orthodox Church in America, (“The Bridegroom Services of Holy Week”).

1. Kathisma Hymns are pointed to be sung to the Bakhmetev Obikhod Troparion melody. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)