**APRIL 16**

**Great and Holy Wednesday**

**Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (sung on Wednesday)**

*(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.)*

**"Lord I Call..." Tone 1**

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!

V. (10) *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy Name.*

**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. (9) *The righteous will surround me, for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.*

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

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. (7) *Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

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!

V. (6) *If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.*

**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!”

V. (5) *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.*

**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!”

V. (4) *From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

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

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. (2) *Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

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

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!”

**Tone 4 Prokeimenon**

O give thanks to the God of heaven, / for His steadfast love endures forever!

*(Ps. 135:26)*

V. *O give thanks to the God of gods, for His steadfast love endures forever!*

*(Ps. 135:2)*

**Reading from Exodus (2:11-22)**

**Tone 4** **Prokeimenon**

Thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever; / do not forsake the work of Thy hands! *(Ps. 137:8b)*

V *I give Thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing Thy praise. (Ps. 137:1a-b)*

**Reading from Job (2:1-10)**

***(“Let my prayer arise…” and then immediately)***

**Gospel**

(108) Matthew 26:6-16

***(and the rest of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts)***

***(After “Blessed be the Name of the Lord”, the Prayer of St Ephraim, once.)***

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”).