

**THE DORMITION OF THE
MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS
THE SERVICE OF THE
LAMENTATIONS
AT THE TOMB**

*As chanted on the 15th of August
at the Great Lavra of St. Sabbas
and the 17th of August at the
Gethsemane Skete in Jerusalem.*



TRADITIONAL ORDER

When chanted at Matins or Vigil

GREAT Vespers is chanted according to the Menaion. If it is a Vigil service, Matins follows thereafter as usual; or otherwise, on the following morning.

At Matins, a decorated bier is brought to the center of the church after the Litany of Peace. *God is the Lord* is chanted in Tone 2, followed by the Hymns *The noble choir*. During these hymns, the protos carries out the Epitaphion of the Dormition, followed by the other clergy. The Epitaphion is placed on the bier. The protos distributes candles to the brethren, and then blesses the deacons and acolytes to distribute candles to the people. He then censes the bier and the temple.

Immediately after the troparia, the verses of the 17th Kathisma are read between the hymns of the Lamentations. There is a Little Litany after the first and second stasis.

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Printed in the United States

Edited by Rdr. John Dykstra.
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Psalm verses from the King James Version. Public domain.

ISBN 978-1-7343286-4-6

Following the third stasis, the Evlogitaria of the Dormition are chanted, followed by the Little Litany. And *From my youth up* and the rest of Matins according to the Menaion.

At the end of the Great Doxology, *Holy God* is chanted slowly while the bier is carried in procession around the church. It is then returned to its place in the center of the church with the chanting of the Dismissal Hymn of the Feast, *In giving birth*.

MODIFIED ORDER

When chanted at Great Vespers

IN some traditions, the Lamentations are chanted at Great Vespers instead, if the protos desires. This modified order incorporates the Jerusalem service into this practice.

During the Trisagion Prayers after the Song of Simeon, the bier is brought out. Following the exclamation *For Thine is the Kingdom*, the Dismissal Hymns *The noble choir* are chanted in Tone 2. During these hymns, the protos carries out the Epitaphion of the Dor-

mition, followed by the other clergy, and the distribution of candles. The Lamentations are then chanted as described above.

If the procession will then take place, *Holy God* is chanted slowly while the bier is carried in procession around the church. It is then returned to its place in the center of the church with the chanting of the Dismissal Hymn of the Feast, *In giving birth*. And the Dismissal.

Matins is chanted according to the Menaion. *God is the Lord* is chanted in Tone 1, with the Dismissal Hymn of the Feast. The Lamentations and Evlogitaria are NOT chanted again; instead, the Poetic Kathismata (Sessional Hymns) and Polyeleos. If there was no procession at Great Vespers, it may take place at the end of the Great Doxology, as described above.



Handmaiden of Christ God. Let us cry to her: Arise, O Sovereign Lady, granting to all the Great Mercy.

Then we begin melodiously chanting the Lamentations, together with Psalm 118, in three parts, saying one verse of the Psalm at each Troparion.

THE FIRST STASIS

Tone 5

1. Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.
2. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

IN a grave they laid Thee, * O my Life and my Christ, * and they now have laid the Mother of Life as well, * such a strange sight, both to Angels and to men.

3. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

WE now magnify thee, * Theotokos most pure, * and we honor thy Dormition and burial * as we bow before thine hon'able tomb.

4. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

How canst thou die, Mary, * life of all the faithful ones? * And how can the tomb contain thy pure body, * which contained the One Which cannot be contained?

5. Thou hast commanded us to keep Thy precepts diligently.

QUEEN who barest God * and the King of Heaven, * thou art now royally translated, O pure one, * to the Kingdom of the heavens in the heights.

6. O that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!

FROM the earth thou wast taken, * but do not forsake it; now, * Theotokos, who art most pure and all-divine, * liberate the world from all the mighty foes.

7. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments.

ALL the earth glorifieth * thine entombment, O Christ, * and with reverence doth sing to thy Mother pure * a most-fitting hymn of burial, O Lord.

8. I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned Thy righteous judgments.

LIFELESS is thy body, * which brought Life to the world; * the angelic hosts are awe-struck and filled with fear * as they contemplate this wonder, O pure Lady.

9. I will keep Thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.
GABRIEL was sent from God * to announce the good news * of thine imminent departure from this life, * O thou pure and spotless heavenly Lady.

10. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy word.

NOW the Bridegroom calleth * unto thee, O pure Bride, * and thou goest forth into His Bride-chamber, * ever to rejoice in beauty divine.

11. With my whole heart have I sought Thee: O let me not wander from Thy commandments.

TO the throne of the Godhead * thou hast drawn near, O Maid, * though His light is unapproachable, thou dost go * and approach Him, in Whom thou hast found repose.

12. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.

WHEN thou didst depart earth, * thou didst stand before God, * as thou never art apart from thy holy Son, * nor is He apart from thy maternal bosom.

13. Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes.
IN the tomb, O Virgin, * thy most holy body * did not see corruption, for thou didst pass from earth * into Heaven with thy mortal flesh unspoiled.

14. With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth.

EVEN now, O Lady, * thy pure face is Paradise * and thy lips still pass the grace of immortal life; * death is powerless to mar thy sacred beauty.

15. I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

RECEIVE, O Mother, * from thy children our love * and these hymns and odes to bid thee farewell, O Maid, * which we offer from the depth of our souls.

71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.

ONCE the fleshless devil * fell from Heaven on high; * now exalted far above Heaven, wrapped in flesh * is the Virgin Mary, Mother of our God.

72. The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than Thousands of gold and silver.

LEAVING earth behind thee, * O most pure Virgin Maid, * thy magnificence and glory have now appeared * in the very glory of our God Most High.

Glory to the Father.

WORD of God, we hymn Thee, * God of all things art Thou, * with Thy Father and Thy Spirit Most Holy praised, * and we glorify Thy Nature divine.

Both now and ever.

EVERY generation * blesest thee, O Virgin pure, * Theotokos, sovereign Lady, and Queen of all, * glorifying thy Dormition and repose.

And again by both choirs:

IN a grave they laid Thee, * O my Life and my Christ, * and they now have laid the Mother of Life as well, * such a strange sight, both to Angels and to men.

Then the Little Litany is intoned, with the Exclamation:

Blessed and glorified be the majesty of Thy Kingdom: of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

After the priest has censed, the Left Choir begins the Second Stasis.

THE SECOND STASIS

Tone 5

RIGHT is it indeed, * Life-bestowing Lord, to magnify Thee, * Who hast glorified Thy pure Mother * at the time of her life-bearing repose.

73. Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn Thy commandments.

RIGHT is it indeed, * Theotokos, to magnify thee, * for thy most divine and all-blameless soul * is entrusted now unto the hands of God.

74. They that fear Thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in Thy word.

WONDER strange and new! * The door now passeth through a door, * heaven doth now enter the heavens, * and the throne draws near unto the throne of God.

75. I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

ALL the Angel hosts * stood and marveled when Christ God descended: * see'ng the Unapproachable now approach * to give honor at the body of His Mother.

76. Let, I pray Thee, Thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Thy word unto Thy servant.

TREMBLING with dread fear, * the angelic hosts see God descending * once again to take her soul in His hands * and ascend to Heaven once again in glory.

77. Let Thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for Thy law is my delight.

QUAKE, O ye heavens! * and, O earth, give ear now unto these words: * God descended once before for our sake; * He descends again today for His pure Mother.

78. Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in Thy precepts.

WISDOM doth remove * from the earth her dwelling to the heavens, * taking her abode in the mansions there, * and thereby doth fill it with divine glory.

79. Let those that fear Thee turn unto me, and those that have known Thy testimonies.

SHE did not descend * from the heavens, the Virgin Bride of God; * rather, to the heavens did she ascend, * in that she gave birth unto the Heav'nly King.

80. Let my heart be sound in Thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

FLESH now enters Heaven; * that which was impassible is open: * all ye people who bear the name of Christ, * come, let us ascend with God and His pure Mother.

After the priest has censed, the Right Choir begins the Third Stasis.

THE THIRD STASIS
Tone 3

EV'RY generation * to thy grave comes
bringing * its dirge of praise, O Virgin.

132. Look Thou upon me, and be merciful
unto me, as Thou usest to do unto those that love Thy
name.

COME, all things created, * let us offer up
now * a parting hymn to Mary.

133. Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any
iniquity have dominion over me.

CHRIST'S holy Disciples * bury now the
body * of my God's holy Mother.

134. Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will
I keep Thy precepts.

RANKS of holy Angels, * hosts of the Arch-
angels * unseen, now sing her praises.

135. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and
teach me Thy statutes.

HEAR the pious Women * with the blest
Apostles, * as they cry out with sadness.

136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because
they keep not Thy law.

HOW, O Unwed Virgin * Mother of the
Highest, * shall we bear our pain and
sadness?

137. Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are
Thy judgments.

IN thy blest departure, * all the world re-
joiceth, * but as for us, we mourn, weeping.

138. Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded
are righteous and very faithful.

LEAVE us not as orphans, * O our blessed
Mother, * and keep us in thy loving care.

139. My zeal hath consumed me, because mine ene-
mies have forgotten Thy words.

THOU, our light, now darkened: * how, then,
shall we bear it, * to ne'er again see thy
sweet eyes?

140. Thy word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it.

WOE, alas, O Lady, * thy lips of God e'er speaking, * how have they been left silent?

141. I am small and despised: yet do not I forget Thy precepts.

WE shall never leave her, * the Mother of our Teacher! * the blest Apostles cried out.

142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth.

ONCE again upon clouds, * we shall go before you * unto the gates of Heaven.

143. Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet Thy commandments are my delights.

SEE the holy staff placed * in thy tomb, now springing * forth blooms of life most fragrant.

144. The righteousness of Thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

SHE, who by her Childbirth * raised the dead up from the grave, * is now herself placed in a grave.

145. I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord: I will keep Thy statutes.

WHITHER hast thou gone, * O adopted Mother? * the Virgin Disciple cried out.

146. I cried unto Thee; save me, and I shall keep Thy testimonies.

THOU hast gone to glory * with thy Son, O Mother, * and thou art glad, rejoicing.

147. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in Thy word.

HAST thou been called away * again with the Apostles * to Cana for a wedding?

148. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in Thy word.

To thy holy Son, * O my blessed Mother, * take up today me, thy child!

149. Hear my voice according unto Thy loving-kindness: O Lord, quicken me according to Thy judgment.

TRANSLATE me, O Mother, * by thine own translation, * to Him Who was born of thee!

150. They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from Thy law.

LET us stand in glory * together in heaven,
* as we stood suff'ring at His Cross!

151. Thou art near, O Lord; and all Thy commandments are truth.

CHRISt the Lord descendeth * to Gethsemane now * with countless hosts of Heaven.

152. Concerning Thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them for ever.

CHOIR of the Disciples, * seeing the Lord coming, * be glad and raise up your voice!

153. Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget Thy law.

LET the whole earth leap up * as it now beholdeth * our God, once more descending!

154. Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to Thy word.

LET us go out quickly, * meeting the Lord Jesus, * Who stands among us once more.

155. Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not Thy statutes.

LET us be attentive, * for our God is speaking * with His all-spotless Mother.

156. Great are Thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to Thy judgments.

O MY sweetest Mother, * come now and rejoice with * thine own most sweet Child, Jesus.

157. Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from Thy testimonies.

MOTHER, come and see now, * thy Divine Son cometh * to take thee home to Heaven.

158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not Thy word.

IN My Father's glory * My Mother's glory I shall appear, * and this is why I have come.

159. Consider how I love Thy precepts: quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy loving-kindness.

IN Thy loving-kindness, * O my God, I glory, * the Mother said to her Son.