

The Great Blessing of the Waters



Holy Ascension Orthodox Mission

**HOLY ASCENSION
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN MISSION**

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This project is still in draft and continues as a work-in-progress.

Instructions for Clergy & Altar Servers in Blue.

Instructions for Choir & Faithful in Red.

The Great Blessing of the Waters

After the prayer behind the Ambon at the end of the Divine Liturgy, the clergy go in procession, with lights and incense, to the place where the Blessing of the Waters is to be held, the priest holding in his hand the Precious Cross.

Meanwhile, the following stichera are sung:

Tone 8

By Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem

People:

The voice of the Lord upon the waters cries aloud saying: Come all of you, and receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, from Christ who is revealed. (x 3)

Today the nature of the waters is sanctified; the Jordan is divided and it reverses the current of its own streams, seeing the Master wash Himself. (x 2)

O Christ the King, as a man You came to the river, O Good One. As a servant You hasten to receive Baptism by the hands of the Forerunner for our sins, O Lover of mankind. (x 2)

People: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 8

People:

O Lord, taking the form of a servant, You came to the voice who cried in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord," and knowing no sin, You asked for Baptism. The waters saw You and were afraid, and likewise the Forerunner trembled and cried aloud, saying: "How shall the lamp illuminate the Light? How shall the servant lay hands upon the Master? O Savior who takes away the sin of the world, sanctify both me and the waters."

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us attend.

Isaiah 35: 1 - 10

Reader: Be glad, you thirsty desert, and rejoice exceedingly, and let the desert blossom as a lily. The desert places of the Jordan shall blossom abundantly and rejoice exceedingly. The glory of Lebanon and the honor of Carmel shall be given to it, and My people shall see the glory of the Lord and the majesty of our God. Be strong, you relaxed hands and feeble knees. Be comforted, you fainthearted. Be strong, do not fear. Behold, our God renders judgment and will render it. He will come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will speak clearly. For water shall burst forth in the desert, and a valley in the thirsty land. The waterless desert shall become meadows, and the thirsty land springs of water. There will be the gladness of the birds, a habitation of reeds and marshes. A pure way shall there be, and it shall be called a holy

way. No unclean man shall pass through there, neither shall there be an unclean way there. But those dispersed shall walk in it, and they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous animals go up in it, nor at all be found there. But the redeemed shall walk in it, and those gathered by the Lord shall return and come to Zion with gladness, and with everlasting gladness over their head, and gladness shall possess them. Pain, sorrow, and sighing fled away.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us attend.

Isaiah 55: 1 - 13

Reader: “You who are thirsty, go to the water, and all who have no money, go and buy wine and fat, and eat and drink without money and price. Why do you value the price of money, and give your toil for what does not satisfy? Listen to Me and eat good things, and your soul will delight in good things. Incline your ears and follow my ways. Listen to Me, and your soul shall live in good things; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the holy and faithful things of David. Behold, I made him a witness among the Gentiles, a ruler and commander to the Gentiles. The Gentiles, which did not know you, shall call upon you, and the peoples who did not understand you shall take refuge in you, because of your God, the Holy One of Israel; for He glorified you.”

Seek God, and when you find Him, call upon Him when He draws near to you. Let the ungodly man abandon his ways, and the lawless man his counsels; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; for He

shall forgive your sins abundantly. “For My counsels are not your counsels, neither are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “But as Heaven is distant from Earth, so is My way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from My mind. For as rain comes down, or snow from Heaven, and does not return until it saturates the Earth, and it brings forth and produces, and gives seed to the sower and bread for food, so shall My word be, whatever proceeds from My mouth. It shall not return until it accomplishes whatever I willed, and I shall prosper your ways and My commandments. For you shall go forth with gladness and shall be taught with joy, for the mountains and hills shall exult to receive you with joy; and all the trees of the field shall applaud with their branches. Instead the broom-tree shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle; and the Lord shall be for a name and for an everlasting sign, and He shall not fail.”

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us attend.

Isaiah 12: 3 – 6

Reader: You will draw water with gladness from the wells of salvation. In that day, you will say, “Praise the Lord; call upon His name. Declare His glorious things among the Gentiles and make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the name of the Lord, for He has done great things. Declare this in all the Earth. Exult and be glad, O inhabitants of Zion, for the Holy One of Israel is exalted in her midst.”

Prokeimenon Tone 3

(Psalm 26: 1)

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: Peace be to all.

Reader: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 3rd Tone: The Lord is my light and my savior; whom shall I fear?

People: The Lord is my light and my savior; whom shall I fear?

Reader: The Lord is the defender of my life; whom shall I dread?

People: The Lord is my light and my savior; whom shall I fear?

Reader: The Lord is the defender of my life...

People: ... whom shall I fear?

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us attend.

1 Corinthians 10: 1 – 4

Reader: Brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant, that our forefathers were all under the cloud: all passed through the sea; and they were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.

Alleluiarion Tone 4

(Psalm 28: 3)

Reader: Alleluia in the 4th Tone.

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: The God of glory thundered; the Lord is upon the many waters.

People: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Deacon: Wisdom! Arise! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all.

People: And to your spirit.

Priest: The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark.

People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Deacon: Let us attend.

Priest: **Mark 1: 9 – 11**

People: Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

The Great Litany

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace from above, and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world, the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of them all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this holy temple, and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our great lord and father, His Holiness, Patriarch **N.**; for our lord the Most Reverend Metropolitan **N.**, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad; for our lord the Most Reverend (Archbishop **or** Bishop **N.**); for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this land, its authorities and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He may deliver His people from enemies visible and invisible, and confirm in us oneness of mind, brotherly love and piety, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this city, for every city and country, and the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For seasonable weather, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For travelers by sea, land and air; for the sick, the suffering, the imprisoned, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may be sanctified by the power, operation and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That there may be sent down into it the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That there may come upon this water the purifying operation of the supersubstantial Trinity, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That Satan may be swiftly crushed beneath our feet, and that every counsel directed against us by the Evil One may be made of no effect, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He will deliver us from every attack and temptation of the Enemy, and make us worthy of the good things which are promised, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That we may be illumined by the Illumination of Understanding and godliness through the descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord may send down the blessing of Jordan and sanctify these waters, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may become a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, for the healing of soul and body and for every useful purpose, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may become a fountain springing up for eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may serve for the averting of every evil purpose of enemies visible and invisible, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For those who draw from this water and take it for the sanctification of their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That this water may bestow cleansing of soul and body upon all who draw it

with faith and partake of it, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That we may be deemed worthy to be filled with holiness through partaking of these waters, by the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the Lord God may hear the voice of our supplication, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He will deliver us from all tribulation, wrath, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God, by Your grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God.

People: To You O Lord.

Priest (quietly): O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, O True God, source of life and immortality, O Light of Light, who came into the world, to enlighten it: Illumine our mind with Your Holy Spirit and accept us who are offering glory and thanksgiving to You for all Your great and wondrous works which are from all ages, and for Your saving Providence in these last times. O You who are King of all, You have clothed Yourself in our weak and poor nature, and submitted Yourself to the state of a servant; and moreover You accepted to be baptised in the Jordan by the hand of a servant, so that You, O Sinless Lord, having sanctified the nature of water, may lead us to a new birth through water and Spirit, and restore us to our original freedom. Celebrating the memory of this divine mystery, we entreat You, O Master, Lover of mankind: Sprinkle cleansing water upon us Your unworthy servants, according to Your divine promise, which is the gift of Your deep compassion; so that the prayers of us sinners over this water may be acceptable through Your grace, and that through it Your blessing may be granted to us and to all Your faithful people, for the glory of Your holy and venerated Name. For to You is due all glory, honor, and worship, together with the Father who is without beginning, and Your Most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Priest: Great are You, O Lord, and wondrous are Your works, and no word will suffice to praise Your miracles. (x3)

Priest: For by Your will, You have brought all things into existence from nothingness, by Your strength You uphold creation, and by Your providence You order the world. From four elements You have formed creation; You have crowned the course of the year with four seasons. All the rational powers tremble before You. The sun praises You. The moon glorifies You. The stars meet together before You. The light obeys You. The deep waters shudder before You. The springs of water serve You. You have stretched out the heavens as a curtain. You have established the Earth upon the waters. You have bordered the sea with sand. You have spilled out the air for breathing. The Angelic Powers serve You. The choirs of Archangels worship You. The many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, standing and flying around You, cover themselves with fear at Your unapproachable

glory. For You who are God and who are inexpressible, without origin, and indescribable, came down upon Earth, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man. For You, O Master, for the sake of Your tender mercy, could not endure to see the race of men tormented by the devil; but You came and saved us. We confess Your grace. We proclaim Your mercy. We do not conceal Your benevolent acts. You have liberated the nature of our race. You sanctified the virginal womb by Your nativity. All creation sings the praises of You who has revealed Yourself. For You, our God, have revealed Yourself upon Earth, and have dwelt among men. You sanctified the streams of Jordan, sending down from Heaven Your Holy Spirit, and crushed the heads of the dragons that lurked in it.

The priest makes the Sign of the Cross three times saying:

O King who loves mankind, come now through the descent of Your Holy Spirit, and sanctify this water. (x3)

And give it the grace of redemption, the blessing of the Jordan. Make it a source of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, protection against disease, a destruction of demons, unapproachable by hostile powers, filled with angelic power: so that all who draw from it and partake of it may have it for the cleansing of their souls and bodies, for the healing of their passions, for the sanctification of their homes, and for every useful purpose. For You are our God, who through water and the Spirit has renewed our nature grown old through sin. You are our God, who through water drowned sin in the days of Noah. You are God who by Moses through the waters of the sea freed the Hebrew race from the slavery of

Pharaoh. You are our God who split the rock in the wilderness and it gushed out waters and poured out streams, and satisfied Your thirsty people. You are our God who through water and fire, through Elijah converted Israel from the delusion of Baal.

O Master, sanctify now this water by Your Holy Spirit. (x 3)

Grant to all those who touch it, who anoint themselves with it, or drink from it, sanctification, blessing, cleansing and health.

O Lord, save and be merciful to our Metropolitan N., our Bishop N., the priests, priestmonks, the deaconate in Christ, and the clergy and people here present together with our brethren who are absent for just cause.

O Lord, save our faithful rulers.

And preserve them under Your protection in peace, and subdue under them every enemy and adversary, granting all their petitions which are for salvation and eternal life, that by the elements, by men and angels, by things visible and invisible, Your most-holy name may be glorified, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: Peace be to all.

People: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Bow your heads to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest (quietly): O Lord, incline Your ear and hear us, who has accepted baptism in the Jordan, and sanctified the waters. Bless all of us who through the bowing of our heads, outwardly show You our servitude. O Lord, count us worthy to be filled with Your sanctification, through partaking of this water and being sprinkled with it, may it bring us health of soul and body.

Priest: For You are the sanctification of our souls and bodies and to You we send up glory, thanksgiving and worship, with Your Father who is without beginning and Your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The priest now makes the Sign of the Cross over the water with the Precious Cross. Then holding the Cross upright in both hands, he plunges it into the water, and lifts it from the water once again. As he does this, he sings the troparion:

Priest: O Lord, when You were baptized in the Jordan, /

People:
the worship of the Trinity was revealed; /
for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, /
calling You His beloved Son. /
And the Spirit in the form of a dove /
confirmed the certainty of His word. /
O Christ our God, who has revealed Himself, //
and has illumined the world, glory to You.

(x 3)

The priest then plunges the Cross a second and third time, doing as before. The troparion is repeated a second and third time. Next he dips a branch of basil in the water, and sprinkles the 4 corners of the church.

The rest of the clergy, and then the people, approach and kiss the Cross, and the priest sprinkles the water on the head of each one, with the branch of basil. Clergy and people

also drink from the water which has been blessed. During this time, the choir continues to sing the troparion.

Then the following sticheron is sung:

Tone 6

People:

O faithful, let us praise the greatness of God's dispensation for us. For He who became a man for our transgressions and who alone is pure and incorrupt was cleansed in the Jordan for our cleansing, so that He may sanctify us and the waters, and crush the heads of dragons upon the water. O brethren, let us draw water with gladness for the grace of the Spirit is invisibly given by Christ, the God and Savior of our souls, upon those who draw water with faith.

Liturgy Dismissal

People: Blessed is the name of the Lord now and ever and to the ages of ages. (x 3)

The Priest goes through the Holy Doors and stands at the Holy Table, and the Deacon, having entered by the South door, lays his head upon the Holy Table, to the left of the Priest. The Priest says the following prayer:

The Prayer Said When the Holy Gifts are to be Consumed

Priest: O Christ our God, the Mystery of Your Dispensation has been accomplished and perfected as far as it was in our power; for we have had the memorial of Your death, we have seen the image of Your Resurrection, we have been filled with Your endless life, we have enjoyed Your inexhaustible food. Be well-pleased to grant this to us all in the age to come, through the grace of Your Father who is without beginning and Your Holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The Priest blesses the Deacon, who then goes to the Table of Oblation to consume the Holy Gifts.

The Priest stands in the midst of the Holy Doors and blesses the people saying:

Priest: The blessing of the Lord be upon you, through His grace and love for mankind, always, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Dismissal

Priest: Glory to You, O Christ God, our hope, glory to You.

People:

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

Lord, have mercy. (x 3)

In the name of the Lord, Father bless.

Priest: May Christ our true God, who was baptized by John in the Jordan for our salvation, through the intercessions of His all pure Mother; of the holy and glorious apostles; of our father among the saints, (John the Golden-Mouth, Archbishop of Constantinople or Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia), and Saint(s) N.(N.) (to whom the church is dedicated); and Saint(s) N.(N) (of the day); of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and the Lover of mankind.

People:

Amen. O Lord, preserve for many years, our great lord and father ..., the Most-holy Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia;

our Lord the Most Reverend Metropolitan ...;
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad,

and our Lord the Most Reverend Archbishop (N);

and our Lord the Most Reverend Bishop (N);

the brotherhood of this holy temple,
and all Orthodox Christians.

Sources

Kallistos Festal Menaion

Scripture – Old Testament

The Orthodox Study Bible (Old Testament). St Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology. 2008.

Psalms and Old Testament in general are according to the Septuagint usage and numbering as contained in The Orthodox Study Bible.

Scripture – New Testament

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