THE SERVICES

OF THE

HOURS

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THE

GREAT

BOOK

OF THE

HOURS

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GREAT

HOROLOGION

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USDAOC, ed

THE SERVICE OF
SMALL EVENING PRAYER
That is, SMALL VESPERS

This service is offered on certain occasions, often before a Great Vigil, as prescribed in the Typicon, and usually for Sunday.
If the Ninth Hour immediately precede, and have been read in the Temple itself, then the Dismissal is not pronounced ; and immediately, we begin with "Blessed is our God", and then "Come, let us worship ...".
If the Ninth Hour immediately precede, but be read in the Narthex, then the Ninth Hour is read to its conclusion, including the dismissal, and all enter the Temple to begin Small Vespersas follows :

Presbyter : Blessed is our God, always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

– *or*– **Reader :** Through the prayers of our holy *fathers*, O Lord, Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.[1]

Reader : Amen.

In some places, it is the one presiding who reads Glory..., and O Heavenly King..., before the reader begins.

Glory be to You, our God, glory be to You.

– *or* – *:* Glory be to You, O Christ our God, our hope, glory be to You.

***** O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and fulfilling all things ; Treasury of good things, and Provider of Life, come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

***** [We do not read "Heavenly King" in paschaltide. We say "Christ is risen...." (three times). From Ascension to Pentecost, we read the tropar of Ascension.]

Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.
(*three times*) (*three metanias*)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins.[2] O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit, and heal our infirmities, for Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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[1] This invocation generally refers to the persons present, not only to necessarily ancestors, hence fathers for a male monastery, mothers for a female monastery, brothers, and sisters for a usual parish situation.

[2] *Be propitious to*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit ; now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
Our Father, who are in the heavens, hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come, Your 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 bring us not to the test, but rescue us from the evil one.

Presbyter : For Yours are the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Reader : Amen.
Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit ; now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
O come,[3] 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. (*with three metanias*)

PSALM 103

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, You have been greatly magnified ; You have put on confession, and splendour, throwing light around You like a garment, and stretching out the heaven like a skin. He covers His upper chambers with water ; He makes the clouds His steps of ascent ; He walks around on the wings of the winds. He makes His angels His spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. He lays the foundations of the earth for its stability, so that it shall not be bent unto the ages of ages. The abyss is His mantle like a garment, the waters shall stand up on the mountains. From Your rebuke they shall flee away ; from the voice of Your thunder they shall be afraid. The mountains climb up, and the plains go down into the places where You founded them. You have placed a bound which they shall not pass, nor shall they turn around, and cover the earth. He sends out the springs in the ravines ; the waters shall pass between the mountains. They shall give drink to the wild beasts of the field, and the wild asses shall quench their thirst ; the birds of the heaven shall make their home on them, and from the midst of the rocks shall they sound forth their voice, watering the mountains from His upper chambers. From the fruit of Your works shall the earth be sated. He makes the grass spring up for

[3] But in Pascha, if Vespers follow Ninth Hour immediately, then we say "Christ is risen …" three times instead.

the cattle, and green plants for the service of Men, so that he may bring forth bread from the earth, and wine makes glad the heart of Man ; so that he may gladden his face with oil, and bread makes firm the heart of Man. The trees of the plain shall be sated, the cedars of Lebanon which You planted. There the sparrows shall make their nests ; the house of the heron is chief amongst them. The highest mountains are for the hart ; the rocks are a refuge for the hare. He made the moon for seasons ; the sun has known its setting. You appointed the darkness, and it became night, and through it shall move all the wild forest beasts ; the cubs of the lion roaring to snatch their prey, seeking their food from God. The sun has risen, and they have been gathered, and they shall lie down in their dens. Man shall go forth to his work, and to his labour until evening. How magnified have been Your works, O LORD ; in wisdom have You made them all. The earth has been filled with Your creation. Here is the sea, great, and broad ; in it are reptiles beyond number, living things, both small, and great. There the ships move about ; and that leviathan which You fashioned to sport in it. All expect You to give them food in due season. When You give it to them, they gather it ; when You open Your hand, all things are filled with loving-kindness. But when You turn away Your Face, they shall be stirred up. You have taken away their spirit, they shall fade away, and return to their dirt. You shall send forth Your spirit, and they shall be established ; and You will renew the face of the earth. Let the glory of the LORD be forever ; the LORD will be glad in His works – He who looks upon the earth, and makes it tremble ; He touches the mountains, and they smoke. I shall sing to the LORD in my life ; I shall chant to my God while I have being. May my conversation be made sweet to Him ; as for me, I shall be glad in the LORD. May sinners fade away from the earth, and the iniquitous, so that they cease to be. Bless the LORD, O my soul.

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

Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia. Glory be to You, O God.

(*3 times*)

Reader : Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

Immediately, we sing "Lord I call" .

O LORD, I HAVE CRIED

(*Psalms 140, 141, 129, 116*)

Reader : In the _____ tone : O Lord, I have cried out You, hear me.

PSALM 140

Readers : O LORD, I have cried out to You. Hear me. Hear me, O Lord. O Lord, I have cried out to You, hear me. Give heed to the voice of my supplication, when I cry out to You. HEAR ME, O LORD.[4] Let my prayer be directed in Your sight as incense ; and the lifting-up of my hands, like an evening sacrifice. HEAR ME, O LORD.

And we read the verses in their order, until the beginning of the stikhs.

Reader : O LORD, set a guard on my mouth, and a fortified door around my lips. Do not incline my heart away to words of evil, to make excuse for my sin. I am with Men who work iniquity, but I will never join in with their chosen ones. The righteous shall chastise me with mercy, and reprove me, but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head, as my prayer is ever against their good pleasure. Their judges have been drowned holding the rock ; my words shall be heard, for they have been sweetened. As a clod of earth has been broken, so our bones have been scattered all around Hadēs. For to You, O LORD, LORD, do my eyes look, on You have I hoped ; do not take away my soul. Guard me from the snare which they set up for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of those who work iniquity. The sinners shall fall into their own nets ; but as for me, I am alone until I pass over.

PSALM 141

With my voice have I cried out to the LORD ; with my voice have I entreated the LORD. I shall pour out before Him my supplication ; I shall make known in His presence my oppression. When my spirit fails within me, You have known my paths ; on this road on which I have walked, have they hidden a snare for me. I considered my right hand, and looked down, for there was no-one who recognised me ; flight has been lost from me, and there is no-one to seek out my soul. To You, O LORD, have I cried out, and I have said; "You are my hope ; You are my portion in the land of the living". Give heed to my supplication, for I have been greatly humbled ; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they have grown stronger than I. Lead my soul out of prison, so that I may confess Your name, O LORD. The righteous shall await me ; until You reward me.

PSALM 129

Out of the depths have I cried out to You, O LORD ; O LORD, hear

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[4] This capitalised phrase may be used as a refrain on the psalm-verses until the verses begin, as the superior may bless.

my voice. May Your ear give heed to the voice of my supplication. If You marked iniquities, O LORD, O LORD, who shall withstand ? For with You is propitiation. For Your name's sake have I waited for You, O LORD. My soul has waited for Your word. My soul has hoped on the LORD.

Reader : From the morning watch until night ; from the morning watch,

Reader : let Israel hope on the LORD. (4) (*At Small Vespers*)

Reader : For with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him plenteous redemption ;

Reader : And He will redeem Israel from all His iniquities. (3)[5]

PSALM 116

Reader : Praise the Lord, all you nations.

Reader : sing praises to Him, all you people. (2)

Reader : For His mercy has grown strong upon us,

Reader : and the truth of the LORD endures forever. (1)

Reader : In the ___ [*same*] tone :

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Glory-verse
Now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen
Theotokos-Hymn, or Festal Stikh

There is no entrance, and we immediately sing the hymn :

GLADSOME LIGHT

By the Hieromartyr Athenogenos
edited by Saint Soprhonius, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Readers : O Jesus Christ, the Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal, Heavenly, Holy, Blessed Father. 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 You with voices of praise, O Son of God, and Giver of Life ; therefore all the world glorifies You.

PROKEIMENON

The presbyter, in the Altar, says :

Presbyter : Wisdom. Let us attend.
The Prokeimenon in the ___ tone.
The prokeimenon is sung in the usual manner.

Reader(s) :

DEEM US WORTHY

Deem us worthy, O Lord, of guarding us sinless this evening. Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified be Your Name unto the ages. Amen.

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[5] Verses from the Menaion.

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, even as we have set our hope on You. Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your statutes[6]. Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your statutes. Blessed are You, O Holy One, teach me Your statutes.

Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever ; O disregard not the works of Your hands.

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

Response : Amen

APOSTIKHA

We sing one stikh from the Octoechos, and three for the Theotokos, as prescribed, with their verses.

And then,

v : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

proper stikh, if provided

v : Now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Theotokion / Dogmatic

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And after the Apostikha we immediately sing or read the Canticle of Saint Symeon :

CANTICLE OF SAINT SYMEON

Readers : Now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, O Master, in accordance with Your word ; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light of revelation for the nations, and the glory of Your people Israel.

Reader : Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (*three times*)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins.[7] O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit, and heal our infirmities, for Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

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[6] *Or :* "Law"

[7] Be propitious to

Spirit ; now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
Our Father, who are in the heavens, hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come, Your 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 bring us not to the test, but rescue us from the evil one.

Presbyter : For Yours are the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Response : Amen.

And we sing the Dismissal Tropar :

TROPAR

W*e sing the proper Tropar once.*

AUGMENTED LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION [8]

Deacon : Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great goodness, we pray You, hearken, and have mercy.

Response : Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
(*and so, after each petition*)

Deacon : Again, we pray for our Metropolitan *n*, for our father, (*Arch*)Bishop *n*, for priests, deacons, and all other clergy, and for all our *brethren* in Christ.
Again we pray for this country, for those who govern us, for all civil authorities and the public service.
Again we pray for our Abbot/Abbess n, for our brethren, the priests, the priestmonks, and all our brethren in Christ.
Again we pray for the blessed, and ever-memorable holy Orthodox patriarchs ; and for the blessed, and ever-memorable founders of this holy *temple*[9]; and for all our *fathers, and brethren*,[10] the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here, and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.
Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, and visitation for the servants of God *n*, and for the pardon, and remission of their sins.
Sometimes, special petitions are added here.
Again we pray for those who bring offerings, and do good works in this holy , and all-venerable house ; for those who labour, and those who sing ; and for all the people here present, who await Your great, and rich mercy.

Presbyter : For You are a merciful God, and love Man, and unto You we send up glory, to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Response : Amen.

DISMISSAL

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[8] If there be no presbyter, then instead of reading the "Lord have mercies" for this litany, the Intercession for the Living and the Departed may be instead read.

[9] house, habitation, monastery.

[10] Refers to a monastic community : "Mothers, and sisters" for a female community, but "brothers, and sisters" for a non-monastic community.

Presbyter : Glory be to You, O Christ, our God, and our Hope, glory be to You.

Response : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit ; now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Master bless.

Presbyter : pronounces the Lesser Dismissal of the day

Response : Amen.

If there be no presbyter, then the senior reader says :

Reader : O Lord Jesus Christ Son of God, through the prayers of Your most pure Mother, of our venerable, and God-bearing fathers, and of all the saints, have mercy on us and save us.

Reader : Amen.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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In the Refectory

And we go to the refectory for a light meal, and we pray as follows :

Readers : The needy shall eat, and be filled up ; they shall praise the Lord, those who seek Him out, their hearts shall live unto the ages of ages. *Psalm 21*

Reader : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Reader : Now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Master (*Father*) bless.

And the presbyter blesses the table, and food is taken.

And when the meal is ended, then we say :

Readers : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Readers : Now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
O Theotokos, your womb is the holy table filled with the heavenly bread, Christ our God ; for whoever eats of this does not die. So says the Nourisher of all.
Make us worthy of your gifts, O Virgin Mother of God, overlooking our trespasses, and providing healing for those who faithfully receive your blessing, O Pure One.

Readers : More honourable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you.
O Lord, You have made us rejoice in Your creation ; and in the deeds, and the works of Your hands shall we be glad. The light of Your Face, O Lord, is signed upon us. You have given gladness to

our hearts. From the fruit of wheat, wine, and oil are we fulfilled. In peace we lie down, and sleep, for You, O Lord, have made us alone to dwell in hope.

Reader : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Reader : Now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
Master bless.

Presbyter : God is with us, with His Grace, and love of Man, always, now, and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Response : Amen.

[THE END OF SMALL VESPERS]