The Lamentations before the Holy Sepulchre
From Holy Saturday Orthros
Modern English Translation by N. Takis
Byzantine Chant

Dedicated to His Eminence, Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh

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The Lamentations

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Plagal First Tone

First Stasis

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1. In a grave they laid You, yet, O Christ, You are Life, and the armies of the angels beheld amazed, giving glory that You chose to condescend.

2. How, O Life, do You die? How do You dwell entombed, Who has slashed through all the bonds in the realm of death, and has raised the dead in Hades from their graves?

3. We, O Lord, exalt You, O Christ Jesus, our King, and we venerate Your Passion and burial through which You have brought redemption from our sins.

4. You have set the measures of the earth, yet this day in a narrow tomb do dwell, Jesus, King of all, Who has raised those who were dead up from their tombs.
5. O mine own Christ Jesus,- You are King of all things. Why have You come down to Hades to seek the dead? Is it not to set the race of mortals free?

6. He Who is the Master of creation appears as a corpse and lies entombed in a fresh-hewn grave, Though He emptied every grave-site of its dead.

7. In a grave they laid You, yet, O Christ, You are Life. By Your death have you abolished the realm of death, and upon the world have poured down streams of Life.

8. Fairer in His beauty than all creatures on earth, He is seen now lying lifeless, his beauty gone, yet all beauty in creation springs from Him.

9. O my own sweet Jesus, Saving Light of the world, can the darkness of the grave hide Your Light within? Neither Thought nor word can say what You have borne.
10. Neither Nature’s reason, nor the angels, O Christ, grasp the mystery enfolding Your burial, beyond all our understanding and all words.

11. I revere Your passion, Your entombment I praise, and I magnify Your might, Loving Friend of man; they have ransomed me from passions that corrupt.

12. When Your mother saw You brought to slaughter, O Lamb, she was stabbed with painful torment; her anguish sobs called the flock to join her bitter cries of grief.

13. “Woe is me!” the Virgin mourned through heart-breaking sobs. “You are, Jesus, my most precious, beloved Son! Gone is my light, and the Light of all the world!”

14. “God and Word eternal, O my Gladness and Joy! How shall I endure Your three days inside the tomb when my heart is breaking with a mother’s grief?”
15. "Who will give me water, and a fountain of tears," cried the Virgin Bride of God in her deep despair, "that in grief for my sweet Jesus I might weep."

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

16. We will sing Your praises, Word and God of all things, with Your Father and Your Holy Spirit You are praised, and we glorify Your burial divine.

both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

17. You are known as blessed, Theotokos, most pure. With our faithful hearts we honor the burial suffered three days by Your Son, Who is our God.

18. In a grave they laid You, yet, O Christ You are Life, and the armies of the angels beheld amazed, giving glory that You chose to condescend.
Second Stasis

1. Tru-ly it is right that we mag-ni-fy You Who be-stows Life, Who up-on the Cross with Your out-spread Hands all the po-wer of the e-ne-my have crushed.

2. Tru-ly it is right that we mag-ni-fy You, our Cre-a-tor; through Your pain have we been re-leased from pain, and from all corrup-tion we have been set free.

3. All the earth did shake and the sun con-cealed it-self in dark-ness when they set Your bo-dy in-to the tomb, Christ, the Sa-vior and the ne-ver-set-ting Sun.

4. "Free from pain, my Child, I, a- lone a-mong all wo-men, bore You." said Your mod-est Mo-ther with hum-ble voice. "Now Your pas-sion brings more pain than I can bear."

5. "Torn a-part am I, and my womb, O Word, is wrenched with-in me as Your un-just slaugh-ter as-saults my eyes," cried the Mo-ther to her Son through bit-ter tears.
6. "Eyes that are so sweet, and Your lips, O Word, how shall I close them?" Jo-seph cried appalled, trembling in dismay. "How shall I entomb You as befits the dead?"

7. Fearfully the earth took Your body in her bosom, Savior. Holding her Creator, she quaked in fear, and awakened those who lay dead in their tombs.

8. Stone that man has hewn now conceals the Stone of Life's Foundation; mortal men entomb God as mortal man, causing You, O earth, to tremble in dismay.

9. "Child of mine, behold Your belov'd disciple and Your mother. Grant that I might hear Your sweet voice again!" Your pure Mother called through flowing tears to You.

10. Suffering in pain, neither form, had You, O Word, nor beauty, but by Your arising, Your beauty shines, and Your holy rays adorn all those on earth.
11. Sun and moon as one turned to darkness in their sorrow, Savior, and like faithful servants, they wore their grief, when they wrapped themselves in blackness like a shroud.

12. Struck with fear, the sun saw Your light invisible as You lay lifeless and concealed in the grave, my Christ, and it shuddered and relinquished its own light.

13. Weeping bitter tears, Your pure Mother mourned to see You lifeless lying in the tomb, yet You are, O Word, the ineffable and everlasting God.

14. Witness to Your death, through her bitter tears Your all-pure Mother weeping, cried aloud unto You, O Christ: "Do not linger with the dead, for You are Life!"

15. Singing hymns, O Christ, all the faithful now sound forth the praises of Your crucifixion and burial for by Your entombment we are freed from death.
Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
16. God beyond all time, with the Word and Spirit everlasting! Strengthen every scepter, O righteous Lord, of the Orthodox against our every foe!

both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

17. Life was born of You who are holy and most pure, O Virgin. Grant Your church protection from all dissent and reward us with the blessing of Your peace.

18. Truly it is right that we magnify You Who bestows Life, Who upon the Cross with Your outspread Hands all the power of the enemy have crushed.
Third Stasis

Third Tone

1. Every generation offers adoration
   - my Christ, at Your entombment.

2. The Arimathian from the Cross has brought
   You and in Your tomb has laid You.

3. Anxiously the women carry myrrh and spices, my Christ, to lay before You.

4. Come with all creation, and offer hymns of mourning
   - ing to honor our Creator.

5. As women bearing myrrh did, let us in our awareness anoint as dead the Living.
6. Three times blessed Joseph, You shall tend the Body of Christ, Who has bestowed Life.

7. Those He fed with manna have raised their heels to spurn Him from Whom all things are given.

8. Ignorance most foolish! Those who slew the prophets have come, O Christ, to slay You.

9. Mindless as a servant, he who learned the mysteries betrayed the Depths of Wisdom.

10. He who sold the Savior, Judas the Betrayer, has sold himself as captive.

11. With help from Nicodemus, Joseph tends the Body as does befit the Master.
12._You are my sweetest Spring-time, My sweetest Son, I ask

You, "Where has Your beauty faded?"

13._When she beheld You lifeless, O Word, Your all-pure Mother cried out in lamentation.

14._Death to Death You bringest, through Your divine dominion. My God, by Your own dying.

15._Foiled is the Deceiver; Redeemed is the deceived one, my God, by Your great wisdom.

16._My God and my Creator, the King of all, and God's Son, how have You borne Your Passion?

17._Beholding You suspended upon the tree, the Mother cried to her Calf in anguish.
18._"My sweet-est Son, most precious, the Light of my eyes hidden! How can a tomb conceal You?"

19._"My Son, I give You glory for Your supreme compassion which causes You to suffer."

20._Arise, O Lord of Mercy, and with You, also raise us who linger deep in Hades.

21._"Arise, You Who bestows Life!" the Mother who didst bear You through flowing tears entreats You.

22._The powers of the Heavens stood up in fear and wonder when they beheld You lifeless.

23._Early in the morning, the women bearing myrrh came to sprinkle You with spices.
24._By Your Resurrection grant peace upon Your churches and to Your flock salvation.

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

25._My God, Who are three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, on all the world have mercy.

both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

26._Deem Your servants worthy, O Virgin, to bear witness at Your Son’s Resurrection.

27._Every generation offers adoration my Christ, at Your entombment.