TA ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ
THE LAMENTATIONS

St. John the Baptist
Greek Orthodox Church
Tampa, Florida
The Lamentations at the Tomb of Christ

The funeral service in the Orthodox Church is based in part on the words of Psalm 118 (119). This Psalm has 176 verses. The theme of this Psalm is the Glory of God’s Law—it is an examination of the righteousness of God, contrasted to how we all fall short of it. This is why it is sung in part at a funeral service, to remind us of the goal, while recognizing that we will all struggle with it.

The Service of the Lamentations, celebrated on Holy Friday evening, is for all intents and purposes, a funeral for Christ. It is also a service of transition between the heaviness of Holy Week and the joy of the Resurrection. The colors and the mood of the service change throughout the service, so that by the end of the service, we can feel ourselves at the cusp of the Resurrection.

There are 176 Lamentations, divided into three stanzas, and traditionally, one verse of Psalm 118 is intoned before each of them. In modern parish usage, we do not chant all 176 of them and the verses are usually omitted.

In this book, you’ll find 17 verses of the first stanza, 12 verses of the second stanza, and 30 verses of the third stanza. The first verse of each stanza is chanted by the priest, and then repeated by the people. The first verse of each stanza is also chanted again at the end of each stanza.

The Lamentations are offered in front of the Tomb of Christ, which is called a Kouvouklion. The embroidered cloth that has been placed in the Tomb, that depicts Christ being laid in the grave is called the “Epitaphios,” which literally translates “Into the Tomb.” It is customary in most parishes for young girls to surround the Tomb of Christ, representing the myrrh-bearing women who ministered to Christ in death, and who were present when He was laid in the grave.

Please sing along with the priest and the choir. The verses that are chanted by the priest may be chanted by the people as well.
A Guide to English Phonetics

While the exact sound of the Greek alphabet cannot be fully expressed through English phonetics, a close approximation is possible. * Please use the following pronunciation key when using this book:

- a as in “ah”
- u as in “too”
- ch and h as in “hefty”
- e as in “met”
- d as in “then” or “that”
- s as in “sing”
- i as in “bee”
- g as in “good”
- th as in “think”
- o as in “foam”
- y as in “bee”
- z as in “zebra”

*As explained by Rev. Fr. Anthony Moschonas.
1. In a grave they laid You,
O my Life and my Christ;
and the armies of angels were amazed,
as they sang praise of Your sacrificial love.

2. How, O Life, can You die?
or abide in a grave?
For You did destroy the Kingdom of death,
O Lord
and You raise up the dead of Hades’ realm.

3. We magnify You,
O Lord Jesus, our King;
and we venerate Your Passion and Burial,
whereby from corruption’s curse we are redeemed.

4. You Who did establish
the earth’s bounds does now dwell
in a new tomb, O my Jesus, King of all
Who does call the dead to leave their graves
and rise.

First Stanza

1. I Zo-i en ta-fo
ka-te-te-this Chri-ste,
ke An-ge-lon stra-ti-e ex-e-pli-ton-do
sin-ka-ta-va-sin do-xa-zou-se tin Sin.

2. I Zo-i pos thni-skis
pos ke ta-fo i-kis
tou tha-na-tou to va-si-li-on li-is de
Ke tou Ad-hou tous ne-krous
ex-a-ni-stas.

3. Me-ga-li-no-men Se
I-i-sou Va-si-lev
ke ti-mo-men tin ta-fin ke ta pa-thi
Sou
Dhi on e-so-sas i-mas ek tis ftho-ras.

4. Me-tra yis o sti-sas
en smi-kro ka-ti-kis
I-i-sou Pam va-si-lef ta-fo si-mer-ou
Ek mni-ma-ton tous tha-non-das a-nis-ton.
5. O my dear Christ Jesus,
King and Ruler of all,
why to them that dwell in Hades did You descend?
Was it not to set the race of mortals free?

μυ Χριστέ μου,
Βασιλεύ του παντός,
τι ζητών τοις εν τω άδη ελήλυθας,
η το γένος απολύσαι τών βροτών.

6. The Master of All
of creation is dead
and is buried in a tomb never used before,
He that emptied all the tombs of all their dead.

Ο Δεσπότης πάντων
καθοράται νεκρός
και εν μνήματι καινώ κατατίθεται
ο κενώσας τά μνημεία τών νεκρών.

7. In a grave they laid You,
O my Life and my Christ.
Yet, behold now, by Your death,
You destroyed death,
And You pour forth Life’s streams for all the world.

Η ζωή εν τάφω
κατετέθης Χριστε
και θανάτω σου τόν θάνατον
ώλεσας
και επήγασας τώ κόσμω τήν ζωήν.

8. You, O Christ, were numbered
with men of evil deeds
as one evil, and did also deliver us
from the ancient schemer’s evil works and deeds.

Μετά τών κακούργων
ως κακούργος Χριστε,
ελογίσθης δικαιών ημᾶς ἀπαντας
κακουργίας τού αρχαίου
πτερνιστού.

9. O my sweetest Jesus,
my Salvation, my Light:
How are You now hidden in a dark tomb?
Your burial surpasses understanding.

Ιησού γλυκύ μοι
και σωτήριον φώς,
tάφω πώς εν σκοτεινώ
κατακέκρυψε
ο αφάτου και αρρήτου ανοχής.

O De-spo-tis pan-don
ka-tho-ra-te ne-kros
ke en mni-ma-ti ke-no ka-ta-ti-the-te
o ke-no-sas ta mni-mi-a ton ne-kron.
10. Both the mind of nature and the bodiless angels cannot comprehend the mystery, O Christ, of Your inexplicable entombment.

Απορεί καί φύσις νοερά καί πληθύς η ασώματος Χριστε το μυστήριον τῆς αφάτου καί αρρήτου ανοχής. A-po-ri ke fi-sis No-er-a ke pli-this i a-so-ma-tos Chris-te to mi-sti-ri-on tis a-fa-tou ke a-ri-tou a-no-chis.

11. Lo, how strange are these wonders things amazing and strange for the Giver of my life is carried lifeless forth to the tomb by the hands of weeping Joseph.

Ωθαυμάτων ξένων ο πνοής μοι χορηγός άπνους φέρεται κηδευόμενος χερσι του Ιωσήφ. O thav-ma-ton xe-non o prag-ma-ton ke-non o pno-is mi ho-ri-gos ap-nous fe-re-te ki-de-vo-me-nos her-si tou I-o-sif.

12. When, O Christ our Maker, You were laid in Your tomb, the foundation of Hades shook with ruin and the graves of mortal men were opened wide.


13. Your pure Mother weeping bitter tears for You, O my Jesus, she cried out to You, O my Son, how can I lay You in the grave?

Δακρυρρόους θρήνους, επί σέ η Αγνή, μητρικώς, ω Ιησού επιφανείον ανεβά, πώς κηδεύσω σε Υιέ. Da-kri-ro-ous thri-nous epi se i Ag-ni mi-tri-kos o I-i-sou e-pi-re-nou-sa a-ne-vo-a pos ki-dev-so se I-ie.

14. I adore Your Passion, Your entombing I praise, and I magnify Your might, O Friend of all; by which I am set free from corrupting passions.

Προσκυνώ τό πάθος, ανυμινό τήν ταφήν μεγαλύνω Σου τό κρατός Φιλάνθρωπε δι’ ών λέλυμαι παθών φθοροποιών. Pros-ki-no to pa-thos a-nim-no tin ta-fin me-ga-li-no Sou to kra-tos Fi-lan-thro-pe di on le-li-me pa-thon ftho-ro-pi-on.
15. “Who will give me water and the fountain of tears?”
So the Virgin wed to God cried with loud lament,
“that for my beloved Jesus I may weep.”

Τίς μοι δώση ύδωρ και δακρύων πηγάς; η Θεόνυμφος Παρθένος εκφυγάζεν ἵνα κλαύσω τὸν γλυκὸν μου Ἰησοῦν.

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

Δόξα Πατρί καί Υιώ και Αγίω Πνεύματι.

16. Word of God, we praise You.
the God of all things, with Your Father and the Holy Spirit; and we glorify Your burial divine.

Ανυμνούμεν Λόγε Σέ τών πάντων Θεόν σύν Πατρί καί τώ Αγίω Σου Πνεύματι καί δοξαζομεν τήν θείαν Σου ταφήν.

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

Καί νύν καί αεί καί εις τούς αιώνας τών αιώνων. Αμήν.

17. We call you blessed,
Theotokos most pure, and with faithful hearts we honor the burial suffered three days by Your Son Who is our God.

Μακαρίζομέν σε Θεότοκε Αγνή καί τιμώμεν τήν ταφήν τήν τριήμερον του Υιού σου καί Θεού ημῶν πιστώς.

Ma-ka-ri-zo-men se The-o-to-ke Ag-ni ke ti-mo-men tin ta-fin tin tri-i-me-ron tou I-i-ou sou ke The-ou i-mon pi-stos.
1. In a grave they laid You,  
   O my Life and my Christ;  
   and the armies of angels were amazed,  
   as they sang praise of Your sacrificial love.

Priest: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God by Your Grace.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: Commemorating our most holy, pure, blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos, and ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our whole life unto Christ our God.

People: To Thee O Lord.

Priest: For Your Name has been blessed and Your Kingdom has been glorified, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen
Second Stanza

1. Right it is indeed,
   Life-bestowing Lord, to magnify You,
   for upon the Cross were Your most pure hands outspread,
   and the strength of our dread foe have You destroyed.

2. Right it is indeed,
   Maker of all things, to magnify You:
   for by Your sufferings have we all now attained freedom from suffering and corruption.

3. The earth quaked and trembled,
   and the sun concealed his face with darkness:
   for the light unwaning that has shone forth from You,
   with Your Body sank to darkness and the grave.

4. In Your suffering,
   neither form had You, O Word, nor beauty:
   but when You did rise up You did illuminate and shed beauty upon all with rays divine.
5. Both the sun and moon were completely darkened, O my Savior, thus portraying servants obedient, who have clothed themselves in black from their great grief.

6. Seeing You, O Christ, the Unwaning and Unseen Light, lying hidden in a grave, without form or breath, the sun hid his face behind a veil of gloom.

7. Wailing bitter tears, Word of God, Your spotless Mother mourned You, when she saw that You were laid in a grave, O Ineffable and Everlasting God.

8. Witnessing Your death, Your supremely undefiled Mother cried with bitter grief, O Christ, and said to You: Tarry not among the dead, O Life of all.

9. Hades, that dread foe, shook with terror when he looked upon You, O Daystar of Glory, only Immortal Lord; and he yielded up his captives then in haste.
10. With our hymns, O Christ, we, Your faithful people, now acclaim Your holy Crucifixion and Blessed Burial; for Your Burial has ransomed us from death.

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

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

11. O Eternal God, Co-eternal Word and Holy Spirit: As a righteous Lord strengthen our rulers against heresies and all wars.

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

12. Birthgiver of Life, O most blameless and most holy Virgin: Quell every offense within our most Holy Church, blessing us with peace forever, Blessed One.
1. Right it is indeed, Life-bestowing Lord, to magnify You, for upon the Cross were Your most pure hands outspread, and the strength of our dread foe have You destroyed.

Priest: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God by Your Grace.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: Commemorating our most holy, pure, blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos, and ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our whole life unto Christ our God.

People: To Thee O Lord.

Priest: For You are Holy our God, Who sits on the throne of glory of the Cherubim and to You we offer glory, together with Your Eternal Father and Your All-Holy, Good, and Life-Creating Spirit now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen
**Third Stanza**

1. Ev’ry generation offers hymns of praise at Your entombment, O Christ.
   
   Αἱ γενεὰς πᾶσαι, ὑμνον τῇ ταφῇ σου, προσφέρουσι, Χριστὲ μου.

2. The Arimathaeans took You down from the wood and laid You in a new tomb.
   
   Καθελὼν τοῦ ἔξου, ὁ Ἀριμαθαίας, ἐν τάφῳ σε κηδεύει.

3. The Myrrh-bearing women with loving preparation, came to give myrrh to You.
   
   Μυροφόροι ἠλθον μύρα Σοι Χριστέ μου κομίζουσαι προφρόνως.

4. Come, all things created, let us sing a funeral hymn to honor our Creator.
   
   Δεῦρο πᾶσα κτίσις, ὑμνοὺς ἐξοδίους, προσοιόσωμεν τῷ Κτίστῃ.

5. Let us like the myrrh-bearers with myrrh and true knowledge anoint as dead, Him, who lives.
   
   Ὡς νεκρὸν τὸν ζώντα σὺν μυροφόροις πάντες μυρίσωμεν εμφρόνως.

6. O thrice-blessed Joseph, bury now the Body of Christ the Life-bestower.
   
   Ἡσσὴρ τρισμάκαρ κηδεύον τὸ Σῶμα Χριστοῦ τοῦ ζωοδότου.
7. Those He fed with manna
lifted heels of judgment
against their Benefactor.

8. O, the utter hatred,
brimming with Christ’s murder,
of them that slew the prophets.

9. Taught the inner myst’ries,
he, the foolish servant,
betrayed Eternal Wisdom.

10. He that sold his Savior
sold himself as captive,
that crafty traitor, Judas.

11. Joseph does entomb now
Helped by Nicodemus,
the Body of his Maker.

12. O, my most sweet Springtime!
my most beloved Child,
whither has gone your beauty?

13. Your All-holy Mother
was moved to tears lamenting
seeing as Dead, You, the Word.
14. Women to anoint Him with their myrrh, are coming now to Christ, Who is Divine Myrrh.

15. Deceived is the deceiver; deceived man is now redeemed, through Your great wisdom, my God.

16. O Son of God, Almighty, O my God and Maker, where came Your will to suffer?

17. When Your Mother saw You suspended on the Cross she cried out: O my Young Child!

18. Fervently the maiden crying out and weeping the sorrow piercing her heart.

19. O Light of my eyes, O, my sweetest Child, how can a tomb now hide You?

20. I praise You O my Son for Your great compassion which moved You thus to suffer.
21. Arise, O Lord of Mercy, raising us up also who languish deep in Hades.

22. Arise, O Life-giver, cried out she that bore You, even Your weeping Mother.

23. All the hosts of Heaven stood with fear, confounded, beholding Your dead Body.

24. Once a Joseph fled with You into exile, Savior; another now buries You.

25. Weeping and lamenting, Your most holy Mother mourns for You, my slain Savior.

26. Hearts must tremble seeing, the Maker of creation, Your strange and awful burial.

While the next verse is being sung several times, the Priest will sprinkle rose water on the Epitaphios and the people and around the sanctuary.
27. Sprinkling Your Sepulchre, the myrrh-bearing women before the dawn came to the tomb.

28. Grant peace unto Your Church, by Your Resurrection, and to Your flock salvation.

29. O Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, have mercy on the world.

30. Grant that we who serve you may see the Resurrection of your Son, O blessed Virgin.

1. Ev’ry generation offers hymns of praise at Your entombment, O Christ.
Priest: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and protect us, O God by Your Grace.

People: Lord have mercy.

Priest: Commemorating our most holy, pure, blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos, and ever-Virgin Mary, with all the Saints, let us commit ourselves and one another and all our whole life unto Christ our God.

People: To Thee O Lord.

Priest: For You are the King of Peace and the Savior of our souls, O Christ our God, and to You we offer glory, together with Your Eternal Father and Your All-Holy, Good, and Life-Creating Spirit now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Please return to page 395 in the black Holy Week book for the remainder of the service.
In Loving Memory of
Ted and Freda Kladis