

Great Vespers with a Non-Celebrating Hierarchy

NOTE: In most cases only things that are done differently when the Bishop is present are noted here. If a particular item is not mentioned then that means to do it the same as in a regular Vespers Service.

After the Bishop ascends the Episcopal Throne, the Clergy approach the Bishop and each makes one metania, asks the Bishop's blessing and kisses his right hand. They proceed through the south door and take their places at the Altar.

*After making three metanias in their respective places, the Priest and the Deacon bow together to the Bishop and then the Deacon says in a loud voice, "Bless, Master!" After the Priest completes, "Blessed is our God..." the Deacon and the Priest turn and bow together to the Bishop. The bow to the Bishop is repeated after every exclamation by the Priest throughout the entire service. The Priest takes his place on the south side of the Holy Table facing north. **(NOTE: The Priest stands to the side and leaves the center of the Altar open at all times except when he is reciting lines that are for Priests; those are said from the center of the Altar.)***

The Bishop will then say: Come let us worship and fall down . . . Then Psalm 103.

At the commemoration of the Hierarchs, in the Great Ektenia, the Deacon turns, points his orarion and bows to the Bishop as he says, "... and for our Bishop Mark..." while the Priest bows from the Royal Doors. At the conclusion of the Ektenia, the Deacon moves to stand before the icon of Christ and the Priest moves in front of the Holy Table to intone the exclamation. After the Priest intones the exclamation, the Deacon bows to the Bishop, enters the Altar through the south door and takes the censor as the Bishop or if he defers, the chanters begin, "O Lord, I have cried..."

The Deacon, stands in the Holy Doors, asks the Bishop's blessing on the incense, censes the Bishop three times and begins the great censuring. After censuring the Altar, the Prothesis, and the High Place, he exits the Altar through the north door. After censuring the icons and the west of the Church, he censes the Bishop nine times (three sets of three), the Clergy around the Episcopal Throne, the people, and the Bishop nine times, again. He completes the censuring in the usual manner.

The Little Entrance is made with the Deacon stopping in his usual place on the solea and the Priest proceeding to the Episcopal Throne and standing on the Bishop's right side. The Deacon asks the Bishop's blessing on the incense, censes him three times. He censes the icons, the West of the Church, the Bishop nine times (three sets of three), the people and the Bishop nine times, again. Then, moving the censor to his left hand, he takes his orarion in his right hand, points it toward the Royal Doors, and looking at the Bishop says quietly, "Bless, Master, the Holy Entrance." The Bishop blesses the Entrance. The Deacon puts the end of his orarion back over his left arm and elevates the censor in his right hand. When the chanters finish the Doxasticon he intones, "Wisdom, Let us Attend!" The entrance is completed in the usual manner. If it is a daily Vespers, O Gladsome Light is said by the Bishop.

If it is a Great Vespers, the Prokeimenon is done first by the priest, repeated by the choir or chanter, then the appropriate verse is chanted, followed by the prokeimenon, the verse, the prokeimenon, the verse, the prokeimenon, followed by the priest chanting the first half of the prokeimenon and the chanter or choir concluding the prokeimenon. In the next Ektenia ("Let us say ..."), the Bishop is commemorated after the Metropolitan as in the Great Ektenia. The Bishop says the prayer, Vouchsafe, O Lord,gives the Peace after the Ektenia of Fervent Supplication. The Bishop also says St. Simeon's Prayer or may defer to the chanters or choir. At the Dismissal, the Deacon intones, "Wisdom!" with the choir's response being, "Master, Bless." The Bishop says all of the remaining lines including the final Dismissal. After the commemoration of the Saints of the Day, the people chant, "Preserve, O Lord, our Master and Chief Priest..." The Bishop intones, "Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers..." and the Priest intones, "Through the prayers of our Holy Master..."