TA ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ

The Lamentations before the Holy Sepulchre

From Holy Saturday Orthros

Modern English Translation by N. Takis

Byzantine Chant
The Lamentations

Plagal First Tone

First Stasis

N. Takis

1. Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.

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. Thou hast commanded us diligently to keep thy precepts.

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.

4. O, that my ways were directed to keep thine ordinances.

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.

5. I will keep thine ordinances: O forsake me not greatly.

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. With my whole heart have I diligently sought thee: cast me not away from thy commandments.

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. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.

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. I have delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

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. I will meditate on thine ordinances: I will not forget thy words.

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. Render a recompense to thy servant: so shall I live, and keep thy words.

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 am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

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. My soul has longed exceedingly for thy judgments at all times.

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

13. Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have sought out thy testimonies.

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. For princes sat and spoke against me: but thy servant was meditating on thine ordinances.

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. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.

15. "Who will give me wa-ter, and a foun - tain of tears," cried the Vir-gin Bride of God in her deep de - spair," that in grief for my sweet Je - sus I might weep."

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

16. We will sing Your prai - ses, Word and God of all things, with Your Fa - ther and Your Ho - ly Spi - rit You are praised, and we glo - ri - fy Your bu - ri - al di - vine.

Both now and ever and unto ages of ages, Amen!

17. You are known as bless - ed, The-o - to - kos, most pure. With our faith - ful hearts we hon - or the bu - ri - al suf -fered three days by Your Son, Who is our God.

18. In a grave they laid You, yet, O Christ You are Life, and the ar - mies of the an - gels be - held a - mazed, giv - ing glo - ry that You chose to con - de - scend.
Second Stasis

1. My soul has cleaved to the ground; enliven thou me according to thy word.

2. For thy testimonies are my meditation, and thine ordinances are my counselors.

3. My soul has slumbered for sorrow; strengthen thou me with thy words.

4. I have chosen the way of truth; and have not forgotten thy judgments.

"Free from pain, my Child, I, alone among all women, bore You." said Your modest Mother with humble voice. "Now Your passion brings more pain than I can bear."
5. I have cleaved to thy testimonies, O Lord; put me not to shame.

5. "Torn apart am I, and my womb, O Word, is wrenched within me as Your unjust slaughter assaults my eyes," cried the Mother to her Son through bitter tears.

6. I ran the way of thy commandments, when thou didst enlarge my heart.

6. "Eyes that are so sweet, and Your lips, O Word, how shall I close them?" Joseph cried appalled, trembling in dismay. How shall I entomb You as befits the dead?"

7. Take away my reproach which I have feared: for thy judgments are good.

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. And let thy mercy come upon me, O Lord; even thy salvation, according to thy word.

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. And so I shall render an answer to them that reproach me: for I have trusted in thy words.

Child of mine, behold Your beloved disciple and Your mother. Grant that

I might hear Your sweet voice again! Your pure Mother called thru flowing tears to You.

10. I spoke of thy testimonies before kings, and was not ashamed.

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. Remember thy words to thy servant, wherein thou hast made me hope.

Sun and moon as one turned to darkness in their sorrow, Savior, and like

faithful servants, they wore their grief, when they wrapt themselves in blackness like a shroud.

12. This has comforted me in mine affliction: for thine oracle has enlivened me.  

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. Thou art my portion, O Lord: I said that I would keep thy law

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

14. I prepared myself and was not terrified to keep thy commandments.

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

15. The snares of sinners entangled me: but I forgot not thy law.

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.

16. Lord, the earth is full of thy mercy: teach me thine ordinances.

16. God beyond all time, with the Word and Spirit everlast-ing! Strengthen every scepter, O righteous Lord, of the Orthodox against our every foe!
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit!

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.

Both now and ever and unto the ages of ages, Amen!

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

1. They that fear thee will see me and rejoice: for I have hoped in thy words.

2. My soul faints for thy salvation: I have hoped in thy words

3. Mine eyes failed in waiting for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

4. When wilt thou execute judgment for me on them that persecute me?
5. Transgressors told me idle tales; but not according to thy law, O Lord.

6. All thy commandments are truth; they persecuted me unjustly; help thou me!

7. They nearly made an end of me in the earth; but I forsook not thy commandments.

8. Thy word, O Lord, abides in heaven for ever.
9. Were it not that thy law is my meditation, then I should have perished in mine affliction.

10. I am thine, save me; for I have sought out thine ordinances.

11. Sinners laid wait for me to destroy me; but I understood thy testimonies.

12. I have been very greatly afflicted, O Lord: quicken me, according to thy word.
13. My soul is continually in thine hands; and I have not forgotten thy law.

14. Behold, I have loved thy commandments, O Lord: quicken me in thy mercy.

15. The beginning of thy words is truth; and all the judgments of thy righteousness endure for ever.

16. Princes persecuted me without a cause, but my heart feared because of thy words.
17. Let my petition come in before thee, O Lord; deliver me according to thine oracle.

18. Let thine hand be prompt to save me; for I have chosen thy commandments.

19. My soul shall live, and shall praise thee; and thy judgments shall help me.

20. The injustice of the proud has been multiplied against me; but I will search out thy commandments with all my heart.
21. My soul shall live, and shall praise thee; and thy judgments shall help me.

21._"A-rise, You Who be-stows Life!" the Mo- ther who didst bear You through flow-ing tears en-tracts You.

22. The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.

22._The pow-ers of the Heav-ens stood up in fear and won-der when they be-held You life-less.

23. Lord, the earth is full of thy mercy: teach me thine ordinances.

23._Ear-ly in the morn-ing, the wo-men bear-ing myrrh came to sprin-kle You with spi-ces.

24. The injustice of the proud has been multiplied against me: but I will search out thy commandments with all my heart.

24._By Your Re-sur-rec-tion grant peace up-on Your church-­es 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 ever and unto ages of ages, Amen!

26. Deem Your servants worship, O Virgin, to bear witness at Your Son's Resurrection.

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