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The Meaning of our Divine Services, part seven: Divine Liturgy, "The First Antiphon"

The Antiphons, named such because the first two Antiphons are usually sung *antiphonally* (that is by two choirs alternating with the first choir singing the First Antiphon and the second choir singing the Second Antiphon) begin with verses from the beautiful Psalm 103, praising the Creation given to us by our Creator Whom we have just supplicated for peace in the Great Litany. Here is a commentary on this psalm by St. Jerome (from his Homily 30):

This psalm is the worship of the creature praising and blessing his Creator through the prophet and is similar in theme to the eighteenth psalm that says: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of His hands."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul!" The Prophet bestirs himself to praise God. To bless the Lord, that is, to praise the Lord, brings, moreover, a blessing upon oneself. O Lord, my God, You are great indeed! You, who are God of all, are especially my God, for I am not the slave of sin; I have merited to be called Your servant. "thou hast been magnified exceedingly." When I behold the sky, the earth, the birds, quadrupeds, serpents, and all of Your creation, I marvel, and I magnify the Creator [. . .]

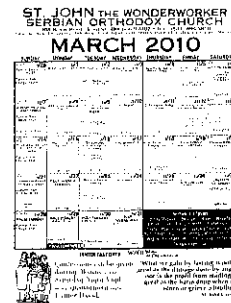
The Prophet means to say that from the beginning God spread out the heavens, just as if He were unfolding a scroll and rolling it back again, as it is written in the Holy Writ: "And the sky shall be rolled up like a scroll" (Isaiah 34:4).

"Who supporteth His chambers in the waters," as similarly in Genesis (Gen. 1:7), there were waters above the firmament and, likewise, below the firmament. "Who walketh upon the wings of the winds." This typifies the presence of God everywhere.

Next Week: "The First Antiphon" continued

3rd Week of Great Lent

Sunday	9 am	Canons of Preparation
<i>ST. GREGORY OF PALAMAS</i>	10 am	Divine Liturgy & trapeza
	7 pm	Twenties Round Table
Mon-Friday	Noon	Sixth Hour
Monday	5 pm	Compline
Tuesday	5 pm	Vespers
Wednesday	6 pm	Presanctified Liturgy followed by potluck
Thursday	5 pm	Vespers
Friday	2:30 pm	First Saturday Breakfast Preparation
	5 pm	Akathist to the Mother of God
Saturday	9-11 am	First Saturday Neighborhood Breakfast
	7 pm	Vigil
Sunday	9 am	Canons of Preparation
<i>ADORATION OF THE</i>	10 am	Divine Liturgy & trapeza
✠ <i>HOLY CROSS</i> ✠	5:30 pm	Vespers at St. Anne's in Corvallis



"The blood of the holy Great Prince Igor brought about a spiritual change in the souls of the Kievans and united Kiev and Chernigov in venerating the slain holy prince."

✠Vladika John the Wonderworker

To receive Holy Communion, one must be baptized and chrismated in the Orthodox Church, have recently confessed with one's Spiritual Father/Confessor, be blessed by him to receive the Gifts, and abstained from food & drink since the night before. Ideally, we should also attend Vigil the evening before. Upon approaching the Chalice, we should not have any foreign matter in or on our mouths; this includes gum or lipstick. All are welcome to receive the blessed bread (*antidoron*) at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.