

# December 1

## Prophet Nahum

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you..., 3 verses, tone 3  
to the Special Melody* Great are the powers of your cross...

The grace of the Holy Spirit  
dwelt within you, O prophet of God,  
its light making of you a radiant lamp;  
through you proclaiming to Nineveh the great things to come.

Like a luminous cloud, O Nahum, prophet of God,  
you let fall a shower of divine knowledge,  
giving the city of Nineveh the judgment of God to drink,  
for it was sick with impiety.

As a partaker of incorrupt glory,  
ineffable renown, unutterable joy and divine sweetness,  
O divinely inspired Nahum, prophet of God,  
pray for us to the Master of all.

*But if Alleluia be sung Matins instead of God is the Lord...  
we sing the following verses of the Mother of God before the above verses of the prophet,  
in the same tone and melody*

With the balm of your prayer, O Maiden,  
heal me, wounded by the fangs of the serpent,  
and lying, barely alive, on the bed of despair:  
make me a servant of your Son and God.

Knowing the weakness of my body,  
the sickness of my soul and the tribulation of my heart,  
grant to me divine visitation, O immaculate Virgin,  
and save me, I pray, by your fervent supplication.

I have surpassed all in my offences:  
cleanse me of their multitude, O virgin Lady,  
entreating your Son and God.  
Grant that, for the sake of your mercy,  
I may receive forgiveness at the judgment to come.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion*

O Virgin, implore him who was born of you,  
that he preserve your flock unharmed  
by every temptation of our adversary, the devil;  
and strengthen us to fulfill the will of your Son.

*Theotokion of the Cross*

A sword pierced your heart, O most pure Lady,  
seeing your Son upon the cross;  
and you cried out:  
Let me not be childless, O my Son and God,  
who has preserved my virginity even after giving birth.

*Troparion, tone 2*

Celebrating the memory of your Prophet Nahum, O Lord,  
through him we implore you to save our souls.

## **Matins**

*Both Canons from the Octoechos;  
and this Canon of the prophet, composed by Theophanes, tone 5*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Halting the battle with his upraised arm, Christ shook the horse and rider into the Red Sea, while he saved Israel singing a hymn of victory.

Anointed by the divine Spirit, O God-pleasing Nahum, you were enlightened by his grace: honouring the divine foresight of your mind, we bless you, O excellent prophet.

Instructing your soul from on high, the grace of the Spirit fittingly breathed prophecy into you, and gave your tongue divine inspiration, O truly wondrous prophet.

Plucked with the plectrum of the Spirit, as an instrument hymning God who loves us, you proclaim to all the impartiality of his divine judgment, O glorious one.

*Theotokion* O most blessed and pure Virgin, save from misfortunes those who with faith and love hymn you as the pure Mother of God, quelling unrestrained savagery.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* By your ordinance you established the earth upon nothing, and suspended its weight unsupported: build your Church upon the immovable rock of your commandments, O Christ who alone is good and loving to mankind.

Through communion with the life-creating and divine Spirit you became godly of soul; thereby, at the ordinance of God, you were granted purification, to declare clearly to all those things which are far distant, O divinely inspired one.

O blessed prophet of God, you foresaw the judgment of retribution for the impious foes who with incurable evil offends the patience, mercy and goodness of God.

*Theotokion* O pure one, the lover of mankind who of old brought all things into being, proceeded from you in his love for man, that he might deliver men.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 5,  
to the Special Melody* The Word who is equally unoriginate...

Having gained an intelligence unconfused by coarseness,  
O glorious Nahum,  
you became a pure receptacle of the divine Spirit,  
receiving his radiance and illumining all;  
therefore we implore you to pray for the peace of the world.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion*

O pure one, earnestly entreat the Lord God  
who for our sake was incarnate of you,  
that he take pity on us, corrupt in transgressions:  
avert his anger from those who with faith  
unceasingly honour and praise his power and might.

*Theotokion of the Cross*

Your Mother, O Christ, seeing you willingly hanging  
upon the cross between the thieves,  
said maternally, inwardly rent asunder:  
O my sinless Son,  
how is it that you can be unjustly nailed to the cross as a malefactor,  
desiring to bring life to the human race,  
as you are compassionate?

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* Perceiving your divine condescension O Christ, Habakkuk with prophetic eyes cried to you in fear: You have come for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed ones.

Shining with the radiance of the Spirit, you proclaimed the threat of destruction to the Ninevites, revealing the inescapable power of God, O divinely manifest one.

O blessed Nahum, prophet of God, you declared the righteous judgment of the creator, and in prophecy announced bitter destruction to an adverse people.

Adorned with humility of mind, O good one, the soul of your prophet was supernaturally caught up to the divine sight of you and the splendour of divine vision.

*Theotokion* O Mary, queen of creation, who gave birth to the king of all, alone most exalted, by your supplications free me of the tyranny of the passions.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* I come early in the morning to you, who is clothed with light as with a garment, and I sing to you: Enlighten my darkened soul O Christ as you alone are compassionate.

O wondrous Prophet Nahum, you were granted to acquire a blameless and pure life through the activity and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

You made your flesh subject to your governing mind, directing your heart to that which is above; therefore you received godly revelation.

Those who are honoured by prophecy are beyond visible honours, for through them speaks the Holy Spirit, the most good God.

*Theotokion* Not even a heavenly intelligence can truly hymn you, O Mother of God; for you gave birth to the creator who is hymned by the hosts of heaven.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* O Master Christ, calm the sea of the passions raging like stormy waters which destroy the soul, and lead me up from corruption in your compassion.

O faithful, let us hymn him who was revealed as the temple of the grace of God and who, past understanding, became a pure receptacle of divine revelation.

Receiving the never-waning radiance of the divine Spirit, and acquiring a godly mind, Nahum teaches hymnody to the pious.

*Theotokion* The noetic powers and all the generations of men ever glorify you as the one who gave birth to God, O blessed and immaculate Lady.

*Kontakion, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* You have appeared today...

Enlightened by the Spirit,  
your pure heart became a dwelling place of splendid prophecy;  
for you beheld things far off as though they were near.  
Therefore we honour you,  
O blessed and glorious prophet Nahum.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The supremely exulted Lord of our fathers extinguished the flame and sprinkled the children with dew as they sang together: Blessed are you O God.

With the godly prophet as the leader of our choirs, we honourably and divinely celebrate as we sing: Blessed are you, O God.

Recognizing you as an instrument played by the Spirit, a divinely inspired flute, we call upon you as our helper, singing in hymnody: Blessed are you, O God.

The Lord crowned you a prophet, O wondrous one, and gave you the grace to foretell things to come. To him we sing: Blessed are you, O God.

*Theotokion* The prophet saw you as an impassable gate, O most pure Virgin, through which only one may pass, to whom we sing: Blessed are you, O God.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* The children in the furnace weaving a universal chorus, sang to the creator of all: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Deified by the immaterial radiance of the ruling Trinity, O prophet, you sing, rejoicing: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Honouring your sanctified memory in sacred manner, O prophet, we sing: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* O pure one, strengthen my soul paralyzed through transgressions and passions, that I may hymn your most glorious birthgiving for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Isaiah dance for joy, for the Virgin has carried in her womb and given birth to a Son, Immanuel, he is both God and man, his name is Orient, and magnifying him we hail the Virgin as blessed.

Your life on earth was truly angelic, and now you dwell with the angelic choirs in heaven by the three-sunned light: delighting in it, watch over those who hymn you.

O blessed prophet, as one foremost, we appoint you as an intercessor before God for the world, that he grant the faithful that eternal deliverance which abides splendidly.

*Theotokion* With divine eloquence we the faithful with true designations call you the Mother of God, as you gave birth to God in two natures; and we proclaim your honoured birthgiving.

*And the rest from the Octoechos*

## December 2

### The holy Prophet Habakkuk

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 3 verses, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

The wondrous prophet Habbakuk, \* receiving the radiance of the Spirit, \* became as one wholly divine; \* and, seeing the dishonesty of the judges \* and their unjust judgment, \* he was displeased, \* exhibiting the rightness of the justice of Christ the Master \* with divine love and fervent thought, \* as he burned as one justly angered.

Standing on divine watch, \* honourable Habbakuk \* heard the ineffable mystery \* of your coming to us, O Christ, \* and he openly prophesied, \* in proclamation of you, \* foreseeing the wise apostles \* as steeds charging the sea \* of the many nations of the gentiles.

Rejoicing in the Lord God your Saviour, \* O divinely eloquent and glorious one, \* and filled with gladness, \* receiving the brilliant outpouring of heavenly radiance, \* and noetically illumined with deifying light, \* by your supplications \* deliver from dangers and misfortunes \* those who with faith celebrate \* your festive memory.

*But if Alleluia is to be sung at Matins instead of God is the Lord...  
the following verses of the Mother of God are sung before the foregoing verses of the prophet,  
in the same tone and melody*

With the showers of the Holy Spirit \* bedew my mind, O most pure one, \* who has given birth to Christ, \* the infinite drop of rain \* who with his compassion washes away \* the iniquities of mortals. \* Dry up the source of my passions, \* and grant me a torrent of sweetness \* by your ever-living supplication.

I am cast down beneath the earth, \* slain by my sins and my passions, spiritual and bodily, \* and covered by the darkness of despair. \* Raise me up to life incorruptible, \* guiding me to the homeland on high, \* where the voice of those who keep festival is heard, \* and where the light of your countenance shines, O Christ.

O pure one, who confined the uncontainable God \* who, in his love for mankind, became man \* and received from you our nature, \* mightily deifying it: \* Reject me not, \* who is now afflicted; \* but quickly take pity on me, \* and free me from the malice and harm of the evil one.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *same tone and melody*

*Theotokion* Thousands of times, O most pure one, I have promised to repent of my offences; \* yet my unseemly and evil habits \* will not depart from me. \* Therefore, I cry to you, \* and falling down, I pray: O Lady, rescue me from such affliction, guiding me to higher things \* which are closer to salvation.

*Theotokion of the Cross* When she saw you, \* the lamb and shepherd, upon the tree, \* the lamb who gave you birth lamented \* and maternally exclaimed: \* O my Son most desired, \* how can your hands and feet \* be pierced with nails by the iniquitous, O Word? \* How can you shed your blood, O Master?

*Troparion, tone 2*

Celebrating the memory of your Prophet Habbakuk, O Lord,  
through him we implore you to save our souls.

## **Matins**

*Both Canons from the Octoechos,  
and the Canon of the prophet, tone 4 composed by Theophanes  
upon the acrostic I hymn you, O blessed Prophet Habbakuk*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* I shall sing to you, O Lord my God, for you have led your people out of the slavery of Egypt and have covered the chariots and power of Pharaoh.

Illumine my heart with your grace, O good Lord, and make me wise, that I may hymn your divine Prophet Habbakuk.

Thus said the prophet: How long, O Lord, will I cry to you, and you answer not? Why have you revealed to me the injustice of the judges?

By your entreaties, O prophet, deliver from misfortunes and cruel circumstances those who piously celebrate your honoured memory.

*Theotokion* When the fulness of time came, our holy God appeared from you, O Mother of God, becoming man, that he might save man.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* The bow of the mighty has become weak, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power; therefore, my heart is established in the Lord.



Elevated by lifting your gaze to God, and illumined by the radiance which emanates from him, you saw the form of things to come, O prophet revealed by God.

With every virtue and with your mind, you hated all wickedness, O blessed one; and you justly reviled the iniquitous.

As one pure, O truly wondrous prophet, you were entrusted with speech by the Holy Spirit, clearly prophesying the fulfillment of things to come.

*Theotokion* O most pure Lady, you are revealed as the mountain overshadowed by the virtues, from which the Master has come forth as a servant to free men from slavery.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 4*  
*to the Special Melody* Having been lifted up...

On divine watch, O blessed and divinely inspired Habbakuk,  
with the eyes of prophecy you perceived the coming of God;  
therefore, you cried out with fear:  
Lord, I hear of your dread coming, and I hymn you,  
who has chosen to bear the flesh of clay received from the Virgin.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* After God, it is to your divine protection  
that I, the lowly, flee, O Mother of God,  
and falling down I pray: Have mercy, O most pure one,  
for my sins have gone over my head,  
and I tremble in fear of the coming torment:  
O pure one, make supplication to your Son,  
that he deliver me therefrom.

*Theotokion of the Cross*  
She who in latter times gave birth to you, incarnate,  
who was begotten of the unoriginate Father,  
seeing you hanging upon the cross, cried out:  
Woe is me, most beloved Jesus, my Son.  
How is it that you, glorified as God by the angels  
are now crucified by the iniquitous?  
I hymn you, the long-suffering one.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* Proclaiming the appearance of your coming on earth, O Christ God, the prophet  
cried out with gladness: Glory to your power, O Lord.

## December 2

You were seen to be radiant in virtue, O divinely inspired prophet who announced the never-waning light, to which we sing with faith: Glory to your power, O Lord.

The radiant grace of the Spirit, dwelling abundantly within you, O wise Habbakuk, made you a prophet announcing the Saviour to all.

Instructed by hearing from the Almighty, O wondrous propoet, you were seized with reverent fear, and, understanding his words, you were filled with awe.

*Theotokion* The Word, equally everlasting with the Father, described you, O Virgin, as the ark of witness, truly containing the bread of life.

### *Ode 5*

*Irmos* Glory to you O Jesus, Son of God, who has shone forth the light, causing the dawn to break and showing forth the day.

Now the honoured Church sees the sun lifted up upon the tree, as you foretold, O sacred Habbakuk.

Giving wings to your mind, you stood watch, O rich prophet who perceived the advent of the Lord.

You cried out, O wise and blessed Habbakuk: I rejoice greatly in God my Saviour and am glad.

*Theotokion* Weighed down by the fetters of my many transgressions, I flee to you: save me, O Lady, Mother of God, the boast of the faithful.

### *Ode 6*

*Irmos* The prophet Jonah in the belly of the whale prefiguring your burial for three days cried out and prayed: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus king of hosts.

God incarnate has come from the south as you foretold, O thrice blessed Habbakuk, and, radiantly enlightened by him, you illumined the world with light.

O God, by the prayers of the honoured and divinely wise Habbakuk, illumine the souls of those who hymn you; for by divine inspiration you enlightened his mind.

The proclamation and power of your divine words has passed over all the ends of the earth, O divinely eloquent one, prophesying to us the divine advent of the Word.

*Theotokion* O Virgin, you gave birth to the Son, consubstantial with the Father, clearly known to be with him from whom he was begotten, who in the latter times became flesh.

*Kontakion, tone 8*  
*to the Special Melody* To you, the champion leader...

Divinely eloquent Habakkuk who announced to the world  
the coming of God from the south, from the Virgin;  
who stood in holy vigil and received the report from the radiant angel:  
you proclaimed the resurrection to the world; and so in gladness we sing to you:  
Rejoice, splendid example of the prophets.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* Once in Babylon, the children of Abraham trampled upon the flames of the furnace, crying out in hymns: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Taught understanding which transcends recounting, and prophesying a radiant lamp, O blessed one, you now cry out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Christ, whom you glorify, has given you the thrice-radiant radiance and a share in never-waning glory, for you cry out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* Among all generations you are seen as the blessed virgin Mother who, beyond understanding gave birth to the incarnate Word; therefore, we hymn you, O pure Lady.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* All you works of God, and all creation, bless the Lord. You that are holy and humble of heart, hymn and exalt him above all for ever.

Illumined with the light of the threefold sun, O excellent prophet, you were granted divine and supernatural visions, crying: Exalt God above all for ever.

Drinking from the torrent of sweetness, filled with immaterial vision, partaking of the glory as foremost of the prophets, you hymn God for ever, rejoicing.

How great is the divine and honoured beauty of the prophet Habbakuk, for, joining chorus with the angelic hosts, he hymns Christ for ever, rejoicing.

*Theotokion* You were truly revealed as the Mother of him who shone forth from the Father before time began: you alone are more holy than all others; you, the pure one, we exalt above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Your birthgiving has been shown to be incorrupt: God issued from you, and has appeared on earth incarnate and dwelt among men: therefore, we all magnify you, O Mother of God.

Your memory shines with the radiance of your divine eloquence, emitting your mystic teachings and prophecies for those who honour you, O blessed prophet Habbakuk.

Having proclaimed the Lord of glory and foretold his advent from the holy Virgin, O divinely blessed Habbakuk, you are filled with gladness to see its fulfillment.

All the prophets rejoice in gladness on this your joyous day, O divinely wise one, sharing your joy and divine glory: praying with them, save those who hymn you.

*Theotokion* With the sprinkling of your compassions, O pure maiden, wash away the defilement of my soul, and cause torrents of unceasing tears to well forth in me, staunching the torrents of my passions.

*And the rest from the Octoechos*

## December 3

### The holy Prophet Zephaniah

#### Vespers

*At Lord, I call to you... 3 verses of the prophet, tone 4  
to the Special Melody Called from on high...*

As a divine prophet, \* a proclaimer and herald \* of the words of God, \* having received the radiance of the splendour of the divinity \* through the purity of your mind, \* you became the divinely inspired mouth of the Spirit. \* Proclaiming things shown to you by him \* and relating to all the nations \* the salvation given to men \* and the kingdom of Christ, O honoured one, \* entreat him \* to save and enlighten our souls.

O divinely inspired one, shining in divine vision, \* honoured with a chief place among the prophets, \* and granted grace \* and divine blessedness, \* with sympathy and boldness toward him who is supremely good \* never cease to pray \* for those who praise you with faith, \* who honour you as one of godly eloquence, \* honourable and God-pleasing, \* that he deliver us from misfortunes \* and save our souls.

You have revealed your prophet, \* O God who is immortal, \* as an animate cloud \* streaming water for life which is truly eternal, \* having sent and richly bestowed \* upon him the most holy Spirit, \* who is consubstantial with you, the almighty Father, \* and your Son, \* who shone forth from your being, \* whereby he prophesied the saving advent \* of Christ our God \* and proclaimed salvation to the nations.

*But if Alleluia be sung Matins instead of God is the Lord..  
we sing the following verses of the Mother of God before the foregoing verses of the prophet,  
in the same tone and melody*

As the intercessor for our whole race, \* O immaculate Mother of God, \* from every attack of the enemy \* save those who piously worship your child; \* for we have now acquired you \* as a help, refuge and confirmation, \* and a mediator before Christ, the Lord and Master. \* Entreat him, we pray you, \* that he grant the world peace, \* and remission of sins \* for those who have recourse to your protection.

See, I expose to you the wounds of my soul \* and show you the grievous scars \* which the robbers, \* my wicked thoughts \* and the tumults of the demons, \* have inflicted upon me. \* O immaculate Lady, \* who gave birth to the healer of men's souls and bodies, \* grant me healing thereof, \* pouring forth the oil \* of your loving kindness and goodness, \* for my wellbeing in health and salvation.

## December 3

I do not hide my wicked deeds, \* for, as a wretch, I have gained that which God hates: \* I have defiled my flesh, spirit and mind \* by impious thoughts, \* vile deeds and words. \* With my tongue I condemn sinners, \* while I commit worse things, O Mother of God. \* Grant me correction of all these things, \* that, having rid myself of evil habits, \* I may fall down and weep \* over what I have wickedly done \* in the course of my life.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, same tone and melody*

As I have fallen into the abyss of many offences, \* wretch that I am, \* through my slothfulness, despondency and ignorance, \* I am now held fast by despair. \* Be my help and purification \* and my salvation, O most pure one, \* readily granting me consolation; \* and I beseech you, implore and fall down before you, \* and with faith cry out to you, \* that I not utterly become \* the delight of the deceiver.

*Or this Theotokion of the Cross, in the same tone and melody*

Weep not for me, O Mother, \* beholding your Son and God hanging upon the tree, \* him who suspended the earth freely upon the waters \* and fashioned all creation; \* for I shall arise and glorify myself, \* and shall break the might of the kingdom of hell, \* destroy its power, \* and deliver all \* who have been bound by its villainy, \* as I am compassionate; \* and I shall lead them to my Father, \* as I love mankind.

*Troparion, tone 1*

You perceived from afar that which would come to pass,  
and you clearly foretold our eternal redemption.  
You proclaimed Christ as the king of Sion,  
O holy prophet Zephaniah;  
released from the condemnation by him we sing to you:  
~ Glory to him who has glorified you  
~ glory to him who has crowned you;  
glory to him who through you grants forgiveness to all.

## Matins

*Both canons from the Octoechos, and the Canon of the prophet, tone 6,  
composed by Theophanes,  
upon the acrostic May the glory of Zephaniah illumine me.*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Traversing the deep on foot as if it were dry land, Israel looked upon the tyrant Pharaoh as he drowned and cried out: Let us sing to God a song of victory.

We implore you, O prophet, standing before the throne of God, that you earnestly entreat him to grant enlightenment to us who with faith hymn your honoured memory.

You appear as a divine instrument of enlightenment bearing the gifts of the divine Spirit, O wise Zephaniah; rejoicing, we the faithful call you blessed.

*Theotokion* The sun which shone forth from you, O Lady, illumines the earth with most brilliant rays: enlightened thereby, we honour you as the Mother of God.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* There is none holy as you O Lord my God, who has exalted the strength of your faithful O good one, and has established us on the rock of your confession.

He who sees all things, since he is God, O blessed and wondrous prophet, in a godly manner revealed to you knowledge of the future and awareness of what is to be.

Having strengthened your mind with the boldness of piety, O blessed one, you bowed yourself down to the divine Spirit and there received divine inspiration.

*Theotokion* With faith all generations call you blessed, who transcending nature gave birth within time to the timeless Word incarnate, yet remaining a Virgin.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 6*  
*to the Special Melody* The portals of compassion...

Having cleansed your mind of defilement, O wise one,  
you made it a divine mirror reflecting the rays of the Spirit of God;  
and now, rejoicing, you have departed to the source of this brilliance,  
O holy prophet Zephaniah.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion*

I offer you, O immaculate one,  
the groaning of my heart and inner being, asking your beneficial aid.  
Have mercy upon my greatly suffering soul;  
move the most merciful God to pity,  
that he deliver me from damnation and the lake of fire,  
O Lady who is truly blessed.

*Theotokion of the Cross*

The ever-virgin maiden who gave birth to you, O Christ,  
seeing you suspended upon the cross for us,

### December 3

was wounded in heart and soul by the sword of grief,  
weeping and lamenting maternally.  
By her supplications  
have mercy upon us, O merciful one.

#### *Ode 4*

*Irmos* Christ is my strength, my God and my Lord, sings the holy Church in reverent piety, raising her voice with a pure mind, and keeping festival in the Lord.

The Lord of all appeared to us in accordance with your prophecy, O blessed one, calling all to knowledge of him; and he has freed us from slavery.

Illumined by grace, you made proclamation, speaking to those who are bowed low in labour beneath the one yoke, who follow the faith and serve the Lord.

*Theotokion* O most pure Mary, still the tumult of the passions of my mind and the storm of temptations, as you gave birth to the fountain of dispassion, O virgin Mother.

#### *Ode 5*

*Irmos* I pray you, O good one, illumine with your divine light the souls of those who rise at dawn with love for you, that they may know you O Word of God to be truly God, who calls them back from the deep gloom of transgression.

By your prayers, O blessed and glorious prophet, convert me from unrighteousness to virtue, and from the captivity of the passions lead me to the light of piety.

Your soul, enlightened with the comeliness of the virtues, became pleasing to the splendour of the divine Spirit by whom you were enriched with the grace of prophecy.

*Theotokion* In many ways the words of the prophets proclaimed your birthgiving, O most pure one: we, seeing their fulfillment, declare you to be truly the Mother of God.

#### *Ode 6*

*Irmos* Beholding the sea of life, surging with the storm of temptations, I run to your calm haven and cry to you: Raise my life from corruption, O most merciful one.

Receiving the rays of the Spirit through revelation, O glorious one, like a mirror you shine the splendour of divine prophecy upon the world, telling of things of the future as though they were present.

Rejoice and adorn yourself, O Zion, to see the king who has come, who has enlightened the world with the brilliance of his divinity, shaming demonic falsehood.



*Theotokion* Within you, the only-begotten of the Father united himself to flesh of clay; and he who is one person of two natures came from you, preserving your purity, O exalted Lady.

*Kontakion, tone 4*  
*to the Special Melody* You have appeared...

Brilliant with the divine Spirit,  
O prophet Zephaniah, you proclaimed the coming of God:  
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.  
Proclaim him, O Jerusalem.  
Behold, your king comes to save mankind.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* An angel moistened the furnace with dew for the holy youths, but the commandment of God consumed the Chaldeans with fire and caused the tyrant to cry out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Your memory shines upon the world like the sun, illumining with the grace of your prophecy those who with faith sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

As a cloud heavy laden with rain, you let fall upon us a shower of divine knowledge from the springs of salvation, O blessed one, whereby we are enlightened to sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* Desiring in his divine will to restore man, the Word who of old gave all things existence made his abode within you, O pure and blessed one who gave birth to God incarnate.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* You caused dew to gush from the flames upon the venerable youths, and you burnt the water poured on the sacrifice of your righteous one: for you, O Christ, perform all things by the power of your will alone, and we exalt you above all for ever.

Offered wholly to the Almighty, you were instructed in the mysteries by way of foreknowledge, teaching the Gentiles in accordance with God's providence: we hymn you, O divinely eloquent prophet.

Offer a hymn of supplication for those who sing to you, O divinely eloquent prophet, and end the turmoil of temptations, that we may hymn you.

### **December 3**

*Theotokion* In giving birth to God, the Lord and bestower of life, you have abolished the unrestrained tyranny of death, slaying it: we hymn you for ever, O most pure one.

#### *Ode 9*

*Irmos* It is not possible for man to see God, upon whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through you, O most pure one, appeared to us the incarnate Word, whom magnifying with the heavenly hosts, we call you blest.

You made your abode in the land of the meek, where, since your repose, you behold the splendour of the angels, O wise Zephaniah, prophet of God, shining with grace: we the faithful rejoice to call you blessed.

Radiantly beholding the fulfillment of your prophecies, O glorious one, we marvel at the grace given to you and the purity of your mind, and we are struck with wonder by your soul.

*Theotokion* No other like you has ever been given to us from generations of old, O immaculate Mother of God; for you, alone of all, have incomparable sanctity and purity, and so you received within yourself God incarnate.

*And the rest from the Octoechos*

## December 4

### The great martyr Barbara and our venerable father John of Damascus

#### Vespers

At Lord I call to you... *6 verses,*  
*beginning with 3 for the great martyr, tone 2*  
*to the Special Melody When from the tree...*

Before the dreadful tribunal, blessed Juliana saw glorious martyr Barbara covered with wounds and her whole body lacerated by various tortures, and she cried out with fervent tears: O Word of God who loves mankind, may I also share in her torment.

Holy Barbara and Juliana, with a single yearning for piety contended against the enemy, and, having mightily vanquished him, were granted glory by Christ our God. Having done away with destructive passions, they bestow healings upon the faithful.

When sweet death was pronounced upon you, O honourable martyr Barbara, you quickly ended your course, rejoicing. Slaughtered by the iniquitous hand of your ungodly father, you offered yourself to God as comely fruit. Truly in chorus with the wise virgins, you see the brilliant radiance of Christ your Bridegroom.

*And 3 verses for the venerable John, tone 8*  
*to the Special Melody O all-glorious wonder...*

O wise father John, \* you adorned the Church of Christ with your hymns, \* sweetly singing things divine \* through the activity of the Spirit, O glorious father, \* striking your harp and emulating \* the musical modes of David: \* causing it to sound, \* you draw all with hymns divine.

O glorious father John, \* having forsaken the turmoil of the world, \* you hastened to the tranquility of Christ, \* and were truly enriched \* with divine vision and action \* and splendours most rich. \* These you have imparted to the faithful, \* O blessed one, resplendent in your godly life.

Come, you earthborn, \* and with hymns let us piously hymn \* the sacred and honourable festival \* of venerable father John; \* for he was truly granted to receive divine illumination. \* How great is your ineffable compassion, O Lord, \* whereby we have come to know \* how to glorify you, the most good one.

Glory be to the Father... *of the great martyr, tone 6*

## December 4

Forsaking homeland, birthright and possessions, O Barbara, and spurning your ungodly father, you came to love God, to whom you betrothed yourself; and you became known as a great merchant. Entreat him, that our souls be saved.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross  
to the Special Melody On the third day...*

The pure Virgin, your Mother,  
seeing the iniquitous nailing you unjustly to the tree, O Saviour,  
was wounded in innermost being,  
as righteous Simeon foretold.

*Aposticha of the Octoechos*

Glory be to the Father... *of the venerable one, tone 6*

O venerable father, the report of your teaching has gone out into all the earth; and so, you have found the reward of your labour in heaven, having destroyed legions of demons and attained the ranks of the angels, whose life you blamelessly emulated. As you have boldness before Christ our God, entreat peace for our souls.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross,  
same tone*

Beholding you crucified, O Christ, she who gave you birth cried out What is this strange mystery which I see, O my Son? How is it that you die on the tree, suspended in the flesh, O giver of life?

*Troparion of the great martyr, tone 8*

Let us honour holy Barbara, the honourable one who broke the snares of the enemy  
and was delivered from them like a bird, with the help of the weapon of the cross.

*Troparion of the venerable one, in the same tone*

Instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity;  
beacon of all the world and divinely inspired adornment of monastics:  
O John most wise, you enlightened all by your doctrines.  
O harp of the Spirit, entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the great martyr, twice;  
Glory be to the Father... that of the venerable one;  
Both now and for ever... Theotokion or Theotokion of the Cross.*

*One canon from the Octoechos,  
and the two Canons for the saints.*

### *Ode 1*

#### *Canon of the Great martyr Barbara, tone 2*

*Irmos* The almighty power once overwhelmed the army of Pharaoh in the deep, and the incarnate Word has destroyed pernicious sin. The Lord is all-glorious, for he has been greatly glorified.

Blessed and adorable Trinity who gives your servants gifts beyond comprehension, breathe a ray of splendour into my darkened mind, that I may praise the ever-memorable martyr Barbara. *twice*

The glory of your martyrs truly surpasses all praise, O lover of mankind; yet, accepting the praise we offer with faith according to our means, O Master, impart to us rich rewards.

A beauteous rose flowering from a thorny root has perfumed the Church of Christ: this is glorious Barbara who dyed her vesture in the blood of her suffering, and as is fitting, we sing to her.

#### *Canon of venerable father John, in the same tone*

*Irmos* The almighty power once overwhelmed...

Grant your melodious voice to me who desires to begin to sing your praises, O venerable one; that same voice with which you illumine with hymns the Orthodox Church which honours your memory, O father John. *twice*

Perceiving most excellently the way things are, as a wise judge, keen of intellect, you preferred the eternal to the temporary, and you traded transitory things for those which are abiding, O John, through which Christ has now glorified you.

*Theotokion* You have surpassed all creation, visible and invisible, O pure ever-virgin; for you gave birth to the creator, as it was his will to be incarnate of you: entreat him with boldness to save those who hymn you.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* The desert flowered as a lily at your coming, O Lord, just as the temple of the heathen that was barren; and thereby my heart is established.

Wounded by the love of you, her bridegroom, O Master, the passion-bearer Barbara rejected her father's ungodliness with unrestrained determination.

Neither the sweet beauty and comeliness of flowers, nor riches, nor even the sweetness of youth satisfied you, O glorious virgin Barbara who become a bride of Christ.

Neither the hindrance of a womanly nature nor youthful stature impeded the martyr's perfect struggles, O Christ; for she was fortified by your invisible power.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* The desert flowered as a lily...

You distributed your wealth, thereby giving it back to God; thus the kingdom of heaven was prepared for you, and you received a vastly greater reward, O John.

Receiving the talent of wisdom, O John, you adorned the Church of Christ, bedecking it with your deeds: departing this life, you increased it exceedingly.

*Theotokion* The ranks of angels are astonished, O most pure one, and the hearts of men are filled with awe at your birthgiving: with faith we honour you, the Mother of God.

*Kontakion of the venerable one, tone 4*  
*to the Special Melody* Having been lifted upon the cross...

Let us hymn the honourable, divinely voiced John, | the composer of hymns, the instructor and teacher of the Church, | the opponent of the enemy; | for with the cross of the Lord as a sword, | he cut down the falsehood of heresy; | and as a fervent intercessor before God, | | he bestows forgiveness of transgressions upon all.

*Ikos* Together let us cry out to the instructor, teacher and priest of the Church, as a servant of ineffable mysteries: By your supplications to God open our mouths that we may speak the words of your doctrines; for you appear in the world as one who shared in the Trinity, shining in the world like another sun, illumining all with your miracles and teachings, like Moses ever instructing in the law of the Lord. You were a luminary in word and deed, praying unceasingly, that forgiveness of transgressions be given to all.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 3*  
*to the Special Melody* Awed by the beauty of your Virginity...

In your suffering you amazed all,  
enduring the wounding, bonds, torture and imprisonment by the tormentors,

O most praiseworthy Barbara.  
Christ has given you a crown in heaven,  
and it is to him that you flee, desiring him earnestly.  
He has imparted grace to you, O martyr,  
to pour healings upon mankind.

Glory be to the Father...

*Sessional Hymn of the venerable one, same tone*

We see you as a melodious and sanctified clarion,  
O sacred and venerable father,  
sounding in hymnody the teachings of the Lord and Saviour  
to the ends of the earth which is illumined thereby:  
entreat Christ our God, that he grant us great mercy.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* You were the divine tabernacle of the Word, | O most pure Mother and Virgin, | who has surpassed the angels in purity. | With the divine waters of your prayers, O pure one, | cleanse me who, more than all is dust, defiled by carnal transgressions; || and grant me great mercy.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The incorrupt virgin Mother, the unblemished lamb and mother of the Word, | seeing him, born from her without pain, suspended upon the cross, | cried out, as she lamented maternally: | Woe is me, O my child. | How can you suffer so willingly, || desiring to deliver man from the indignity of the passions?

#### *Ode 4*

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* You have come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but the Lord himself incarnate, and have saved me, and the whole of mankind. Therefore I cry to you: Glory to your power O Lord.

O Virgin-born, you have given to virgin maidens the boldness to cast down the deceiver: therefore, the truly victorious Barbara put his arrogance to shame.

Our first mother, led astray of old by the machinations of the deceiver, was driven from the food of paradise; but Barbara, putting him to shame, has now made her abode in the bridal-chamber of heaven.

You destroyed the power of death by your cross; and so the maiden Barbara, sparing not her body, valiantly endured wounding with steadfast mind.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* You have come forth from the Virgin...

Submitting to the command of Christ, you forsook the beauty, wealth, sweetness and splendour of the world; and taking up your cross, O wise John, you followed him.

Impoverishing yourself for Christ who impoverished himself for man's salvation, you were glorified with him as he promised, and now reign with him who reigns for ever, O John.

*Theotokion* We the faithful, know you to be the haven of salvation and an insuperable rampart, O Lady, the Mother of God; for by your supplications you deliver our souls from tribulation.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* You are the mediator between God and man, O Christ our God, for by you, O Master, we are led up from the night of ignorance to your Father, the author of light.

Commanding that the bathhouse be lighted by three windows, O Barbara, you mystically described baptism, which, through the light of the Trinity, was the radiant cleansing of your soul.

Aflame with zeal for God, the praiseworthy maiden Barbara spat upon the vile faces of the false deities, putting to shame the prince of this world.

The mountain opened to receive Barbara who was fleeing the savagery of her cruel father; a miracle wrought by Christ, like that of the ever-memorable protomartyr Thecla of old.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* You are the mediator between God and man...

Strengthened in the divine life by the fear of Christ, O father John, you fully subjected your carnal mind to your soul, thus cleansing your senses.

Having diligently purified body, mind and soul of all defilement, O divinely wise one, you received the splendour of the threefold Sun, who enriched you with radiant gifts.

*Theotokion* Entreat your Son and Lord, O pure Virgin, to grant deliverance from the assaults of the adversary to all captives, and peace to those who hope in you.



*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* I am held fast in the depths of sin, O Saviour, and overwhelmed by the sea of life; but as you brought out Jonah from the belly of the whale, bring me out from the passions and save me.

As you promise to give divinely imparted wisdom to those who stand before the tyrants' tribunals for your sake, the martyr Barbara was filled therewith.

With divinely wise words you denounced the falsehood of the ungodly, O glorious Barbara; and enduring the deeds of the tormentors, you astonished the wise.

The blameless athlete gave her body over to be pitilessly afflicted with wounds and to be chafed thoroughly with rags of horsehair, for the sake of Christ.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* I am held fast in the depths of sin, O Saviour...

Illumined by the grace of the Spirit, and greatly enriched by human knowledge, you generously gave your substance to the needy, O John.

Like the choirs of heaven you adorned the Church in Orthodox manner, intoning divine choral hymns to the Trinity.

*Theotokion* You gave birth without knowing man, O Virgin, and remain eternally virginal, revealing the true divinity of your Son and God in images.

*Kontakion of the great martyr, tone 4  
to the Special Melody* Having been lifted up upon the cross...

Following God who is piously hymned in the Trinity,  
O passion bearer Barbara of manly mind,  
you dimmed the pagan temples:  
suffering amid your struggle, you did not fear the threats of the tyrants;  
for you ever proclaim: I worship one divinity, the Trinity.

*Ikos* We have gathered to give fitting honour to Barbara who made herself the bride of Christ through martyrdom; for, delivered from soul corrupting danger, destruction and earthquake through her supplications, we lead our life in peace, having received your mercies, O Saviour, with all the saints who have pleased you from ages past, that we may walk in the light and sing with them. She is the wonder of all who confess with faith: We worship one divinity, the Trinity.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* The command of the iniquitous tyrant, opposed to God, raised a lofty flame; but Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths: blessed is he and glorified above all.

Raging in vain to destroy the earth and annihilate the sea, the tyrant lies like a plaything at the feet of the maiden Barbara, as Christ, trampling on him, has bound him.

When your whole body was wracked with unbearable wounds and empurpled with drops of your blood, O praiseworthy martyr, glorious Barbara, you endured scorching by candles applied to your sides.

How inhuman and pitiless was the savagery and extreme ungodliness of the torments; for with swords they cruelly severed the breasts of the martyr as though in a butcher's shop, but her mind was set steadfastly on Christ, the judge of the contest.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* The command of the iniquitous tyrant, opposed to God ..

Afire with zeal, you struck down the false knowledge of God-opposing heresies with your splendid writings, O John, making abundantly clear what had been sown of old and written carefully by the wise.

With the discourses and the dogmas you compiled, you fervently denounced the blasphemous impiety of the disciples of Manes, which strove to infect the Church of Christ, O John.

*Theotokion* O undefiled Virgin, Mother unwedded, we know you to be more holy than the saints, as you alone gave birth to the immutable God; for you have poured forth incorruption upon all the faithful by your divine birthgiving.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* In Babylon of old by the command of God, the fiery furnace worked in divided ways: while it burned the Chaldeans, it refreshed the faithful as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Christ appeared to you in prison, O Barbara, surrounded by unapproachable light, commanding you to be of good cheer, healing your wounds and granting you joy; therefore, you have lovingly taken wing to your Bridegroom.

Your prophecy was clearly fulfilled, O Christ; for the father gave his own child over to death, the wretched parent becoming the instigator of your martyr's slaughter: therefore he was destroyed by fire from heaven.

An angel of light arrayed you like a bride in brilliant vesture, O Barbara, stripped naked for Christ's sake and subjected to suffering; for you shed your garments, receiving divine transformation.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* In Babylon of old by the command of God...

You openly denounced the division of Nestorius, the confusion of Severus and the monothelite foolishness, O thrice-blessed John, shining with the radiance of Orthodoxy upon the ends of the earth in the one true faith.

The enemy sowed the weeds of heresy in the Church of Christ, that the worship of Christ in his precious icons might be eliminated; but he did not find you sleeping, O blessed John, who uprooted every seed of evil.

*Theotokion* Without seed you conceived him who is inseparable from the Father, who dwelt within you as God and man; and you gave birth to him ineffably, O most pure Mother of God. Therefore, we confess you to be the salvation of us all.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* Our God and Lord has appeared to us, the Son of the Father without beginning, incarnate of the Virgin, to give light to those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Therefore let us magnify the all-hymned Mother of God.

Ending your glorious martyrdom under the sword, O Barbara, you heard the voice of God which filled you with strength, as with Juliana you were awarded your crowns.

United now with Christ your Bridegroom, shining with the glory of divine light in the mansions of heaven, O Barbara, look upon those who hymn you; lighten our sufferings and lead us to the living God.

Christ, fulfilling your request, O athlete Barbara, grants healings to those who with faith keep your annual memorial. For truly your glorious miracles surpass the sands of the sea in number.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Our God and Lord has appeared to us...

You taught all the children of the Church to hymn in Orthodox fashion the worshipful unity in Trinity, and to theologize concerning the divine incarnation of the Word, O John, explaining sacred Scriptures where many find it difficult to understand.

Having hymned the ranks of the saints, the pure Mother of God, the forerunner of Christ, the apostles, the prophets, fasters and wise teachers, the righteous and the martyrs, O John, you now abide in their mansions.

*Theotokion* In a manner past understanding, O immaculate Lady, you became the bridal-chamber of the incarnation of the Word, arrayed and embroidered with the glory of the virtues. Therefore we proclaim you to be the Mother of God.

*Exapostilarion of the Octoechos, and that of the great martyr  
to the Special Melody* hearken, O women...

Like a most beautiful rose, dyed with the blood of your sacred suffering, you came forth from a thorny root, O virgin martyr Barbara. Now you lovingly save from misfortune those who keep your divine memory.

Glory be to the Father... *that of the venerable one*

You shine like a divine light upon the Church, O our father, illumining it with the splendour of your hymns and the light of your character, whereby you reveal the dogmas of Christ as adorned, to whom may you never cease to pray for us, O John.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Saved by you, we confess you to be the true Mother of God, O Lady; for you ineffably gave birth to God who destroyed death by his cross and drew to himself the assemblies of the venerable, with whom we praise you, O Virgin.

*We recite the Praises, and insert 4 verses of the great martyr,  
tone 1, to its own melody,  
composed by Anatolius.*

Rejecting the sweetness of earthly food and the riches of your father, and spurning glory as well, you loved the heavenly Bridegroom, O glorious Barbara; for, beheaded by the sword, you have entered to Christ the Bridegroom with the wise Virgins. Dispelling deadly plague, you heal the faithful by the activity of the Holy Spirit and pray unceasingly for our souls.

*Tone 2, composed by Byzantius*

The wicked enemy who lured our first mother into sin is put to shame, vanquished by a woman; for Christ, the Word of the Father incarnate of the Virgin without change

or confusion, as he himself knew, lifted the curse from Eve and Adam, and he fittingly crowned the martyr Barbara, for her sake granting the world cleansing and great mercy.

The divinely called martyr Barbara, suffering in the tribunal, said: Cruel are my present torments, O torturers, but joyful will it be to receive eternal life, for I shall never prefer earthly things to those of heaven. Therefore, cut and lacerate my flesh, and give me over the fire, that, rejoicing, I may depart to Christ my Bridegroom. Through her supplications, O Christ our God, impart your mercies and save us who with faith celebrate her sufferings.

Come, you people, let us hymn the festival of the athlete Barbara today; for neither sword, nor fire, nor any torment, nor the crafty snares of Belial was able to triumph over her. To her we cry out with faith: Entreat Christ, O good and glorious martyr, that he grant us great mercy.

Glory be to the Father...

*Composed by John the Monk, tone 6*

Treading the path of suffering, O honourable Barbara, you avoided the counsel of your father. Bearing a lamp like a wise Virgin, you entered into the courts of your Lord, and as a manly-wise martyr you have received the grace to heal carnal passions. Deliver us all, who hymn you, from spiritual sickness by your prayers to God.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross*

The most pure one, seeing you hanging on the cross, said, weeping maternally: O my Son and my God, my child most sweet, how can you endure such a violent death?

*Aposticha, from the Octoechos*

Glory be to the Father... *of the venerable one, tone 8*

We, the multitude of monks, honour you, our instructor, O John our father; for by your footsteps we have truly learned to walk the straight path. Blessed are you, who labouring for Christ, denounced the power of the enemy, O conversor with angels, companion of the venerable and the righteous. With them pray to the Lord, that our souls find mercy.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross  
to the Special Melody O most glorious wonder...*

I cannot bear to see you asleep upon the tree O my child who grants wakefulness to all. But you grant divine and saving wakefulness to those who sleep the sleep of

## December 4

destruction because of the fruit of disobedience which was eaten of old, said the Virgin, weeping, whom we magnify.

# Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 Troparia:*

*4 from Ode 3 of the Canon of the great martyr,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of the Canon of the venerable one.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

God is wonderful in his saints, the God of Israel.

*Verse* In their choirs they bless God, those that are sprung from the fount of Israel.

*Epistle Galatians 208*

*Alleluia tone 1*

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He brought me up from the pit of roaring waters, out of the mire and clay,

*The Gospel of Mark, number 21*

*Communion*

Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 5

### Our venerable and God-bearing father

### Savvas the Sanctified

### Little Vespers

*At Lord, I call to you... we sing 4 verses, tone 1,  
to the special melody O all-praised martyrs...*

In your mind you beheld the noetic powers, for you followed the divine sayings, laying them up in your heart, and finding in them a means of ascent as upon a ladder, O Savvas our venerable father: pray that our souls be granted peace and great mercy. *twice*

Most venerable Savvas, from childhood you offered your life to Christ our God, in whose strength you subjected your carnal passions to the mind, subjugating that which is worse to that which is better: pray that our souls be granted peace and great mercy.

Our God-bearing father, you became a great beacon, enlightening all the earth with the splendour of your miracles and divine works; and so, after your repose, the unwaning light received you: pray that our souls be granted peace and great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 2*

O venerable father, having earnestly taught yourself the virtues from childhood, you became an instrument of the Holy Spirit; and having received from him the ability to work miracles, you urged men to reject the delights of life. And now, enlightened purely with light divine, illumine our thoughts, O Savvas, our father.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* I place all my hope in you, O Mother of God: keep me safe under your protection.

*Aposticha, tone 2*  
*to the special melody O house of Ephratha...*

From your swaddling clothes \* you were shown to be \* a sanctified vessel \* and the abode of the most holy Spirit, \* O our God-bearing father.

*Verse* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.

## December 5

Bearing upon your shoulders \* the cross of the Lord, \* O Savvas our father, \* you utterly laid waste \* demonic fantasies.

*Verse* Blessed is the man who fears the Lord; and greatly delights in his commandments.

Having renounced the deception of the evil demons \* by the power of the cross, \* you shone forth \* the glory of Christ, \* O Savvas, our father.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O good Lady, \* stretch forth your holy hands \* to your Son, the creator \* to him who loves souls, \* that he spare your servants.

*Troparion, tone 8*

With the streams of your tears you cultivated the barrenness of the desert, | and with the sighs of your labours from the depths of your soul you brought forth fruit a hundredfold: | shining with miracles you were a shining light for the whole world. || O Savvas our father, entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved.

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

*Theotokion* For our sake you were born of the Virgin and suffered crucifixion, O good one, | and destroyed death by death and as God revealed the resurrection. | Forsake not those who were fashioned by your hand but show your love for mankind, O merciful one. | Receive the intercession for us of the Mother of God who gave you birth, || and save us, your despairing people, O our Saviour.

## Great Vespers

*We sing* Blessed is the man... *the first antiphon*

*At* Lord, I call to you... *we sing 8 verses, tone 5,*  
*to the special melody* O venerable father...

O divinely wise Savvas, who stands among the angels, abiding with the venerable, conversor with the prophets, co-heir to the kingdom with the martyrs and apostles, who now dwells in unwaning light, reflecting the brilliance of that for which you greatly longed. Standing before Christ with boldness, enlightened eternally and delighting in his beauties, entreat him, O venerable father, to grant the Church oneness of mind, peace and great mercy. *thrice*

Divinely wise Savvas, inextinguishable lamp of abstinence, radiant beacon for monastics, illumined with rays of love, immovable pillar of patience, confirmation and strength of those who honour you with faith, treasury of healings and true dweller in the



desert which you made a divine paradise bearing the divine fruit of the saved: entreat Christ to grant the Church oneness of mind, peace and great mercy. *thrice*

O divinely wise Savvas, fiery pillar of the virtues, beacon guiding men from the sea of life to the harbour divine, destroyer of spiritual deception, pure abode of the Holy Spirit, instructor of monastics, sure measure of abstinence, radiant summit of humility, a fountain flowing with an abyss of healings: entreat Christ, O venerable father, to grant the Church oneness of mind, peace and great mercy. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Having preserved that which was fashioned according to the image of God, by fasting you made your mind master over pernicious passions; and as one mighty you ascended to those things which are of God. For, having manfully compelled your nature, you strove to subject that which was worse to the better, and to enslave the flesh to the spirit. Thereby, you became the lofty summit of monastics, a desert-dweller, an admonisher of those who run well the course of life, and a model of certain virtue. Now, the shadows having been set aside, O Savvas our father, in a pure manner you see the Holy Trinity in heaven, praying directly for those who honour you with faith and love.

Both now and for ever...

*Dogmatikon* Who would not call you blessed, O most holy Virgin?  
 who would not hymn your most pure maternity?  
 For the only begotten Son  
 who shone forth from the Father from eternity,  
 came forth, ineffably incarnate from you, O pure one.  
 He who by nature is God,  
 for our sakes assumed the nature of man;  
 not divided into two persons,  
 but known in two natures without confusion.  
 O pure and most blessed Lady,  
 pray to him to have mercy on our souls.

*Entrance with Incenses, Prokimenon of the day and three readings*

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever. Those who trust in him will

understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The righteous live for ever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them. The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies; he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; he will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against his frenzied foes. Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim, and will leap from the clouds to the target, as from a well-drawn bow, and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult; the water of the sea will rage against them, and rivers will relentlessly overwhelm them; a mighty wind will rise against them, and like a tempest it will winnow them away. Lawlessness will lay waste the whole earth, and evildoing will overturn the thrones of rulers. Listen therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High; he will search out your works and inquire into your plans.

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon.

The righteous, though they die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honoured for length of time, or measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There were some who pleased God and were loved by him, and while living among sinners were taken up. They were caught up so that evil might not change their understanding or guile deceive their souls. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years; for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, or take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and that he watches over his holy ones.

*At the Entreaty, the verse of the Church,  
and these verses to the saint, tone 2*

O venerable Savvas, trained on earth in the school of fasting, you blunted every assault of the passions with the flow of your tears. O divine and honoured ladder leading to heaven, your God-pleasing life is made known to all; for thereby, having shown the fruits of piety, you heal the weaknesses of the passions of those who cry to you in faith: Rejoice, golden star of the east, radiant lamp of monastics, our pastor. Rejoice, exulted one, goodly nourishment of the desert and unshaken confirmation of the Church. Rejoice, great guide of those who stray. Rejoice, our boast, the radiant joy of the whole world.

Let us honour Savvas, an angel on earth, and a man of God in heaven, a beautiful adornment of the world, the delight of the good and the boast of the virtuous in fasting. Planted in the house of God, he flourished righteously like a cedar in the desert, and he increased Christ's flock of rational sheep, in holiness and righteousness.

God, who alone dwells among his saints, acquiring your sanctified soul as a pure dwelling, made his abode there and filled it with graces divine, whereby you lead to the light those who hymn you, O blessed and sanctified Savvas.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone*

Yearning for the good things which surpass understanding, you rejected every beautiful thing of the world, O God-pleaser. Sharing Adam's flesh, you were entrapped by the fruit as was he, but having repulsed the serpent by abstinence, you lived an angelic life; and now you dwell in heaven, nurtured by the tree of life, entreating God for us who faithfully celebrate your memory, O sanctified Savvas.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Here is a new wonder greater than all the miracles of old, for who has ever known a mother to bear a child without a man, and to hold in her arms him who encompasses the whole creation. It was the will of God to be born, and you, O immaculate one, have carried him as an infant in your arms. With your maternal boldness, pray to him without ceasing for us who honour you, that he save our souls and have mercy on us.

*Aposticha, tone 5,  
to the special melody Rejoice...*

Rejoice, truly fragrant vessel of the struggles of fasting; for you have taken your cross upon your shoulder and offered yourself to Christ the Master, O blessed one. You trampled upon the baseness of the flesh, and illumining your soul with the virtues, soared with divine longing. Surrounding your holy shrine, O exalted Savvas, we ask that, by your prayers, we receive God's love for mankind, and that the world be granted great mercy.

*Verse* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.

O God-bearing Savvas, having approached the fire of the Spirit, you appeared in the world as a divinely radiant ember enlightening the souls of those who faithfully have recourse to you, O venerable Savvas of godly wisdom, leading them to the unwaning light. Bedewed from above with grace divine, you quenched the burning coal of the desert; and so Christ, the helmsman of divine righteousness, has granted you a crown of victory, O blessed one: entreat him to grant our souls great mercy.

*Verse* Blessed is the man who fears the Lord; and greatly delights in his commandments.

Your life was clearly a ladder spanning the gulf between earth and heaven, O divinely wise one, whereby you ascended to the heights and were granted to converse with Christ the Master. Having enlightened your mind with radiance there, through its rays you received splendour equal to that of the angels. Standing now before him, pray, O venerable one, that we who celebrate your divine and sanctified memory may stand with you, and that he may grant the world great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8*

We honour you as the instructor of a multitude of monks, O Savvas, our father; for we have truly learned to walk aright in your steps. Blessed are you, who laboured for Christ and renounced the power of the adversary, O conversor with the angels. With them entreat the Lord, that he have mercy on our souls.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Virgin unwedded, who inconceivably conceived God in the flesh; receive the prayers of your servants. O immaculate Mother of God the Most High, who grants cleansing of transgressions to all: receive our entreaty that we all may be saved.

*If it is a vigil, the troparion of the saint, twice;  
and Virgin Mother of God rejoice... once.  
Otherwise the troparion and Theotokion.*

## **Matins**

*At God is the Lord... the Troparion, tone 8*

With the streams of your tears you cultivated the barrenness of the desert, | and with the sighs of your labours from the depths of your soul you brought forth fruit a hundredfold: | shining with miracles you were a shining light for the whole world. || O Savvas our father, entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* For our sake you were born of the Virgin and suffered crucifixion, O good one, | and destroyed death by death and as God revealed the resurrection. | Forsake not those who were fashioned by your hand but show your love for mankind, O merciful one. | Receive the intercession for us of the Mother of God who gave you birth, || and save us, your despairing people, O our Saviour.

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 1,  
to the special melody The choir of angels...*

You piously fulfilled your life on earth, having become a pure dwelling of the Spirit, enlightening those who come to you in faith, O divinely wise Savvas, our father. Entreat your Master, that he enlighten the souls of us who hymn you, O blessed one. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Through the Holy Spirit you conceived God, the creator and fashioner of all, O pure and immaculate Lady; who in purity gave birth to him. Glorifying him, we hymn you, O Virgin, as the palace of the king of all, the protection of the world.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the special melody* You have appeared today...

Shining like the sun, you emit splendid rays upon the earth, O venerable one, through the far reaching radiance of your teaching, O wondrous and light-bearing Savvas the boast of the venerable. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Accepting the supplication of us who flee to your protection, O most pure Virgin, never cease to entreat the lover of mankind to save your servants.

*Polyeleos and Magnification*

We bless you, O our venerable father Savvas, and we honour your holy memory, instructor of monks and conversor with angels.

*Psalms verses* I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
I have fled afar off and have made my dwelling in the wilderness.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the special melody* Of the Wisdom...

Truly you were sanctified from your mother's womb, O sacred Savvas, and on earth you lived like an angel, as you slayed the flesh by abstinence, rightly emulating the demeanor of great Evthymius as a favourite of the Trinity. Therefore, you have brought together choirs of monastics who follow your godly life, O our ever memorable and Godbearing father. Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who honour your holy memory with love. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *Theotokion*

Let us hymn the portal of heaven, the most holy mountain and radiant cloud, the bush unburnt, the paradise of the Word and the restoration of Eve, and the remission of the transgression of old;

## December 5

For she is the great treasure of the world, for its salvation was wrought within her,  
And so we cry out to her: pray to Christ our God,  
that he grant remission of sins to those who piously worship your most holy child.

*Hymn of Degrees, tone 4, the first antiphon.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.  
*Verse* How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me?

Let every breath praise the Lord... *and the rest,*  
*with the Gospel of Luke, number 24 (6:17-23)*

*The Psalm* Have mercy... *and this verse, tone 6*

O venerable father, the report of your teaching has gone out into all the earth; and so, you have found the reward of your labour in heaven, having destroyed legions of demons and attained the ranks of the angels, whose life you blamelessly emulated. As you have boldness before Christ our God, entreat peace for our souls.

*We sing two Canons, to the Mother of God and to venerable Savvas.*

*Ode 1*

*To the Mother of God, tone 2<sup>1</sup>*

*Irmos* Traversing the impassable, unfamiliar and dry sea-path, Israel the chosen sang:  
Let us sing to the lord, for he has been greatly glorified.

The immaterial ladder of old and the path through the unusually dry sea disclosed  
your birthgiving which we all praise, O pure Virgin; for he has been greatly glorified.

Incarnate of you, O most pure one, the power of the Most High, the embodiment  
of perfection and divine wisdom consorted with man; for he has been greatly glorified.

The Sun of Righteousness passed through the impassible gate of your closed  
womb and has shone upon the world, O pure Virgin, for he has been greatly glorified.

*To the venerable one, tone 8,*  
*composed by Theophanes*

*upon the acrostic* Lovingly I hymn Savvas, most eminent among fasters.

*Irmos* The rod of Moses, working wonders in times past, marking the sea in the form of  
the cross, struck it and parted it, and sank Pharaoh driving his chariot, while it saved  
Israel who fled across on foot, while singing a hymn to God.

---

<sup>1</sup> From the Oktoechos, tone 2, Sunday Matins

With the splendour of the Holy Spirit, O Savvas, illumine us who with devout love praise you with hymns as the boast of fasters, the glory of monastics, the adorning of the desert and teacher of piety.

Having offered all your love to God from your youth and made him the object of your desire, you rejoiced to mortify the stirring of the flesh and the assaults of the passions, O all-praised God-bearer Savvas.

Conquering the serpent hidden in the fruit, you trampled it down and easily passed over his snares, taking flight on wings of piety, O father; and, rejoicing, you partook of life in the garden of the cross.

Illumined with the light of grace, you entered the fire and, like the three youths, remain unconsumed; for God preserved you, revealing to all your ultimate future progress and perfection, O father.

*Theotokion* Death has grasped us with its irresistible assault, but, drawing near to your child, it perished, and rushing against him, was destroyed. For you truly gave birth to him who is eternal life incarnate, O Virgin Mother of God.

*Katavasia, the second canon of Christmas, tone 1*

*Katavasia* Of old the master working wonders saved his people, making the watery waves of the sea into dry land. Who now of his own will is virgin-born, making a heavenward path for us to tread, who praise the one whose nature is both God and man.

*Ode 3*

*To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* The bow of the mighty has been broken by your strength, O Christ, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power.

He who is beyond all time since he created time, was voluntarily formed into an infant from you, O Virgin.

Let us praise your womb that is more spacious than the heavens, for through it Adam rejoices as a citizen of heaven.

*To the venerable one*

*Irmos* Christ, who in the beginning established the heavens with wisdom and founded the earth upon the waters, confirm me upon the rock of your commandments, for none is holy but you, O true lover of mankind.

## December 5

With your mind as master over the passions, O most rich, you became a dispenser of justice, having clearly subjected what is worse to that which is better. Therefore, you flourished in the desert like a palm tree, O father.

Resolved to follow the steps of the Master, you forsook your homeland; and dwelling in the desert, you were victorious over foes, strengthened by the power of God.

Strengthened by firmness of mind, you denounced the various wiles of the enemy, unmasking them in the sight of all and bringing down his haughty audacity, O wise one.

Perceiving you to be sacred of soul and adorned with simplicity of intent and with the virtues, Evthymius the radiant star received you, prophetically proclaiming your splendour, O blessed one.

*Theotokion* O Virgin Mother, you are truly known as the splendid portal of the dispensation of the Word who saves us, for you have shone upon us the noetic ray of the most divine divinity.

*Katavasia* Graciously accept the praises of your servants, O benefactor, and bring down the boastful pride of the enemy. O good one who sees all, raise us up far above sin, and establish those who sing to you unshakably firm on the foundations of faith.

*Sessional Hymns, tone 8,  
to the special melody Of the Wisdom...*

Forsaking all earthly things, while on earth in the body you were a companion of the angels in spirit; and having mortified the passions of the body you became a servant of the Trinity, O blessed one. You cure the sufferings of the afflicted, and at your word drive away evil spirits through grace: O God-bearing father, pray to Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who celebrate your holy memory with love.

Glory be to the Father...

Abandoning the tumults of life and taking your cross upon your shoulders, you offered yourself wholly to God; and surpassing the flesh and the world, you became a conversor with the Holy Spirit. Raising men to zeal, you emptied the cities and made cities of desert places, O our Godbearing father. Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who celebrate your holy memory with love.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O immaculate bride of the creator, O unwedded mother of the deliverer: as the abode of the Comforter, O exalted one, hasten to deliver me, who in my iniquity is a defiled habitation and a plaything of the demons; free me from their wickedness and make me a splendid dwelling-place of the virtues. O luminous and incorrupt one, drive away the clouds of the passions and grant that I may partake of the unwaning light of the Most High, through your prayers.



*Ode 4*

*To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* I have heard the report of your dispensation O Lord, and I glorify you, O only lover of mankind.

Behold, the dwelling place of the Lord, the Mother of God, the divine mountain, is clearly seen highly exulted above the powers of heaven.

Since you alone gave birth beyond the laws of nature to the him who is the Lord of creation, O Virgin, you have been granted a divine calling.

*To the venerable one*

*Irmos* You are my strength and power O Lord my God, you are my rejoicing, who without leaving the bosom of the Father, has visited our lowliness. With the Prophet Habakkuk, I therefore cry to you: Glory to your power, O lover of mankind.

Cleansing and expanding the state of your soul with divine visions, you truly fashioned of it an abode of divine gifts, O divinely blessed one; and by the laying on of your hands you healed the afflicted, being an emulator of the Master.

He who grew arrogant against you, O father, was swallowed up like the wretched Dathan, and was destroyed like Abiram; for the grace of God invisibly preserved you, intending the salvation of many, O blessed, glorious and divinely wise Savvas.

Having chastened your senses with the Law of God, you directed your skillful mind to the knowledge of bodiless and noetic things, passing steadily from glory to glory and from strength to strength, O father.

Proposing to do good to your compatriots, you founded magnificent and spiritually profitable cities in the desert, brought springs of water to the parched land, and gloriously brought down clouds from heaven upon the waterless fields.

*Theotokion* You became a beauteous and newly blossoming paradise, O Mother who divinely carried and gave birth to the tree of life planted there, he who pours the hope of salvation upon all who with faith know you as the Mother of God.

*Katavasia* Of old the prophet Habakkuk was granted to behold ineffably the figure and symbol of Christ's birth, and he foretold in song of the renewal of mankind. For the Word now comes forth from the mountain, the Virgin, a new-born child, for the renewal of the peoples.

*Ode 5*

*To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* The burning ember was revealed to Isaiah, and the sun has shone forth from the Virgin's womb, granting the enlightenment of the knowledge of God to those who have gone astray in the darkness.

Rain sweetness upon the earth, you clouds of gladness, for a child has been given to us, our God who existed before the ages, now incarnate of the Virgin.

When in latter times the Most High became incarnate without seed of the Virgin, he shone light upon my life and flesh, destroying the sorrow of sin.

*To the venerable one*

*Irmos* O light that never sets, why have you turned your face from me? Why has an alien darkness covered me, a wretched one? But turn me back I entreat you, and guide my paths towards the light of your commandments.

Reaching out with constant mindfulness of him whom you desired, from him you received the sure grace of magnificent miracles, O venerable father who compassionately heals those who have recourse to you in faith.

Casting aside the coarseness of the heaviness of the flesh, you became a divinely wrought and chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, O wondrous one, adorned with abstinence from foods, with patience and chastity.

Appointed the most sonorous herald of the divine dogmas of the Councils, O father, you were a sharer with the saints, O blessed one, enlightening emperors to whom you were clearly shown to be protected by grace divine.

O divinely inspired one, the grace given you by God sounded forth, for all to the ends of the earth, clearly bringing about the divine activity of wondrous revelation.

*Theotokion* Save my soul, O intercessor for the faithful and indestructible rampart for those who praise you, O most pure one, whose physical giving of birth to God revealed salvation to the whole human race.

*Katavasia* From the night of the dark deeds of falsehood we stand in vigil, and sing to you, O Christ, our benefactor. Come to us and grant us cleansing; make straight the path for us whereby we may ascend and find resplendence.

*Ode 6*

*To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* Hearing the sound of the cries of entreaty from a soul in pain, O Master, deliver me from my dread sins, for you alone are the cause of our salvation.

Human nature, enslaved to sin, has found freedom through you, O pure Lady; for your Son was slaughtered as a lamb for the sake of all.

We call upon you to deliver us your servants who cause anger, O true Mother of God, who alone has boldness before your Son.

*To the venerable one*

*Irmos* O Saviour cleanse me, for my transgressions are many, and lead me up from the depths of evil, I entreat you; for to you I cry, and you heard me, O God of my salvation.

Having acquired love for God and neighbor, fulfilling the chief precepts of the Law and the prophets, you achieved unattainable virtue, surpassing all others, O father.

You attained on earth a life equal to that of the angels, and Christ has given you honour equal to them, sending your soul to accompany the ranks of the holy ones.

Shown to be a child of wisdom, you desired the beginning of wisdom, the fear of God; and, strengthened thereby, O father, you attained the perfection permitted men.

*Theotokion* O pure Lady, who gave birth to God, the Saviour and deliverer of all, who took our flesh upon himself: save from misfortune those who call upon you.

*Katavasia* Enclosed in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah entreated you to come and still the storm. And I, pricked by the dart of the tyrant, call on you, O Christ, the slayer of evil, that you come quickly to my slothfulness.

*Kontakion, tone 8,*  
*to the special melody* To you the champion leader...

In your virtue you offered yourself from childhood to God as an unblemished sacrifice, O blessed Savvas, becoming a gardener in the garden of piety. You are an adornment for monastics and a truly praiseworthy citizen of the desert. Therefore we cry to you: Rejoice, O Savvas most rich.

*Ikos* O leader of the fathers, beauty of the venerable, boldness of fasters before Christ, citizen and cultivator of the desert: how can I hymn your life, for you shine in brilliance to the ends of the earth, like the sun. And so I sing to you: Rejoice, beauteous glory of the Cappadocians. Rejoice, honoured standard of the whole world. Rejoice, offspring most good of the desert. Rejoice, godly delight of the righteous. Rejoice, for you rejected that which is fleeting and corruptible. Rejoice, dweller with the angels in the heavens. Rejoice, admonition and model of monastics. Rejoice, rousing of the slothful toward God. Rejoice, divinely flowing fountain of miracles. Rejoice, honoured instrument of the Spirit. Rejoice, with whom the East is adorned. Rejoice, through whom the Western lands shine forth. Rejoice, O Savvas most rich.

*Ode 7*

*To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* The youths of old became orators with the greatest love of wisdom; for, theologising with their lips, they sang from their God-pleasing souls: Blessed are you, the most divine God of our fathers.

In a mysterious sign by night, Jacob saw God incarnate, he who came forth from you as a brilliant light for those who sing: Blessed are you, the most divine and glorious God of our fathers.

Foreshadowing the ineffable intertwining that was to take place in you, O pure one, he who wrestled with Jacob, was willingly united with man through you: Blessed are you, the most divine and glorious God of our fathers.

Profane is the one who fails to proclaim you, the Son of the Virgin as one of the exalted Trinity, and who fails to cry with perfect faith: Blessed are you, the most divine and glorious God of our fathers.

*To the venerable one*

*Irmos* At the condescension of God the fire in Babylon was struck with awe, and so the children, dancing with joyful feet and rejoicing in the furnace as in a meadow sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

You put away transitory things, being rewarded with the eternal; and with the angels you join chorus as one who led an angelic life; and with them you sing: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

With you as its inhabitant, founder and citizen, O wise one, your great and honorable Lavra sings in thanksgiving to the Lord: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

O Savvas most wise, entreat the Lord unceasingly for your flock, and earnestly pray that your labours be preserved for ever for those who bear fruit and sing with love: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* Reasoning rightly, we call you the bridal chamber, the banquet hall and throne of the incarnation of the Word, most pure beyond telling; and, rejoicing, we sing to your Son: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

*Katavasia* Caught by the love of the king of all, the children scorned the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant in his uncontrollable fury. And as the terrible fire withdrew before them, they sang to the Master: Blessed are you for ever.

*Ode 8*

*To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* The thrice blessed youths, disdaining the golden image and beholding the immutable and living image of God, sang in the midst of the fire: Let the whole creation sing to the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

He who is goodness and power beyond compare, through you appeared on earth and dwelt with man; and all we the faithful sing to him: Let the whole creation sing to the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Truly we glorify you, the Mother of God, proclaiming your purity; for you gave flesh to one person of the Trinity, whom we all hymn with the Father and the Spirit: Let the whole creation sing to the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

*To the venerable one*

*Irmos* In his wrath the Chaldean tyrant heated the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones, but seeing them saved by a higher power, he cried out to the creator and deliverer: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

With gladness the ranks of the saints preceded your pure soul to the place of delight among the splendid mansions, where the choirs of the righteous rejoice, O venerable one. With them you now sing: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

Strange are your wonders, for having quelled the waves of the passions you tamed wild beasts; and with your prophetic gift you told of things to come; and, expelling legions of demons, you wounded them with your powerful vigils, prayers and fasts, and by the invincible power of the cross, O Godbearer.

He who spoke to Moses of old from the pillar of cloud and fire, made of you a magnificent pillar reaching to heaven from the earth, where your patient and greatly suffering body now rests, where we reverently sing: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

Your memory is celebrated with joy, O exalted one; for robed in the virtue which brings joy, the true garment of salvation, the pure and radiant garment of gladness, you now sing unceasingly: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* Remaining in virginity, you gave unwedded birth, and by your strange birthgiving you have united all, abolishing the strife of time and vast distance, in bearing Christ, the bestower of peace, whom we faithfully hymn and exalt above all for ever.

*Katavasia* The youths of the Old Covenant who were cast into the fire prefigured the womb of the Maiden that remained sealed when surpassing nature she gave birth. Divine

## December 5

grace wrought these wonders as a single miracle, which moves the people to sing in praise.

### *Ode 9*

#### *To the Mother of God*

*Irmos* You are the fullness of desire and sweetness, O Word of God and Son of the Virgin, God of gods and most holy Lord of the saints; therefore we all magnify you and her that gave you birth.

A sceptre of strength has been given to our feeble nature, the Word of God who dwelt in your womb; and he has raised it up, after it had stumbled into Hades: and so we magnify you, most pure one, as the Mother of God.

Receive with compassion O Master, your Mother whom you have chosen to intercede with you for us; and let all things be filled with your goodness, that we may all magnify you as our benefactor.

#### *To the venerable one*

*Irmos* Heaven was struck with awe and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God should bodily appear to men and that your womb became more spacious than the heavens. Therefore the ranks of angels together with mankind magnify you O Mother of God.

Your shrine emits a sweet spiritual fragrance, richly delighting your children who fervently surround you, commemorating your angelic sojourn on earth, O venerable one, and the radiance, glory and everlasting beauty bestowed on you.

Water broke forth in the desert, and the parched earth became a marsh, transformed by your prayers, O father; for legions of fasters inhabit it as it were a river valley, and the land of Jordan has blossomed like a lily, watered by your tears.

The splendour of the saints in heaven shone upon you, as one righteous, O father who loved the true righteousness of Christ. Following his way of life, you emulated his life-imparting sanctity as far as you were able.

Shining with rich light, O God-bearer, and seeing the choirs of angels standing in splendour around the light of the Trinity, receiving rays of divine knowledge through grace, cease not to pray that remission of sins be granted to those who hymn you.

*Theotokion* More highly exalted than all mortals in your incomparable pre-eminence, O pure one, you held God, the creator of all creation: entreat his mercy that he grant his Churches oneness of mind, peace and serene prosperity.

*Katavasia* It would be easier for us to be silent out of fear, for that is not threatening for us, O Virgin. As it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for you, O Mother, give us the strength to hymn you, for it is our will.

*Exapostilarion*

With your wisdom-loving ways you made the desert a city, O divinely wise father Savvas, adornment of the fathers; and you made of it a perfect noetic paradise blossoming with the divine flowers of a multitude of those like you, who fittingly celebrate your honoured memory. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* As you have compassion and great mercy, O exalted Virgin Mother of God, look upon my lowliness; quell the turmoil of the passions and the temptations of life, O Maiden, and by your prayers deliver me from the fire of Gehenna.

Let everything that has breath... *and the praises,*  
*inserting 4 verses tone 1*  
*to the special melody* Joy of the heavenly hierarchies...

The divinely wise Savvas, rejecting things below and lover of things above, as a temporary dweller in the desert, commands us all to celebrate with faith the saving day of his departure to God. *twice*

As your character was not of the flesh or of the world, you thereby glorified the Lord of glory on earth in your life, O wise father. And as is fitting you have been glorified by him and shown to be a divine source of healings, O God-pleasing Savvas.

O father, truly humble, natural, meek, simple and more quiet than other men, as one material you became a most worthy immaterial house of God, mercifully imparting to us the gifts given you by him.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 6*

O venerable father, the report of your teaching has gone out into all the earth; and so, you have found the reward of your labour in heaven, having destroyed legions of demons and attained the ranks of the angels, whose life you blamelessly emulated. As you have boldness before Christ our God, entreat peace for our souls.

Both now and for ever...

*Same tone*

## December 5

*Theotokion* O Mother of God, you are the true vine which has blossomed forth for us the fruit of life. We implore you, O Lady, to intercede together with the holy apostles that our souls may find mercy.

# Liturgy

*Beatitudes, eight verses: 4 each from Odes 3 and 6 of the canon to the venerable one.*

*Prokimenon, tone 7*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.

*Verse* What shall I give to the Lord for all he has given to me?

*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, number 213.*

*Alleluia, tone 8*

The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom and his tongue speaks what is right.

The Law of God is in his heart and his steps shall not be tripped.

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 43 (11:27-30)*

*Communion*

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance and shall not be afraid of evil tidings.



## December 6

### Our father among the saints, Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

#### Little Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 4 verses, tone 4,  
to the special melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

The grace of God the Spirit \* anointed you with divine myrrh \* to preside as bishop for the people of Myra, \* perfuming with the myrrh of the virtues \* the ends of the world, O sacred one; \* and to disperse the foetid passions \* by your sweetly spiritual prayers. \* We praise you with faith \* and celebrate your holy memory, O Nicholas.

Fittingly we bless you, O Nicholas, \* as a never-waning luminary, \* a universal beacon \* shining brightly in the firmament of the Church, \* which illumines the world \* dispelling the darkness of bitter misfortunes, \* and the winter of grief \* and instills profound tranquility.

Appearing in dreams, O Nicholas, \* you saved those about to be unjustly put to death, \* as you are compassionate, \* one who is truly loving, \* a most fervent deliverer, \* and a true intercessor \* for those who with faith ask your defense, \* O sacred father, \* fellow citizen with the angels, \* peer of the apostles and prophets.

Your glorious life \* has shown you to be most wondrous, \* O divinely wise and sacred father, \* the majesty of holy hierarchs, \* and adornment of the venerable. \* Spreading forth your rays upon the earth, \* like the sun you have illumined the hearts of the faithful \* who celebrate your luminous and divine memorial, \* O blessed Nicholas.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Your memory, O holy hierarch, shines like the sun, noetically illumining the hearts of the faithful; and celebrating it today with splendour, we sing to you in supplication: Rejoice, O might of chastity who with the shield of abstinence preserved your soul intact. Rejoice, O pastor and teacher of your Christian flock. Rejoice, adornment of the Church, beauty of hierarchs, boast of monastics. O blessed and sacred father Nicholas, unceasingly entreat Christ our God, that he grant peace to the whole world and save our souls.

Both now and for ever...

## December 6

*Theotokion* No one who flees to you goes away disappointed, O most pure Virgin and Mother of God: he who asks a favour receives according to the virtue of his request.

*Aposticha, tone 6,  
to the special melody* On the third day...

O blessed Nicholas, have pity on me who falls down before you, and enlighten the eyes of my soul, I pray, O wise hierarch, that in purity I may gaze upon him who is the compassionate giver of light.

*Verse* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

As you have boldness before God, O most blessed hierarch Nicholas, rescue me from the enemies who seek to do me evil, and save me from men of blood, O holy one.

*Verse* Your priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and your faithful ones shall shout for joy.

O hierarch, for us the faithful you are a haven untroubled by storms, an impregnable rampart, a tower of confirmation and a portal of repentance, and a guide and champion of our souls.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Zealous in his opposition to your flock, O most pure one, every day the wicked adversary seeks to devour it. But rescue us from his harm, O Mother of God.

*Troparion, tone 4*

Truly you were revealed to your flock  
as a standard of faith, a model of humility and a teacher of abstinence.  
Thus you reached the heights through lowliness  
and wealth through poverty.  
Holy hierarch Nicholas, pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion*

The mystery hidden from before the ages  
and unknown even to the angels,  
through you, O Mother of God, has been revealed to those on earth:  
God incarnate in unconfused union,  
who willingly accepted the cross for our sake  
and, thereby raising up the first-formed man,  
has saved our souls from death.

## Great Vespers

*We sing Blessed is the man... the first antiphon.*

*At Lord I call to you... 8 verses, tone 4,  
to the special melody When from the tree...*

Dwelling bodily in Myra, truly you proved to be myrrh,  
having been anointed with noetic chrism,  
O holy Nicholas, hierarch of Christ:  
you perfume the faces of those who with faith and love  
ever celebrate your glorious memory,  
freeing them from misfortunes, perils and sorrows  
by your prayers to God, O father.

As a true namesake of victory,  
to the faithful people you appear mighty amid perils,  
O holy Nicholas, hierarch of Christ;  
for whenever you are invoked,  
you hasten to those who with love flee to your protection.  
Appearing to the faithful by day and at night,  
you save them from dangers and evil circumstances.

In a dream you appeared  
to the Emperor Constantine and to Avlavius,  
and instilling fear in them, you spoke to them thus:  
Quickly release those whom you hold bound in prison,  
for they are undeserving of such lawless execution;  
but if you disobey me,  
I will petition the Lord and king against you when I pray.

For us amid misfortunes as we journey by land or sail the seas,  
for us who are nearby or afar away,  
you are a great and fervent advocate,  
a greatly merciful and mighty intercessor,  
O holy Nicholas, sacred preacher of Christ.  
Therefore, we come together and cry:  
Entreat the Lord, that we be delivered from every evil circumstance.

*And in the same tone  
to the special melody With what wreaths of praise...*

With what wreaths of praise shall we crown the holy hierarch? While bodily in Myra, he spiritually reaches out to all who love him in purity; the advocate and helper of all, the comforter of all the sorrowful, the refuge for all in trouble, the pillar of piety, the champion of the people; for whose sake Christ, in his great mercy, has cast down the arrogance of the enemy. *twice*

With what songs of hymnody shall we praise the holy hierarch? He is the opponent of impiety and champion of piety, the leader, great ally and teacher, who puts to shame the infamous, the destroyer of Arius and his minions: for his sake Christ, in his great mercy, has cast down the arrogance of the enemy.

With what hymns of prophecy shall we praise the holy hierarch, who saw things far distant and unerringly prophesied things far off as though near? He who watches over the whole world and delivers the oppressed, of old appeared to the divinely wise emperor in a dream and delivered from execution those unjustly arrested, and bestows great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

You that love the feasts of the Church, come together to hymn the adornment of hierarchs, the glory of the fathers, the fountain of miracles and great defender of the faithful, saying: Rejoice, O protector of Myra, honoured primate and steadfast pillar of its Church. Rejoice, O radiant beacon, illumining the ends of the earth with wonders. Rejoice, divine joy of the sorrowful and fervent intercessor for the oppressed. And now, O blessed Nicholas, cease not to entreat Christ our God for those who honour your ever-joyous and illustrious memory with faith and love.

Both now and for ever...

*Of the forefeast, in the same tone*

Adorn yourself well, O cave, for the lamb is coming, bearing Christ within her. O manger, receive him who by his word releases us mortals from irrationality. Shepherds, piping, bear witness to the awesome wonder. Magi from Persia, bring gold, frankincense and myrrh to the king, for the Lord appears from the Virgin Mother. His Mother, gazing down upon him, bows her head as a handmaid, and exclaims to him who was held in her arms: How were you sown within me? How did you spring forth within me, O my deliverer and God?

*Entrance, Prokimenon and three readings*

A reading from the Proverbs

The memory of the righteous is praised and the Lord's blessing is upon him. Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right. Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live. I, wisdom, live with prudence, and I attain knowledge and discretion. I have good advice and sound wisdom; I have insight,

I have strength. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. O simple ones, learn prudence; acquire intelligence, you who lack it. Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right; for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. They are all straight to one who understands and right to those who find knowledge, for I will instruct you in the truth that your hope may be in the Lord and that you will be filled with the Spirit.

#### A reading from the Proverbs

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse. A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but an accurate weight is his delight. When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble. The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them. Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness of the blameless keeps their ways straight, but the wicked fall by their own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright saves them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their schemes. When the wicked die, their hope perishes, and the expectation of the godless comes to nothing. The righteous are delivered from trouble, and the wicked get into it instead. With their mouths the godless would destroy their neighbors, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered. When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. whoever belittles another lacks sense, but an intelligent person remains silent.

#### A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The righteous, though they die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honoured for length of time, or measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There were some who pleased God and were loved by him, and while living among sinners were taken up. They were caught up so that evil might not change their understanding or guile deceive their souls. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years; for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, or take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and that he watches over his holy ones. (Wisdom 4: 7-15)

*Entreaty*  
*verses having their own melody,*  
*composed by Byzantius*

#### *Tone 2*

Christ our God has revealed you to your flock as a standard of faith and a model of meekness, O holy hierarch Nicholas; and as you emitted sweet fragrance in Myra, your

## December 6

divine admonitions shine in splendour everywhere, O intercessor for orphans and widows: pray unceasingly that he save our souls.

O father Nicholas, the shrine of your relics, like a phial, enriches Myra with myrrh. Appearing to the emperor in a vision during sleep, you saved from death, fetters and prison those unjustly held condemned: now, as then, you still appear in visions, praying for our souls.

O father Nicholas, even though the land of Myra has fallen silent, yet the whole world which has been enlightened by you with the sweet fragrance of your myrrh and the multitudes of your miracles, cries out in praiseworthy hymns; and we, saved by you from condemnation, cry out with those in Myra: Pray that our souls be saved.

### *Tone 4*

O father Nicholas, as the phial of the most holy Spirit, you poured forth the sweet fragrance of divine perfume in Myra; for, having emulated the apostles of Christ, the report of your miracles has gone out over all the world. Appearing during sleep to those distant and nearby, you delivered from death those who were to be executed through an unjust sentence, and gloriously have saved from misfortunes many who call upon you. By your supplications, from besetting evils free us also, who ever praise you.

### *Tone 8*

The fruit of your valiant deeds has illumined the hearts of the faithful, O venerable father. For who, hearing of your boundless humility, does not marvel at your patience, your concern for the poor, and your consolation of the sorrowful? You have taught all divinely, O holy hierarch Nicholas, and now have been crowned with a never-fading wreath. May you pray for our souls.

Throughout this fleeting life you hastened to praise the Lord, O Nicholas, and he has glorified you in the true life in heaven. Having acquired boldness before him, pray that he save our souls.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

O good and faithful servant, cultivator of the vineyard of Christ: you carried the burden of the day and increased the talent entrusted to you; and you did not envy those who came after you. Therefore, as the portals of heaven opened to you, enter into the joy of the Lord, and intercede for us, O holy Nicholas.

Both now and for ever...

*Of the forefeast, in the same tone*

Hold festival, O Sion; be glad, O Bethlehem, city of Christ our God. Receive the creator who is held in a manger in the cave. Open to me your gates, that entering there, I

may see him who holds all creation in his hand, an infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes: the Lord and giver of life, whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices, and who saves our souls.

*Aposticha, tone 5,  
to the special melody Rejoice...*

Rejoice, O sacred one, pure abode of the virtues, standard of the most divine priesthood, great shepherd, radiant beacon, who bears victory in your name, who inclines mercifully to those who entreat you, bending your ear to the pleas of the infirm; ready deliverer, saving preserver of all who with faith honour your glorious memory. O blessed one, beseech Christ to impart great mercy to the world.

*Verse* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

Rejoice, O sacred mind, pure habitation of the Trinity, pillar of the Church, confirmation of the faithful, help of the vanquished, star who, by the splendours of your truly acceptable supplications, ever dispels the darkness of danger and sorrow, calm haven to which those beset by the storm waves of life hasten and find salvation. O holy hierarch Nicholas, entreat Christ to grant great mercy to our souls.

*Verse* Your priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and your saints shall sing with joyfulness.

Rejoice, hierarch filled with divine zeal, who, by your dread confrontation and warnings, delivered from a wicked sentence those who were to be unjustly executed, O fountain in Myra flowing with myrrh in abundance, giving drink to our souls and driving away the stench of the passions; O sword mowing down the weeds of falsehood, O winnowing-fan scattering the teachings of Arius like chaff; O Nicholas, pray that he impart great mercy to our souls.

Glory be to the Father...

*Composed by John the Monk, tone 6*

O man of God, faithful servant and minister of the Lord, man of divine aspiration, chosen vessel, pillar and foundation of the Church, heir of the kingdom: never cease to cry to the Lord for us.

Both now and for ever....

*Composed by Byzantius, in the same tone*

O unwedded Virgin, from where have you come? Who is your father and who is your mother? For how is it that you bear the creator in your arms; how is it that your womb was not subject to corruption? O how great, all glorious and awesome are the mysteries we see wrought in you, O most holy one. We prepare fitting recompense for

## December 6

you on earth: the cave; and we ask that the star be given from heaven, and that Magi come from the lands of the East to the West, to behold him, the salvation of mankind, wrapped in swaddling-bands in the manger.

*Troparion, tone 4*

Truly you were revealed to your flock as a standard of faith, | a model of humility and a teacher of abstinence. | Thus you reached the heights through lowliness and wealth through poverty. | Holy hierarch Nicholas, pray to Christ our God || for the salvation of our souls. *twice*

*And Virgin Mother of God, rejoice... once.*

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the saint, twice;*  
*Glory be to the Father... . Both now and for ever...*  
*and the Theotokion The mystery hidden from before the ages... as at Little Vespers*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,*  
*the Sessional Hymn, tone 1*  
*to the special melody Your tomb, O Saviour...*

Dwelling bodily in Myra, O father Nicholas, you appeared noetically anointed with the myrrh of the Spirit: you have perfumed the world with the myrrh of your wonders, pouring forth through your memory and your discourses, which are redolent of myrrh.

Glory be to the Father...

You shine upon the earth with rays of miracles, O wise Nicholas, and move every tongue to the glorification and praise of him who has glorified you on earth. Beseech him that we who with faith and love honour your memory may be delivered from all want, O chosen among the fathers.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O pure and immaculate Lady, through the divine Spirit you conceived the creator, God and author of all, and you gave birth to him without corruption. Glorifying him, we hymn you, O Virgin, as the palace of the king of all and the defence of the world.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,*  
*the Sessional Hymn, tone 4*  
*to the special melody You have appeared today...*



You intercede for the faithful, protecting and preserving them, saving them from all sorrow, O most comely glory and boast of hierarchs, venerable Nicholas.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 8,  
to the special melody Of the Wisdom...*

Receiving from God a fountain of miracles, O wise father, you pour honeyed waters upon all the faithful, O blessed one; for as a pastor and preacher of the faith, you carried out the words of the true shepherd. As you have boldness before him, you saved men from death, O blessed hierarch Nicholas. Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who honour your holy memory with love.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* I have fallen into the mire of sins, and there is no firm place for me. The tempest of transgressions has cruelly engulfed me. As you gave birth to the Word who alone loves mankind, look upon me, your servant, and deliver me from every sin and soul-destroying passion, and from every wicked affliction of the murderer, O unwedded Mother of God. Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to me, your servant, who hopes in you.

*Polyeleos, and Magnification*

We magnify you, O holy hierarch Nicholas, and we honour your holy memory; for you entreat Christ our God on behalf of us.

*Verses* O hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world.

*After the Polyeleos, Sessional Hymn, tone 5,  
to the special melody The Word who is equally unoriginate...*

O faithful, let us piously praise | God-bearing Nicholas, sent by God, | the all-wise hierarch and fervent ally and defender | of those amid misfortunes and sorrows; | for he prays to the Lord for those who with faith || celebrate and hymn his divine memory.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 4*

*to the Special Melody* Quickly anticipate...

You are seen to be a most ardent intercessor | for the Church of Christ, O Nicholas, | boldly refuting the ungodly teachings of heresies; | and you have been revealed to all | as a standard of Orthodoxy, || praying for all who follow your divine teachings and instructions.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Quickly accept our supplications, O immaculate Lady | and bear them to your Son and God. | From evil circumstances deliver those who have recourse to you. | Crush the wiles and cast down the arrogance of the ungodly || who array themselves against your servants, O most pure one.

*Hymn of Degrees, tone 4, the first antiphon.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.  
*Verse* How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me?

Let every breath praise the Lord...

*The Gospel of John, number 36*

*After the Psalm* Have mercy... *this verse, tone 6*

O heir of God, fellow communicant of Christ | and servitor of the Lord, holy Nicholas, | as was your name, so also was your life. | For the radiance of your countenance bore witness to your intellect, | shining forth in your venerable head with innocence of spirit and serenity | proclaiming your meekness. | Your life was glorious and your repose is with the saints: || may you pray for our souls.

*Canon of the Mother of God, and two Canons of the Saint.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the Mother of God,  
tone 1*

*Irmos* Let us all sing a hymn of victory to God who has wrought wondrous miracles with his upraised arm, and saved Israel, for he has been glorified.

O pure one who gave birth to him who is the abyss of wisdom, by your grace impart a fountain pouring drops of wisdom, that I may hymn the abyss of your grace.

I hymn you, O exalted Lady, whom the ranks of angels hymn as the one who gave birth to God, whom all creation highly hymns, for he has been glorified.

*The first Canon of the hierarch,  
upon the acrostic* I sing divine hymnody to you, O Nicholas  
*composed by Theophanes, tone 2*

*Irmos* The almighty power once overwhelmed the army of Pharaoh in the deep, and the incarnate Word has destroyed pernicious sin. The Lord is all-glorious, for he has been greatly glorified.

Crowned, before the throne of Christ with the angelic armies, O wise Nicholas, grant me the enlightenment which illumines the darkness of my soul, that, rejoicing, I may praise your memory.

The Lord who glorifies all who glorify him has given you to the faithful as a refuge, O Nicholas, delivering from perils those who have recourse to your protection, who call upon you with faith and love.

*Theotokion* The most wicked serpent, instilling in me the desire for equality with the creator, took me captive; but through you, O most pure one, I have been restored and truly deified, for you gave birth to him who has deified me, O Mother of God.

*The second Canon of the hierarch, tone 1,  
the acrostic of which, excluding the Triadica and Theotokia, is the [Greek] alphabet.*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

Though my tongue and lips are at a loss, O Nicholas, I bring this meager praise and entreaty to your godly excellence; but, as you are a bestower of riches, render God the Saviour merciful to me.

As a heavenly man you were shown to be angelic upon the earth, a ready defender of widows, an avenger of the oppressed, and a helper amid misfortunes for all who are sorrowful, O father Nicholas.

All who are under the sun tell of the depths of the wonders of your virtue, O thrice blessed Nicholas: the poor call you their intercessor, the orphans and widows their nurturer, the blind their guide, and all men their champion.

*Theotokion* Without seed you conceived the Word, one of the Trinity, O most immaculate Lady, and you gave birth to him in the flesh, remaining a virgin after birthgiving, as you were before. Ever entreat him for us, as he is your Son and God.

*Katavasia* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

### *Ode 3*

#### *Canon of the Mother of God*

## December 6

*Irmos* Let my heart be made firm in your will, O omnipotent Christ our God who established the second heaven above the waters and founded the earth upon the waters.

I hymn the Mother of God as the abode of the king, more pure than the heavens, the truly fragrant garden of paradise emitting the sweet odour of grace, the hope of Christians.

At the word of the archangel you gave birth to the Word who by his word has brought all nature, rational and irrational, into being, and who delivers men from irrationality, O blessed one.

### *The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* The desert flowered as a lily at your coming, O Lord, just as the temple of the heathen that was barren; and thereby my heart is established.

O blessed Nicholas, as you are the true disciple of the Master, you save those who have recourse to you from grievous misfortunes and bitter death.

Cleanse your servants, granting them remission of sins, as you are good, through the mediations before you of Nicholas, your favorite, O greatly merciful one.

*Theotokion* Quell the turmoil of my soul, O most pure one, and guide my life, O most holy one who gave birth to God, in whom my heart is established.

### *The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Having acquired in your heart tablets inscribed with many virtues by the immortal and pure finger of Christ our God, O Nicholas, sweetness greater than that of honey or the honeycomb pours forth from your lips.

Grace gloriously produced miracles in you, O Nicholas; for your pure life, truly more lustrous than gold, illumines benighted souls with the radiance of the divine Spirit.

You live even after death, clearly appearing in dreams, and you gloriously delivered the young men from death, crying out to the emperor: Do no harm to these men, who have been slandered by vainglorious jealousy.

*Theotokion* O Mother of God, who gave your servants the hope of salvation, with your speedy supplications protect and help us amid needs and perils, for you are the boast of us, the faithful.

*Katavasia* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 8*  
to the *Special Melody* Of the wisdom...

Having ascended to the summit of the virtues and illumined by the divine splendours of miracles therefrom, O father, you were an all-radiant pastor for the world, and an invincible intercessor for us amid perils. Having gloriously vanquished the enemy, you drove away falsehood and saved men from sin. O Nicholas, entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of offences to those who with love honour your holy memory.

Glory be to the Father...

*Same tone and melody*

He who is the abyss of mercy has revealed you as a river of abundant healings and an inexhaustible fountain of miracles, O Nicholas; for those bitterly afflicted with grievous ailments and cruelly tormented by the vexations of life truly find the curative healing of all suffering in your fervent defence. Therefore, we cry out to you: Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of offences to those who with love honour your holy memory.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* All of us, the generations of mankind, bless you, the Virgin who alone among women gave seedless birth to God incarnate; for the fire of the divinity made his abode within you, and you nurtured the creator and Lord with milk as a child; and so we, the race of angels and men together sing to you: Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of offences to those who with faith worship your most holy birth giving.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Mother of God*

*Irmos* In the Spirit foreseeing the incarnate Word, O prophet Habakkuk, you cried out, saying: You shall be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; you shall be made manifest when the time comes. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Eve became the cause of death for mortals through the counsel of the serpent; but you, O pure Virgin who at the angel's word gave birth to the Word, have become the mediator of immortality and life. Therefore, we fittingly hymn you.

In the Spirit foreseeing you as the mountain, the gate, the table, the holy ark, the lampstand, the throne of life, the jar and couch, O pure one, the prophets revealed you beforehand in indistinct images, the fulfillment of which we behold.

*The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* You have come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but the Lord himself incarnate, and have saved me, and the whole of mankind. Therefore I cry to you: Glory to your power O Lord.

Having in purity approached the rays of the Spirit, you became a light-bearer, illumining the ends of the world, interceding for all, and saving all who have recourse to you with faith.

As of old you appeared, delivering the young men from death, O venerable Nicholas, so now save me from every evil circumstance, from perils and misfortunes.

Having shone with the brilliance of the virtues, O blessed one, as an excellent emulator of your Master, when invoked, you save those who glorify you with reverence and love.

*Theotokion* Incarnate, the Master of creation came upon you, saving me wholly, in that he is compassionate. Therefore, we, the faithful, glorify you as Mother of God.

*The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

When your name alone is invoked, with all speed it truly delivers those who fervently call upon you from all the counsels of the enemy, O sacred Nicholas. As of old you delivered the soldiers, so also save us from every grievous circumstance.

Before the throne of God, you never cease to make earnest supplication for us, your faithful servants, O wise and wondrous Nicholas, that we be delivered from the eternal fire, from the enemy, from the wicked tongue, and from affliction.

Everywhere you pour healings upon those who come to you, and deliver all from bondage: by your supplications which are acceptable to God, transform our grief to joy, O all-radiant Nicholas, and cast down the pridefulness of our enemies.

*Theotokion* You alone are truly more honourable than those on earth and those in heaven, O Mother of God, for you conceived the creator of all, clothed in material flesh, giving birth to him without seed: what a new sight this is.

*Katavasia* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the

mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Mother of God*

*Irmos* O Christ our Master and God who loves mankind, cause the radiant and everlasting light to shine upon us who arise in the morning to ponder the judgements of your commandments.

O honoured Lady, you contained God Almighty like the ark of sanctity, like the holy throne of fire, like a sanctified palace.

O pure Lady, you alone among virgins were a mother who had not known a man and among mothers a virgin; for you ineffably gave birth to God who enhances nature.

*The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* O Christ my Saviour, the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and the salvation of the despairing, I rise early to you, O king of peace: enlighten me with your radiance, for I know no other God than you.

Enlightened by a godly life, O thrice blessed one, boldly you delivered those condemned by an unjust sentence to death, who cried to Christ our God: We know none other God than you.

As you now see the eternal glory in heaven and delight in the most splendid brilliance of the ineffable and divine radiance, protect me by your intercessions, O venerable and honourable favorite of Christ.

*Theotokion* That you might seek out your image, buried by the passions, O Saviour, withdrawing from the heavenly hosts, you appeared, incarnate of the Virgin, to those who cry to you: We know none other God than you.

*The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

The great metropolis of Myra, the province of Lycia, and all the parts of your homeland, proclaim your wonders and miracles, whereby you deliver all from pain and sorrow, O divinely blessed father Nicholas.

## December 6

As the feeder of the wise and father of orphans, the excellent help of those in sorrow, the consolation of the grieving, the shepherd and guide of all the lost, O Nicholas, by your supplications deliver us from misfortunes.

Having passed from earth to the immaterial mansions, you gaze upon the ineffable beauty of Christ, and have become a conversor with the angelic host: joining chorus with the apostles and martyrs, earnestly pray for us to the Master of all, O father Nicholas.

*Theotokion* O pure one, who alone has placed salvation and hope before all men and saves them, help us now who cry out to you and ever call upon you amid grievous circumstances; for we have no other intercessor than you, after God.

*Katavasia* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

### *Ode 6*

#### *Canon of the Mother of God*

*Irmos* Like the prophet Jonah, I cry out: Free my life from corruption, O good one, and save me, O Saviour of the world, as I sing: Glory to you.

O help of the faithful and joyful gladness of the grieving, with spiritual joy enrich your servants who desire your aid.

Let the noetic heaven, the all-pure temple, the holy ark, the beautiful paradise of God, wherein the tree of my life stands, be hymned.

#### *The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of your loving kindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God.

The crown of victory has fittingly been placed upon your head, O Nicholas: as you are a most excellent victor, save those who call upon you.

Appear and save me, slain by transgressions and engulfed by the storm waves of the passions, O blessed one, and lead me to the harbour of the will of God.

*Theotokion* In you, O ever-virgin Mother, have I placed my hope of salvation, and I propose you as the steadfast and unshakable intercessor for my life.

#### *The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her,



came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

Shown to be a new Abraham, O Nicholas, you ever offered the unbloody sacrifice, and brought your mind to your Master as if it were your only-begotten son: you were blessed as a lover of strangers, O father, and as the divine and immaculate habitation of the Trinity.

You worked strange and awesome miracles, O Nicholas, interceding in your speedy supplications for those in danger over all the earth and far away at sea, showing yourself to the faithful as a physician of the sick, a feeder of the poor, and the namesake of victory over the enemy.

Foreseeing things yet to come with the eye of your mind, you filled the ends of the earth with right doctrines; and declaring to us that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, you brought down the savagery of Arius, O pillar of the Orthodox faith, setting forth your honourable admonitions.

*Theotokion* Wholly incarnate within you, O most pure one, Christ our God was born without seed; for, unable to endure the sight of the work of his hands tormented by the deceiver, he came in the guise of a servant to deliver the human race.

*Katavasia* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

*Kontakion, tone 3,  
to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

In Myra, you were seen to be a servant of divine things,  
O holy one,  
for there you fulfilled the Gospel of Christ  
and gave up your life for your people  
and saved the innocent from death.  
You have been sanctified O venerable one.  
for you were a great steward of the grace of God.

*Ikos* With songs let us now hymn the holy hierarch, the pastor and teacher of the people of Myra, that we may be enlightened by his prayers. Behold, he is seen to be wholly pure and incorrupt of spirit, offering to Christ the immaculate and pure sacrifice which is truly acceptable to God, as a hierarch pure in soul and body. Therefore, as a true intercessor of the Church and champion thereof, you were a great steward of the grace of God.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Mother of God*

*Irmos* The furnace was sprinkled with dew, O Saviour, and the children danced for joy as they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The Most High has shown you, O pure one, to be an animate heaven, a bridal-chamber surrounded with grace, a royal robe inwoven with gold, a garden of paradise.

Make steadfast the inconstancy of my mind, and by your protection establish my turbulent thoughts upon the immovable rock, O virgin Mother.

*The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* When the golden image was worshipped on the plain of Dura, your three youths spurned the ungodly command; and, cast into the fire, bedewed they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

I have fallen into precipitous temptation, grievously pierced; I approach the gates of Hades, wounded by sorrows. Save me by your supplications, O blessed one, and raise me up who sings: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Illumined with the immaterial rays of the never-waning light, rescue the afflicted who find themselves in the darkness of tribulations, and guide to the light of gladness those who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* Ask Christ, your Son and God, O Virgin Mother of God, for those sold under grievous transgressions and the deceptions of the serpent, that they may be delivered by his precious blood who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

As an excellent physician of all manner of grievous ailments, O father Nicholas, and having healed the infirmity of my soul, grant me goodly health, that I may cry: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Having of old delivered the soldiers from death, O holy one, you raised them up to hymn and glorify Christ with ardent faith; and they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Having mystically approached the cup of wisdom, O father Nicholas, from your lips you let fall raindrops sweeter than honey or the honeycomb, commanding the people to cry out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* As you are more exalted than all other creatures, O Mother of God, entreat your Son and God, that those who truly honour and glorify you may be delivered from torments, singing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Katavasia* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Mother of God*

*Irmos* As their creator and Lord, before whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe, you priests hymn, you children glorify and you people exult above all for ever.

O Virgin, shown to be an animate bridal-chamber and an inspired mantle of scarlet, the embroidered cloak of the king of all, and the purple robe, from whom the flesh of the Word and incarnate God has shone forth.

Ineffably, incomprehensibly, you conceived God the creator, who holds all creation in the palm of his hand, who for our sake became a man like us, without forsaking that which he was.

*The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* God, who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the fire into dew, praise as the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

As one good and compassionate, free those bitterly trapped in the abyss of perils, granting them release from the evils which hold them, by your supplications to Christ the Saviour, O steward of the sacred mysteries.

As you are a mystagogue of things which pass understanding, the minister of things holy and celestial, and a faithful hierarch, O divinely wise one manifest in sanctity, implore our Saviour for remission of transgressions.

*Theotokion* Having fallen into the abyss of impiety, my mind fails, beset on every side by divers evils; yet heal me, O Virgin, and clothe me in the light of dispassion.

*The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

The ranks of the patriarchs and apostles, the assemblies of the hieromartyrs, the company of prophets and fasters bless your godly life. With them we also sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

O Most High, Word, and king of all, great in might; through the supplications of the venerable pastor grant peace to the life of all Christians, aiding our Orthodox hierarchs in the struggle against heresy, that with him we may sing to Christ: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

Illumined with unapproachable light, O father, you shine upon the souls of those in tribulation, dispelling the gloomy darkness of perils, and enlightening our hearts with gladness. Enlightened thereby from afar, we cry out: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Triadicon* Following the truly divine teachings of the fathers, with faith we hymn the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the life and lives, the one and three lights. With them we piously sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* Of old on Mount Sinai, the bush prefigured a strange mystery, O pure Maiden, burning without being consumed, depicting the mystery of your birthgiving; for the fire of the divinity which dwelt within you preserved you unharmed: we magnify him for ever.

*Katavasia* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

### *Ode 9*

#### *Canon of the Mother of God*

*Irmos* As a fountain ever-flowing which brings life, as the light bearing lamp stand of blessing, the spiritual temple and most pure tabernacle more spacious than heaven and earth, we the faithful magnify the Mother of God.

Pour the stream of your grace upon me who is consumed by the flame of afflictions and grievously wasting away, O abundant fountain who gave birth to the river of grace, from which, drinking thereof, we thirst no more.

O Lady, save me who entreats you, the beautiful chamber of the bridegroom, animate palace of the Master, the golden robe, and most comely dwelling of Christ.

#### *The first Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* Our God and Lord has appeared to us, the Son of the Father without beginning, incarnate of the Virgin, to give light to those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Therefore let us magnify the all-hymned Mother of God.

Enlightened by lamps of grace, O divinely wise one, you clearly became a lamp of piety, saving those in danger, delivering those who are out upon the depth of the sea, and gloriously feeding the hungry, O blessed one.

Dwelling now in the sweetness of paradise, and clearly seeing the ineffable glory, look down from the circles of heaven upon those who hymn you, delivering them from sufferings, O blessed God-bearer.

*Theotokion* O pure Mother of God, you gave birth to the wisdom, power and hypostatic Word of the Father, who built the temple of his body with your most pure blood, and joined himself inseparably to it by unification.

*The second Canon of the Hierarch*

*Irmos* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain. Him we praise and magnify.

O lovers of the feasts of the Church, let us join chorus in spirit. Heavens, mountains and hills, choirs of virgins and of the Church, splendour of fasters: rejoice in memory of the blessed one; and, assembling today, let us magnify the Saviour.

With hymns let all the ends of the earth sing unceasingly, adorning the head of Nicholas, the favorite of Christ our God, with wreaths of praise. Through his supplications may we be delivered from sufferings and misfortunes.

O Nicholas, accept this meager effort as fitting hymnody, as Christ accepted the widow's two mites. Reject not one accursed with passions, for it is not in pride that I have presumed, O thrice-blessed one.

*Theotokion* All grief has been abolished by your birthgiving, and the Lord has taken away lamentation, weeping, and each tear from the face of every mortal, O pure Mother of God who knew not wedlock. In you we also fulfill our debt.

*Katavasia* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain. Him we praise and magnify.

*Exapostilarion,*  
*to the special melody* hearken, O women...

## December 6

Let us all praise Nicholas, the great archpastor, hierarch and prelate of Myra; for he saved many men who were unjustly condemned to be executed, appearing to the emperor and to Avlavius in a dream, annulling the unjust verdict.

Glory be to the Father...

The Lord glorified you greatly in miracles, during your life and after your end, O hierarch Nicholas; for whenever anyone, out of love for the faith, calls upon your holy name, he is straightway heard, and finds you a fervent intercessor.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Having given birth to Christ, the hypostatic wisdom, the transcendent Word and physician of all, O Virgin, heal the grievous and long-standing wounds of my soul, and slay the passionate thoughts of my heart.

Let everything that has breath... *and the Praises,*  
*inserting 6 verses:*

*Verses with their own melody, tone 1*

Lifting your eyes unwaveringly toward the heights of understanding, and gazing mystically into the abyss of wisdom, O father, you have enriched the world with your teachings. Ever pray to Christ for us, O holy hierarch Nicholas.

O man of God, faithful favorite, performer of his mysteries, man of divine desires, animate pillar and inspired image: the Church of Myra, marvelling, received you as a divine treasure, an advocate for our souls.

*And 4 verses, same tone*  
*to the Special Melody* Joy of the heavenly hierarchies...

Soaring above the flowers of the Church, \* like a fledgling of the angelic nest of the Most High, \* O thrice-blessed Nicholas, you ever cry out to God \* for us who find ourselves amid violent misfortunes and temptations, \* and you deliver us by your supplications.

You made the beauty of your priestly vesture \* even more splendid through active virtues, O God-bearing father; \* therefore, as a hierarch you accomplish wondrous things for us, \* delivering us from evils, \* O sacred minister of glorious miracles.

Passing through the beauties of the invisible ones, \* you comprehended the awesome glory of the saints, O holy one; \* therefore, O sacred father, \* you reveal to us in heavenly words the vision of those who live eternally.

You stood before the pious emperor in a dream, \* and delivered the prisoners from death, O father. \* Pray unceasingly, that, by your supplications, \* we also, who praise you well, \* may be delivered from temptations, misfortunes and pain.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 5*

Rejoicing, let us sound the trumpet of festal hymns, let us leap up and join chorus on this the God-bearing father's prayerful celebration. Let kings and princes come together, and let them hymn him who by his dread appearance in a dream prevailed upon the king to release the three soldiers unjustly imprisoned. O teachers and pastors of the good shepherd, assembling, let us praise the pastor who showed forth love like his. Lauding the great hierarch, the physician of the infirm, the deliverer of those in misfortune, the helper of sinners, the treasure of the poor, the consoler of the sorrowful, the companion of those who travel, the helmsman of those at sea, who fervently anticipates the needs of all in every place, let us say thus: O holy Nicholas, come and deliver us from these present tribulations, and save your flock by your supplications.

Both now and for ever....

*Composed by German us the Patriarch, in the same tone*

Let us sound the trumpet of hymns; for, bowing down from on high, the virgin Mother, the queen of all, crowns with blessings those who hymn her. Let kings and princes come together, and let them clap their hands in hymns before the queen who gave birth to the king, who, in his love for mankind, has been pleased to loose those held fast by death from of old. Pastors and teachers, assembling, let us praise the most pure Mother of the good shepherd. With divinely voiced hymns praising the golden lampstand, the light-bearing cloud, the animate ark more spacious than the heavens, the fiery throne of the Master, the golden jar which held the Manna, the portal of the Word which is shut, the refuge of all Christians, let us say: O palace of the Word, grant the kingdom of heaven to us, the lowly; for nothing is impossible to your mediation.

*Great Doxology. Troparion. Litanies. Dismissal. Prime*

## Liturgy

*On the Beatitudes,  
8 verses: 4 from Ode 3 of Canon 1 of the saint,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of Canon 2*

*Prokimenon, tone 7*

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall hope in him.  
*Verse* Hear my voice, O God, when I make my prayer to you.

*Epistle Hebrews 335*

*Alleluia tone 4*

Let your priests be clothed with righteousness and let your faithful ones shout for  
joy.  
For the Lord has chosen Zion for himself, he has desired it for his habitation.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 24*

*Communion verse*

The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance: he will not fear bad  
tidings.



## December 7

### **Our father among the saints, Ambrose, Bishop of Milan**

### **Vespers**

*At Lord I call to you... verses to St Ambrose, tone 1  
to the Special Melody Joy of the heavenly hierarchies...*

Adorning the seat of government with virtue, you likewise received sacred office with divine inspiration: having been a faithful steward of grace in both, O Ambrose, you inherited a twofold crown.

In abstinence and sorrow, in many vigils and in lengthy prayers, you cleansed soul and body, O divinely wise one; henceforth revealed as a chosen vessel of Christ our God, equal to the apostles, you received heavenly gifts.

As Nathan reproved David, so you boldly reproved the pious emperor who had sinned, O Ambrose, and you openly cut him off from the Church; and having chastised him in godly manner with a penance, you numbered him again among your flock.

*Other verses, to the Mother of God,  
used if Alleluia is sung instead of God is the Lord...  
in which case, these verses are sung before those to St. Ambrose,  
in the same tone and melody*

O pure Mother of God, with the staff of your intercession drive bestial passions from my wretched soul; and, peacefully guiding me to life, number me among the holy flock of your chosen sheep.

As you are the helper of the helpless, and the hope of all the hopeless, O Mother of God, be my release and aid amid evils, O most pure one, delivering me from sins and tribulations, as you are merciful.

Quench the fiery urgings of my pernicious passions with divine dew, O Virgin, and with the rain of your will; that even I, like the three youths, may give thanks to God who was born of you, and glorify and bless your grace, O Lady.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, in the same tone and melody*

## December 7

Dragged down by my corrupt will, I lie prone, yet I have recourse to your serenity, O Virgin. Deliver me from the adverse tempest and from diverse temptations, that I may unceasingly hymn your grace, O ever-virgin Mother of God.

*Or this Theotokion of the Cross*

Standing before the cross of your Son and God, and seeing his long-suffering, O pure Mother; weeping, you said: Woe is me, O my child most sweet. What are these things which you suffer unjustly, O Word of God, in your wish to save mankind?

*Aposticha from the Octoechos*

*Troparion, tone 4*

Truly you were revealed to your flock  
as a standard of faith, a model of humility and a teacher of abstinence.  
Thus you reached the heights through lowliness  
and wealth through poverty.  
Holy hierarch Ambrose, pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

## Matins

*Both canons from the Octoechos,  
and the Canon to the saint,  
upon the acrostic I praise Ambrose most great.*

*Tone 4*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Traversing the depth of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, Israel of old vanquished the might of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms stretched out in the form of a cross.

O venerable one, radiant with divine splendours, by your prayers illumine those who piously honour your radiant, light-bearing and holy repose.

The Word of God gave you wise discourse adorned with true knowledge, O hierarch Ambrose, to dispel the irrational and malicious ideas of the heretics.

The vision of your mind cleansed of the darkness of the passions, you rendered it receptive to the pure brilliance of the most holy Spirit, O blessed one.

Having, as a pastor, fended off the destruction of the Arian-minded with your most wise and sacred dogmas, O wise father, with faith you pastored your rational sheep on the meadow of Orthodoxy.

*Theotokion* By the Father's will and through the divine Spirit of God, without seed you conceived and gave birth in the flesh to the Son who was begotten of the Father without a mother and was born of you without a father for our sake.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* Let us not boast of wisdom, power and wealth, but of you O Christ, wisdom in person, for none is holy but you, O lover of mankind.

Having received of God tremendous grace and power, O father Ambrose, by your touch you healed the various passions of those who came to you.

Having learned the knowledge of the Scriptures, as a godly hierarch you made plain to the ignorant things difficult to understand, O venerable father Ambrose.

With the sentence of God you instantly struck dead the vile woman who brazenly and senselessly strove to come close to you, who shone with spiritual wisdom.

*Theotokion* You alone have renewed the human race, having given birth to the creator and Lord of our nature: therefore, we glorify you, the divinely joyous one.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 8  
to the special melody Of the Wisdom...*

Emulating zealously Elias the Prophet, and likewise John the Baptist,  
you bravely denounced the iniquitous emperor, O hierarch;  
divinely you adorned your see and enriched the world with a multitude of miracles.

Learned in the divine Scriptures, you strengthened the faithful therein, and converted the faithless.

O hierarch Ambrose, entreat Christ our God,  
that he grant remission of sins to those who with love celebrate your holy memory.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Tripped by wicked thoughts, I have fallen into the abyss of sin, and, groaning, I cry out to you from the depths of my heart, O most pure one: Show me the wonder of your rich mercy, and the unfathomable abyss of your loving kindness, and the incalculable wealth of your compassion; and grant me repentance and forgiveness of sins, that I may cry out to you with love: Entreat Christ our God, that he grant me remission of transgressions, for I, your servant, have you as my hope.

*Or this Theotokion of the Cross*

Beholding the lamb, shepherd and deliverer upon the cross, the lamb and mother cried out, weeping, and exclaimed, bitterly lamenting: The world rejoices, receiving

## December 7

deliverance through you, but inwardly I burn, seeing your crucifixion, which you endure in the loving kindness of your mercy, O long-suffering Lord, abyss of mercy and inexhaustible fountain. Take pity, and grant remission of offences to those who, with faith, hymn your divine sufferings.

### *Ode 4*

*Irmos* As an example of mercy and love, you hung upon the cross and the nations were scattered before you: you are the lover of mankind, my strength and my praise.

Having been anointed with the chrism of the priesthood, you were made a hierarch, ordaining priests and granting the cleansing of salvation to all.

You protected your flock from all the harm of the adversaries, O blessed one, and blinded the falsehood of Arius with the radiance of your words.

Invested with the power of the Spirit, you dispelled the evil spirits of malice, who could not endure your rebuke, O blessed one.

*Theotokion* He who wrought all things by his will is himself wrought of your pure blood, saving those who acknowledge you to be the pure Mother of God.

### *Ode 5*

*Irmos* You have come as a light into the world, O my Lord; a holy light which turns from the darkness of ignorance those who sing to you with faith.

Having attained a mind resplendent with immaterial light, O blessed Ambrose, you have emitted rays of healing and miracles.

You raised yourself up as a sacred dwelling place of the Spirit, O divinely inspired Ambrose, and razed the temples of idolatry.

Emperors were put to shame by you, shining with the radiance of the greatest of virtues, and their restrictions did not cause your tongue to falter.

*Theotokion* He who wrought all things in wisdom through his will, desiring to renew man, O Virgin, made his dwelling within you.

### *Ode 6*

*Irmos* I will sacrifice to you with a voice of praise, the Church sings to you, O Lord, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which for mercy's sake, flowed from your side.

Amazed, Rome faithfully praised your honoured deeds; for, like a radiant star, O hierarch, you spread the rays of your wonders everywhere.

Having risen at dawn for Christ, you were richly illumined with splendours and filled with divine light; and you enlighten those who ever faithfully honour you.

Having sanctified body and soul, O father, you rendered your heart receptive to the gifts of grace, for it ever aspired to its sweetness.

*Theotokion* Heal the wounds of my soul, O Virgin, with your divine overshadowing, and enlighten my mind, benighted by slothfulness and by the malice of the adversary.

*Kontakion, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody Of divine faith...*

Resplendent with divine dogmas,  
you darkened the deception of Arius,  
O Ambrose, pastor and teacher of the mysteries:  
working miracles through the power of the Spirit,  
you became a healer of various passions, O venerable father:  
entreat Christ our God, that our souls be saved.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The children of Abraham in the Chaldean furnace were consumed by a burning love of godliness rather than by the flame, and they sang in the destructive fire: Blessed are you, O Lord, in the temple of your glory.

The divine proclamation of your teaching has flashed like lightning throughout the world, O wise father, shining with the revelations of miracles and enlightening formerly darkened hearts.

Following the command of the Saviour, O father, as a most blessed servant, you carefully increased many times the talent given you, and were granted the Master's joy.

Your theological mind deepened like a river, you flowed sacred dogma to give drink to the fulness of the faithful, O father Ambrose, teacher of the mysteries.

*Theotokion* Behold, O Virgin, you conceived the Word, co-unoriginate with the Father, and you gave birth to him who grants restoration to those who since Adam have fallen.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* Daniel stretched forth his hands, and stopped the mouths of the lions in the den; while girded with virtues, the youths who loved to worship quenched the mighty fire as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

## December 7

Having mortified your members and slain the wisdom of the flesh, you imparted life to your soul and poured a fountain of miracles upon those slain by the passions, O venerable one, granting life to those who sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Informed of the approaching repose of your body by the Spirit of God, O wise one, you described it prophetically to those who were with you, and passed over to the heavens crying out with joy: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Having rid body, mind and heart of the turbulence of the passions, O Ambrose, from on high you received a fiery ray of light, crying out like the divine disciples: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Theotokion* You appear more exalted than the heavens, O pure one, having given birth to the God of heaven, who has united those of earth with those of heaven, and who grants knowledge of himself to all who sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

### *Ode 9*

*Irmos* From you O Virgin, the unquarried mountain, was hewn Christ, the cornerstone not cut by man, who joined in himself the separate natures. Therefore with rejoicing we magnify you, O Mother of God.

In ecstasy you saw the eternal honours laid up for the saints, O father; and you passed over to them, receiving the reward of your labours, rejoicing, O glorious one.

Like a ripe cluster of grapes you were gathered into the vats of heaven, fittingly pouring forth the wine of immortality and gifts of healing upon those who piously have recourse to you O divinely wise Ambrose.

With a mighty voice we bless you, O father, the golden candlestick of the divine Spirit, which puts forth the light of pious teachings and the radiance of healings, enlightening the faithful.

Having you as a daystar, O blessed one, the Church escapes the deception of darkness, and blesses you, illumined with the splendours of your sacred dogmas.

*Theotokion* With joy we utter to you the salutation of the archangel, O Virgin: Rejoice, abolition of the curse. Rejoice, deliverance from all evil, who beyond comprehension, deified mortals by your birthgiving.

## December 8

### Our venerable father Patapius of Thebes

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you..., 3 verses, tone 1  
to the Special Melody O all praised martyrs...*

O father Patapius, having quenched the burning of the assaults of the flesh with abstinence, like Elias of old you made your abode in the desert, purifying your mind with unceasing prayers to God. Pray that he grant our souls peace and great mercy.

O father Patapius, you enrolled yourself in the choirs of fasters, adorning yourself with dispassion; and you made your abode in the mansions of the venerable, where the light is unwaning and where stands the Tree of Life. Pray that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls.

O father Patapius, you shone like a beacon from Egypt, enlightening the world with the splendours of your miracles, and dispelling the gloom of soul-destroying infirmities, and driving off the darkness of the demons. Pray that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls.

*Verses to the Mother of God, in the same tone and melody*

*[These verses to the Mother of God are used on weekdays of Advent, on those occasions when the superior elects to serve the services in Lenten fashion, with Alleluia at Matins instead of God is the Lord. In such a case, the verses to the Mother of God are sung first at Vespers, followed by those of the saint.]*

Incorruptibly you gave birth to God who has destroyed corruption and poured forth incorruption, O incorrupt and undefiled one. I beseech you: By your prayers, O pure one, renew me, corrupted through wicked deeds, that with love I may glorify and magnify you, who has exalted our race.

O exalted Lady, the hope and confirmation, refuge and help of the faithful, we entreat you: Protect from all misfortune your servants who worship your birthgiving with faith, and pray to Christ, that he grant our souls peace and great mercy.

Alas, what shall become of me who has defiled mind, soul and body with transgressions? What shall I do, and how shall I escape the unquenchable flame and the everlasting and unbreakable bonds? But before the end comes, entreat your Son, O immaculate one, to grant me forgiveness.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever....

*Theotokion, in the same tone and melody*

You carried within you Christ, the fire of divinity, O most pure Lady. Beseech him, that he quench my readily-kindled passions, deliver me from everlasting fire, and grant me the splendour of the righteous, when he comes to judge all things.

*Or this Theotokion of the Cross*

The unblemished lamb and mother, the sovereign Lady, as she beheld her lamb upon the cross bereft of form or comeliness, lamenting, said: Woe is me, for where has your beauty fled, O most sweet one? Where is your splendour? Where is the radiant grace of your image, O my Son most blessed?

*Troparion, tone 8*

That which was created in the image of God was preserved in you, O father;  
for taking up the cross you followed after Christ.  
By your deeds you have taught us to reject the flesh for it passes away,  
but to care for the soul as a thing immortal.  
Therefore O venerable Patapius your soul rejoices with the angels.

## **Matins**

*Both canons from the Octoechos,  
and this canon for Venerable Patapius, tone 2*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* The almighty power once overwhelmed the army of Pharaoh in the deep, and the incarnate Word has destroyed pernicious sin. The Lord is all-glorious, for he has been greatly glorified.

I pray you, venerable Patapius: Entreat the Lord who drives away the clouds of ignorance, that he grant a ray of grace from heaven to me who wishes to praise the splendid achievements of your radiant life.

He, who of old covered the Egyptians with the deep by a divine gesture, raised you from the abyss of the world's turmoil, illumining you with divine splendour and making of you a most radiant star, O venerable father.

Burning with the fervour of the Spirit like a noetic ember, O venerable one, you drove away the gloom of the demons and quenched the fiery darts of sin; and as most pure, you were led to the summit of dispassion.



*Theotokion* Granting the world deliverance from the ancient curse, the redeemer is born of you, O Virgin; he who has made the venerable Patapius a fountain of healing for all who have recourse to him in faith.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* The desert flowered as a lily at your coming, O Lord, just as the temple of the heathen that was barren; and thereby my heart is established.

Having thoroughly watered the field of your soul with streams of tears, you produced the divine grain of good works stored in granaries on high.

Armed with love as with a sword, and protected thereby as with a shield, O venerable one, you destroyed legions of demons with your divine humility.

Like a lily you flowered with the blossom of abstinence, O venerable one, perfuming the hearts of those who hymn you and celebrate your memory with love.

*Theotokion* Upon the arms of your mother, O Lord, with your might you destroyed the idols of Egypt, whence a multitude of the venerable sprang forth.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody Of Wisdom...*

With streams of fasting and abstinence you quenched the flame of the passions, and as another Moses, you downed the deceitful assaults of a legion of demons pouring a depth of wonders upon all.

We gather to honour your prayerful commemoration, O venerable and God-bearing Patapius:

entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who honour your holy memory with love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* As the mother of the merciful and loving Word, O Lady, have mercy on all who have recourse to you, and free us from temptations and illness, from affliction and the everlasting flame, that in thanksgiving we may glorify the wealth of your abundant compassion and infinite mercy, and that we may ever cry out to you: Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who worship your birthgiving with faith.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The Virgin and Mother of the redeemer, standing before the cross and lamenting with tears of anguish, cried out maternally: What is this strange and most glorious thing which I see, O my Son? You have poured dispassion upon all men and are now crucified upon a cross between two condemned thieves. Your side pierced and you are given gall to drink by hands which you yourself have made. Arise and grant remission of sins to those who hymn your divine passion with faith.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* You have come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but the Lord himself incarnate, and have saved me, and the whole of mankind. Therefore I cry to you: Glory to your power O Lord.

The sea of your fervent tears drowned the armies of the demons and the uprisings of sin; and you appear as a sea of miracles to those in the midst of the seas of the passions.

Having acquired humility, vigilance and intense prayer, unfeigned love, faith and hope, O venerable father, you became a conversor with the angels of heaven.

With divine ascents and unceasing purification you laid to rest the tumult of the various passions, and therefore, after your repose you departed to unwaning light.

*Theotokion* Like the sun through a cloud you shone forth from the Virgin, O compassionate one, showing as stars your venerable ones who crucified themselves to the world and the passions.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* O Christ my Saviour, the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and the salvation of the despairing, I rise early to you, O king of peace: enlighten me with your radiance, for I know no other God than you.

O enlightenment of those in darkness, shine your radiance on me through the divine prayers of your venerable one: disperse the clouds of despair which hang over my soul, and rain upon me the dew of forgiveness, for I know no other God than you.

Having purged your noetic eye of the defilement of the passions by abstinence, O Godbearing father, you opened the eyes of the blind with divine prayer and dispelled the gloom of evil with healing radiance.

Come, let us all draw health of body and soul and abundant grace from the divine shrine of wise Patapius, as from a fountain; for it flows with miracles like water upon those who have recourse to it with faith.

*Theotokion* In your ineffable birthgiving, O Maiden, you gave birth to the giver of life who created all things, who is glorious in the saints and resides among the venerable: entreat him, O Bride of God.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of your loving kindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God.

Illumining your mind with most radiant ascents, O father, you lived in the flesh as one of the bodiless, unsodden by sins.

Emulating Elias the Tishbite and following John the Forerunner, of old you made your abode in the desert, having cleansed your mind with stillness.

A beacon of most godly splendour from Egypt, O radiant father Patapius, you shone in the city of Constantinople with healing radiance.

*Theotokion* Christ who sits upon a light cloud came of old into Egypt, and, having cast down the idols, he has brought together choirs of the venerable.

*Kontakion, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody* Today the Virgin...

Having found your church to be a place of spiritual healing, O holy one, those who have zealous recourse to it ask to receive the healing of their infirmities and forgiveness of the transgressions committed in their lives; for you are seen as an intercessor for all who are in need, O venerable father Patapius.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* When the golden image was worshipped on the plain of Dura, your three youths spurned the ungodly command; and, cast into the fire, bedewed they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

With noetic fire you inflamed the senses of your soul; you reduced the fire of sin to ashes by the activity of the Spirit, and became radiant, O Patapius, singing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

O divinely blessed one who opened the eyes of the blind with divine assistance, you healed various passions and by the invocation of God drove off the wicked legions of the demons, singing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

O father, your tomb has become an abyss of wonders, a river of healing, an ever-flowing fountain and a never exhausted stream, for those who approach it with faith crying out fervently: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* The most divine God who was born of you, O Virgin, deifies me, having taken upon himself the form of a servant; and he restores the paths of knowledge as the bounds of nature, leading along them a multitude of monks and the venerable, who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* God who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the fire into dew, praise as the Lord and exult above all for ever.

## December 8

Having cleansed yourself of the filth of the passions with care, O father, you became a most splendid tabernacle of God, crying out: Hymn the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Having ordered your life in godly manner, O venerable father, you become a good steward who served the needs of the saints, O venerable one; and with them you have been granted a heavenly inheritance.

By your prayers to the Lord cleanse us of every impurity, and by your fervent supplication, O Patapius, deliver from the storm waves of passions, infirmities and tribulations us who fittingly honour you.

*Theotokion* O pure one who rendered our earthly and corruptible nature celestial, the glory of the angels and joy of the venerable, alone the queen of creation: you are hymned for ever as the one who gave birth to God.

### *Ode 9*

*Irmos* Our God and Lord has appeared to us, the Son of the Father without beginning, incarnate of the Virgin, to give light to those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Therefore let us magnify the all-hymned Mother of God.

Your commemoration has dawned as a day of salvation which enlightens those in darkness, dispels the gloom of the passions and shows as children of the light those who now honour you as a favourite of the Lord, O father.

We fittingly bless Patapius, an angel on earth, the offspring of Thebes, the boast of the desert, the glory and splendour of monastics, and the beacon of Byzantium.

Being a conversor with the angels, the peer and fellow heir of the prophets and apostles, the martyrs and hierarchs, you served the honourable Trinity with purity of mind, O venerable one: pray for us all.

*Theotokion* The great mystery of your birthgiving, which passes understanding, astounds the angels, delights the gatherings of the venerable, and gladdens the sacred fathers who hymn you in a godly manner, O pure and unwedded Mother of God.

*And the rest from the Octoechos*

## December 9

# The Conception of Mary the Mother of God by righteous Anna

*On the same day, the commemoration of the Icon of the Mother of God known as Unexpected Joy,  
the hymnody of which follows this*

## Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses, tone 4  
to the Special Melody Called from on high...*

The barren woman, who beyond hope carried her, the fruit who will give birth to God incarnate, is made radiant and dances for joy, crying out: Let all the tribes of Israel rejoice with me, for I have conceived and put away the disgrace of barrenness: for the creator has been pleased to hear my prayer for that which I desired, and he has healed the pain of my heart. *twice*

He who poured water from the barren stone, grants fruit to your womb, O Anna: the ever-virgin Mother of God, from whom the water of salvation will issue forth. No longer do you remain on earth like barren ground, for you have put away your disgrace. You gave rise to the fertile ground which would bear the grain of life who takes away the disgrace of all men, for he has been pleased in the loving-kindness of his mercy to form himself in what is alien to him. *twice*

The sayings of the prophets are now fulfilled: the holy mountain is planted within Anna; the divine ladder is set up; the great throne of the king is prepared; the place which God will enter is adorned; the unburnt bush begins to sprout; the phial of holiness already pours, spreading in broad streams the fruitfulness of divinely wise Anna, whom with faith we call blessed. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...  
*composed by Germanus, tone 2*

The glorious great mystery hidden from the beginning of time, unknown to angels and men, is seen today: Mary, the divine maiden, becomes a child within chaste Anna, and is prepared as a dwelling place for the king of all ages, for the restoration of our race. We entreat her with a pure conscience, crying out: As the intercessor of us Christians, implore your Son and God that he save our souls.

*Aposticha, tone 5  
to the Special Melody Rejoice...*

Once Anna, praying for a child, through divine grace cried out to God, the creator of all: O Adonai Sabaoth, you know the disgrace of my barrenness; relieve the pain of my heart and open the floodgates of my barrenness and make me fertile; that, in thanksgiving, we may offer you the gift which shall be born, singing and glorifying with oneness of mind your compassion, whereby great mercy is given to the world.

*Verse* The Lord has sworn to David, an oath which he will not break.

Of old, chastely-minded Anna, entreating and imploring God, heard an angelic voice which announced to her the divine fulfillment of her petition; as one of the bodiless conversed with her, saying: Your supplication has come before the Lord; do not be downcast and do not weep, for you shall be a fruitful olive-tree, putting forth as a branch the comely Virgin who shall give rise to a flower incarnate: Christ who grants great mercy to the world.

*Verse* One who is the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne.

The honourable couple bear as fruit the divine heifer, from whom the sacrificial bullock will come, who through his ineffable will is fattened and slaughtered for the world. Rejoicing, in contrition they offer unceasing confession to the Lord and conceive her who will benefit all. Let us call them blessed and dance with faith at their divine conceiving of the mother who will give birth to our God, and through whom great mercy is richly given.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 2*

Today the mystic flower begins to grow out of Jesse; the robe of royal purple sprouts forth from the root of David, wherein Christ our God shall emerge, saving our souls.

*Troparion, tone 4*

Today the bonds of barrenness are loosed,  
for God has heeded the voice of Joachim and Anna;  
promising that beyond all hope, they shall give birth  
to the divine maiden from whom shall be born the infinite one incarnate.  
He commands the angels to cry out to her:  
Rejoice, O full of grace,  
the Lord is with you.

*This troparion is sung without a Theotokion.*

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion, thrice.*

*After the first reading of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody The choir of angels...*

A new heaven is fashioned within Anna  
at the command of God the creator of all,  
from which the never-setting sun shall shine forth,  
illuminating the whole world with rays of divinity  
in the greatness of his compassion, as he alone loves mankind.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*After the second reading of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody The choir of angels...*

Of old, the choir of prophets  
proclaimed the pure and immaculate divine maiden and Virgin,  
whom Anna conceives, being barren and childless.  
We bless her today with gladness of heart,  
saved through her, who alone is pure and immaculate.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*We sing the two canons of righteous Anna*

### *Ode 1*

*The first Canon, composed by Andrew, tone 1*

*Irmos* Let us all sing a hymn of victory to God who has wrought wondrous miracles with his upraised arm, and saved Israel, for he has been glorified.

Divinely wise Anna, we celebrate your conceiving today, for, loosed of the bonds of barrenness, you conceived her who held him who cannot be contained.

You heeded the supplication of the righteous ones O Lord, fulfilling the vow of your holy forebears, and giving them as fruit the pure one who gave you birth.

Glorious Anna now conceives the pure one who would conceive the all-good, incorporeal Lord, and who will give birth to Christ incarnate.

From a corruptible womb you shone forth, O Virgin who in your incorrupt womb carried the sun of glory who became as we are, but for change and confusion.

*The second Canon,  
the acrostic of which is the alphabet, in the same tone*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

Anna, receiving the pure Virgin and divine Maiden who will become the mother of the creator, cried out with joy: All tribes of Israel, rejoice with me, for, behold, I have conceived.

Anna, holding within her the book which the prophet foretold, sealed by the divine Spirit, cried out to all: All the scriptures proclaim her: I am magnified, bringing her forth this day.

The temple of the divine Saviour is contained and formed within her mother: the ladder is set up which leads all on high, whose conception we celebrate with faith.

*Katavasia* Christ is born...

*Ode 3*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* Let my heart be made firm in your will, O omnipotent Christ our God who established the second heaven above the waters and founded the earth upon the waters.

Anna cried to the Lord: If you will grant me fruit, I shall be magnified, and will offer it to you: at this, she conceived the pure Mother of God.

Having observed the provisions of the law and served God blamelessly, O honourable Anna, you truly carried her who would give birth to the giver of the law. Therefore, we, the faithful, call you blessed.

When you prayed in the garden, you heard the voice of the Most High, O divinely wise Anna; and he gave you fruit: the portal which by grace shall open paradise.

*Theotokion* Dispel all barrenness from my fruitless mind, and let my soul be fruitful in the virtues, O most holy Mother of God, the help of the faithful.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.



Entreating the Lord, Joachim received from on high the message he desired when an angel appeared before him and said: Depart, O righteous man, for the God of all has fulfilled your petition.

Standing in the garden and calling upon the God of all, Anna saw an angel who appeared before her, saying: Be not downcast, for you shall become the mother of the Mother of God.

When you, O Anna, full of zeal, offered supplication to God, you conceived the pure one who without seed received the infinite Word, giving grace to all in your fertility.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* Lifted up upon the cross...

Sacred Joachim and Anna offered a gift to the priests of old, but it was not accepted, for they were barren; but they made entreaty to the giver of all things, and, heeding their prayer, he granted them the tree of life, whose holy conception we honour.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*To the Special Melody* Joseph marvelled...

Divinely adorned Mary, the unblemished lamb and pure bridal chamber, now gloriously begins to issue forth from the righteous ones, O faithful. Be glad, O heaven and earth; and exalt, all born on earth; for today has God wrought glorious things, the yet unborn Virgin, the fruit of a barren woman, whom we hymn with faith.

*Ode 4*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* In the Spirit foreseeing the incarnate Word, O prophet Habakkuk, you cried out, saying: You shall be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; you shall be made manifest when the time comes. Glory to your power, O Lord.

How divine the proclamation; how strange it would be, should I conceive: thus Anna cried out, amazed, to the angel who was sent to her. Glory to my God, who has wrought marvellous things.

Rejoice with me, all you tribes of Israel, for I have conceived a new heaven, from which Jesus, the giver of life, shall eventually shine forth. Thus Anna cried, rejoicing.

God heeded the sighs of Anna; the Lord attended to her supplication and, dispelling the cloud of her childlessness, he gloriously illumined her with the light of fertility: thus she conceived her who is truly pure.

## December 9

*Theotokion* O Virgin Mother of God, the undefiled tabernacle, with pure sprinkling of compassion cleanse me, defiled by transgressions, and grant me a helping hand that I may cry: Glory to you, O pure and divinely glorious Lady.

### *Second Canon*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Your womb, before childless, was opened, O Anna, to receive the heavenly cloud from whence the radiant sun shone upon us, illumining all with the light of truth and driving away the profound darkness of ungodliness.

The fiery throne of God has been set up within you, O blessed Anna acceptable to God, who, seated thereon and resting there, has taken away the burdens of the pious; and has planted the pure knowledge of God on earth.

Behold, you have received the bower which Solomon described of old, the place rightly reserved for the true king who is the divine restoration and conversion of mankind. Therefore, O Anna, we bless you with joy.

### *Ode 5*

#### *The first Canon*

*Irmos* Grant us your peace, O Son of God, for we know no other God but you. We call upon your name, for you are God of the living and the dead.

Springing from the root of Jesse and David, Anna now begins to put forth the divine shoot which shall give rise to Christ, the mystic flower, the creator of all.

The people seeing me who shall become a mother, shall marvel, cried Anna; For I shall give birth, as is the good pleasure of him who loosed the bonds of my barrenness.

The prophets proclaimed from afar the Maiden whom I have conceived, to be the mountain and the impassable gate, Anna cried out joyfully to those who came to her.

*Theotokion* O pure Virgin Mother, we know you to be the cloud, paradise and portal of light, the fleece, the jar bearing Manna within, the sweetness of the world.

#### *The second Canon*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

Joachim descended from the mountain, not receiving tablets of the law, but her whom the law prefigured and whom all the sayings of the prophets revealed: the Mother of God; and, dancing, he cried out: My heart is magnified.

When Anna sensed within her the divinely fruitful branch which had been planted there, from whom the ripe cluster would blossom which abundantly pours upon us the wine of immortality, she exclaimed: What shall I render to you, O compassionate Lord?

Joachim, unable to endure the sight of creation bereft of piety, prayed that the barrenness of Anna might pass, and that she would conceive that Maiden to whom a Son would be given: the most exalted one who effects the adoption of all to his Father.

*Ode 6*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* Like the prophet Jonah, I cry out: Free my life from corruption, O good one, and save me, O Saviour of the world, as I sing: Glory to you.

How can she who contained God be contained? How can she who gave birth to the incarnate Christ be born? How can she who nourished the creator with milk take nourishment at a woman's breast?

Hearing your entreaty, O exalted Joachim and Anna, God this day grants you fertile fruit.

Having conceived the pure dove, Anna was truly filled with spiritual joy, offering hymns of thanksgiving to God.

*Theotokion* The storm waves of wicked thoughts, the assaults of the passions and the abyss of sins bestorms my wretched soul. Help me, O holy Lady.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

The shadows of the law are mightily transcended, for see, a ray of divine grace is revealed, the cloud who is the Virgin, from whom the radiant sun of the divinity shall truly shine, cried Anna rejoicing and magnifying the God of Israel.

It will be a strange thing, if I conceive, said formerly barren and childless Anna, when she heard the angel announce that she would give birth; and she cried out: Better than any other good report will be the fulfillment of your words.

Let the mountains and hills, the fields and the sea, the multitude of the angels and all mankind be glad, for I have received the divine temple of the Master, the beginning of our reconciliation: thus Anna cried, sensing that she had conceived.

*Kontakion, tone 4*  
*to the Special Melody* You have appeared today...

Today the world celebrates Anna's conceiving  
which was brought about by God;  
for she gave birth to the one who would indescribably give birth to the Word.

*Ikos* Wondrous Joachim and divinely wise Anna, living together in all piety according to the law of Moses, were childless; and they prayed to God with all their heart, saying: O all-good Lord of hosts, the help of all: you know the pain, reproach and grief of childlessness, therefore, grant us fruit of the womb, and we will bring to your temple as a sacred gift and perfect offering the one who would indescribably give birth to the Word.

*Ode 7*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* The fire did not touch or threaten your youths in the furnace, O Saviour, for the three with one voice then praised and blessed you, saying: Blessed be the God of our Fathers.

Anna entreated the Master of all, that she might escape the reproach of childlessness; and, hearkening to her pitiful cry, he granted her as fruit her who gave birth to him, as was his good pleasure.

O Anna, the weaving of a robe of royal purple begins within you, through which God, the king of all shall clothe himself, appear to men and lay low the adversary.

You conceived the fragrant myrrh who, in a manner transcending nature received the Master, the myrrh of life, who perfumes our minds with the wafted scents of grace.

*Theotokion* We glorify you as one of the Trinity, O Christ; for, incarnate of the Virgin without change, you assumed full humanity, without separation from the Father's nature, though you united yourself to us.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Childless Anna has conceived the fire-bearing bush which Moses saw of old on Sinai, which burns away impiety for those who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

A drop has now been gloriously poured into you, O Anna, who then contained the water of life, bedewing those who sing with faith: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

As you saw the bird's nest, you were furnished with wings by the Spirit and prayer; and you received the unblemished turtledove who bears Christ, the olive branch who frees us from the noetic deluge, O Anna.

*Ode 8*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* As their creator and Lord, before whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe, you priests hymn, you children glorify and you people exult above all for ever.

Behold, I receive the queen whom David foretold, cried Anna; and I shall give birth to the intercessor for all the faithful, who will give birth to Christ the king.

The land in which the creator of earth made his abode, the holy sceptre, the new ark, the jar of manna who gave birth to him, begins to take form within her mother.

The unburnt bush, the golden candle stand, the living bridal-chamber of the Lord God, the precious staff who gave birth to him, approaches birth within her mother.

*Theotokion* Raise me, lying in the abyss of evils, and vanquish the enemies that engage me now in battle. Reject me not, wounded by countless pleasures, O good and pure one, but take pity and save me.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

As foretold by the prophets, O Master, Anna cried: What have you done for my childlessness and my withered breasts? Free me from my disgrace and grant me the fruit with whom I may sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

O Anna, the lamp stand has entered you, she who shall mystically contain the divine lamp who illumines every creature with the mystic radiance of the knowledge of God. Therefore, rejoicing, you sang: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Joachim and Anna, as comely husband and wife, bear the divine heifer, from whom the beautiful sacrificial bullock shone forth to be slaughtered for all, as you sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* As a fountain ever-flowing which brings life, as the light bearing lamp stand of blessing, the spiritual temple and most pure tabernacle more spacious than heaven and earth, we the faithful magnify the Mother of God.

Conceiving the life-receiving fountain, O divinely wise Anna, receive also joy, taking the holy temple into you, and magnifying her who is radiant with the light of the creator's righteousness.

Let Joachim and Anna be honoured: the honourable and glorious couple, the forebears of the pre-eternal Son, the renowned observers of the law, who gave birth to the first fruits of joy.

Let us hymn the virgin Mother of God, whom Daniel saw as a great mountain, whom Joel saw as a holy land, whom Isaiah perceived as an impassable gate, and another foretold as a sealed fountain and divine fleece.

*Theotokion* Let the Virgin Mother of God be glorified: the purple which dyed the fleece of the ineffable incarnation of the Word, the golden lamp stand, the table on which Christ, the bread of life, was set forth.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain. Him we praise and magnify.

Dance and leap up, for the earth has now been prepared which, without being ploughed, will produce the life-bearing grain, eating of which those who magnify his goodness will hunger no more.

David, take up your psaltery and sing: Behold, the ark of God appears which you foretold would be for our edification. Thereby rise from our fall into sin.

Like two magnificent stars you brought forth the most radiant beam who shone the great sun upon the world. We praise and glorify you, Joachim and Anna, as divinely wise.

*Exapostilarion,*

*to the Special Melody O Light immutable...*

Anna now prepares to blossom forth from her barrenness her who gave birth to the light which illumines all creation: let us all hasten to her, for she, our deliverance from the condemnation of Eve, is come.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord... *and the Praises,*  
*inserting 4 verses, tone 1,*  
*to the Special Melody Joy of the ranks of heaven...*

Human nature, which before was barren, \* with trust in God, brings forth the Virgin, the first fruits of piety, \* in whom the fertility of the good is proclaimed \* through her conceiving on earth, which served for the advent of Christ. *twice*

The impassable gate of Christ the king, \* by the counsel of God, received conception in barrenness. \* When she appeared on earth, the portals of heaven were opened \* permitting the entry of mortals.

The conception of the pure and godly Maiden, \* has come about as the first fruits of faith, \* which before the ages was ineffably proclaimed by God \* in his divine and dread mysteries. \* Through her the works of darkness and the passions are brought to an end.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...  
*composed by Malax, tone 8*

Come, every class of mankind in every age, and with the choirs of angels let us joyously celebrate with splendour the glorious conceiving of the Mother of God. Patriarchs, praise the Mother of the king of all; prophets, praise her whom you preached; forefathers, honour the Mother of God who is descended from you; elders, acclaim the forebears of God; ancestors of God, bless the divine Maiden; virgins, honour the ever virgin; faithful, exalt the source of faith; priests, magnify the most sacred temple of God; choirs of all the saints, acknowledge the reason for your gathering; armies of angels, pay homage to her who gave birth to the Master of all creation, the Saviour of our souls.

*Great Doxology, Litanies and Dismissal.*

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 verses:  
4 from Ode 3 of the Canon of the first Canon,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of the second Canon.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

God is wonderful in his saints, the God of Israel.  
*Verse* In their choirs they bless God, those that are sprung from the fount of Israel.

*Epistle to the Galatians, number 210*

*Alleluia, tone 1*

The salvation of the righteous is the Lord, and he is their defender in a time of affliction.

The Lord shall help them and shall deliver them, and he will rescue them from sinners and will save them because they hoped in him.

*Gospel of Luke, number 36*

*Communion*

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous; for it befits the just to praise him.



## Also on December 9

### The Icon of the Mother of God, known as *Unexpected Joy*

#### Little Vespers

*At Lord I call to you..., 4 verses, tone 2*

O Lady, who intercedes for those who come with faith to your mighty protection, we sinners, burdened by many sins, have no other sure deliverance in our misfortune and tribulation: O Mother of God the Most High, hasten to help your servants. *twice*

When a certain sinner fell down before your wondrous image, offering the angelic salutation to you, alone pure and blessed, you turned him away from the path of destruction and gave him the unexpected joy of salvation, peace and great mercy.

Desiring to pour the abundant riches of grace upon his faithful, the Saviour has scattered the icons of his Mother like stars shining among the Orthodox lands, pouring forth the grace of miracles and bestowing healings, peace and great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 4*

Let the assembly of the faithful rejoice and be glad today, for the Mother of light and purity, through aiding a sinner, revealed that she is a reliable ally for us, burdened by sins and many sorrows, who have recourse with faith to her wondrous protection.

*Aposticha, tone 5*

Let heaven and earth sing together; for the Mother stands before her Son, earnestly entreating forgiveness for a great sinner. The angels rejoice over this; and with them let us also sing, magnifying the Mother of God with hymns.

*Verse* I shall commemorate your name in every generation.

With the priestly ranks let us, the generations of the faithful, rejoice, celebrating the festival of the Mother of God, who in her wonder-working image has been revealed to us as an ever-flowing fountain, granting to all the abundant gifts of goodness.

*Verse* Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear.

The angels of heaven and men on earth bless you as the one who gave birth to the God of all, for you pray for the faithful people, protecting by your mercy those who celebrate your festival.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 8*

O Lady, accept the supplications of your servants, and deliver us from all necessity and grief.

*Troparion, tone 4*

O faithful, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of Christians; and hastening to her most pure image, let us cry out: O most merciful Lady and Mother of God, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating your Son Christ our God that he save our souls.

## **Great Vespers**

*We sing Blessed is the man... the first antiphon.*

*At Lord, I call to you... 6 verses, tone 2*

Come, let us sing to the Lord who has given us great joy in the miraculous icon of his Mother; and, gazing upon it, let us all sing: O most wondrous Lady, the Mother of God, save this city and your people, who with faith and love bow down before your precious icon. *twice*

He who speaks of your power, O Lord, makes all your praises heard; for you have given your most pure Mother to the Christian race as a bold advocate who leads sinners to you, who grants unexpected joy to them, and asks peace and great mercy for us. *twice*

O most pure Mother of God the Most High, the helper of all the sorrowful and oppressed, the feeder of the starving, the comfort of travellers, the haven of the storm tossed, the visitation of the sick, the protection of the weak, the support of the elderly: hasten to help your servants. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 6*

The noetic ranks rejoice with us, seeing our sovereign lady glorified with many names by the faithful; and the souls of the righteous rejoice also, seeing the Mother of God extending her most honourable hands toward her Son for sinful people, imploring the remission of their sins, peace and great mercy.

*Entrance, Prokimenon of the day, three Readings*

A reading from Genesis.

Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place. This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Genesis 28: 10-17)

A reading from the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Thus says the Lord: When these days are over, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer upon the altar your burnt offerings and your offerings of well-being; and I will accept you, says the Lord God. Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. The Lord said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. Only the prince, because he is a prince, may sit in it to eat food before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way. Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; and I looked, and lo. the glory of the Lord filled the temple of the Lord; and I fell upon my face. (Ezekiel 43:27-44:4)

A reading from the Proverbs.

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars. She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table. She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the highest places in the town, "You that are simple, turn in here." To those without sense she says, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight."

whoever corrects a scoffer wins abuse; whoever rebukes the wicked gets hurt. A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked, will love you. Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. (Proverbs 9:1-11)

*Entreaty, tone 2*

Having cleansed our mind and understanding, we celebrate with the angels, singing with splendour the hymn of David to the bride and maiden, the Mother of Christ our God the king of all: Arise, O Lord, into your rest, you and the ark of your holiness;

## December 9

for you have adorned her like a beautiful palace, O Master, to protect and save the faithful by your mighty power.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 6*

Come, you faithful, let us hymn the helper of the Christian race, who once arose to make supplication to her Son and God for an iniquitous man who had angered the Son of God by his sinful life, and thereby crucified him anew; and let us cry out to her from the depths of our souls: O most merciful advocate, forsake us not, but make truly acceptable supplications to your Son for us.

*Aposticha, tone 4*

Your miraculous icon has shone forth upon us like the all-radiant sun, O Lady, streaming the rays of your goodness in abundance: health for the sick, consolation for the sorrowful, and for our souls deliverance from misfortunes, peace and great mercy.

*Verse* I shall commemorate your name in every generation.

O people, let us sing the hymn of David to the maiden Bride of God, the Mother of Christ the king of all: The queen stood at your right hand, O Master, arrayed in vesture of gold and adorned with divine majesty; for, having adorned her, the one chosen of women, above all the earth, he was pleased to be born of her in his great mercy, and has given her, who alone is blessed, as a helper to his people, to protect his servants.

*Verse* hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear.

Inclining your ear to the glad tidings of the archangel, O pure one, you received him who bowed down the heavens and descended to earth for our salvation, who now inclines his ear to your truly acceptable supplications for those who honour you with faith and love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 8*

Fleeing to your protection, O Lady, we the earth born cry out to you: O Mother of God, our hope, deliver us from our immeasurable transgressions, and save our souls.

*Troparion, tone 4*

O faithful, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of Christians; and hastening to her most pure image, let us cry out: O merciful Lady and Mother of God, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating your Son Christ our God that he save our souls.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the Mother of God, thrice.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 3*

Surrounded by the divine radiance of the angelic hosts, and as the Mother of God graciously receiving the ministry of the ranks of the prophets and apostles, visit us, your servants, entreating Christ our God to grant us great mercy.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 6*

O Mother of God, you are truly the strength of the helpless, the protection of all, and our advocate before God.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*Polyeleos, and Magnification*

We magnify you, O most holy Virgin, divinely chosen Maiden, and we honour your holy image, whereby you pour forth healings upon all who have recourse to it.

*Verse* Glorious things are spoken of you, O Zion, city of our God.

*After the Polyeleos,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 2*

You are a great and glorious mountain, greater than Mount Sinai; for then, unable to bear the descent of the glory of God in images and shadows, it burned with fire, and thunder and lightning struck it; but, having received within you the divine fire, the Word of God, you carried without being consumed him who carries all things in his hand. As you have maternal boldness before him, O Lady, help those who with faith honour you, for you have received from God the gift of ordering and protecting the Christian flock, your servants.

*Hymn of Degrees, the first antiphon, tone 4* From the days of my youth...

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

I shall commemorate your name in every generation and generation.

*Verse* hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear.

Let every breath praise the Lord... *and the rest, with the Gospel of Luke, number 4*

*After the Psalm Have mercy... and the verses, this verse, tone 6*

All the noetic ranks rejoice with us, seeing our sovereign lady glorified with many names by the faithful; and the souls of the righteous rejoice also, seeing the Mother of God extending her most honourable hands toward her Son for sinful people, imploring the remission of their sins, peace and great mercy.

*We sing two canons of the Mother of God*

*Ode 1*

*The first Canon, tone 1*

*Irmos* I shall open my mouth and the Spirit will inspire it; and I will sing to the Queen and Mother. I shall be seen keeping festival with splendour; and rejoicing I shall hymn her wonders.

When the archangel offered you his salutation, you opened the portals of God's loving kindness: close not off his love for mankind from us who hymn you.

Wondrous was your life on earth, yet even more wondrous is your dwelling in heaven, O most glorious virgin Mother, who unceasingly reveals the wonders of your maternal loving kindness to those who hymn you.

In latter times through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit you conceived the Son who was timelessly begotten of the Father before time began, giving birth to eternal joy for the world.

Rejoice, O sea which drowned the devil, the noetic pharaoh; rejoice, O stone which gave drink to those thirsting for the life of the Spirit; for you have given to the human race the deliverer of those held captive and the guide of those who are lost.

*The second Canon, tone 2*

*Irmos* Taking up the song of Moses, cry out, O my soul: he who is my helper and protector has become my salvation; this is my God and I will glorify him.

You have delivered the human race from slavery to the enemy, having given birth to the Saviour of the world. Entreat him to save us from the assaults of the evil one.

O most holy Virgin, in our perils be a mediatrix and intercessor for us before your Son, that, delivered from them, we may glorify him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

More exalted than the angels and archangels, and higher in honour than all creation, you are the great intercessor of the Christian race.

*Katavasia* I will open my mouth...

*Ode 3*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* O Mother of God, the living and abundant fountain, give strength to those who hymn you and form a spiritual choir in your divine memory, and grant them crowns of glory.

Confirm in the virtuous life those who fervently hymn you, and earnestly entreat him who was born of you, that we not be deprived of crowns of glory because of our sins.

In our life we anger your Son by our sins more than any other iniquitous man; yet be our intercessor, O loving Mother.

May Jesus who loves mankind, who was born of you and has the authority to forgive men their sins, grant us crowns of glory in his divine glory.

Rejoice, O virgin who contained the infinite God within you, who carried him as a baby and fed him at your breast.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* Confirm me, O Lord my God, lest my enemy boast over me; for you, O Lord, are my strength, my refuge and power.

Heed our entreaties, O virgin Mother, and give ear to our sighs; and make supplication to your Son for us.

As you are full of loving kindness, give ear to our supplications, and grant us deliverance from bitter and evil circumstances and sorrows.

Still the tempest of the storm waves of life, and drive away our evil passions, O most pure one, that we may glorify you in peace and dispassion.

Come, you people of God, let us now praise the queen of heaven, who gazes down upon us from her holy heaven and leads us up to the heavens.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 5*

O pure ever-virgin, fervent and invincible intercessor,  
renowned and unashamed hope, bulwark, rampart and refuge  
of those who have recourse to you:  
with the angels implore your Son and God,  
that he grant peace to the world,  
salvation and great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*Ode 4*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine is come upon a gentle cloud, and with his incorrupt arm he has saved those who sing: Glory to your power, O Christ.

O Mother who gave birth to the Saviour, save from the misfortunes and griefs of life those who confess you to be the Mother of God.

O Mother of the Son and deliverer who lifted up our sins upon the cross, heal all our bitter and barely curable sicknesses.

God the Word, the hypostatic wisdom, chose you to be his dwelling-place. Earnestly entreat him, that he save us by the judgments which he knows.

Rejoice, O all-comely, beauteous bride; rejoice, O pure turtledove; rejoice, O Mother of Emmanuel, ever-virgin Mother of God.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* I hymn you, O Lord, for I have heard your report and was afraid. You came to me, seeking me who had gone astray. Therefore I glorify your great providence toward me, O most merciful one.

Though our tongue is unable to praise you worthily, yet, moved by love for you, with all our heart and mind we glorify and praise you, the mediator of all good things.

Who can plumb the depths of the sea; and who is able to number the great mercies and compassions which you have for us?

O Father and Lord of heaven and earth, what thanks shall we offer you? For you have given to the Christian race a good and powerful intercessor.

Stretching forth your hands to him who was born of you, O loving Mother, ever intercede for us, that by your entreaties we may be granted earthly and heavenly gifts.

*Ode 5*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* All things are filled with awe at your divine glory, for you, O Virgin who has not known wedlock, held in your womb God who is over all, and gave birth to the timeless Son, granting peace to all who sing your praises.



Heaven and earth are amazed, seeing your loving kindness for the Christian race, O glorious virgin Mother, for you condescend even to the most fallen of sinners.

Save your servants from evils and tribulations, O Mother of God, and grant to those who hymn you the peace of God which transcends any earthly peace.

You gave birth to him who has reconciled those above and those below, who descended to earth for this purpose, yet has not separated himself from the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, O Queen of heaven and earth; rejoice, Lady who surpasses the Angels and Archangels; rejoice, for through you the reconciler foretold to us by Jacob has come.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* O Christ my Saviour, the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and the salvation of the despairing, I rise early to you, O king of peace: enlighten me with your radiance, for I know no other God than you.

From the spheres of celestial light the Archangel Gabriel brought you the joy of the Annunciation; and having obeyed that ineffable counsel of God, O wondrous among women, you bring joy to all who hymn you with faith.

You have truly given unexpected joy to the whole universe, the world below and the world above, for he who was born of you has brought peace, uniting those above with those below. Entreat him, that we be delivered from malice and misfortunes.

The poison of sin has penetrated the human race through our ancient forefather, but he who was born of you cleanses, hallows and saves all. Entreat him, that we be delivered from sinful and unseemly passions.

Your compassions are beyond number, like the goodness of your Son, the Word. This we know well, yet what can we render to you for them, O most loving Mother?

*Ode 6*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* As we celebrate this sacred and solemn feast of the Mother of God, let us come, clapping our hands, O people of the Lord, and give glory to God who was born of her.

Spiritually celebrating a sacred festival, let those who love the feasts of the Church, come and hymn the Mother of God with songs, glorifying her Son, who has bestowed such grace upon his Mother.

## December 9

Regard the hymnody of your servants, O Mother, and cast down the vaunted pride of our foes, seen and unseen; and pour your exalted mercies upon the lowly.

You are the root from whence Christ, the Rod of Jesse, sprang forth: a man from the house of David, and God who is co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.

Rejoice, O joyous Mother; rejoice, who surpasses all the daughters of men in beauty; rejoice, O noble scion of the divinely chosen race of David.

### *The second Canon*

*Irmos* I am held fast in the depths of sin, O Saviour, and overwhelmed by the sea of life; but as you brought out Jonah from the belly of the whale, bring me out from the passions and save me.

By your birthgiving you have saved the human race from hell, death and corruption; therefore, as is fitting, all the ranks of heaven and earth bless you as the Mother of him who has destroyed hell and our liberator from death.

Turn not away from us because of our sins, O most holy Virgin, but by your supplications mediate for us liberation from Hades and everlasting death.

O how slothful and indifferent we are toward our salvation, having wasted our life. What torment, what flames lie before us: save us by the grace given to you, O Mother.

You carried Christ the divine fire in your arms without being consumed: standing now before the fiery throne of his glory, pray that he enflame us with the desire for good.

### *Kontakion, tone 6*

We have no other help, and no other hope than you, O Lady. Come to our help, for we trust in you and in you we boast, for we are your servants. Let us not be put to shame.

*Ikos* Entrust me not to the intercession of men, O most holy Lady but accept the entreaty of your servant who is grasped by sorrow and the unendurable darts of demons. I have no protection, nor any place to flee, wretch that I am. Ever vanquished, I have no consolation but you, O Queen of the world. Hope and intercession of the faithful, reject not my entreaty, and render it profitable.

### *Ode 7*

### *The first Canon*

*Irmos* The divinely wise youths worshipped not a creation rather than the creator, but bravely trampling the threat of fire underfoot, they rejoiced shouting: Blessed are you, O highly praised Lord God of our fathers.

You spurned the beauties of this world, O pure one, desiring to serve God alone; and to him you sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

O Lady, guide us to the one God who have failed utterly to follow the pious youths, but have instead cleaved to creation instead of the creator; and teach us to sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

With noetic eyes, O Christ, Daniel foresaw you as the stone uncut by human hands, destroying the vain kingdoms of men, for the salvation of those who hymn you, and the Father and the Spirit: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Rejoice, O mountain overshadowed by the grace of God, from whom was quarried Christ, the stone set by God the Father as the cornerstone of his Church, to whom we sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* The fiery bush on the mountain and the dew-bearing furnace of Chaldea clearly prefigured you, O Bride of God; for in your material womb you received the divine and immaterial fire without being consumed: therefore we sing to him who was born of you: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

God the Word, the creator and fashioner of all, in latter times made his abode within you, O most glorious divine Maiden, and has taught all to sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Though the great multitude of our sins, sorrows, tribulations, and sicknesses have, like the waves of the sea, brought our souls down to the abyss; yet hoping in your aid, O Mother, we do not despair, but cry to your Son: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Who in heaven can describe your power which he who issued from you has given you? And who on earth can render audibly every praise of your great protection and assistance to mortals, who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

O pure unwedded Maiden, cleanse our minds of vain thoughts and our hearts of wicked lusts, that with pure souls and undefiled lips we may sing to your Son: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos* The birthgiving of the Mother of God saved the pious youths in the furnace: then in figure but now in deed; and it moves the whole universe to sing to you: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

## December 9

O virgin Maiden, heed the words announced to you by Gabriel: You shall bear a Son who saves those who sing: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

He who was born of you saved from fire the youths who gazed upon him with faith: implore him to save us also who burn with the flame of the passions and sing to him, the Son: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

O Christ, seen in the Babylonian furnace as a radiant Angel appearing as the Son of God, with the Father and the Spirit we sing to you: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Rejoice, O bush seen by Moses, who in latter times sprang forth from the root of David and gave birth ineffably to the Saviour of all, to whom we sing: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

### *The second Canon*

*Irmos* Refusing to obey the edict of the tyrant, the three venerable youths were cast into the furnace, and confessed God, chanting: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

The fleece wet with dew, which Gideon saw, mystically prefigured you, the virgin Mother, who without knowing man gave birth to God the Word by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. To him we sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

The mindless rage of the tyrant cast the pious youths into the furnace kindled with fire, but your Son quenched the power of the flame with mystic dew. Entreat him, O most holy one, that he deliver us from everlasting fire and deprive us not of the dew-bearing kingdom, that there we may sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

You served the ineffable mystery of the incarnation of Christ, and loved him with all a mother's love, and maternally lamented him as he hung upon the cross. Entreat him that he not reject even the most inveterate of sinners, that they may sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

We fittingly glorify and hymn you, O most loving Mother; for you are the great helper of the Christian race, our most good and speedy aid.

### *Ode 9*

### *The first Canon*

*Irmos* Let all mortal flesh leap for joy, enlightened by the Spirit, and let the orders of the angelic powers celebrate, honouring the sacred triumph of the Mother of God; and let them cry out: Rejoice, O most blessed ever virgin Mother of God.

God, who came to us incarnate of you, made your womb more spacious than the heavens. What a wondrous marvel, that the infinite is contained within the Virgin, whom we hymn for all ages.

Entreat him who was ineffably conceived by you in latter times, O virgin Mother of God, that he transform all our grief to joy and grant us his never-waning light, that we may hymn you for all ages.

You are the throne of the glory of God which Ezekiel mystically saw, for you received the Son of God who is equally enthroned with the Father and the Spirit, and held him in your maternal arms.

Rejoice, animate temple wherein the incarnate God; rejoice, ark overshadowed by the glory of the Son of God; rejoice, most blessed and pure ever-virgin Mother of God.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* We hymn you, O Virgin Mother of God who contained the uncontainable God in your womb, and gave birth to him who is the joy of the world.

You have given to the world the good shepherd who sought the lost sheep, and with him you now reign: lead to him all the sheep that have gone astray.

The Father, surpassing all understanding in his love for those fallen in Adam, has through you revealed the Lamb who takes away the sins of the whole world. Never cease to pray before him, that by the blood of his Son we may be sanctified and cleansed.

O Son of God, equally glorified with the Father and the Spirit, by the supplications of her who gave you birth, forsake not us who are perishing.

He who was incarnate and became man through you has placed you above all the angelic ranks: standing there, lead us also to the heights of heaven, taking away every sin.

*Exapostilarion*  
*to the Special Melody* Having fallen asleep in the flesh...

The Dayspring from on high has visited us, O Mother of God, and amid sorrowful circumstances has given you to us as a beam of surpassing radiance, a mediatrix for sinners, imparting unexpected joy to us.

Let everything that has breath... *and the Praises,*  
*4 verses, tone 4*

Let heaven and earth join in song; for the Mother stands before her Son, earnestly entreating forgiveness of sins for a certain sinful man; at which the angels rejoice. With them let us also spiritually rejoice, magnifying the Mother of God with hymns. *Twice*

O people, let us sing the hymn of David to the maiden Bride of God, the Mother of Christ, the king of all: The queen stands at your right hand, O Master, arrayed in vesture of gold and adorned with divine majesty; for, having adorned her, the chosen of women, above all the earth, he was pleased to be born of her in his great mercy, and has given her, who alone is blessed, as a helper to his people, to protect his servants. *Twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 6*

All the noetic ranks rejoice with us, seeing our sovereign lady glorified with many names by the faithful; and the souls of the righteous rejoice also, seeing the Mother of God extending her most honourable hands toward her Son for sinful people, imploring the remission of their sins, peace and great mercy.

*Great Doxology and Troparion. Litanies and Dismissal.*

## **Liturgy**

*Beatitudes, 8 verses: 4 from Ode 3 of the first Canon, and 4 from Ode 6 of the second Canon.*

*At the Entrance: Troparion of the Icon; Glory be to the Father... Both now... the Kontakion of the Icon.*

*Prokimenon, tone 3, the Song of the Mother of God*

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

*Verse* For he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

*Epistle to the Hebrews, number 320*

*Alleluia, tone 2*

Arise, O Lord, into your rest, you and the ark of your might.

The Lord has sworn in truth to David, and he will not annul it.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 54*

*Communion Verse*

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

## December 10

### Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes and Evgraphus of Alexandria

#### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 3 verses, tone 1  
to the Special Melody O all praised martyrs...*

O glorious martyr Menas, \* when your heels were beaten, \* your eyes put out, \* and your divinely eloquent tongue removed, \* you endured steadfastly, \* looking for divine rewards. \* Therefore pray \* that God grant to our souls \* peace and great mercy.

The glorious Hermogenes \* loved the severing of his hands \* and the removal of his feet; \* and, gazing at the fire \* he showed a mightier ardour of heart, \* cleaving to God, \* to whom he now prays \* that he grant our souls \* peace and great mercy.

Your limbs broken, O wise saints, \* you were cast into the depths of the sea; \* and by the hand of the Most High \* you were guided \* to the calm haven of sweetness, \* having drowned the malice of the serpent. \* Therefore, pray \* that God grant our souls \* peace and great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, in the same tone and melody*

Without corruption you gave birth to God \* who has destroyed corruption and poured forth incorruption, \* O incorrupt and blameless one. \* Therefore, I pray you: \* By your supplications renew me \* corrupted through evil, O pure one, \* that I may glorify you \* and magnify you with love \* who has magnified our race.

*Or this Theotokion of the Cross*

The undefiled Virgin, \* beholding on the tree \* him to whom she had given birth from her seedless womb, \* unable to bear her inner wounding \* and rending her hair, said, \* How is it that you, holding all creation in the palm of your hand, \* are lifted up on the cross \* like one condemned, \* who desires to save mankind in whatever way is possible?

*Aposticha from the Octoechos.*

*Troparion, tone 8*

By abstinence, O martyrs of Christ you mortified the fiery forms and movements of the passions;

in your lifetime you received the grace of healing the infirm, and to work miracles even after your death.

What a truly most glorious wonder it is, that bare bones pour forth healings.

Glory to the only God and creator.

## **Matins**

*Both canons from the Octoechos;*

*and this canon for the martyrs tone 1,*

*upon the acrostic I hymn the steadfast crown-bearing martyrs,*

*composed by Joseph.*

### *Ode 1*

*Irmos* Delivered from bitter slavery, Israel traversed the impassible as though it were dry land, and seeing the enemy drowned, sang a hymn to God as the benefactor who wrought wonders with his upraised arm, for he has been glorified.

O martyrs adorned with crowns of glory, who stand before the throne of God, filled with divine light: from the darkness of the passions deliver those who with love keep your splendid memory.

Loving divine glory and desiring the beauty of God, you spurned the beauties of life and all power, O martyrs, and by your death have obtained never-ending life.

Burning with divine zeal, wise Hermogenes and Menas quenched the fire of godlessness; and shining on all the light of piety, by faith are radiantly seen as beacons.

*Theotokion* That your servants may be delivered from possession by the passions, O immaculate Maiden, earnestly entreat your Lord and Master, to whom you gave flesh of your most pure blood, and who has entered into fellowship with us.

### *Ode 3*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Clearly illumined with heavenly light, the martyrs dispersed the darkness of the falsehood of idolatry, and have emitted the radiance of healings for us who sing to the God of all: You are holy, O Lord.



Following the living Master of mortality, O O manly martyr Menas, having been broken underfoot, you have broken the head of the tyrannical enemy, setting your feet firmly upon the hard path of torture.

His hands severed, Hermogenes hymned the Saviour, having brightened his priestly vesture with the moistening of his blood, revealed through grace as an emulator of him who suffered in the flesh.

*Theotokion* Christ the comely, finding you alone to be comely among women, came forth incarnate from you, O Maiden, enlightening our race with divine beauty: therefore, we honour you.

*Kontakion, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody* The choir of the angels...

Together let us all honour with sacred and sweet hymnody wondrous Menas, godly Hermogenes and Evgraphus, as ones who rendered honour to the Lord, who suffered for him, attained to the choirs of the incorporeal in the heavens, and pour forth miracles.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody* Of the Wisdom...

Rejecting worldly glory and furnishing themselves with wings through divine glory,

Menas, Hermogenes and glorious Evgraphus endured the weight of cruel tortures with zealous intent, sparing not their flesh.

Cast to the depths of the sea after their end, they were guided to the will of God.

Let us sing to them with faith: Entreat Christ our God,

that he grant remission of sins to those who honour your holy memory with love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Fallen into subtle temptations through the activity of my enemies, seen and unseen, I am caught fast in the tempest of my countless offences. I flee to the refuge of your goodness, to my fervent help and protection O pure one. Therefore, O lady, earnestly entreat him who was born of you without seed, for all your servants who unceasingly pray to you, O immaculate Mother of God; and ever beg him to grant forgiveness of sins to those who rightly hymn your glory.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The lamb and mother, beholding her lamb, the shepherd and redeemer upon the cross, exclaimed, weeping, and bitterly lamenting: The world rejoices, receiving deliverance through you; but inwardly I burn, seeing your crucifixion, which you endure in the loving kindness of your mercy. O longsuffering Lord, abyss and inexhaustible source of compassion, take pity and grant remission of sins to those who with faith hymn your divine passion.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Proclaiming the brilliant laws of God, O Menas, you endured the putting out of your eyes by the iniquitous, lifting up the eyes of your heart to the never-waning light, and singing with joy: Glory to your power, O Lord.

Your tongue cut out, it was found to be honed by the fire of the Spirit; for it spoke, hymning the wonders of God and bringing to the glory of piety the tyrant who had caused your muteness, O Menas.

Enduring great suffering, Hermogenes was deprived of his feet, yet he trampled upon the head of the serpent, preparing with unwavering demeanor the path of witness which leads to the life of heavenly splendour.

Preserving your soul unwounded, O Menas, Christ appeared to you, healing your wounds and commanding you to endure bravely, that through you, he who desires mercy, might work salvation for all who see your torment.

*Theotokion* You put forth the rod from the root of Jesse, O pure and exulted Virgin who budded forth the nurturer of all creation, who has caused the gardens of fruitless knowledge to wither and has piously rooted the most true faith within us.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

The martyrs cried out together to the iniquitous judge: Why trouble yourselves in vain, for he who gives power stands before us, he who alone is invincible in might, for whose sake we are mightily enduring wounding.

The conversion of wondrous Hermogenes to the Lord took place suddenly; for he was cleansed in the laver of baptism and received the light of the hierarchal office by the judgment of God, illumining with his teachings those in the night of evil.

Abandoning the worthless mentality of the philosophers, you were caught in the snares of the unlettered apostles when the Spirit made you truly wise as martyrs and through faith made you mighty in strength against every storm of torment.

*Theotokion* You surpass the angels, O Virgin who gave birth to Emmanuel, the Angel of Great Counsel, who by his descent united men to the heavenly, in his ineffable mercy.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

After three days you saved from the monster Jonah, who foreshadowed your burial almighty God; and the bodies of the martyrs cast into the deep you guided to the tranquil haven of burial, where your divine will is the safekeeping of us, the faithful.

O invincible martyrs, the deep gave up your bodies to the dry land unharmed, guided by the angels of heaven who proclaimed to all your spiritual state, which flows with healings and delivers all from the passions of the soul.

The ranks of the angels marvelled at your endurance, and how in the body you vanquished the incorporeal serpent, and were crowned with wreaths of victory, O martyrs, who stand before the throne of God, illumined with the radiance of divine light.

*Theotokion* Through you, O Virgin, death has ceased to be, for you gave birth to him in whom we believe with pure faith: pray to him, to deliver your servants from misfortune.

*Kontakion, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* Having been lifted up...

The truly melodious sound of your words, O Menas,  
led Hermogenes from the depths of perdition and placed him on the rock of life;  
and Evgraphus, having denounced the emperor,  
had his glorious head severed with rejoicing:  
pray that all who honour you with love be saved.

*Ikos* Your life was godly, your discourse sweet, your boldness and teaching great, your courage wondrous in the face of the iniquitous, O Menas, who with steadfastness was in no way afraid. You taught all to worship the one God in three persons and to serve him with unwavering intent. Confessing the Son of God incarnate for us in these latter days, you pursued Hermogenes: with him pray that all that honour you with love be saved.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

## December 10

You made your abode with joyous souls, O athletes, full of gladness, where the voices of those who keep festival in pure manner is heard, singing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Sweet to me is the death whereby I die, cried Hermogenes, for with Christ as my life, it is immeasurable gain to die. Let my members be cut off as I sing with love: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

With steadfast wisdom you inscribed yourself in the Book of Life, O wise Evgraphus; for when your head was cut off, you were transported to the never-waning light on your blood, as on a chariot.

*Theotokion* The incarnate Word issued from you, O Maiden, without burning your womb or disturbing the seal of your virginity, granting incorruption and life to us who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

### Ode 8

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

He whose wisdom was vain fell at your feet, beaten, O divinely wise Menas; for, having deprived you of eyes and tongue, he was unable to shake your idea of a higher place. Therefore, you cried out with joy: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

When the irrational tyrant deprived you of your hands and feet by his savage will, then, O wise Hermogenes, desiring the prize, rejoicing you sang to Christ: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

I hymn your divine suffering, O Menas; I honour the struggles of Hermogenes; I venerate your relics and hymn the wounds, bonds, persecutions and death by which you gained life, singing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* We know you as the urn holding the Manna of the divinity, O Maiden; the ark, the table, the candlestick, the throne of God, the palace, and the bridge to divine life for those who sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

### Ode 9

*Irmos* Burning but unconsumed, the bush prefigured your pure birthgiving, O Mother of God. Therefore we now entreat you to quench in us the raging furnace of temptations, that we may never cease to magnify you.

Behold, the brilliant celebration of the radiant martyrs shines upon all, illumining the ends of the world and removing the blindness of men's souls. Let us hasten with all diligence, and draw forth sanctity therefrom.

As you ever stand before God, O great martyrs, we entreat you: Pray that those who with faith honour your radiant memory may receive the blessings of heavenly glory which you have been granted.

Immolated in the fire of torment and illumined with the most pure light, O praiseworthy ones, you brought body and soul to the creator of all as an unblemished sacrifice, and are numbered among the choirs of the martyrs.

Divinely wise Menas, Hermogenes and Evgraphus, as a splendid and divine choir of martyrs, have been taken up to the mansions of heaven to stand before the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, abundantly delighting in deification.

*Theotokion* Our rejected nature has seen the radiance of the splendour of your birthgiving, O immaculate Lady, and has been delivered from the night of unbelief and the dark tumult of the passions: we honour you as the cause of our salvation.

*Exapostilarion,*  
*to the Special Melody* Adorned with stars...

By your rhetoric and divine miracles, O Menas, you drew sacred Hermogenes to suffer with you; and with him and holy Evgraphus: we now most joyfully praise you.

*Theotokion* You are revealed as the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded which divine Habbakuk foresaw of old, O Virgin whom David calls the mountain of God, a high hill, as the hill of Bashan.

## Liturgy

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.

*Verse* I have set the Lord always before me: he is at my right hand and I shall not fall.

*The Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Ephesians, number 233*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

The righteous cry and the Lord hears it, and frees them from all their affliction.

The trials of the righteous are many but our God delivers him from them all.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 106*

*Communion*

Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 11

*The service for the saint of the day, Daniel the Stylite, follows this one.*

### **The Sunday on or after: of the holy Forefathers, the second Sunday before Christmas**

### **Great Vespers**

*At Lord, I call to you...  
we sing 3 verses of the resurrection, and 3 of Anatolius,  
and 4 of the Forefathers.*

*Verses to the forefathers, tone 8*

Celebrating today the memory of the forefathers,  
O faithful, let us hymn as mighty and powerful  
him who has exalted them among all the nations,  
Christ the deliverer, the Lord who by faith wrought most glorious miracles,  
and who has, through them, shown us a staff of power,  
pure Mary, the only unwedded divine Maiden,  
from whom Christ blossomed forth with life for all,  
the inexhaustible food and eternal salvation.

O Master, who delivered the holy youths from the fire  
and Daniel from the lions' mouths,  
who blessed Abraham, Isaac your servant, and Jacob his son,  
whose good will it was to become like us through their seed:  
our forefathers, fallen of old, you have saved by your cross and resurrection;  
and, having broken the bonds of death,  
you have raised with you all of them, dead from ages past,  
who worshipped you, O Christ, the king of the ages.

Rejoicing in the dew of the Spirit,  
the godly youths walked in the flames as if in gentle rain,  
mystically signifying therein the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ,  
and in wisdom they quenched the power of the fire with faith;  
and righteous Daniel was shown to be a restrainer of lions.  
By their prayers be entreated, O Saviour, lover of mankind;  
deliver us from the unquenchable fire of eternity,  
and grant us your kingdom, O Lord.

Your faithful and holy youths  
who walked amid the fiery flame as in dew,  
mystically prefigured your coming from the Virgin,  
dwelling upon us without consuming us;  
and righteous Daniel, wondrous among the prophets,  
clearly foretelling your divine second coming,  
said that he beheld the thrones set up, and the judge seated,  
and the flowing river of fire.  
By their prayers may we be delivered therefrom, O Master Christ.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6, composed by Anatolius*

O faithful, let us praise today  
all the fathers of the old Law:  
Abraham, the beloved of God, and Isaac, born according to the promise,  
and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs,  
most meek David, and Daniel, the prophet of longings,  
glorifying with them the three youths who transformed the furnace into dew,  
who ask remission of Christ our God,  
who is glorified in his saints.

Both now and for ever... *and the Dogmaticon in the tone of the week.*

*Entreaty, the verses of the Church, then*

Glory be to the Father... *tone 1*

The prophets of great renown who are ever blessed,  
splendid in the rays of divine eloquence,  
uttering the sayings of the Spirit as fruit,  
they preached to all the ineffable nativity of Christ our God;  
and having lived most wondrously,  
they ended their lives in accordance with the Law.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Behold, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled,  
for a virgin has given birth,  
yet after her birthgiving remaining as she was before;  
for God was born, and therefore nature has been newly wrought.  
Reject not the supplications of your servants  
offered to you in your church, O Mother of God,  
but as you held the compassionate one in your arms,  
take pity on your servants and entreat him, that our souls be saved.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos,*  
*and Glory be to the Father... tone 3, composed by Germanus*



Come, you lovers of the feasts of the Church,  
and with psalms let us praise the assembly of the forefathers:  
Adam, the forefather of us all,  
Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;  
and, after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David,  
and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets,  
together with Elias, Elisha and all the rest,  
Zechariah and the Forerunner;  
who all preached Christ, the life and resurrection of our race.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, same tone*

By the will of the Father, through the divine Spirit  
you seedlessly conceived the Son of God  
who existed before the world began,  
begotten of the Father without a mother.  
You gave birth to him and fed with your milk as an infant  
him who for our sake was incarnate from you without a father.  
Therefore never cease to entreat him  
to deliver our souls from danger.

*Troparion of the Resurrection;*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...  
*and that of the Forefathers, tone 2*

By faith you justified your forefathers,  
and through them you espoused them in advance  
to the Church which was set apart from the gentiles.  
The saints rejoice in glory,  
for from the seed of these forefathers has come a truly glorious fruit,  
the one who gave birth to you without seed.  
By their intercessions O Christ our God, have mercy on us.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the Resurrection, twice;*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...  
*and that of the forefathers.*

*After each reading from the Psalter, the Sessional Hymns and Theotokia of the Resurrection.*

*After the Polyeleos, the Ipakoe of the tone of the week, and this Sessional Hymn of the forefathers,  
tone 8, to the Special Melody Of the Wisdom...*

With hymns let us all praise Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,  
meek David, Joshua, and the twelve patriarchs,  
with the three youths who quenched the fiery flame with the power of the Spirit.  
Let us sing to them: Rejoice, you that bravely denounced the deception of the mad king.

Pray to Christ, to grant remission of offences to those who celebrate your holy memory with love. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *Theotokion*

Like the widow who gave two mites as an offering,  
I offer you the praise of thanksgiving which is your due, O Lady, for all your gifts;  
for you a shelter and aid, ever rescuing me from temptations and tribulations.  
Delivered from that which causes me grief, as from the midst of a burning furnace,  
I cry out to you with all my heart: O Mother of God,  
help me by entreating Christ our God to grant me remission of transgressions,  
for I, your servant, have you as my hope.

*We sing 3 Canons: of the Resurrection;  
and the following two Canons,  
of the Three Holy Youths and Daniel,  
and that of the Forefathers.*

*Canon to the Three Holy Youths and Daniel the Prophet, tone 8,  
upon the acrostic I hymn the three youths and the great Daniel  
composed by Theophanes*

*Irmos* Having traversed the water as though it were dry land, and escaping the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried out: Let us sing to our deliverer and our God.

Let us glorify the unoriginate Word, who was born of the Father in godly manner before all ages and was seen figuratively in the youths in the furnace.

The truly noble youths, resolutely spitting upon the words of the impious tyrant, did not wish to defile themselves with the food of the iniquitous like the Chaldeans.

Nourished in soul by the word of God and in body with foods which grew of themselves, they appeared to the king more comely of countenance than those who were fed with coarse foods.

*Theotokion* You heal the venom of the serpent, which had been bitterly poured into the ears of Eve, O Maiden who sprang from David and gave birth to the deliverer.

*Canon to the Holy Forefathers, tone 1  
upon the acrostic I now offer up fitting praise to the fathers  
composed by Joseph.*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

Let us offer a hymn to the fathers born before the Law and under the Law, who, by their upright will, were pleasing to the Lord and Master born from the Virgin, and who now delight in unwaning enlightenment.

Let us honour the first Adam who was honoured by the hand of the creator, and who is the forefather of us all and rests with all the elect in the mansions of heaven.

The Lord and God of all accepted the gifts of Abel, who offered them with a most noble soul; and when he was slain by his brother's murderous hand, he received his soul into light as that of a divine martyr.

*Theotokion* Let us hearken to the divine sayings concerning the appearance of Christ; for behold, he is born in the cave of the unwedded Maiden, an awesome nativity proclaimed by the appearing of the star to the astrologers.

*Katavasia* Christ is born...

*Ode 3*

*Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* You are the confirmation of those who have recourse to you, O Lord: you are the light of those in darkness; and my spirit sings to you.

With divinely imparted understanding, the children of David kept the laws of their fathers in divinely wise fashion, O Master.

The fire did not consume the most pure bodies of the pious youths, for they had been watered with a spiritually nourishing fast.

Wondrously bedewed in the midst of the furnace, the three children chanted the universal and oft chanted hymn of praise.

*Theotokion* O Master who saved the bodies of the virginal youths in the furnace, you show us a birthgiving from the Virgin's body.

*Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

## December 11

The zeal of Seth for his creator is hymned throughout the world, for in his blameless life and spiritual love he was truly pleasing to him, and now sings in the land of the living: You are holy, O Lord.

Wondrous Enoch trusted in the Spirit and with divine wisdom began to call upon the God and Master of all with mouth and heart; and having lived on earth in a God pleasing manner, he received glory.

Let us bless Enoch with sacred utterances, for, having been pleasing to the Lord, he was translated in glory, shown to be greater than death, as it was written, since he had been a most earnest servant of God.

*Theotokion* The expectation of the nations comes forth from the Virgin, and Bethlehem radiantly opens the closed gates of Eden, receiving the incarnate Word, laid in a manger.

### *Ipakoe, tone 2*

The fire was transformed into dew for the children, and the lamentation of the myrrh bearing women was changed into joy; and an angel ministered in both wonders, transforming the furnace into a place of rest for the former, and announcing the resurrection on the third day to the latter. Glory to you, O Lord, the author of our life.

### *Ode 4*

#### *Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* I have heard the mystery of your dispensation, O Lord; I have considered your works, and I glorify your divinity.

The most wise Daniel, divinely enlightened of mind, interpreted the dreams of the rulers by divine grace.

The suffering of the youths in the furnace shines with wonders, for they brought the tyrant to acknowledge you, O Almighty.

The harmonious organs and melodious hymns of music did not distract the valorous ones, and they did not bow down before the golden image.

*Theotokion* O exalted one, with hymns the children in Babylon honour your most divine Son, whom they came to know in the furnace.

#### *Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Let us offer praise to God, honouring with hymns the truly righteous Noah; for he is seen to be adorned with all the divine commandments, having been well pleasing to Christ, to whom we, the faithful, sing: Glory to your power, O Lord.

Seeing your nobility and simplicity of character, O Noah, God clearly made you perfect in all respects and the leader of the new world, for which you saved from the deluge the seed of every species, as he had commanded.

With hymns let us piously bless Noah, who preserved the Law of God intact; who, alone among his generation, was found to be righteous, and of old saved the species of the animals with an ark of gopher wood at the command of him who accomplishes all things.

O blessed Noah, your memory pours the wine of compunction upon us who honour you, which ever gladdens the hearts and souls of those who, in a pure manner, bless your honorable and divine life.

*Ode 5*

*Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* O light that never sets, why have you turned your face from me? Why has an alien darkness covered me, a wretched one? But turn me back I entreat you, and guide my paths to the light of your commandments.

Your favoured ones, the great Daniel and the three divinely wise youths, having learned your Law, O Saviour, were not rejected; but, having received strength of you, their benefactor, they bravely vanquished the tyrants.

Daniel perceived your mysteries, O lover of mankind, as with purity of mind he saw you, the king and judge of all nations, coming as the Son of Man upon a cloud.

Your unity is adorned more than with sapphire, O youths who burned like a golden ray with zeal for piety and joyfully walked about in the furnace, forming a universal chorus.

*Theotokion* Godly Daniel clearly described you as a mountain, O Virgin, and the three youths, seeing the dew-bearing flame, praised with hymns your divine child as Saviour, creator and Lord.

*Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

Let Shem, who received the blessing of his father, be honoured with divine praises; shown to be well pleasing before the Lord, he has joined the choir of the forefathers and joyously rests in the land of the living.

As the friend of God, Abraham was granted to see the day of his creator and has become full of spiritual joy; therefore, honouring his uprightness of mind, we all bless him as a divine forefather of Christ.

Seeing the Trinity, as far as it is possible for man to do, as a true servant you offered hospitality, O blessed Abraham: and for your strange hospitality you received a reward, to be, through faith, the father of countless nations.

*Theotokion* He who is full empties himself into the flesh for our sake; he who is unoriginate receives a beginning; he who is rich impoverishes himself; he who is the Word of God rests as a babe in a manger of dumb beasts, accomplishing the restoration of all who have existed throughout the ages.

*Ode 6*

*Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* The abyss of sins and the storm of transgressions assail me and cast me violently to the depths of despair, but extend your mighty hand as you did to Peter, O my guide, and save me.

Having mastered the passions of the soul by the power of the Word, you became governors in the lands of the Chaldean peoples, for virtue knows to give honour to those who have acquired her, O wise descendants of David.

Daniel of old, vested in life-bearing mortality, slew with food the wicked serpent impiously held to be a god by the Chaldeans; and wisely he slew the impious priests.

*Theotokion* O Mother of God, Virgin and Mother, implore the judge, your son, the deliverer from evil, that by your supplication he be merciful to me on the day of judgment; for in you I place my trust.

*Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

Led up by your father's obedience to be sacrificed, you were clearly an image of the passion of Christ, O blessed Isaac. Therefore, you were blessed and truly became a close friend of God, rejoicing now with all the righteous.

Jacob appears as the most faithful of all of God's favoured ones. Therefore, he wrestled with an angel, saw a celestial intelligence, was called a god, and, sleeping, saw a divine ladder, whereon God, who put on our flesh in his goodness, established himself.

Loving obedience to his father, and cast into a pit, Joseph was sold, thus becoming an image of Christ, who was slain and placed in a tomb. He became dispenser of the grain of Egypt, being chaste and righteous, and a true governor of the passions.

*Theotokion* He who abides with the Father and the Spirit is known on earth as a little child; and he who wraps the earth in darkness is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger of dumb beasts. Rejoicing, we celebrate the forefeast of his seedless nativity.

*Kontakion of the Forefathers, tone 6*

Defended by the indescribable essence, O thrice-bless'd ones,  
you shunned the adoration of the image made by hands:  
glorified by your ordeal by fire, you stood in the midst of unbearable flames  
and called upon God, saying:  
Hasten to our aid, O compassionate one, as you are merciful;  
for you have the power to do as you will.

*Ikos* Stretch forth your hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsts after us, not swallow us up; but spare our souls, as you once spared your three children in Babylon who glorified you unceasingly and were cast for your sake into a furnace, from where they cried out to you: Hasten to our aid, O compassionate one, as you are merciful; for you have the power to do as you will.

*Ode 7*

*Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* The God fearing youths in Babylon did not bow before the golden image, but bedewed in the midst of the fiery furnace, they sang a hymn, saying: Blessed are you, the supremely high God of our fathers.

A pious voice sounded to the almighty from the midst of the fire, for the divine Azariah, forming a choir, chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

The harp of the youths theologized concerning the Almighty, the God of all, and to him who appeared to them openly in the furnace they sang the hymn: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

The king, seeing the three children cast into the furnace, beheld the form of a fourth, and he called him the Son of God and cried out: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

## December 11

*Theotokion* Possessed of a mind illumined with divine radiance, O divinely blessed Daniel, you clearly foresaw the offspring of the Virgin formed by divine images; and you cried out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

### *Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Let Ananiah, Azariah and Misael, who quenched the fiery furnace, be hymned, with Daniel, who stopped the mouths of the lions, for together they sang to Christ: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Having lawfully suffered amid temptations and unmitigated tribulations, Job was called the favourite of God, as one most faithful, meek, guileless, righteous, perfect, blameless, singing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

With faith let us honour Moses, Aaron and Hur, praising Joshua and sacred Levi, Gideon and Samuel, and let us sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* As the prophet foretold, the unwedded one has conceived and comes to Bethlehem to give birth to God to whom we sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

### *Ode 8*

### *Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* In his wrath the Chaldean tyrant heated the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones, but seeing them saved by a higher power, he cried out to the creator and deliverer: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

Striving to preserve the nobility of Abraham, you also gained his foundation of faith and hope, O venerable ones, with his patience and endurance of temptations, crying out: Bless the Master, O priests; and you people, exalt him above all for ever.

Having shone like beacons and made the earth heavenly, and illumined with the radiance of piety, as a universal chorus, they sing to the Master who saved them: You children, bless; you priests, hymn, and you people exalt him above all for ever.

The descendants of David, having youthfully extinguished the fiery furnace and shut the jaws of the lions, rejoicing, now hymn you, the benefactor and king of all, saying: You children, bless; you priests, hymn, and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* Wise Daniel tells of your mystery, and the three divinely wise youths prefigure your maternity, seeing in symbols him who comes ineffably from you, the pure one. You children, bless; you priests, hymn, and you people exalt him above all for ever.



*Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

We celebrate today the divine memory of the honoured fathers from ages past: Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Enos, Enoch, Abraham, Melchizedek and Job, Isaac and faithful Jacob: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

Let us praise the divinely beautiful order of the divine fathers: Barak, Nathan and Eleazar, Josiah and David, Jephthah and Samuel, who honourably saw that which was to come and sang: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

With hymnody let us offer praise to the prophets of God, praising Hosea and Micah, Zephaniah and Habbakuk, Zechariah and Jonah, Haggai and Amos, Malachi and Obadiah, Nahum, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with Daniel, Elias and Elisha.

*To the Holy Trinity* Let us utter the threefold hymn to the most holy Trinity: the unoriginate Father, Son and most holy Spirit, a unity of three persons, which every breath glorifies: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* O Christ, incarnate of the Virgin's blood by your ineffable word, born in a cave as a perfect babe in the abundance of your loving kindness. The star heralds you from afar to the astrologers, who cry with faith: Hymn and exalt Christ above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Canon to the Three Youths*

*Irmos* We who are saved by you, O pure Virgin, confess you to be the true Mother of God, and with the bodiless choirs we magnify you.

You have attained your desired end, O most blessed youths, and you stand in the mansions of heaven before him who is the greatest of all desires.

Rejoicing, you have received a sheaf as the reward of the good cultivation of your tears, having brought forth the grain of incorruption.

Radiance has now fittingly shone upon you, and gladness of heart has blossomed forth, and you have made your abode in the place where grief has fled away.

*Theotokion* O Virgin, you halted the spread of death, having given birth to the Lord, the bestower of life, who imparts life to those who magnify you with faith.

*Canon to the Forefathers*

*Irmos* I see strange and most glorious mystery: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place in which Christ was laid, our God whom nothing can contain, whom praise and magnify.

By your might, O Lord, you made powerful of old your daughters: Hannah, Judith, Deborah, Huldah, Jael and Esther, Sarah, Miriam the sister of Moses, Rachel, Rebecca and Ruth the exceedingly wise.

In a sacred manner let us honour the holy children who quenched the furnace, and with them, Daniel the prophet and all who were clearly righteous, who shone forth well before the Law; who under the Law were pleasing to the Lord.

The wise and divine prophets, being descendants of Abraham, proclaimed through the Spirit the Word of God, born of Abraham and Judah. By their prayers, O Jesus, have compassion on us all.

All creation is sanctified by your memory and, keeping festival, calls out, as befits a servant: Ever offer entreaty to the Lord, O blessed ones, that those who praise you may receive eternal blessings.

*Theotokion* The Word of the Father, robed in me, comes forth from the Virgin and is born in the cave in unconfused manner. Dance, O creation, magnifying with thankful voices his most holy condescension which he has shown in his loving kindness.

*Exapostilarion of the Resurrection*  
Glory be to the Father... *of the Forefathers,*  
*to the Special Melody* hearken, O women...

Let us praise Adam, Abel, Seth and Enos, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Job and Aaron, Eleazar and Joshua, Barak, Sampson and Jephthah, David and Solomon.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* The great sun, the creator, who shall come forth from the Virgin who knew not man, hastens to Bethlehem to enlighten all who are descended from Adam: the radiant memory of the forefathers proclaims the wonder.

*At the Praises, 4 verses to the Resurrection,*  
*and these 4 to the Forefathers, tone 2,*  
*to the Special Melody* O house of Ephratha...

Let us all now celebrate \* the memory of the forefathers, \* hymning their life \* which was pleasing to God, \* for whose sake they have been magnified. *twice*

*Verse* Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is your name to the ages.

The children quenched \* the power of the fire, \* dancing in the midst of the furnace, \* and hymning God \* the Almighty.

*Verse* For you are righteous in all that you have done for us.

Daniel the prophet, \* who, imprisoned in a pit, \* dwelt with wild beasts, \* was shown forth as one \* who did not partake of their ferocity.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 7, composed by Germanus*

Come all, let us faithfully celebrate the annual commemoration  
of Abraham and those with him, the fathers who lived before the Law.  
Let us fittingly honour the tribe of Judah;  
let us praise with Daniel, the youths in Babylon,  
who, as an image of the Trinity, quenched the flame of the furnace;  
and holding fast to the prophecies of the prophets,  
let us cry out with Isaiah:  
Behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb, and bear a Son,  
Immanuel, God with us.

Both now and for ever.... *Theotokion* Most blessed are you...  
*Great Doxology, Litanies, and Dismissal.*

## **Liturgy**

*Beatitudes, 10 verses:*  
*6 from the Octoechos, and 4 from Ode 6 of the Canon to the Forefathers.*

*At the Entrance, the Troparia of the resurrection and of the Forefathers;*  
Glory be to the Father... Both now... *the Kontakion of the Forefathers.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4, the hymn of the Fathers*  
Blessed are you, Lord God of our ancestors, and worthy of praise; and glorious is your name for ever.

*Verse* For you are just in all you have done for us.

*The Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Colossians, number 257 (3:4-11)*

*Alleluia, tone 4*  
Moses and Aaron are among his priests, and Samuel is among those who call upon his name.  
They called to the Lord, and he answered.

*The Gospel of Luke number 76 (14:16-24)*

*Communion*

Praise the Lord from heaven; praise him in the highest.  
Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## **Our venerable father Daniel the Stylite of Constantinople**

### **Vespers**

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses, beginning with these of the Stylite, tone 8  
to the Special Melody What shall we call you...*

What shall we proclaim you to be, O Daniel? An uprooter of the passions and planter of the virtues, a true wonder worker, an intercessor for sinners, a valiant exorcist of demons, a beacon radiant with piety, a dwelling place of the Spirit and champion of the Church: pray that our souls be saved.

What shall we name you, O Daniel? A faster, who subjected the passions to the mind; a sufferer, who endured all manner of discomfort, lifted high above the ground on your pillar; a diligent athlete and a skilled physician: pray that our souls be saved.

What shall we now call you, O Daniel? A model for monastics and teacher of abstinence, an adornment of the faithful and worker of healings, a beacon shining light upon those who are in darkness, a fellow citizen of the angels, equal in honour to them, and an inhabitant of paradise and a heavenly man: pray that our souls be saved.

*And three verses for the Mother of God, in the same tone and melody.  
If Alleluia is to be sung, these verses are sung first.*

Strange and awesome is the mystery of your seedless maternity, surpassing the mind of man in majesty, O pure Virgin. For you gave birth in the flesh to him who is ever of the Father's substance, upon whom the many-eyed cherubim dare not gaze and before whom all the ranks of angels tremble. We glorify you, the Bride of God who gave him birth.

To whom may you be compared, O my wretched soul, in no way rousing yourself to repentance, neither fearing the fire which awaits the wicked? Arise, and call upon her who alone is quick to help, and cry out: O Virgin Mother, entreat your Son and our God, that he deliver me from the snares of the deceiver.

O pure and undefiled one, who gave birth to the unendurable fire which utterly consumes sins and bedews the faithful. By your supplications burn up the tinder of my countless offences, and with dew cool my soul which withers because of the passions, that I, your servant, may magnify your mercy and power.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Lady, help of all, impart a drop of the oil of your mercy to me, storm tossed upon the sea of darkness and ever compassed by the billows and waves of the evils of this life and extend to me a helping hand; grant to me the portion of the elect and the righteous, for you gave birth to the lover of mankind.

*Theotokion of the cross* When she beheld the lamb stretched out upon the tree of the cross, the lamb and mother cried out maternally, weeping and in pain: O my Son, what is this strange thing that I see? How is it that you die, who as Lord give life to all, O long-suffering one, granting resurrection to mortals? I glorify your great condescension, O my God.

*If God is the Lord... is to be sung at Matins, then we sing Glory be to the Father... tone 5,  
composed by the Studite*

Having made good the talent entrusted you by Christ, O venerable father, even after death you became an exorcist of demons and a physician for those suffering various ills, a pillar and foundation, and a holy mountain of the Church of Christ. We pray you, O wonder worker Daniel: Implore peace and great mercy for our souls.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos.*

*Troparion, tone 1*

You were a pillar of patience, O venerable one, | emulating the forefathers: | Job in suffering, Joseph in temptations, | and the life of the bodiless ones while in the body. | O Daniel our father, | | entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved.

## Matins

*Both canons from the Octoechos and that of the venerable one in tone 8,  
composed by Joseph  
upon the acrostic With hymns I honour Daniel the Stylite*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Let us sing to the Lord, who led his people through the Red Sea, for he alone has gloriously been glorified.

## December 11

O blessed Daniel, send down a luminous ray of light from heaven upon me who with hymns desires to praise your memory.

A truly great sun, O father, you shine to the ends of the earth, illumining the assemblies of the faithful with the splendor of your virtues.

Submitting to the laws of the Master, O father, you mortified the flesh with abstinence and subjected it to the Spirit.

*Theotokion* The immutable Lord who was born of you, O Mother of God, appeared as a whole man, though even after incarnation he remained as he had been.

### *Ode 3*

*Irmos* Lord the fashioner of heaven's vault and founder of the Church, establish me upon your love, O summit of desire and confirmation of the faithful, who alone is the lover of mankind.

Having parted the sea of the passions with the rod of abstinence, O father, you traversed it without drowning, and attained the mountain of true dispassion, and conversed with God in purity of mind.

Having ascended to the heights of the virtues, you became known to the world; for you stood aloft on your pillar, illumining those who came to you with faith with the splendour of glorious wonders.

Founded upon the rock of the knowledge of God, you were unmoved by the wiles of the demons; therefore, you raised up your body on a pillar above the earth, and let your soul soar to the heavens.

*Theotokion* Deliver me from the assault of the passions, O Lady, and vanquish the foes that war against me; establish me upon the rock of the will of God and enlighten my soul, O portal of the light divine.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 1,  
to the special melody* Your tomb, O Saviour...

Having lifted yourself up upon a pillar,  
you wasted your flesh through abstinence, O father Daniel.  
Therefore, you were granted to become a vessel of the Spirit,  
and having received grace divine, O thrice blessed one,  
you drive away every ailment  
from those who with faith honour your memory.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Most holy Virgin, the hope of Christians,  
 unceasingly implore God,  
 to whom you gave birth in manner past understanding and telling,  
 that he grant remission of our sins to us who hymn you  
 and correction of life to us  
 who ever glorify you with faith and love.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The unblemished lamb and mother,  
 seeing the lamb and shepherd hanging dead upon the tree,  
 wept and cried out maternally:  
 How can I endure your condescension, which passes telling,  
 and your voluntary passion,  
 O my Son, the most good God?

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* You are my strength and power O Lord my God, you are my rejoicing, who without leaving the bosom of the Father, has visited our lowliness. With the Prophet Habakkuk, I therefore cry to you: Glory to your power, O lover of mankind.

O ever-memorable father, you beheld Simeon, the servant of God, upon his pillar, shining like the radiant sun; and you were divinely illumined by the splendours which issued forth from him, O Daniel, and you followed his manner of life.

You vanquished the demonic legions with the sword of faith and drowned them in the torrents of your prayers, ending the destruction they wrought upon those at sea; and you save those who sing with faith to God: Glory to your power, O lover of mankind.

Having ascended your pillar, O blessed father, you stood whole nights like one of the bodiless, having acquired an humble spiritual eye; and, as a shining mirror of the Spirit, you received radiance and divine manifestations with a pure mind.

*Theotokion* The laws of nature are renewed in you, O most pure one who gave birth truly beyond cause and telling to the Word, the giver of the law, who delivers from ignorance the human race which with faith sings: Glory to your power, O lover of mankind.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* O light that never sets, why have you turned your face from me? Why has an alien darkness covered me, a wretched one? But turn me back I entreat you, and guide my paths to the light of your commandments.

That you might receive immortal glory, you slayed the desires of your flesh, O father, you bridled the urgings of the passions with the labours of abstinence, becoming a river of miracles and a fountain of healings.

When struck with fear, O blessed father, wondrous Simeon appeared to you and with two angels he indicated the path you were to tread on the earth, crying out: Come and stand by me, borne aloft to God by grace.

Illumined by the unwaning brilliance and divine radiance, O father, you dispelled the gloom of the passions, becoming a pillar of light and a stairway truly leading the faithful to God.

*Theotokion* O Maiden Bride of God who gave birth to the Master, you are more exalted than the heavenly hosts, and have deified earthly nature. With soul and tongue, O Virgin, we the faithful glorify you, most truly the Mother of God.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* O Saviour cleanse me, for my transgressions are many, and lead me up from the depths of evil, I entreat you; for to you I cry, and you heard me, O God of my salvation.

Illumined through cleaving to God, your mind was unconsumed by the fires of pleasures and above passions, O father, higher than passionate attachments of the flesh.

Your soul was filled with the Spirit's gifts of life-creating waters, O divinely wise and blessed one; and you truly flow with streams of healing which quench the torrents of the passions.

*Theotokion* All we the faithful, have you as an intercessor and a helper in the deep of evil and the billows and waves of tribulation which ever pass over us, O Mother of God, who alone is the refuge of mortals.

*Kontakion, tone 8,  
to the special melody As the first fruits...*

Having ascended your pillar like a star of great radiance, | you illumined the world with your venerable deeds, | and dispelled the gloom of deception, O father; and so we implore you: || Shine even now in the hearts of your servants with the unwaning light of knowledge.

*Ikos* The hymn which I now offer in praise of your struggles is flawed, O father; for my heart is not pure, as I have shamefully defiled it. But grant me the words to hymn in a pure manner your life at which even the angels marvel, O holy one who lived as a bodiless one, having received the unwaning light of knowledge.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The Hebrew children in the furnace bravely trampled upon the flames, and transformed the fire into dew as they sang: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.



The ranks of angels marvelled at your standing upon the pillar, O blessed God-bearer; for having assumed their manner of life while in the body, you sang: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

Luminous with the loftiness of an immaterial way of life and with the splendour of prophecy you shine rays of healing upon us who piously honour you, O wondrous Daniel.

Dispell the gloom of my passions with the radiance of your prayers, O blessed one, and guide me to the path of life as I sing: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

*Theotokion* Be merciful to me, O Virgin: with the healing power of your prayer cure me, wounded by the sting of sin and who sings: Blessed is the fruit of your womb.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* In his wrath the Chaldean tyrant heated the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones, but seeing them saved by a higher power, he cried out to the creator and deliverer: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

O God-bearing father, you attained the ultimate desire, the greatest good, soaring aloft on the wings of your virtuous deeds; and with the bodiless ones, you sing: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

The power of God strengthened you to endure the bitter cold of winter, the burning heat of summer, the putrefaction of your flesh and the discomfort of the worms which grew there; as you sang: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

You became a new Job, O truly wondrous Daniel, beset by a multitude of temptations and tribulations; and you emulated the meekness of David, the guilelessness of Jacob and the chastity of Joseph, singing in thanksgiving: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* O exalted and most holy Lady, fulfilling your words in acknowledging you to be the Mother of God, we now bless you, for you gave birth to God for us. Hymning him in two natures and one person, we sing: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Every ear trembles with fear to hear of the ineffable condescension of God, how the Most High willingly came down and assumed flesh, and became man through the Virgin's womb. Therefore, O faithful, let us magnify the most pure Mother of God.

When you finished your course and reposed, the gates of heaven were opened to you and the ranks of angels received you; and Christ, the bestower of crowns, crowned you with the glory of righteousness: we the faithful magnify him in song.

Like a lily of the valley you blossomed in the paradise of abstinence, and like a cypress you rose to the heights of perfection: you became like the olive tree of the Psalms, anointing our faces and hearts with the oil of your asceticism.

Creation knows you to be a pillar firmly grounded upon the rock of the virtues, an unbreachable rampart, a foundation of miracles, a truly calm haven, a treasury of healing and dwelling place of the Spirit. Therefore, we celebrate your memory today, O Daniel.

Today your divine memory shines upon us more brightly than the sun, illumining the hearts of the faithful with the light of righteousness, and dispelling the darkness of the soul-destroying passions. And celebrating it, we piously hymn you.

*Theotokion* Born of her whom you preserved incorrupt even after giving birth, have pity upon me when you sit to judge my deeds, and overlook my iniquities and sins; for you, alone without sin, are a merciful God and the lover of mankind.

*Exapostilarion from the Octoechos,  
Glory be to the Father... and Exapostilarion of the venerable one,  
to the special melody O immutable light...*

With wordless utterance, your pillar shouts forth your ascetic feats, O father who suffered, standing unprotected at the mercy of the adverse elements. Therefore, you shine as a luminous beacon, enlightening all creation.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* With unceasing hymns we bless you, O Virgin who gave birth to one of the Trinity and held in your divine arms the transcendent Word, incarnate without change.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos.*

## December 12

### Our venerable father Spiridon, bishop of Tremithus

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses, tone 5,  
to the Special Melody to the Special Melody Rejoice, O life-bearing cross...*

Rejoice, model of hierarchs, unshaken confirmation of the Church, glory of the Orthodox, fount of miracles, inexhaustible stream of love, most radiant beacon, organ of the Spirit, intellect divine, meek and guileless, adorned with true simplicity, heavenly man and earthly angel, labourer in the vineyard, true friend of Christ. Beseech him to grant great mercy to those who honour you. *twice*

O Spiridon, glory of the fathers, truly meek and an heir to the land of the meek. By the cords of your wise and simple words, by divine grace you strangled Arius, that wicked and demented adversary. Having clarified the divine dogma for all, and extolled by the Spirit that which leads to salvation, and thoroughly enlightened the Orthodox, you taught the faithful to glorify the one Word, truly the only begotten of the unoriginate Father, who grants the world great mercy. *twice*

Having slain carnal passions, you raised the dead by the grace of God, and changed a serpent into gold, and restrained the raging of the river by your prayer, O father. Appearing to the afflicted emperor by night, you healed him by moving his heart when the Lord glorified you most gloriously. We honour your memory with a mighty voice and reverence the divine and sacred shrine of your relics, where flows a divine stream of healings and great mercy. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... *tone 1*

O venerable father Spiridon, blessed and wise, for the love of God you questioned the dead woman as though she were alive, and transformed a serpent into gold for him who was beset by poverty, and restrained the flow of the river, taking pity on the people, and stood before the emperor as physician through the providence of God; and, as his disciple, you raised up the dead, and among many fathers you elucidated the faith. Enabled to do all this by Christ who strengthened you, entreat him to save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross,  
to the Special Melody O all-praised martyrs...*

The Virgin, seeing your unjust sacrifice, weeping, cried out to you, O Christ: O my child most sweet, how is it that you die unjustly? How is it that you, who suspended

## December 12

all the earth upon the waters, are yourself suspended upon a tree? O most merciful benefactor, I pray you, do not abandon your mother and handmaid.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos*

Glory be to the Father... *verse to the saint, tone 2*

O father Spiridon, venerable and wise, by your virtues you are seen to be a divine treasure of hierarchs. As an intercessor of the Church, you cast out the chief of the heretics and, in the council, you crushed the blasphemy of Arius to the earth. Therefore, working wonders in word and deed, beseech Christ that our souls be saved.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross,  
to the Special Melody When from the Tree...*

The unwedded one, seeing you nailed to the tree of the cross, O Jesus, weeping said: O sweet child, why have you left me, who gave you birth, O unapproachable light of the unoriginate Father? But hasten to glorify yourself, that those who glorify your divine passion may receive divine glory.

*Troparion, tone 4*

Truly you were revealed to your flock | as a standard of faith, | a model of humility and a teacher of abstinence. | Thus you reached the heights through lowliness and wealth through poverty. | Holy hierarch Spiridon, | pray to Christ our God || for the salvation of our souls.

*Or this Troparion, tone 1*

You were seen as the champion of the first Council and a worker of miracles, | O Spiridon, our God bearing father: | you spoke to one dead in the grave | and changed a serpent into gold. | Angels served with you as you recited your holy prayers, | O most sacred one. | Glory to him who gave you strength: | ~ glory to him who has crowned you: || glory to him who through you works healings for all.

## Matins

*Both canons from the Octoechos, without the verses to the martyrs;  
and the canon to the saint,  
composed by Theophanes, tone 2*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* The almighty power once overwhelmed the army of Pharaoh in the deep, and the incarnate Word has destroyed pernicious sin. The Lord is all-glorious, for he has been greatly glorified.

Having attained the land of the meek, as one meek, merciful and pure, O father, calm the present tempest of my heart, that, in divine tranquility, I may hymn you.

Having cleared your soul of the overgrowth of the passions through godly cultivation, O father Spiridon, you became Godlike, enriched by the radiant splendour of the divine Spirit, and you illumine those who sincerely bless you.

Taking you from a flock as he had taken David, the creator appointed you as an eminent shepherd of the rational flock, shining in simplicity and meekness, and has adorned you with guilelessness, O venerable pastor.

*Theotokion* Most holy and pure Virgin, enlighten and hallow my thoughts and soul, I pray, dispelling the clouds of my ignorance and removing the darkness of sin, that I may fittingly bless you.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* Established upon the rock of faith, I may boast over my enemies, and my spirit rejoices and sings: There is none as holy as our God, and none righteous but you, O Lord.

Having illumined your mind with dispassion and adorned yourself with divine humility, you received the gifts of the Spirit to cast out evil spirits and to loose the infirmities of those who faithfully honour you, O sacred one.

Having slain the serpent, the author of evil, and trampled down the inclination towards avarice, O holy hierarch, taking pity on him who was in need, you transformed a serpent into a golden ornament by your sacred prayers.

You ascended the mountain of dispassion; you entered the darkness of the vision of God, and received the law of salvation on the tablets of your heart, as you are a sacred and faithful favorite of your Master.

*Theotokion* Heal the wounds of my soul, O Bride of God, and illumine my mind darkened by neglect, that I may sing: None is blameless but you, and none pure but you, O Lady.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody* Of the wisdom...

You shine as a divinely appointed pastor, O Spiridon, raised from the tending of sheep by God, who entrusted you to preside over the Church of Christ. You drove away the wolves of false teaching by your words, grazing your flock on the pasture of piety. You affirmed the faith by the wisdom of the Spirit in the midst of the God-bearing fathers, O blessed hierarch. Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of the transgressions of those who celebrate your holy memory with love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *same tone and melody*

*Theotokion* Immaculate bride of the creator, the unwedded mother of the deliverer: as the tabernacle of the Comforter, O exalted Lady, hasten to deliver me, the vile abode of iniquity from the malice of the demons which have made me their toy; and make of me a splendid habitation of the virtues, O radiant and incorruptible one; drive from me the clouds of the passions, and grant, through your prayers, the fellowship of the Most High and the never-waning light.

*Theotokion of the Cross* At the sight of you, the lamb, shepherd and Saviour of the world upon the cross, she who gave birth to you said with weeping: The world rejoices, for it receives deliverance, but inwardly I burn to see your crucifixion which you are enduring for all in the loving kindness of your mercy, O my Son and God, the abyss and inexhaustible fountain of mercy, have pity and grant remission of the transgressions of those who hymn your divine sufferings with faith.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* You have come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but the Lord himself incarnate, and have saved me, and the whole of mankind. Therefore I cry to you: Glory to your power O Lord.

Set afire by the burning coal of the honoured Spirit, you burned away the readily kindled fuel of the passions, O blessed one, and enlightened the world with the fiery rays of your virtues.

Having slain the movements of your flesh, O divinely inspired one, you raised the dead by your life-imparting call: I beseech you: Enliven my slain soul, O father.

The dead woman spoke, obeying your call, and by your command the ragings of the river were restrained; for you were revealed as a worker of wonders endowed with grace divine, O blessed one.

*Theotokion* The prophets foretold the incomprehensible abyss of your mystery, for you alone, O pure Lady, gave birth unto the unknowable one, who became incarnate in his unutterable loving kindness.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* O Christ my Saviour, the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and the salvation of the despairing, I rise early to you, O king of peace: enlighten me with your radiance, for I know no other God than you.

The stream of gifts within you waters every heart, richly giving health to all, O venerable one; and it moves all to glorify God who has glorified you and honoured you with all manner of wonders.

The earthly emperor clearly saw you as a true servant of the heavenly king, full of divine gifts, O blessed one, when you came to him proclaiming God, the great physician.

Emulating the hospitality of Abraham, you opened the doors of your house to all, and were all things to all men, mindful of those constrained by evil, O blessed Spiridon.

*Theotokion* For us you gave birth to a newborn child, who before the ages was begotten of the unoriginate Father, O Maiden: entreat him as your Son and God, that he spare those who, with a pure soul, proclaim you to be the Mother of God.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of your loving kindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God.

Gold was as mire to you who shone in dispassion more brightly than gold, who was made rich by the most golden gifts of the Spirit, O venerable Spiridon.

Serving your Master in purity, O venerable one, you had a multitude of the angelic hosts serving you with unseen voices.

O glorious and wise father, your life has made you most glorious to the world. Therefore, rejoicing, we who hymn you celebrate your divine memory.

*Theotokion* Your womb was more spacious than the heavens for it contained God whom no place can contain, O exalted virgin, the unwedded Bride of God.

*Kontakion of St Spiridon, tone 2  
to the Special Melody Seeking the Highest...*

Wounded with love for Christ, you flew on the wings of the Spirit to radiant contemplation which inspired your mind and divine activity, O sacred and God pleasing one, the divine oblation who asks divine illumination for all.

*Ikos* Let us now praise Spiridon, the hierarch of the Lord, sanctified from his mother's womb, who received the tablets of the grace of divine glory, as glorious in miracles in all creation, as a fervent witness of the divine radiance, intercessor for the poor, and spiritual guide for the sinful; for he is by the throne of Christ, the divine oblation who asks divine illumination for all.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The command of the iniquitous tyrant, opposed to God, raised a lofty flame; but Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths: blessed is he and glorified above all.

With the guilelessness of Moses, the meekness of David and the blamelessness of Job of Uz, you were an abode of the Spirit, singing sacredly: You are blessed and most glorious.

Showers from heaven rained upon your head at the harvest, prefiguring the glory which God would pour on your divine mind, sanctifying the faithful by your mediation.

God has glorified you in the council of the fathers, O blessed one who guarded your words in judgment and brought them forth with faith, openly disclosing the follies of irrational Arius and destroying his opposition.

*Theotokion* Through the ineffable Word, O Virgin, you put forth the cluster of grapes as the branch which alone was uncultivated and which flows with the wine which gladdens all men, sanctifying mortals and dispelling the drunkenness of the wicked.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* In Babylon of old by the command of God, the fiery furnace worked in divided ways: while it burned the Chaldeans, it bedewed the faithful as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

With outpourings of the divine Spirit, you extinguished the furnace of the passions, and poured a dew which takes away the fever of the ailing who ever had recourse to you in faith, O blessed Spiridon most rich.

You were guileless, upright, meek, merciful; not mindful of the wrongs done to you, loving and hospitable; a sacred hierarch, adorned with the wisdom of Orthodoxy, O venerable one. Therefore, we honour you with faith.

When you questioned the dead woman of old, she answered you as though alive, a most marvellous wonder, a most glorious mystery, O father who received grace adorned with an angelic life.

*Theotokion* Heal the passions of my heart with your mercy, O exalted Lady; calm my mind, enlighten my soul, and guide me to walk the paths of salvation, that I may ever hymn you, the most hymned one.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Our God and Lord has appeared to us, the Son of the Father without beginning, incarnate of the Virgin, to give light to those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Therefore let us magnify the all-hymned Mother of God.

Exalted among the God-bearing fathers, you openly proclaimed the Son of the unoriginate Father to be of one essence and equally everlasting with the Father, and stopped the mouths of the iniquitous, O blessed and holy hierarch.

O radiant sun, adornment of the fathers, glory of priests, conversor with angels: by your prayers grant the unwaning light to those who now joyously celebrate your light-bearing memory.



With a voice of rejoicing, the divine mansions, the heavenly city and the beautiful choir of those who feast received your soul, hallowed and adorned with the virtues, O blessed one.

*Theotokion* The great mystery of your birthgiving, which passes understanding, astounds the angels, O divinely joyous one, delights the company of the venerable and gladdens the sacred fathers who hymn you, the hope of our souls, in a godly manner.

*Exapostilarion from the Octoechos; Glory be to the Father... that of the saint,  
to the Special Melody* Having adorned heaven with stars...

O God-bearing Spiridon, the light of the world, like Moses and David, whose calling you followed, the Spirit led you up from an irrational flock to the rational one.

*Theotokion* You were the cause of the blessings bestowed by God upon the world, O Mother of God; and, even now, for the salvation of all, you move to pity God, who is readily appeased.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos;  
and Glory be to the Father... tone 4*

O venerable father, praised and holy hierarch, filled with the teaching of the apostles, and manifest as the habitation of the divine Spirit by your virtuous life, with your teachings you drove off the wolves that beset the Church, and made clear the faith of the Orthodox, and were a pillar and champion of piety. Working wonders in days past, you transformed a serpent into gold, and raised up a dead woman to question her. Spiridon, truly wondrous among the fathers and conversor with teachers, entreat the Saviour, that he save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, or this Theotokion of the Cross,  
to the Special Melody* As valiant among the martyrs...

The most pure Lady, beholding Christ dying, who slayed the deceiver, bitterly cried out to him born of her, and marvelling at his long suffering, exclaimed: O my most beloved child, forget not your handmaid; O lover of mankind, delay not my consolation.

*In some uses, the service to St Spiridon is of Doxology rank, rather than of six-stichera rank as in the Slavonic Menaion. If the latter usage is followed, the Aposticha of the Octoechos is omitted, and the Praises are sung, with 4 verses, as below, and the Great Doxology.*

Let everything that has breath... *and the Praises,  
inserting 4 verses, tone 1  
to the Special Melody* Joy of the ranks of heaven...

Illumined with the radiance of the Spirit, you dispelled the darkness of the foolish prating of Arius, O wise hierarch. Therefore, in simplicity, faithfully teaching the Trinity, you were glorified by the wise and learned, and confirmed the Council. *twice*

Illumined with heavenly rays and with the power of Christ, you bestow healing of soul and body upon those who even now celebrate your memory with faith, O divinely blessed father and wonder worker. Never cease to intercede for us.

In your faithfulness to the commandments, you became a vine-dresser of Christ, the true vine, O God-bearer. Therefore, having mystically received the talent of the kingdom from on high, pray without ceasing for us who honour you, O wise Spiridon.

Glory be to the Father ... *and the rest as above,*  
*with the Great Doxology*

## **Liturgy**

*Beatitudes, 8 verses:*  
*4 from the Octoechos, and 4 from Ode 3 of the canon to the saint.*

*Prokimenon, tone 1*

My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the thoughts of my heart shall be full of understanding.

*Verse* Hear this, all you peoples; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world.

*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, number 335*

*Alleluia, tone 8*

The mouth of the righteous man utters wisdom and his tongue speaks what is right.

The law of his God is in his heart and his footsteps will not slip.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 24.*

*Communion*

The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance: he will not fear bad tidings.

## December 13

### Commemoration of the burial of our venerable father Herman of Alaska

*Be advised that this is the correct day for this commemoration; but often in North America this service is transferred to the previous day. We repeat this entire service on November 15, the day of his death.*

### Little Vespers

*At Lord I call to you..., 4 verses, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody Joy of the heavenly hierarchies...*

Joy of the Church of Christ, \* having proclaimed the glory of God, \* you inherited glorious things in heaven. \* Accept glory from us also on earth, \* and entreat the king of glory, O venerable one, \* that he grant us a share in his glory. *twice*

Joy of the Church of Christ, \* by your evangelical life in the wilderness \* you dispelled the darkness of idolatry, \* uniting the heathen to the life of Christ: \* O venerable Herman, \* may we also share in such grace.

We who are held fast in the gloom of life \* immediately receive illumination of our minds \* through your heavenly visitation, \* O venerable father Herman: \* we hope in your intercession before God.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8*

When the time of departure came for the venerable one, with the candles lit and the Acts of the Apostles read by his bier, holy Herman shone forth wondrously, saying: Glory to you, O Lord. Mystically receiving from the Saviour seven more days of life, he awaited the day which was foretold. Then, again with the candles burning and the Acts being read, he reposed in his ascetic sweetness, having lived a most fruitful and venerable life; and he lives eternally, ever entreating the Lord of glory for us.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, in the same tone*

O Virgin Mother of God and Lady, as you healed venerable Herman, ever heeding his supplications, have mercy on us who hymn you.

*Aposticha, tone 2,  
to the Special Melody O house of Ephratha...*

The Lord has shown you \* to be the abode of the grace \* of the divine Spirit. \* Teach us, O father, \* those things which we ought to do.

*Verse* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

The storms of the sea \* were as nothing to you \* when Christ shone upon you \*  
like the sun from on high. \* Therefore, we glorify you, O venerable one.

*Verse* How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me?

O lover of the faith, \* defender of orphans, glory of monks: \* make steadfast those  
\* who offer you their praises, O father.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Can the fleeting years or the bosom of the earth conceal your heavenly glory, O  
venerable Herman? Glorifying you now, we your children fall down before you, having  
you as a mediator before the Lord. Entreat him, that he grant salvation to your  
homeland, prosperity to our land, and great mercy to our souls.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Mother of God, you are the true vine which has blossomed forth for us  
the fruit of life. We implore you, O Lady, to intercede together with the holy apostles that  
our souls may find mercy.

*Troparion, tone 4*

Venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness  
and gracious advocate for all the world,  
teacher of the Orthodox faith  
and beneficial instructor in piety,  
adornment of Alaska and joy of all America;  
entreat Christ our God  
that he save our souls.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* The mystery hidden from before the ages  
and unknown even to the angels,  
through you, O Mother of God, has been revealed to those on earth:  
God incarnate in unconfused union,  
who willingly accepted the cross for our sake  
and, thereby raising up the first-formed man,  
has saved our souls from death.

## Great Vespers

*We sing Blessed is the man... the first antiphon.*

*At Lord I call to you... 8 verses,  
beginning with these, tone 3*

Leap up, waters of Valaam, join chorus, islands of Alaska. Sing, people of the new world. Let heaven and earth rejoice, for the conversor with the angels is glorified, and the Orthodox faith is proclaimed to the ends of the world. Let us cry out to Christ our God: Through the supplications of Herman our father, save our souls, O Lord.

Come let us proclaim in hymns the victory of honourable abstinence; for, having trampled upon the serpent, the author of evil, meek Herman tastes of triumph in the choir of the angels. O brethren, praise him who adorns the company of fasters, and, joining chorus, cry out with splendour: Rejoice, O venerable Herman, angelic boast of monks.

Venerable Herman, ascetic of savage Alaska and dweller in heaven's mansions, with what praises shall we honour you; with what names shall we magnify you, for how can our glorification compare with that of heaven? Rejoice, O compatriot, who shares in heavenly glory: fill with joy the hearts of us who fall down before you in humility.

*And 5 verses, tone 6  
to the Special Melody* Having set aside all hope...

Having now gathered, \* let us glorify the wondrous one, \* who, even while among mortals, \* attained the things of heaven, \* who by his deeds and words \* carried the light of Christ \* to the ends of the world \* for the unenlightened people \* crushed beneath the darkness of idolatry. \* By his supplications \* may Christ save our souls.

Rejoice, O Valaam, \* dwelling-place of God, \* for you nurtured \* the wondrous ascetic of Christ, \* who, like a lamp upon a lampstand, \* shone forth among the islands of Alaska, \* in a new and unknown land, \* and brought an unbelieving people \* to the Orthodox faith. \* With them let us glorify God, \* who is wondrous in his saints.

Having but one desire, \* to bring the unbelieving people \* to the one God, \* you became all things to all men: \* teaching them the sacred Scriptures \* and how to live in the Christian life; \* training them in handicrafts; \* acting as intercessor for them before the authorities, \* teaching them in every way, as though they were children, \* that you might lead the people to God. \* Forsake not us who hymn you.

Following the words of the apostle, \* to give place to the wrath of God, \* you withdrew to Spruce Island, \* turning away from the hard heartedness of the lovers of this world; \* and, finding there a new Valaam, \* preferring life there \* with the birds and wild beasts, \* and conversing with God and the angels, \* illumined by visions from on high, \* you now dwell in the highest. \* Pray for our souls.

What is above all, \* if not the Lord our creator, \* the adorer of majesty, \* the giver of life, \* the sustainer and nurturer of all things? \* Ought we not to love him \* as the one most worthy of love, \* and place our own happiness in him? \* Thus you taught, O venerable one; \* likewise, teach us also \* to love God with all our heart.

Glory be to the Father... *Idiomelon, in the same tone*

Can the fleeting years or the bosom of the earth conceal your heavenly glory, O venerable Herman? Glorifying you now, we your children fall down before you, having you as a mediator before the Lord. Entreat him, that he grant salvation to your homeland, prosperity to our land, and great mercy to our souls.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

*Dogmatikon* Who would not call you blessed, O most holy Virgin?  
who would not hymn your most pure maternity?  
For the only begotten Son  
who shone forth from the Father from eternity,  
came forth, ineffably incarnate from you, O pure one.  
He who by nature is God,  
for our sakes assumed the nature of man;  
not divided into two persons,  
but known in two natures without confusion.  
O pure and most blessed Lady,  
pray to him to have mercy on our souls.

*Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three readings*

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

The righteous live for ever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from

the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them. The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies; he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; he will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against his frenzied foes. Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim, and will leap from the clouds to the target, as from a well-drawn bow, and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult; the water of the sea will rage against them, and rivers will relentlessly overwhelm them; a mighty wind will rise against them, and like a tempest it will winnow them away. Lawlessness will lay waste the whole earth, and evildoing will overturn the thrones of rulers. Listen therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High; he will search out your works and inquire into your plans.

A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon.

The righteous, though they die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There were some who pleased God and were loved by him, and while living among sinners were taken up. They were caught up so that evil might not change their understanding or guile deceive their souls. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years; for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, or take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and that he watches over his holy ones.

*Entreaty, the verse of the church or monastery,  
and this verse of the venerable one, tone 8*

O ascetic of New Valaam, your brethren were dear to you, and with them you lived in the Valaam of your homeland. Yet you desired a hundred times more your incorporeal friends, who caught your soul up to the vision of God, and with whom you now make your abode. Rejoice, O father, who invisibly guides to good repentance us who glorify your memory. O Herman, favourite of God, offshoot of the Russian land, offspring of the waters of Ladoga, blessing for the Church of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, gracious witness to Orthodoxy: implore for us great mercy and the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8*

When the time of departure came for the venerable one, with the candles lit and the Acts of the Apostles read by his bier, holy Herman shone forth wondrously, saying: Glory to you, O Lord. Mystically receiving from the Saviour seven more days of life, he awaited the day which was foretold. Then, again with the candles burning and the Acts

being read, he reposed in his ascetic sweetness, having lived a most fruitful and venerable life. He lives eternally, ever entreating the Lord of glory for us.

Both now and for ever... *Theotokion, in the same tone*

O Virgin Mother of God and Lady, as you healed venerable Herman, ever heeding his supplications have mercy on us who hymn you.

*Aposticha, tone 5,  
to the Special Melody Rejoice...*

Rejoice, O life-bearing cross, \* invincible victory of piety; \* for through you the gate of paradise is opened, \* enlightenment is given to new lands, \* the darkness of idolatry is abolished, \* the dominion of death is trampled down, \* and mortals are upborne to the heavens. \* Rejoice, O faithful, and be glad, \* for the glory of the life-bearing cross, \* the hope of the martyrs \* and of venerable Herman, \* is proclaimed in a new land, \* imparting to all the faithful \* great and rich mercy.

*Verse* Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.

Rejoice, O venerable guide \* of the newly chosen flock of Christ, \* who enlightened the hearts of the unbelieving \* with the grace of the Word of God, \* taught them with the spirit of meekness \* and the piety of humility, \* and established within them the truth of the faith \* with brotherly love and charity. \* O wondrous father Herman, \* herald of the light of Christ \* and dispeller of demonic darkness, \* illumine also our hearts, \* driving away the darkness of unbelief, \* that we may find great mercy in the Lord.

*Verse* How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me?

Rejoice, O defender of the newly-enlightened people, \* most simple and lowly before the mighty of this world: \* by your life's blood you became a mediator for them, \* an instructor and humble servant of their race. \* A friend to those afflicted with incurable disease, \* you listened to their cries and groaning day and night; \* and, comforting them, you led them to the healing of heaven, \* O fearless shepherd of your flock, even though you declined priestly ordination. \* Rejoice, for you took pity on the wild beasts, \* as did venerable Seraphim. \* Rejoice, for with the flame of faith \* you subdued the conflagration of material fire.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

O venerable father, the sound of your teaching has gone out into all the earth; and you have found the reward of your labours in heaven, having routed the demonic horde and attained the ranks of the angels, whose life you blamelessly emulated. As you have boldness before Christ our God, ask peace for our souls.

Both now and for ever...



*Theotokion* Christ the Lord, my creator and redeemer  
 proceeded from your womb, O most sanctified Virgin;  
 clothed with my flesh, he released Adam from the original curse.  
 Therefore O most pure one, truly the Mother of God and Virgin,  
 we sing unceasingly to you the greeting of the angel:  
 Rejoice, O Lady,  
 intercessor, protection and salvation of our souls.

*Troparion, tone 4*

Venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness | and gracious advocate for  
 all the world, | teacher of the Orthodox faith | and beneficial instructor in piety, |  
 adornment of Alaska and joy of all America; | entreat Christ our God | | that he save our  
 souls.

*If it is a Vigil, we sing this twice, and Virgin Mother of God, rejoice... once.*

*If it is not a Vigil, the troparion is sung once,  
 then Glory be to the Father... both now... and the Theotokion as at Matins*

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the saint, twice;  
 Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...  
 and the resurrectional Theotokion, tone 4:*

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels,  
 through you, O Mother of God, has been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in  
 unconfused union, who willingly accepted the cross for our sake and, thereby raising up  
 the first-formed man, has saved our souls from death.

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
 the Sessional Hymn, tone 3  
 to the Special Melody Awed by the beauty of your virginity...*

Heeding the call of the Lord, and considering all the beauties of this world as  
 dung, you reached a most beautiful wilderness in a remote and savage land, where,  
 manfully putting to flight hordes of demons, you conversed with the angels, who were  
 your companions. Therefore, we praise you as a wondrous adornment of the wilderness.  
*twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Lady, as the only hope of Christians and their intercessor before God,  
 with the venerable Herman entreat your Son for your servants.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 1  
to the Special Melody Your tomb, O Saviour...*

Teaching the illiterate and converting the unbelieving, you planted the true faith among them, labouring in every way and edifying them with your piety: O venerable Herman, teach us also to cleave to the truth and to do works of piety. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* With you as our sure hope and protection, O most pure Mother, trusting in you we fear not the assault of the enemy, for you save our souls from every evil.

*Polyeleos, and this magnification*

We bless you, O our venerable father Herman, and we honour your holy memory, O instructor of monks and conversor with the angels.

*Verses* I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He brought me up from the pit of roaring waters, out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and made firm my foothold.

*After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, tone 3  
to the Special Melody Awed by the beauty of your virginity...*

In a fragile ship you cut through the stormy depths of the sea, O venerable one, until you reached a far away land. There Spruce Island became for you a spiritual vessel, whereon you reached the heavenly harbour through the preaching of the Gospel and your works of piety, rejoicing in the Lord.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Mother of God our Lady, who has revealed to us the pre-eternal Word incarnate: we flee to you as to our protection and help: shield us with the omophorion of your prayers from every assault of the enemy, that unhindered we may worship your Son.

*Hymn of Degrees, tone 4, the first Antiphon*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.

*Verse* How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me?

Let every breath praise the Lord... *and the rest, with the Gospel of Matthew, number 43*

*After the Psalm Have mercy... this verse, tone 6*

Can the fleeting years or the bosom of the earth conceal your glory which is in the heavens, O venerable Herman? Glorifying you now, we, your children, fall down before you, having you as a mediator before the Lord. Entreat him, that he grant salvation to your homeland, and great mercy to our souls.

*We sing two Canons, the Paraklisis Canon to the Mother of God and that of venerable Herman.*

*The Canon of venerable Herman, tone 3,  
upon the acrostic Let us love God above all, and glorify Herman.*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* He who of old gathered the waters into one at his divine behest, parted the sea for the people of Israel. He is our God, most glorious: let us sing to him, for he has been glorified.

The darkened eyes of my soul enlightened, let me now hymn God-pleasing Herman, O most merciful Saviour, that he who is glorious among your saints may be honoured to the ends of the world.

Even from your youth, you sought the heavenly homeland and to labour for God alone, O venerable Herman, entrusting yourself to the protection of heaven with Sergius and Herman of Valaam as your constant helpers.

With the commandments of the Lord in your heart, you never gave your body over to slothfulness ways, but ever laboured, enlightening your soul with divine radiance.

Loving God above all else, you committed your life to him, cherishing most of all your conversation with the choirs on high. Yet you did not neglect love for your brothers, O venerable one, praying with them: O Jesus most sweet, save us sinners.

*Theotokion* Seeing his ardent prayer, you cured young Herman of a deadly ailment, O Mother of God: do not forsake us who fall down before you and call upon him to supplicate you.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* You brought all things into being from nothingness, created by your Word and perfected by the Spirit, confirm me in your love, O most high and ruler of all.

Leaving Sarov for Valaam, the divinely wise Nazarius planted there love for interior spiritual activity; and you likewise, O venerable one, shared this grace and with spiritual enlightenment prepared your soul for spreading the Gospel.

O Sergius and Herman of Valaam, nourished with the grapes of the virtues as fruitful branches of the vine of Christ, fill our hearts with the wine of divine gladness.

Rivalling your brother evangelists in prayer and work, you prepared your soul for a new task; and reaching a distant land, you brought the Alaskans to Jesus most sweet.

*Theotokion* Ever pouring benefactions upon your servants, O good Mother of the good king, guide us to every good deed and guard us from every evil action.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 3*  
*to the Special Melody* Awed by the beauty of your virginity...

The day of your commemoration has come, O exalted father Herman,  
gladdening your chosen flock.  
Illumine us with the splendours of your miracles,  
which issue from your precious relics;  
quench the flame of our passions,  
and bedew the minds of the faithful  
who ever glorify you with love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *Theotokion*

Rejoice, O Virgin full of grace,  
for your new chosen one has been revealed to us:  
he emerged in the northern wilderness,  
making the newly enlightened region fragrant with heavenly gifts.  
Therefore, with gifts of thanksgiving  
we honour you, our sovereign Lady.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* You have shown us your constant love O Lord, for you gave your only begotten Son over to death for us. Therefore in thanksgiving we sing to you: Glory to your power O Lord.

Good shepherd and a ardent father, O venerable one, the help and healing for the sick and infirm, and the refuge and teacher for the orphaned; deprive us not, as orphans, of the protection of your prayers.

O venerable Herman, the people marvelled at how you were able to live alone in the forest; and you said: I am not alone, for God, who is everywhere present, is with me, as are his angels: how then can I be despondent, when I have such companions? And now, O dweller with the inhabitants of heaven, depart not from us on earth.

Defender of Alaska, with your words we now cry out to you: Be for us a father and protector; wipe away the tears of defenseless orphans; cool the hearts of men melting under the heat of grief: grant that they may come to know the consolation of God.

*Theotokion* Approaching the most pure Virgin, with hymns let us praise the humility of her who has corrected the deception of Eve and revealed to us the new Adam; that, receiving a new adoption, we may become heirs to life everlasting.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* I rise at dawn to you, the creator of all who passes all worldly understanding; for your commandments are light: direct me in them.

By many sorrows, vigils and prayers you purified your soul and arrayed it in man's primal beauty, like Adam the first-created; for even the wild beasts submitted themselves to you, sensing in you the fragrance of paradise and the kingdom.

Overcoming the passions of the senses with the reins of abstinence and constant prayer, you reached the summit of dispassion: therefore, we fall down before you, as before a gracious physician, crying: Cure us of the passions and move us to good works.

Veiled in secrecy, dwelling in a cave, you strove to bury the passions of the flesh, desiring to labour for God alone, that you might raise up your soul, illumined with the radiance of heaven, receiving a foretaste of the eternal Passover.

Entering the noetic paradise of the virtues where you produced multifarious flowers of good works, you emit sweet fragrance in the world even to this day, O father Herman.

*Theotokion* The angels acclaim your majesty, O immaculate Lady, while I, a sinner, entreat you to drive far from me the ugly fantasies of demons and preserve my heart in tranquillity.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The uttermost abyss of sins has engulfed me and my spirit perishes. But stretching forth your upraised arm, O Master, save me as you saved Peter, O helmsman.

Loving the Valaam of your homeland, you named your new home New Valaam: you travelled far away to proclaim the good news in a new place, Spruce Island where you acquired new brethren, the newly-enlightened people, through your teaching and deeds.

We join to hymn the struggles of your brethren, O venerable one, for their struggles were truly like those of the apostles: Juvenal sings in the choir of the martyrs, Joasaph and Innocent sing in the ranks of hierarchs, and together we all sing to God: Glory to you, who has shown us the light.

Your deeds and those of your fellow evangelists received their crown through the confession and martyr's blood of Peter the Aleut, at whose mighty faith and endurance you marvelled. We who follow you cry out: Holy martyr Peter, pray to God for us.

Now your life has been revealed, manifest as proof of the true faith, O venerable one: through your teaching, your words became visible in deeds, and you drew thirsting hearts to correction who call to you: Glory to the holy judgments of our merciful God.

*Theotokion* Draw near, O people, and see how the stormy waters about to engulf the island submitted to meek Herman: before the icon of the Mother of God they humbled themselves and turned back to the ocean's depths. Bestormed by the waves of life, we cry out: Most holy Mother of God, save us.

*Kontakion, tone 8*

Belov'd of the Mother of God who received tonsure at Valaam,  
new zealot among the strugglers of the desert dwellers of old;  
wielding prayer as a spear and shield you were terrifying to demons and pagan darkness.

Therefore we cry to you, O venerable father Herman:  
Entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved.

*Ikos* Having fled to the Lord in your youth, like Herman of Valaam in name and struggle, this Herman grew to the stature of the fathers of old, who brought forth fruits in patience: and the meek one was sent to the Aleut people, who had not yet been enlightened. Hard was his life among those simple people, but even harder was the opposition of his compatriots to his goodly admonitions. Showing kindness to them all, the meekness of Herman instructed them. Glorifying your memory for all these things, we cry to you O venerable father Herman: Entreat Christ our God, that our souls be saved.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* As of old you sprinkled with dew the three pious youths in the Chaldean flames, illumine us with the radiant fire of your divinity as we sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Having illumined the eyes of your soul with the radiance of the divine Spirit, O venerable father, you saw distant things as if near, and the future as if present, declaring the judgment of God for men's edification and correction.

Laying up treasure in heaven, you were zealous only for celestial things, leaving nothing for those who sought earthly treasures in your cell. Teach us now, O unmercenary father, to lay up heavenly treasures and to set our heart on him who is beyond price.

The Lord delivered you from the many trials of the righteous, O venerable father, filling your heart with heavenly joy which you now enjoy in the never fading day of the kingdom of Christ: pray for us, that the Lord may transform our trials into joy.

*Theotokion* Revelling in her who is the joy of the angels, the instructor of the monastic ranks and the protector of the Christian race, let us pay homage to her as the queen of heaven, the constant intercessor for mortals before God.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* United in the unbearable fire yet unharmed by its flame, the pious youths sang together a divine hymn: Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Infirmity, advanced age or blindness could not hinder your mediation for the people before the authorities for whom you besought mercy, that they themselves might find mercy with the Lord. As you are in heaven, do not deprive us also of your mediation.

Filled with angelic hymnody, your forest cell resonated with your lonely chant, so that people marvelled greatly. An angel served you, sanctifying the waters with the blessing of the Jordan when you sang: Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Your manifold labours and tribulations wove for you the robe of salvation and vesture of gladness, with which you entered the bridal-chamber of Christ the king, where, with the choirs of the angels and the apostles, you partake eternally of the banquet of joy.

*Theotokion* How greatly our sins burn away the good intentions of the soul as if with unbearable fire; and so, we fall down before you, as to the queen of heaven and earth, crying: Bedew our hearts, that every good work may spring forth.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* It is a new and divine wonder: the Lord truly passed through the closed gate of the Virgin, for God was bare of flesh when he entered, and he appeared clothed in flesh when he emerged; yet the gate remains shut. Ineffably let us magnify her as the Mother of God.

Eternal glory to you, O God, who has revealed to us your wondrous favourite: by his prayers protect us from the assaults of the foe and from soul destroying passions: guide us to all good, that escaping eternal torment we may attain your kingdom.

Reaching the evening of your life, O venerable one, the book of your apostolic work came to an end. Shining the light of your countenance and your glory in the mansions of heaven, bring us also there, by your intercession.

Marking the departure of the venerable one from earth to heaven, a pillar of fire was seen, to the great astonishment of all; and so we cry out to him: Be for us a pillar of fire, ever lighting and showing us the path to heaven.

Although our lips are unworthy, we have offered praises to your true disciple, O Lord, glorifying you, wondrous in your saints. By their prayerful intercession preserve our land and its cities from misfortunes and plague, granting us great mercy.

*Theotokion* Now the abode of sinful defilement and impurity, having fallen into the nets of unclean spirits, purify me, O Mary, dwelling place of God and instructor of purity, and make me again a habitation of God, that with reverence I may magnify you.

*Exapostilarion,*  
*to the Special Melody* Hearken O women...

O Lord, the giver of life, by the prayers of our beacon of piety, the venerable Herman, shine your never-waning light upon this land and upon us who with faith serve you and piously celebrate his luminous memory.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Bride of God, mystic lamp, who by the activity of the divine Spirit has revealed the pre-eternal light to the world: shine the light of the truth upon us who are in the darkness of ignorance, and save all who piously magnify you, the Mother of God.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord... *tone 8,*  
*inserting 4 verses,*  
*to the Special Melody* O all-glorious wonder...

Herman, the meek and humble, \* as a lover of the glory of God \* was sent forth to announce the good news of Christ: \* with his lips he preached the Gospel, \* confirming it with piety. \* Therefore, let us glorify on earth \* him who has inherited glorious things in heaven. \* By his supplications, O Christ our God, save our souls.

O herald of the words of the Lord \* and pious performer of them, \* as one mighty in the grace of the Holy Spirit \* you carried the weakness of the infirm, \* caring for the infants as a teacher \* and for the children as a father, \* instructing them in every way by your deeds and words. \* Therefore, care for us also, \* healing our infirmities.

You said, O venerable father: \* From this day and from this hour \* let us love God above all, \* and let us do his holy will, \* that we may inherit good things: \* O venerable Herman, \* wondrous teacher, \* confirmation of Orthodoxy, \* preacher of the glory of God, \* the teacher of us sinners.



O most glorious wonder: \* a new land has been sanctified, \* for the wonder-worker Herman appears today, \* lifted up to the heights. \* Wondrous is God in his saints. \* God is with us, understand this, you nations: \* be instructed by Herman in Orthodoxy. \* By his supplications, O Christ our God, \* save our souls.

Glory be to the Father... *Idiomelon, tone 8*

You wondrously ascended the ladder of the virtues, O venerable one; for, receiving prayer, fervour of heart and tears, you purified your mind of vainglorious thoughts and your heart of multifarious sensations, and reached the dispassion of paradise, illumined by visions of the mysteries on high, which raise men to heaven and bring them to the knowledge of God.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* O Lady, accept the supplications of your servants, and deliver us from all want and grief.

*Great Doxology. Litanies. Dismissal.*

## **Liturgy**

*On the Beatitudes, 8 verse;  
4 from Ode 3 and 4 from Ode 6 of the canon of the venerable one.*

*Prokimenon, tone 7*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.  
*Verse* How shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits to me?

*Epistle to the Galatians, number 213*

*Alleluia, tone 6*

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord; and greatly delights in his commandments.  
His children shall be mighty in the land.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 24*

*Communion verse*

The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance: he will not fear bad tidings.

## December 14

### Martyrs Thyrsus, Levcius, Philimon and those with them

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... verses of the Martyrs, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody You have given a sign...*

The wondrous Thyrsus, \* the divinely wise Callinicus, \* and the glorious Levcius, \* confessing the uncreated Trinity, \* with most courageous resolve \* endured torments grievous and intense, \* and as victors have received crowns of victory, \* becoming fellow citizens \* with the immaterial hosts.

The great Philemon, \* Adrian most rich \* and the wise Apollonius \* quenched the flame of polytheism with torrents of blood, \* watered all the earth \* with divine streams of the knowledge of God, \* and dry up rivers of the passions \* with showers of healing and grace divine, \* as they are our fervent defenders.

The glorious martyrs, \* the most beauteous flowers \* blossoming in the meadow, \* and emitting the divine fragrance of the Spirit, \* perfume the thoughts of those who with faith \* honour their annual memorial, \* their sufferings and struggles, \* and their godly end. \* Now they dwell, rejoicing, in never-waning light.

*But if Alleluia is to be sung at Matins instead of God is the Lord...  
the following verses of the Mother of God are sung before the above verses of the martyrs,  
in the same tone and melody.*

O Lady, rain down upon me \* the depths of your mercy, \* and as you are merciful, \* give drink to my heart, consumed by the burning heat of the passions; \* cause drops of compunction \* to pour forth continually, I pray, \* through which I may be granted the consolation, \* received by those \* who shed tears in sincerity.

O Lady, take pity on me, \* shaken by the assaults of the demons \* and cast into the pit of destruction; \* and establish me upon the rock of the virtues. \* Destroying the counsels of the enemy, \* grant that I may follow \* the precepts of your Son and our God, \* that I may receive remission \* on the day of judgment.

I have fallen among vile and murderous thieves, \* O immaculate Lady, \* and by their assaults, O Maiden, \* I have been stripped of the pure garments of heavenly splendour, \* and have been pitilessly wounded \* and cast down in a place of affliction, \* barely alive. \* Yet go before me, extend your hand \* and raise me up, I pray.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* I lie upon the bed of despondency, O immaculate Lady, \* and pass my life in slothfulness, \* and I fear the time of my end, O Mother of God. \* Let not the most evil serpent \* mercilessly rend my lowly soul asunder \* like a lion. \* Going before me in your goodness \* before my end, \* raise me up to repentance.

*Theotokion of the Cross* Beholding Christ crucified, who loves mankind, O most pure one, \* his side pierced by a spear, \* you cried out, weeping: \* What is this, O my Son? \* How have the ungrateful people rewarded you \* for the good you did for them? \* How can you hasten thus to leave me childless, O most beloved? \* I marvel, O compassionate one, \* at your voluntary crucifixion.

*Troparion of the martyrs, tone 4*

In their sufferings, O Lord, your martyrs  
received imperishable crowns from you, our God.  
Armed with your might, they cast down tyrants  
and crushed the feeble audacity of demons.  
Through their intercessions, save our souls.

## **Matins**

*Both canons from the Octoechos;  
and this canon of the martyrs, tone 6,  
composed by Theophanes*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Traversing the deep on foot as if it were dry land, Israel looked upon the tyrant Pharaoh as he drowned and cried out: Let us sing to God a song of victory.

Standing at the throne of God in the beauty of martyrdom and resplendent with divine brilliance, O passion-bearers, illumine us who hymn your memory.

Desiring divine beauty, you considered the beauties of life to be worthless, O athletes of Christ; suffering bodily death, you have been granted life without end.

Denouncing the falsehood of idolatry in a godly manner, O passion-bearing martyrs, you endured burning pain and have now attained the life devoid of pain.

*Theotokion* O pure one, you gave birth to the uncircumscribable Word who became circumscribed in a human body, beseech him that those who glorify you be delivered from corruption and the assault of the passions.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* There is none holy as you O Lord my God, who has exalted the strength of your faithful O good one, and has established us on the rock of your confession.

The minions of darkness, cruelly lacerating your body, O Thyrsus mighty in love, were unable to weaken the strength of your mind, which was fortified by divine love.

O wondrous martyr Philemon, your faith in the Lord was truly constant, by which you put the false religion of the enemy to shame, crying: I am the servant of Christ.

You went forth boldly to battle the foe, O martyr, armed not with shield and spear, but divinely defended with steadfast faith; and you bravely cast him to the ground.

*Theotokion* One of the Holy Trinity, incarnate through your pure blood in two natures, O pure Lady, was divinely incarnate, saving the descendants of Adam in his goodness.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* Joseph marvelled...

Protected well by the shield of piety, and arrayed in the armour of the cross, the truly wondrous martyrs of Christ brought low the legions of the tyrant; and, crowned by him with the wreath of victory, they join chorus unceasingly with the hosts on high, and entreat the Saviour to save our souls.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Tempest-tossed by the storm waves of the passions, I, bereft of conscience, fervently call to you: Let me not perish, wretch that I am, O birth giver of him who is the abyss of loving-kindness, for I have no other hope than you. Let not me, who trusts in you, become the delight of the enemy and their plaything; for you can do all you desire, as you are the Mother of the God of all.

*Theotokion of the Cross* Beholding on the cross the lamb who was born of her without seed, pierced by a spear, the Virgin lamb cried out, wounded by darts of grief, exclaiming in pain: What is this new mystery? How can you die, the only Lord of life? Therefore, arise, raising up our fallen first parent.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* Christ is my strength, my God and my Lord, sings the holy Church in reverent piety, raising her voice with a pure mind, and keeping festival in the Lord.

Desiring to confess the one Lord and God of all, who alone is compassionate, through their sufferings the martyrs received his kingdom.

Empowered by the cross, O rich martyr Thyrsus, as a youth you endured the laceration of your body, the raging fire, and the onslaught of wild beasts and the sea.

Adorned with the wounds of your struggles as a warrior of Christ, O martyred athlete Levcius, you rendered your soul more radiant than the brilliance of the sun.

*Theotokion* O blessed Mary, the setting aright of men, we know you, alone among women, to be the unwedded Mother, the immaculate Virgin and undefiled Maiden.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* I pray you, O good one, illumine with your divine light the souls of those who rise at dawn with love for you, that they may know you O Word of God to be truly God, who calls them back from the deep gloom of transgression.

Sanctified in godly splendour by most divine rays, O exalted martyrs, you sailed across the inconstant abyss of ungodliness and passed over to divine tranquility.

Cruelly dragged across the ground and wounded by tortures, O exalted martyrs, you have received the honours of heaven, having become fellow citizens with the angels.

Preferring to die for Christ who loved you, O divinely blessed martyr Philemon, you treated the wounds inflicted on your body as though made by the darts of children.

*Theotokion* O good queen of the world, save those who with all their soul confess you as the Mother of God; for was have you as our invincible intercessor.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* Beholding the sea of life, surging with the storm of temptations, I run to your calm haven and cry to you: Raise my life from corruption, O most merciful one.

Moved by the winds of the divine Spirit, O wise martyrs, you joyously saved your souls that you might enter the noetic havens, delighting together in deification.

Mounting the flaming chariot, O athletes, you were caught up to heaven by the blood you shed, and have attained the glory of God, receiving crowns of victory from him.

Philemon, Levcius, Apollonius and ever-memorable Thyrsus, the four divine and radiant martyrs, were enriched by partaking immaterially of the radiance of the Trinity.

*Theotokion* As God, he who transcends all creation, noetic and visible, passed, incarnate, through your womb, O virgin Mother, keeping you incorrupt, as before.

*Kontakion of the martyrs, tone 2,  
to the Special Melody the steadfast...*

Reviling the impious tyrant,  
O champions of faith and piety,  
you denounced his bestial thirst for blood:  
fortified by the help of Christ,  
O Thyrsus and Levcius, you vanquished his wrathful opposition.  
With those who suffered with you, pray for us.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* An angel moistened the furnace with dew for the holy youths, but the commandment of God consumed the Chaldeans with fire and caused the tyrant to cry out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

With divine rains you extinguished the furnace of polytheism, joyously aflame with divine love, O athletes; and you now sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Casting your divine net to ensnare the persecutor, O wondrous ones, you drew him from the depths of falsehood and brought him to Christ, fervently singing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Showing unshakable resolve and a courageous mind, you shook the foundations of falsehood, O athletes, and you now piously sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* Your conceiving is beyond words, O Bride of God who gave birth to God the Word who delivers men from irrationality and gave us the words to cry: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* You caused dew to gush from the flames upon the venerable youths, and you burnt the water poured on the sacrifice of your righteous one: for you, O Christ, perform all things by the power of your will alone, and we exalt you above all for ever.

Defending yourself with the shield of piety, and with the cross as a spear, O Thyrsus of valiant mind, divine glory of the martyrs, you cut down the invisible foe.

Afire with love for the Almighty, you manfully entered the tribunal of the tyrant, and, having suffered patiently, you smashed the great serpent, O athlete Philemon.

Drowning the power of the enemy in the depths of your courage and patience, O Adrian, you were granted the kingdom which shall be immovable for all ages.

*Theotokion* Confessing you to be the true Mother of God, like the angel we sing to you: Rejoice. For you alone on earth gave birth to our joy, O pure, blessed and joyous Lady.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* It is not possible for man to see God, upon whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through you, O most pure one, appeared to us the incarnate Word, whom magnifying with the heavenly hosts, we call you blest.

Emulating the suffering of Christ, you endured the trial of many torments, O blessed ones; and when your heads were severed, you were numbered among the ranks of heaven, resplendent with glory and adorned with divine rays.

You dyed your robe purple in your blood, O wise Thyrsus, and gloriously arrayed therein and wielding the cross as a sceptre, you now reign with Christ, rejoicing with all the passion-bearers, O divinely blessed one.

The angelic hosts marvel at your struggles, wounds, opposition and violent death, O blessed ones: dwelling with them, be mindful of those who celebrate your memory.

*Theotokion* In the form of human flesh the Word appeared, born of you, O pure and divinely joyous virgin Mary, and, having endured suffering, he has drawn to himself a multitude of martyrs.



## December 15

### **Hieromortyr Elevtherius and venerable Paul of Latros**

*On the same day, the hierarch Steven the Confessor, of Sourozh,  
whose service is printed after the following.*

### **Vespers**

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses,  
beginning with these 3 of the hieromartyr, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody You have given a sign...*

You became a sacred vessel of the divine Spirit, \* having cleansed your soul of the passions, O sacred one. \* Hence, you received the holy and divine anointing, \* becoming a hierarch, \* a divinely wise leader of the people, \* and an invincible martyr \* of him who for us endured suffering \* and poured forth dispassion, \* O athlete Elevtherius.

Seeing you finishing well the contest, \* she who gave you birth \* desired to run the same race as you; \* and, embracing you in the midst of the arena, \* she was slain as a sacrificial victim. \* With her we entreat you, \* O blessed Elevtherius: \* Beseech the Lord and Saviour for us.

You prevailed over your body, \* which was wounded by blows \* and brought into contact with fire; \* for you furnished your mind with wings through invincible desire \* and the most comely beauty of the divine one who loves us, \* by whose sweet desire you were wounded, \* O adornment of martyrs, \* ornament of hierarchs, \* conversor with angels, \* O athlete Elevtherius.

*And 3 verses of the venerable one, tone 2,  
to the Special Melody When from the tree...*

Paul, adornment of monastics, beauteous scion of the wilderness, boast of the venerable, pride of Mount Latros, confirmation of the faithful: by your supplications to the Master, from every evil circumstance and condemnation to fire deliver those who with love celebrate your most honoured memory and kiss the shrine of your relics.

Having made yourself a temple of the Trinity, O divinely blessed father, you erected a church dedicated to the Trinity; and having entered the trackless wilderness of Mount Latros, like Moses on Mount Sinai, you made your home there, where, receiving the divine law, you truly instructed multitudes of monastics with great excellence, O wondrous one.

As you have boldness before God, O venerable Paul, pray that the flock which you gathered with great effort be preserved from the temptations of the enemy and the assaults of the heathen, from fire and sword and every attack of the evil one; for we have acquired our hope with God, having you as our guardian and protection.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, same tone and melody*

Most holy Bride of God, you alone carried the infinite God, who in his goodness became man without becoming finite; and so I implore you: Rescue me from the passions which oppress me, that, treading the straight and narrow path, I may reach that which leads to life, O Virgin.

*Theotokion of the Cross* When the unblemished lamb, the mother, saw her lamb as a man led forth willingly to the slaughter, she said, weeping: Do you now hasten to leave me childless who gave you birth, O Christ? What is this that you have wrought, O deliverer of all? I hymn and glorify your great goodness which passes understanding and recounting, O lover of mankind.

*Troparion of the hieromartyr Eleutherius, tone 4*

You shared in the ways of the Apostles  
and occupied their throne,  
and your deeds were a passage to the divine vision,  
O divinely inspired one.  
Obedient to the word of truth, you suffered for the faith  
even to the shedding of your blood, O hieromartyr Eleutherius.  
Entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved.

*Troparion of venerable Paul, tone 4*

We hymn you, O glorious Paul,  
as one who dwells with the bodiless host  
and as a companion of all the venerable;  
and we beseech you:  
Ever pray for us, that we may find mercy.

## Matins

*We sing one canon from the Octoechos, and two of the saints.*

### *Ode 1*

*Canon of the hieromartyr, tone 1,  
upon the acrostic Show me to be free of the passions, O most blessed one  
composed by Joseph*

*Irmos* Let us all sing a hymn of victory to God who has wrought wondrous miracles with his upraised arm, and saved Israel, for he has been glorified.

By your radiant supplications, O martyr Elevation, free me, in thrall to the darkness of the passions, that I may hymn you, the servant of Christ, with hymns divine.

You shine with the most pure rays of suffering, O sacred one, for you dyed your priestly raiment with your blood, and became radiant through the Spirit.

Cleaving to God from your youth with a pure mind, you drove carnal understanding from your soul and were enriched with the abundant grace of miracles.

*Theotokion* As a throne of fire you held the creator, and as a living bridal-chamber and beautiful palace you held the king who became like us, apart from change and confusion.

*Canon of the venerable one, same tone*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

I hasten to open my lips with new hymns of praise, O God-bearing Paul; by your prayers grant me the grace to speak, that I may recount your honoured struggles.

Taking up the yoke of the Lord from your youth, O venerable one, and sowing the wheat of the Spirit in the furrows of your heart, you reaped the grain which strengthens men's souls.

Through great effort you receive the kingdom on high, having lived on earth like an incorporeal being and passed through life like an angel in your body: be mindful of us as you stand in the highest before the Trinity.

*Theotokion* Receiving my corruptible flesh from your body, O Bride of God, the incorporeal and most blessed one, lying in the manger of his own will, deifies that which he received in uniting himself with it.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* Let my heart be made firm in your will, O omnipotent Christ our God who established the second Heaven above the waters and founded the earth upon the waters.

O wise one who chose to suffer for Christ, enduring the wounding of your body and delighting in your pangs and afflictions, you have now received a life without pain.

Holding fast with the fervent desire for the creator, O divinely wise athlete Elevtherius, bedewed by the fire of the Spirit you submitted yourself to fiery testing.

As one sacred among priests and as a martyr resolute among the martyrs, O blessed one, you received a twofold crown, continually beholding the face of God.

*Theotokion* You budded forth the staff of strength whereby we are made firm; for the staff of Aaron, which once put forth branches, prefigured you, O land untouched by the plough, pure turtledove and ever-virgin.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

How courageous and heroic was your soul, O glorious one; for, to break the jaws of the invisible lions, at night you carried two large stones weighing upon your shoulders.

Who can rightly describe your struggles? For, treading the hard paths in the desert, you ate wild plants, learning to sweeten your meals with the pangs of asceticism.

Moses the God-seer of old was given a divine vision in the bush, which honourable Paul recognized as the fire from on high, burning without being consumed.

*Theotokion* O Word, as God unoriginate in essence and equally worshipped with the Father; Virgin-born, you received a beginning in time, manifesting your human nature in becoming a child, O Christ, as an infant wrapped in swaddling bands.

*Kontakion of venerable Paul, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody to you the champion leader...*

From your youth, O wise one, you bravely desired that which passes understanding and abandoned the tumult of this world. In your divine way of life you became a dwelling place of the Trinity. You illumine those who come to you with faith, and so we cry out to you: Rejoice, O Paul most rich.

*Sessional Hymn of the hieromartyr, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody* Your tomb, O Saviour...

Having acquired a mind free of the passions, you were a most dutiful servant of God, and released from falsehood those who well heeded you; and having suffered as a priest and martyr, O Eleutherius, you received a twofold crown: pray that we be saved.

Glory be to the Father...

*Sessional Hymn of the venerable one, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody* Of the Wisdom...

Steered by the power of the Almighty, and driven by the mast and sail of the cross, you passed readily through the storm of life and reached the truly divine haven. Having acquired a heavy cargo of the virtues, you brought it to the Master of all, and heard from him: Well done, O good servant: O blessed Paul, entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins to those who honour your holy memory with love.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Falling into many temptations, I am surrounded foes, seen and unseen, and by numerous sins. I flee to your goodness, O immaculate one, my fervent protection, my shelter and my haven. Interceded fervently with him who was incarnate of you without seed for all your servants who ceaselessly praise you, the most pure Mother of God, that he grant forgiveness of sins to those who with faith venerate your maternity.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The Virgin and Mother of the redeemer, standing by the cross and lamenting with tears of anguish, cried out maternally: What strange and most glorious thing is this that I see, O my Son? Crucified on a cross between two condemned thieves you pour forth dispassion upon all men, as your side is pierced and you are given gall to drink by hands which you yourself have made. Arise and grant remission of sins to those who hymn your divine passion with faith.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* In the Spirit foreseeing the incarnate Word, O prophet Habakkuk, you cried out, saying: You shall be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; you shall be made manifest when the time comes. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Neither the gaping mouths of the lions, nor the raging of the fire, nor cruel threats were able to weaken the endurance of your strength, O servitor of the sacred mysteries; but, rock-hard, you delighted in torture, afire with divine zeal.

Full of life-bearing waters, your mouth poured forth streams of divine doctrines, O hieromartyr, engulfing the mockery of the iniquitous and watering the hearts of those who acknowledge Christ as God.

Glorifying you greatly, your creator, for whom you were zealous to suffer, O athlete, sent a dove bearing angelic food to you who became angelic through the radiant splendour of suffering.

*Theotokion* The angelic armies were in awe, to see how he who is invisible became visible, assuming a form like ours through you, O Virgin Mother of God: implore him to grant salvation to all who glorify you with faith.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Once, in the time of your youth, overcome by sleep and tired while standing all night, your honoured teacher Peter, seeing this, smote you in the face; and, having smote you, he straightway soothed you.

Conversing privately with God, having come directly to him, our father Paul was never overcome by sleep after the blow dealt him by his teacher; and becoming like the bodiless ones, he ever remained vigilant.

As a sacred vessel, you received the heavenly myrrh of Christ in your heart; and, having brightly lighted the lamp of your patient abstinence with a virtuous life, you hastened to the divine bridegroom.

*Theotokion* O Word who has heaven for your throne and the earth for your footstool, in becoming incarnate you entered the womb of the Virgin and made your abode in a lowly cave; yet as king and God incarnate, you receive gifts from the magi, the kings of Persia.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* Grant us your peace, O Son of God, for we know no other God but you. We call upon your name, for you are God of the living and the dead.

The most wicked enemy, plotting to lead you astray through deceitful words, O martyr, was put to scorn; the most crafty sage of malice being outwitted by your wisdom.

Mounting the chariot of the divine virtues, O glorious one, you reached the summit of martyrdom and cast down the vaunted pride of the wicked demons.

Desiring to see the beauty of Jesus, O venerable one, you adorned yourself with the beauty of martyrdom, and went to him, crowned with a wreath of splendour.

*Theotokion* Every mind marvels at your wonder, O pure one; for you gave birth to God in the flesh and fed the nurturer with milk, without having experienced the temptation of man, as you yourself know.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of Great Counsel who grants us peace. Thus we are guided to the light of divine knowledge, and rising from the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

Having cleansed your mind of the mire of the passions, you became an unblemished mirror, ever receiving the radiance of the Spirit, vanquishing the tempter who taught our ancestors the weakness of evil in the garden.

With Christ our God, who is wisdom, abiding in your heart, you trampled beneath your beautiful feet the foolish sage of evil who attempted to deceive you with various imaginings, O divinely wise Paul.

As a receptacle of the light, a son of the day, as though he were a lion you deceived the prince of darkness who assailed you with earthquakes and a rain of stones, sought to terrify you with his arrogance and set upon you, raging, O Paul.

*Theotokion* Incarnate of you, O ever-virgin maiden Bride of God, the unoriginate Word, who through you humbled himself to lie as an infant in a manger of dumb beasts, has delivered from irrationality our race, from Adam who was driven from Eden.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* Like the prophet Jonah, I cry out: Free my life from corruption, O good one, and save me, O Saviour of the world, as I sing: Glory to you.

The eloquent pastor of the excellent sheep of the Christ's flock is glorified, having glorified God with his members on the path of struggles.

Given life through visions of God, you steadfastly rendered lifeless the greatly crafty foe, O ever-memorable wise one, glory of the martyrs and model of the priesthood.

Enduring wounds, entering the fire of your own will, you put down the onslaughts of the savage beasts, possessing constant love for the creator.

*Theotokion*     Revealed as a tabernacle of sanctity, O Mary, sanctify my wretched soul, defiled by the pleasures, and make it a receptacle of divine glory.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos*     The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

As the Saviour, Christ our God fed a vast multitude with a few loaves of bread, so did Paul, the servitor of Christ's mysteries, with the little water contained in a tiny cruse gladden a multitude, filling them to repletion with its abundance.

By your supplications, O wondrous one, you caused burning heat to cease and lifted dire famine; and with waters poured from above you irrigated the earth and gave drink to its dry furrows, causing it to produce richly, cropping abundantly.

Through your pangs you received the life which is devoid of pain, and you caused the affliction of cruel pangs to cease for those who with faith asked to receive healing, O honoured one, the adornment of the fathers: loose the pangs of my body and soul, I pray.

*Theotokion*     The Word of the Father, the timeless Son of God, the pre-eternal offspring of the pure and divine Maiden and Mother, as man became a child and as uncontainable God was contained by the cave: marvelling, we all worship the great mystery.

*Kontakion of Eleutherius, tone 2,  
to the Special Melody Your steadfast...*

We all praise you, for you are the adornment of the priesthood  
and the proclamation of the passion bearers,  
O venerable hieromartyr Eleutherius.  
We entreat you to free from every kind of misfortune  
those who celebrate your memory with love,  
and to pray unceasingly for us all.

*Ikos*     As you alone are the compassionate God who loves mankind, O loving bestower of life, look upon the darkness of my soul, and with your omnipotent right hand free me from the oppression of the passions, O Word, that I may hymn your hierarch Eleutherius; who, acknowledging you from his mother's womb, became sanctified, and like Samuel was offered by his sacred mother to you, the creator, and who unceasingly prays for us all.



Ode 7

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* The fire did not touch or threaten your youths in the furnace, O Saviour, for the three with one voice then praised and blessed you, saying: Blessed be the God of our Fathers.

Shattered, O wise one, you cried: May Christ now be magnified in my flesh; for I fear neither the boiling of the cauldron nor am I daunted by death or the assaults of wild beasts, for the sake of life.

Thus you cried, O glorious one: Seeking the beauty of the one God, I desire to receive his glory alone. Let my whole body be broken and burned, for I seek the freedom which enslaves me to Christ.

Looking toward the life to come, O blessed one, you truly died to the world, and, burned with the wounds of torture, shining like gold you have been laid up in the treasures of the mansions of heaven.

*Theotokion* The most pure Word of God was born of you, having found you alone to be most pure, O immaculate Bride of God, and he purifies the faithful of the defilements which have come upon us through failing to restrain the passions.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree feared not the threat of fire, but standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Shining like the sun, you firstly illumined the East, and ascending your pillar, standing as in the midst of the heavens, you gladdened the whole world with your teachings, crying: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

You withdrew, fleeing the billows of the world, and, making your abode in the wilderness, as said the Psalms, O divinely blessed one, you received God in your heart, who preserved you with angelic protection.

With spiritual eyes you beheld the tortures of the next world, and pained in heart by your loving soul, you ever watered yourself with tears, not like David, who only drenched his couch with tears by night.

*Theotokion* The incorporeal one is incarnate, the timeless one comes under time, the Lord who wrapped the earth in mist is wrapped in swaddling bands for our sake, appearing, unchanged beyond understanding, through her who knew not man.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* As their creator and Lord, before whom the angels and all the hosts of Heaven stand in awe, you priests hymn, you children glorify and you people exult above all for ever.

Blossoming in the splendour of martyrdom you put forth a beauteous garden, O adornment of the martyrs, where are found the flowers of paradise, emitting a divine fragrance.

Your mother mingled her own blood with the outpouring of the your blood, as embracing your body, O wise one, she was slain by the sword to live for ever.

Your shrine flows with the waters of healings and rivers of miracles for those in need, ever washing away the defilements of soul-destroying passions, O hieromartyr.

*Theotokion* Christ, the benefactor, descend upon your womb as rain, O Virgin: he truly waters all creation, drying up the turbid rivers of the madness of idolatry.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos* Of old the fiery furnace moist with dew was the image of a supernatural miracle, as it did not burn the youths consigned to it, so Christ has appeared divinely born of the Virgin without seed. Therefore let us sing in praise: Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord, sing and exalt him above all for ever.

With David you sing a melodious hymn, with well-tuned strings, saying: O king of all, your consolations have divinely gladdened my soul by your loving gesture. Therefore, rejoicing, you cry out: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Granting that which is contrary to carnal love and preserving you from your youth with his right hand, you trampled down all carnal lust, O God-bearing Paul: the creator thrice fed you with greens, giving them to you by the hand of an angel; for you, loving the life of the angels, have been glorified.

The three men, bound and condemned, were able to escape execution as deserters from general service, invisibly freed from their bonds and borne away by your name, O glorious father who delivers those in fetters from misfortunes, by the hand alone of him who holds all things.

*Theotokion* The Sun of Righteousness by a star summoned the Magi who worship him, immutably incarnate, with gold, frankincense and myrrh: the shepherds magnified and the multitude of angels hymned her who gave birth to him, glorifying him as God in essence and man by nature.

Ode 9

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* As a fountain ever-flowing which brings life, as the light bearing lamp stand of blessing, the spiritual temple and most pure tabernacle more spacious than Heaven and earth, we the faithful magnify the Mother of God.

As the mouth of God, rescuing vain-minded people from the mouth of the alien, you made them heirs of grace; and suffering mightily, you live with the priests and passion-bearers, O Elevation, O Elevation.

Let Elevation be faithfully praised: the pure phial of the Spirit, the beautiful abode of the virtues, the innocent lamb, the ever-burning lamp, the foundation of hierarchs and martyrs.

Truly you live in never-waning light, having become the radiant light of the sun; therefore, by your supplications to God, O Elevation, deliver from the darkness of the passions those who celebrate your radiant memory today.

*Theotokion* Spare us who hymn you, O Lord, the ineffable offspring of the Virgin, for you alone are our benefactor who loves mankind, delivering your servants from perils, passions and tribulations.

*Canon of the Venerable one*

*Irmos* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain: him we praise and magnify.

Your boldness cries out to God, and you have wrought wondrous works even after your departure, having freed many from divers infirmities by the oil of your radiance.

Possessed of a most radiant soul, O venerable one, and wholly anointed as with the ointment of grace, by oil you dispel demons, cleansing lepers and those addled in mind, and causing cruel scabs to fall away.

Stumbling, Satan the most wicked falls headlong like a savage wild beast, seeing you stretching forth the oil of your lamp like myrrh for the healing of divers ailments; and, seized with fear, he has vanished.

*Theotokion* In latter times, O unwedded Mother, you conceived the Son whom the Father begat incorruptibly before time: the heavens proclaimed him by the star and the earth by a cave in the ground.

*Exapostilarion from the Octoechos*

Glory be to the Father... *Exapostilarion of the venerable one,  
to the Special Melody* With the disciples let us ascend...

As David said, you flourish in the house of the Lord like a palm-tree, O venerable father, now multiplying the fruits of your labours a hundredfold. Therefore, drowning hordes of demons in the showers of your tears, O blessed Paul, you have received honour from Christ and the crown of victory, and the grace of miracles abundant in richness.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* He who on high is glorified as God by the angels, O pure one, ineffably dwelt with those below without leaving the bosom of the Father; and you were the cause of his salvation, inexpressibly lending flesh to him of your pure blood, O pure one. Implore him to grant deliverance from transgressions to your servants.

## December 16

### Haggai the Prophet

#### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... these verses, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody Your martyrs, O Lord...*

Having become a dwelling-place and animate temple of your Lord  
through the splendour of your life and your sojourn, O honourable one,  
you raised up the Temple which had fallen of old  
to him who reigns over the whole world.  
Beseech him with your supplications,  
that he grant great mercy to all.

You were a vessel of the Spirit, pleasing in lustre,  
receiving the radiance imparted from heaven;  
therefore you prophesied  
the deliverance of all men by the Saviour.  
Beseech him with your supplications,  
that he grant great mercy to all.

Bathed in luminous radiance,  
granted vision, O blessed one,  
and full of the most pure enlightenment which never wanes,  
preserve those who hymn you,  
entreating the Lord alone,  
that he grant great mercy to all.

*But if Alleluia is to be sung at Matins instead of God is the Lord...  
the following verses of the Mother of God are sung before the above verses of the prophet,  
in the same tone and melody.*

Rescue me from the hands of the serpent, the slayer of men, who through  
deception engages me in mortal combat, O Lady. Crush his jaws, I pray, and destroy his  
wiles, that, delivered from his claws, I may magnify your power.

I am a barren tree devoid of the fruit of salvation, O immaculate Lady. I tremble  
at the thought of being cut down, lest in my wretchedness I be cast into the unquenchable  
fire. I fall down before you and pray: Deliver me from such a fate, and make me fruitful,  
O pure one, by your mediation before your Son.

My thoughts are impure, my mouth deceitful, and my deeds defiled: what then shall I do? How shall I meet the judge? O virgin Lady, entreat your Son, who alone is the compassionate creator and Lord, that he accept my soul in repentance.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Alas, woe is me; for who has angered my God, remaining in ignorance, despondency and slothfulness, as I have? O virgin Lady, help me who is benighted, and entreat your Son and creator, that he grant forgiveness of my offences.

*Theotokion of the Cross* Beholding her son as a sacrificial victim nailed to the tree of his own will, the Mother cried out, lamenting bitterly: Woe is me, O most beloved child. How can the ungrateful assembly of the Jews reward you thus, desiring to leave me bereft of you, O most beloved?

*Troparion of the prophet, tone 2*

Celebrating the memory of your prophet Haggai, O Lord,  
through him we entreat you to save our souls.

## **Matins**

*Both canons from the Octoechos, and that of the prophet, tone 7,  
upon the acrostic We sing the divinely given words of Haggai  
composed by Theophanes.*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Let us sing a hymn of victory to God, who led Israel to freedom through the Red Sea, for he has been glorified.

Standing before God as a true prophet with divine sight, O blessed one, be mindful of those who hymn your honoured memory.

Having set yourself firmly upon the steadfast foundation of the virtues, O divinely blessed one, you built yourself up as an animate temple.

Your most pure mind which ever gazed at God as far as it was able, O blessed one, was illumined with the gifts of heaven shining from afar.

*Theotokion* Having conceived you, the incarnate Word of God who was begotten motherless before time began, the Virgin gave birth to you, her Son, unfathered.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* Having been confirmed in faith, the Church of Christ unceasingly cries out in hymns, singing: You are holy, O Lord, and my spirit sings to you.

Having released us from cruel captivity to the demons by divine power, O Saviour, make us your honoured temples, who cry out: Holy are you, who saves our souls.

O prophet, who abides in the highest and fills the whole world with sanctity, in the Temple you cried out: Holy are you, who saves our souls.

The divine Spirit who imparts grace upon all dwelt in your heart and taught you to cry: Holy are you, O Lord, who saves our souls.

*Theotokion* He who loves mankind, who wisely fashioned all creation by his word, fashioned himself into our form through you, O Mother of God, becoming man in his loving kindness.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody* Of the divine faith...

Possessed of a mind illumined by the divine Spirit,  
O most blessed Prophet Haggai,  
you foretold the mysteries of God,  
disclosing the revelation of that which is to come,  
and speaking of the fulfillment of things.  
Entreat Christ our God,  
that he grant us abundant mercy.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Without separating yourself from the divine essence when he took flesh within you, the one Lord remained God while becoming man, preserving you, his virgin Mother, immaculate even after giving birth, as you were before. Earnestly beseech him to grant us great mercy.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The unblemished lamb, the incorrupt virgin mother of the Word, beholding him born from her without pain suspended upon the cross, cried out, lamenting maternally: Woe is me, O my child. How is it that you willingly suffer, desiring to deliver man from the indignity of the passions?

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* I have heard report of you, O Lord, for you appeared on earth to save us. Therefore, we cry: Glory to your power, O Lord.

## December 16

You revealed to your prophet the animate temple, pleasing to you O Christ, which came forth from the Virgin: with him we cry: Glory to your power, O Lord.

You have gathered to you all the rejected ones, O Lord, freeing us from slavery to the enemy, as the God-pleasing prophet said.

You revealed to your prophet, O Christ, the salvation of the nations which would come afterwards; and he cried out to you: Glory to your power, O Lord.

*Theotokion* You turned the curse of Adam into a blessing, O Lady, in giving birth to Christ for us. To him we cry: Glory to your power, O Lord.

### Ode 5

*Irmos* Rising from the night, I cry to you, O compassionate Lord: Having illumined my soul, darkened by sin, guide and direct it by the light of your commandments.

May those who celebrate your splendid feast become temples of the living God, O blessed one, established on the rock of the dogmas by your supplications.

As you are our benefactor, O Lord, grant us your peace, the peace which is for edification of the soul, which the godly Haggai foretold in the divine Spirit.

Truly great will be the glory of the Church of the incarnate Word who has shared the nature of men, surpassing that of the assembly of Israel of old.

*Theotokion* O blessed and most glorious unwedded Mother, impart life to my soul, slain by sins and buried by my unrestrained passions.

### Ode 6

*Irmos* Jonah cried out from the belly of Hades: Lead my life up from corruption. And we cry out to you: Have mercy on us, almighty Saviour.

Teaching piety to the youth, O blessed one, you erected the sacred Temple to the Master of all, promising an abundance of good things.

O Saviour, you lead man up from far captivity and the uttermost depths, and brought him up to the city on high, in your love for mankind.

Rejoicing, O prophet, through the illumination of the Spirit you uttered beforehand words of action and have taught us piety through justification.

*Theotokion* Having fallen through his will, Adam was expelled from paradise; but the Word incarnate of the Virgin calls him back and leads him up to the delight on high.



*Ode 7*

*Irmos* When the holy youths were cast into the furnace of fire, they changed the fire into dew by their hymnody, as they cried out: Blessed are you, Lord God of our fathers.

Having purified your mind, you received the radiance of the Spirit, O prophet, prophesying splendidly and crying out: Blessed are you, Lord God of our fathers.

Beholding you traversing a most sacred life, God appointed you the prophet of his coming, and you cried to all: Blessed are you, Lord God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* He who saved the three children in the fiery furnace, having made his abode within you, O Virgin, saves those who trust in him and cry out: Blessed is the fruit of your womb.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* The only unoriginate king of glory, whom the hosts of heaven bless, and before whom the ranks of angels tremble; sing to him you priests, and you people exalt him above all for ever.

We hymn you, the Master of all, whom Haggai, the prophet of divine vision, has taught us to worship and praise: Sing to him you priests, and you people exalt him above all for ever.

When the unoriginate Word appeared in latter times, O prophet of vision divine, you proclaimed him: Sing to him you priests, and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* He who before was invisible and infinite in essence became finite and visible within you, O most pure one. To him we cry with faith: Sing to him you priests, and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* O exalted Lady who is more lofty than the heavens, you conceived without seed the unoriginate Word, and for the sake of man gave birth to God incarnate, therefore we all magnify you.

Having tasted divine vision which transcends description, you put away earthly cares, O prophet, and now worthily stand before our most glorious God. Therefore, we the faithful call you blessed.

## December 16

Your godly and wondrous life has shown you to be an intercessor before God, O blessed and divinely wise one; and you now dwell eternally with the incorporeal choirs. Therefore, we ever call you blessed.

It was fitting for you, as a teacher of piety, to be with God and to mingle in his light, O blessed one. Entreat him now, that he deliver our souls from temptation.

*Theotokion* Truly you supernaturally became the dwelling-place and golden ark of the king of all, O Mother of God, having within you Christ, the incarnate giver of the law.

*And the rest from the Octoechos*

## December 17

### **Daniel the Prophet and the three holy youths Ananias, Azarias and Misael**

### **Vespers**

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses, beginning with these 3 of the prophet, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

Wondrous Daniel, having made his heart \* the pure abode of the Spirit, \* illumined by him \* he mightily proclaimed \* the revelation of things to come; \* and, adorned with the splendour of prophecy, \* he clearly interpreted the hidden dreams \* of the iniquitous and mighty king.

Having made your body strong \* with intense fasting, \* you closed the mouths of the lions; \* for, standing in their midst, \* O wondrous prophet, \* and lifting your eyes to our good God, \* you remain unharmed \* through the ineffable power \* of the deliverer of our souls \* who most gloriously accomplishes all things.

O wondrous prophet, \* you beheld the unapproachable one, \* who is the just judge, \* sitting on a throne, \* surrounded by angels. \* Marvelling at the awesome and terrible sight, \* you described it for all who came after, \* recounting the second coming \* of our incarnate God.

*And 3 verses of the holy youths, same tone,  
to the Special Melody You have given a sign...*

Observing the God-given laws, \* O most blessed ones, \* you did not defile yourselves with abominable foods, \* but, keeping the beauty of your souls incorrupt, \* you preserved the flower of your flesh \* untainted and unwithered \* and your splendour comely \* for the Master who glorifies his favoured ones.

Enkindled by the divine flame, \* the youths prevailed over the fire; \* for the honoured ones were seen to be bedewed therein, \* forming a most splendid choir, \* singing in melodious hymnody; \* and Daniel rejoiced, \* beholding the immutable kingdom of Christ, \* as a most excellent prophet.

Marvelling at the wisdom of your words \* and the understanding of the youths, \* O truly wondrous Daniel, \* the tyrants appointed you \* to rule and govern \* the land of Chaldea, \* O honoured ones; \* for the adversary knew to marvel greatly \* at your virtue and splendour of life; \* for you restrained the overpowering passions.

Glory be to the Father.... *composed by Anatolius, tone 2*

Today, the Prophet Daniel has spiritually assembled us, O faithful, and laid an abundant banquet of the virtues for rich and poor, paupers, wanderers, and household servants, filling a noetic cup with the water of piety, gladdening the hearts of the faithful and imparting the grace of the Holy Spirit. He is a splendid luminary who, shining in the world, cast down the worship of the Assyrians and shut the mouths of the untamed beasts. With him let the three youths be praised who, though not gold by nature, were seen to be tried like gold; for the fire of the furnace should have melted them together, yet it preserved them whole, and naphtha, sulphur and tinder crowned them. May the Lord who has led us to the turning of the year grant that we also may attain to the lordly and honourable day of the nativity of Christ, who through their supplications bestows cleansing of sins and great mercy upon us.

Both now and for ever...

*Of the forefeast, same tone,  
composed by Andrew Pyrrhus*

Come, and with faith let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, noetically offering hymns of glorification like the star of the Magi, and with the shepherds let us cry out: The deliverance of the nations has come forth from the Virgin's womb, summoning the faithful.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos;*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *Tone 6*

Daniel, the man of divine desires, seeing you, O Lord, the stone not cut by human hands, foretold that you would be born without seed, the Word incarnate of the Virgin, the immutable God and the Saviour of our souls.

*Troparion, tone 2*

Great are the accomplishments of faith,  
for in the fountain of flame as if in refreshing water,  
the three holy youths rejoiced,  
and the prophet Daniel appeared as a shepherd of lions as if of sheep.  
Through their intercessions, O Christ our God, save our souls.

## Matins

*We sing one canon from the Octoechos, and two of the saints.*

### *Ode 1*

*Canon of the prophet, tone 8,  
upon the acrostic With hymns I will crown the wise Daniel  
composed by Theophanes*

*Irmos* Let us ascribe hymnody to our wondrous God, O people, who freed Israel from slavery, singing a hymn of victory and crying out: We sing to you alone, the Master.

O Saviour and benefactor, cause of every good thing, who loves mankind; illumine my mind with your radiant brilliance, that I may praise the glorious memory of your prophet.

You shone in chastity like the dawn and saved the chaste Susanna who was in danger; for God, who knows all secrets, raised you up to condemn the cruel elders.

The descendants of Abraham, strengthened by the fear of God, valiantly spurned the iniquitous food; and, nurtured by desire for piety, were taken up to the greatest glory.

*Theotokion* You perceived the only ever-virgin, the most pure Maiden, O sacred Daniel, as the noetic mountain from which was cut the chief cornerstone who has crushed all falsehood.

*Canon of the three holy youths, same tone,  
upon the acrostic I hymn the three youths and the great Daniel  
composed by Theophanes*

*Irmos* Having traversed the water as though it were dry land, and escaping the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried out: Let us sing to our deliverer and our God.

Let us glorify the unoriginate Word who was divinely begotten of the Father before time began, and whose likeness was seen by the youths in the furnace.

Firmly reviling the words of the impious tyrant, the noble youths did not wish to defile themselves with vile foods like the iniquitous Chaldeans.

You fed yourselves spiritually with God's word and bodily with foods you grew yourselves; and to the king were more comely of appearance than those who ate richly.

*Theotokion* O Maiden descended from David and who gave birth to the deliverer, you have healed the venom which the serpent poured bitterly into the ears of Eve.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* You are the confirmation of those who have recourse to you, O Lord: you are the light of those in darkness; and my spirit sings to you.

Receiving understanding and wisdom from God, you interpreted obscure dreams for the kings.

Scattering the food-offerings, O glorious one, you slay the material serpent; for you first vanquish the immaterial demons.

*Theotokion* Illumined with radiance, O glorious one, you beheld the mountain blessed by God, the adornment of men.

*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* You are the confirmation... *as before*

The youths of David, having acquired an understanding taught by God, O Master, kept the laws of their fathers with godly wisdom.

Fire did not consume the most pure bodies of the pious ones, for they had already been consumed by the fasting which nourishes the soul.

Wondrously bedewed in the midst of the furnace, the three youths sang universal and most admirable praise.

*Theotokion* That you might indicate your birthgiving from the body of the Virgin, O Master, you saved the bodies of the virginal youths in the furnace.

*Kontakion of the prophet Daniel, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody* Today the Virgin...

Enlightened by the Spirit,  
your pure heart became a receptacle of most splendid prophecy,  
for you saw distant things as though they were present,  
and when cast into the pit, you tamed the lions.  
Therefore we honour you,  
O blessed and glorious prophet Daniel.

*Ikos* Him whose divine advent you clearly proclaimed, Jesus Christ, our true God, may you entreat without ceasing for those who with gladness celebrate this your divine memorial and honour you with love, that we be saved from all trials, sins and evil circumstances, for you have boldness before him, O divinely wise one; and grant that I may open my lips to hymn your excellent discourse.

*Sessional Hymn of the youths, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody Of the Wisdom...*

In the flame the youths prophetically inscribed  
the image of the Trinity with the pen of faith in immaterial ink;  
they mystically beheld the Word's extreme descent to earth and proclaimed it to  
all.

Receiving the dew of the Spirit from heaven, they pour gifts upon the faithful  
who sing to you: O Christ our God, as you are compassionate  
grant remission of sins to those who celebrate their holy memory with love.

Glory be to the Father...

*Sessional Hymn of the prophet,  
same tone and melody*

Enriched by the grace of prophecy, you told of the birthgiving of the Virgin in  
veiled form,  
but clearly interpreted the dreams of the king.  
Cast into the pit as a martyr, you gloriously taught the lions to fast,  
thereby destroying the worship of the ungodly, O truly wondrous Daniel.  
Entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of sins  
to those who celebrate your holy memory with love.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Rejoice, O fiery throne of God; rejoice, O Maiden, royal seat and bower  
adorned with many hues, the bridal-chamber hung with purple and gold, cloak of scarlet,  
decorated temple, sword of lightning, lamp of great radiance. Rejoice, O Mother of God,  
twelve-walled city, gate of beaten gold, tabernacle adorned by God. Rejoice, O glorious  
bride who let the sun fall like rain. Rejoice, O true splendour of my soul.

*Theotokion of the Cross* When she who gave him birth saw the lamb, shepherd and Saviour  
of the world raised unjustly upon the cross, with bitter weeping she cried out: The world  
rejoices, for it receives deliverance, but inwardly I burn, seeing your crucifixion suffered  
for all mankind in your merciful compassion, O God most good and my sinless Son. We  
call to her in faith: Show us your compassion, O Virgin, and grant forgiveness of sins to  
us who venerate his passion.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* With divine vision the prophet perceived that you alone, O Word, would become  
incarnate from the overshadowed mountain, the Mother of God; and with fear he  
glorified your power.

Preserving the law in piety, O prophet, you truly came to know the bestower of wisdom who teaches men profound mysteries and illumines those in darkness.

Living a sacred life, O prophet revealed by God, you were called a man of divine desires: having bravely trampled upon the passions, you were translated to unaging life.

The grace of the Comforter which dwelt within you, O Daniel, proved you to be the radiant victor over tyrants and kings, and the abode of wisdom.

*Theotokion* The prophet Daniel beheld you, O Word, as the stone cut, not by human hands, from the mountain of the virgin Mother of God; and he hymned your divinity.

*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* I have heard the mystery of your dispensation O Lord; I have understood your works, and I glorify your divinity.

By divine grace the most wise Daniel, divinely illumined in mind, interpreted the dreams of the sovereigns.

The suffering of the youths in the furnace shone with miracles; for they prevailed upon the tyrant to acknowledge you, O Almighty.

The melodies of the instruments and the harmonious playing of music did not lead the valiant ones astray, neither did they worship the golden image.

*Theotokion* With hymns the children in Babylon honoured your most divine Son, whom they recognized in the furnace, O exalted one.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* From the night of ignorance, let the day of divine knowledge shine in our hearts, with the light of your face O Christ, for your morning praises.

Illumining your struggles of suffering with the proclamation of prophecy, you are resplendent in both, full of divine inspiration.

By the splendour of wisdom which passes understanding you became most wise, O blessed and divinely eloquent great Daniel; and you enlighten all.

*Theotokion* O pure one, the glorious Prophet Daniel with images described the mystery of the ineffable incarnation of the Most High who came forth from you.



*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* O light that never sets, why have you turned your face from me? Why has an alien darkness covered me, a wretched one? But turn me back I entreat you, and guide my paths to the light of your commandments.

Your favoured ones, the great Daniel and the three godly-minded youths, having studied the law, did not deny you, O Saviour; but, receiving strength from you, our benefactor, they manfully vanquished the tyrant.

Daniel studied your mysteries, O lover of mankind, as in purity of mind he noetically beheld you as the Son of Man coming upon a cloud, as the judge and king of the nations.

As a golden beam, O youths, your company shone more splendidly than sapphire; and afire with zeal for piety, you entered the furnace joyfully as a universal chorus.

*Theotokion* O Virgin, the divine Daniel mightily prefigured you as a mountain; and the three youths, beholding the flame bearing dew, with hymns praised your divine birthgiving as that of the Saviour, creator and Lord.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* As you saved the prophet from the lowest depths, save me from my sins, I pray, O Christ our God, and guide my life, O lover of mankind.

Beholding the angelic choirs in most radiant light, you have become their excellent emulator, delighting in the splendours of the king of all.

Proclaiming the salvific advent of the Word, you also foretold the destruction of the Temple, the fulfillment of the Law, and gifts of grace which pass all understanding.

*Theotokion* Behold, the Virgin whose image the glorious Daniel beheld, shall conceive Christ our God, illumined by the Spirit.

*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* The abyss of sins and the storm of transgressions assail me and cast me violently to the depths of despair, but extend your mighty hand as you did to Peter, O my guide, and save me.

Having gained control over natural passions through the power of the Word, you became rulers of the land of the Chaldean peoples, O wise descendants of David; for virtue knows how to render honour to those who have acquired her.

Daniel, arrayed of old in life-bearing mortality, with food slew the evil serpent which the Chaldeans impiously considered a god; and he wisely slew the ungodly priests.

*Theotokion* By your supplications, O virgin Mother, entreat the merciful judge, your Son, that he deliver me from cruel punishment on the day of judgment; for on you alone do I set my hope.

*Kontakion of the three youths, tone 6*

Defended by the indescribable essence, O thrice- bless'd ones,  
you shunned the adoration of the image made by hands:  
glorified by your ordeal by fire,  
you stood in the midst of unbearable flames and called upon God, saying:  
Hasten to our aid, O compassionate and merciful one,  
for you have the power to do as you will.

*Ikos* Stretch forth your hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsts after us, not swallow us up; and spare our souls, as you once spared your three children in Babylon, who glorified you unceasingly and were cast for your sake into a furnace, from where they cried out to you: Hasten to our aid, O compassionate and merciful one, for you have the power to do as you will.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* The Hebrew children in the furnace bravely trampled upon the flames, and transformed the fire into dew as they sang: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

Protected by the law, O prophet, you did not let yourself be evilly defiled, and, divinely illumined with understanding, you sing: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

Your miracle filled all with awe; for, caught up, the Prophet Habbakuk appeared before you, bearing food to you and singing: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

Imprisoned in a pit and offered as food to the lions, O blessed one, you were saved by God's protection and you sang: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

*Theotokion* You pour an abundant stream of healing, O virgin Mother of God, seen by Daniel as the mountain from which the Saviour shone, the God of our fathers.

*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* The God fearing youths in Babylon did not bow before the golden image, but bedewed in the midst of the fiery furnace, they sang a hymn, saying: Blessed are you, the supremely high God of our fathers.

God-loving voices sang to the Almighty from the midst of the fire; for, forming a divine choir, Azarias chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

The harp of the youths theologized concerning the Almighty, the God of all who appeared to them in the furnace as they sang the hymn: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

Watching as the three youths were cast into the furnace, the king saw a fourth appear, whom he called the Son of God; and he sang: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* With a mind illumined with divine radiance, O Daniel blessed by God, you foresaw the birthgiving of the Virgin, prefigured in mystical images, and sang: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* The God-proclaiming children in the furnace trampled the flames of fire underfoot, as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Through active vision you lived sacredly, O prophet, and sang with the bodiless ones: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

All praise you, O blessed prophet; and, rejoicing on your honoured festival, we cry out: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Theotokion* O divinely eloquent one, perceiving the most wondrous Maiden in symbolic images, you sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* In his wrath the Chaldean tyrant heated the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones, but seeing them saved by a higher power, he cried out to the creator and deliverer: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

Striving to preserve the nobility of Abraham, O venerable ones, you acquired his foundation of faith and hope, his patience and endurance of temptations, crying out: You priests, bless the Master, and you people, exalt him above all for ever.

Shining like beacons and making the earth like heaven, rendered luminous by the enlightenment of piety, and having formed a universal choir, the youths sang to the Master who saved them from peril: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

In their youth, the descendants of Abraham, extinguishing the burning furnace and binding the jaws of the lions, rejoice and hymn the king and benefactor of all: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* Wise Daniel taught the mysteries, and the divinely wise youths prefigured your birthgiving, O most pure Lady, seeing in images him who ineffably issued from you, whom you children bless; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Prophet*

*Irmos* We who are saved by you, O pure Virgin, confess you to be the true Mother of God, and with the bodiless choirs we magnify you.

You reaped the harvest of your pangs, ever dancing in the heavens with the prophets about the most exalted throne of the Almighty.

You stand, now crowned, in the light of the threefold sun, before your ultimate desire, rejoicing with the choirs of the bodiless.

*Theotokion* Beautiful is the glory which you now enjoy, for you, O honoured prophet, have been granted to proclaim to all, in images, the most hymned Maiden.

*Canon of the Youths*

*Irmos* We who are saved by you... *as before*

You have attained your desired end, and stand before your ultimate desire in the mansions of heaven, O youths most rich.

Having produced the grain of incorruption with tears, rejoicing, you have received the sheaves of your goodly labour.

Splendour has now fittingly shone upon you, and gladness of heart has blossomed forth; for grief has fled away from where you made your abode.

*Theotokion* You have departed from the fields of death, O Virgin, having given birth to the Lord, the bestower of life, who bestows life upon those who magnify you with faith.

*Exapostilarion from the Octoechos;*  
Glory be to the Father... *of the prophet*

Let Daniel, the greatest among the prophets, be honoured, for he beheld Christ our God as the stone cut, not by human hands, from the mountain of the pure Virgin. And with him let the three youths be praised whom the divine and ineffable image of the Virgin saved from the fiery furnace, by whom the world has been saved.

Both now and for ever...

Wise Daniel taught the mysteries through the divine Spirit, O most pure Lady, and by faith the three children of Abraham prefigured your seedless birthgiving; for the Word who is uncircumscribable in his divinity, desiring to be circumscribed by the flesh through you, O Mother of God, is born in Bethlehem for men's salvation.

*Aposticha from the Octoechos*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Tone 6, composed by Malaxas*

When the noetic Sun of Righteousness  
desired to shine forth from the Virgin,  
the three youths, equal in number to the Trinity,  
shone upon us beforehand from the fiery furnace,  
prefiguring the awesome mystery.  
With them the splendid prophet Daniel  
illuminated the ends of the earth with the light of prophecy,  
proclaiming Christ to be the Stone not cut by human hands,  
quarried from the Virgin, the mountain overshadowed,  
born from her for the salvation of our souls.

## **Liturgy**

*Beatitudes, 8 verses,  
4 from Ode 3 of the canon of the prophet; and 4 from Ode 6 of the canon of the youths.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

God is wonderful in his saints, the God of Israel.

*Verse* In their choirs they bless God, those that are sprung from the fount of Israel.

*Epistle to the Hebrews, number 330*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

The righteous cry and the Lord hears it, and frees them from all their affliction.  
The trials of the righteous are many but our God delivers him from them all.

*Gospel of Luke, number 62*

*Communion Verse*

Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 18

*The service for the saint of the day, the martyr Sebastian, is printed after this one.*

### **The Sunday on or after the 18th: of the Genealogy (or Sunday of the Holy Fathers) the Sunday before Christmas**

*At Little Vespers, the verses of the Resurrection and of the Mother of God as usual.*

### **Great Vespers**

*At Lord, I call to you...*

*If this is on the 18th or 19th, we sing 3 verses of the resurrection,  
3 of Anatolius and 4 of the Fathers.*

*If this day is between the 20th and 23rd, we sing 3 verses of the resurrection,  
one of Anatolius, and the following verses.*

*Verses of the Forefeast, tone 6,  
composed by Antolius,  
to the special melody Having laid aside...*

The never-setting sun comes to shine forth from the Virgin to enlighten the world. Let us hasten to meet him with pure eyes and deeds, and let us now prepare in spirit to receive him who is coming to his own people through a strange birth, for he has chosen this in his good pleasure as he is compassionate, so that, through his birth in Bethlehem he might lead us up, who have estranged ourselves from the life of Eden.

God the Word who is raised upon the shoulders of the Cherubim, having united his essence to the flesh and made his dwelling within the immaculate one and become a man, now comes to earth to be born of the tribe of Judah. The holy cave is adorned beautifully like a magnificent palace for the king of all, and the manger in which the virgin Mary places the infinite one as a child is like a fiery throne, serving for the renewal of creation.

The Virgin places you in a manger of dumb beasts, the unoriginate Word of God, who in a manner beyond understanding now receives a beginning. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, you come to end the foolishness I assumed through the malice of the serpent, tearing apart the rags and chains of my transgressions, O good one and lover of mankind. I glorify you and hymn and joyfully worship your advent in the flesh whereby I have been set free.

*Verses of the Fathers,  
same tone and melody.*

The memory of the forefathers is universally manifested as being truly filled with light and shining with rays of grace. Christ the radiant sun shines from afar on high, leading forth an assembly of stars shining with him; and in the midst of Bethlehem a nativity takes place which is seen to be that of God and man. Piously clapping our hands, with faith let us all form a choir to utter pre-festive praise to his nativity. *Twice, if the Sunday falls before December 20.*

Rejoicing today, Adam is adorned with the glory of divine communion, as the foundation and confirmation of the wise forefathers. With him Abel leaps for joy and Enoch is glad, and Seth dances together with Noah; the most praised Abraham sings with the patriarchs, and Melchisedec from on high observes a birth in which a father has no part. Celebrating the divine memory of the forefathers of Christ, we implore him that our souls be saved.

With gladness the divinely wise youths in the furnace shine upon us, proclaiming the nativity of Christ on earth; for the Lord, descending like a precious dew, preserves his mother undefiled and enriches her with divine gifts. God-pleasing Daniel, who has clearly foreseen the stone uncut from the mountain, rejoices in gladness, and with boldness he now prays for our souls.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Daniel, the man of divine longings, seeing you, O Lord, the stone uncut by human hands, in prophecy called you the child born without seed; for you are the Word incarnate of the Virgin, the immaculate God and Saviour of our souls.

Both now and for ever...  
*and the Dogmatikon of the tone of the week.*

*But if this day is on or after the 20th,  
we sing the following, tone 6,  
composed by Byzantius*

Splendidly adorn yourself, O cave, for the lamb is coming, the mother who is carrying Christ. O manger, receive him who by a word releases us mortals from that which is irrational: piping shepherds, bear witness to the awesome wonder: Magi from Persia, bring gold frankincense and myrrh. For the Lord is to appear from the virgin Mary, the mother, who in a manner befitting a servant, regarding him, worships and cries out in greeting to him who is laid in her arms: How were you sown in me? How did you spring forth in me, my deliverer and God?

*Entrance, Prokimenon and Readings*



### A reading from Genesis

When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his nephew Lot with his goods, and the women and the people. After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And Abram gave him one tenth of everything. (Genesis 14:14-20)

### A reading from Deuteronomy

In those days, Moses said to the sons of Israel: See, I have set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land that I the Lord swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them." At that time I said to you, "I am unable by myself to bear you. The Lord your God has multiplied you, so that today you are as numerous as the stars of heaven. May the Lord, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times more and bless you, as he has promised you.... So I took the leaders of your tribes, wise and reputable individuals, and installed them as leaders over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officials, throughout your tribes. I charged your judges at that time: "Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien. You must not be partial in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. Any case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it." (Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17)

### A reading from Deuteronomy

In those days, Moses said to the sons of Israel: Behold, although heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth with all that is in it, yet the Lord set his heart in love on your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today. Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen. (Deut 10:14-21)

*Entreaty,  
the verse of the church, and this verse to the Fathers, tone 1*

The prophets of great renown, splendid in the rays of divine eloquence, are ever blessed, and, with the sayings of the Spirit as fruit, they preached to all the ineffable nativity of Christ our God; and having lived most wondrously, they ended their lives under the Law.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 3,*  
*composed by Germanus*

Come, lovers of the feasts of the Church, and with psalms let us praise the company of the forefathers: Adam, the forefather of us all, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and, after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets, together with Elias, Elisha and all the rest, Zechariah and the Forerunner; who all preached Christ, the life and the resurrection of our race.

Both now and for ever... *of the forefeast, same tone*

Adorn yourself well, O Bethlehem, for Eden is opened. Prepare yourself, O Ephratha, for Adam is restored, and Eve with him: the curse is annulled and salvation blossoms forth: the souls of the righteous are adorned, offering hymnody instead of myrrh as their gift, and receiving salvation of soul and incorruption. Behold him in the manger who directs those who cry out to sing unceasingly in spirit: Glory to you, O Lord.

*But if this Sunday falls before the 20th of December, we sing instead*

*Theotokion* By the will of the Father, through the divine Spirit  
you seedlessly conceived the Son of God  
who existed before the world began,  
begotten of the Father without a mother.  
You gave birth to him and fed with your milk as an infant  
him who for our sake was incarnate from you without a father.  
Therefore never cease to entreat him  
to deliver our souls from danger.

*Aposticha, of the Resurrection.*  
*But if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, these verses, tone 2*

*Automelon* O house of Ephratha, \* O holy city, \* glory of the prophets: \* beautify the house \* in which the divine one is to be born.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

*Idiomela* O Bethlehem, land of Judah, splendid habitation of him that is incarnate: prepare the divine cave wherein God is to be born in the flesh of the holy Virgin who has not known man, that he might save the world.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Come all, and with faith let us celebrate the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and noetically offering hymnody like a star, with the shepherds let us give voice to the glorification of the Magi: Salvation has come to men through the Virgin's womb, summoning the faithful.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone, composed by Cyprian*

Rejoice, O honorable prophets who dedicated yourselves well to the Law of the Lord, who by faith revealed yourselves as unshaken and unbreakable pillars of Christ; and, having passed on to heaven, beseech him to grant peace to the world and to save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *of the forefeast, same tone, composed by Cyprian*

Behold, the time of our salvation approaches. Prepare yourself, O cave, for the Virgin is coming to give birth. Adorn yourself and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah, for from you our Lord shall shine: hearken, mountains and hills, and surrounding regions of Judea, for Christ is coming in his love for mankind, that he might save man whom he created.

*But if this Sunday fall before the 20th of December, we sing instead:*

*Theotokion* Here is a new wonder greater than all the miracles of old,  
for who has ever known a mother to bear a child without a man,  
and to hold in her arms him who encompasses the whole creation.  
It was the will of God to be born,  
and you, O immaculate one, have carried him as an infant in your arms.  
Therefore with your maternal boldness,  
pray to him without ceasing for us who honour you,  
that he save our souls and have mercy on us.

*After the Blessing of the Loaves,  
the Theotokion Virgin Mother of God, rejoice... twice,  
and the troparion to the Fathers, once, tone 2*

Great are the accomplishments of faith, for in the fountain of flame as if in refreshing water, the three holy youths rejoiced, and the prophet Daniel appeared as a shepherd of lions as if of sheep. By their intercessions, O Christ our God, save our souls.

*If it is the 24th of December, we also sing the troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

As it is written, Mary with elderly Joseph went to be taxed in Bethlehem, for they were of the lineage of David; and she carried in her womb the fruit that had not been sown. The time of the birth was at hand and there was no room at the inn; but the cave proved to be a beauteous palace for the queen. Christ is born, that he might restore the image that fell of old.

## **Matins**

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the Resurrection, twice;  
Glory be to the Father... that of the Fathers;  
Both now and for ever... either the Theotokion [if it is before Dec 20],  
or the troparion of the forefeast [from the 20th].*

*The usual Hymnody of the of the Resurrection, with their Theotokia,  
but if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, we chant these Sessional Hymns:*

*After the first reading from the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the to the Special Melody Joseph was amazed...*

In the fathers, in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Judah and the other patriarchs, Jesse, David and the rest, you mystically prophesied the manifestation of God which would come to pass on earth, that of your pre-eternal Son from the Virgin, Christ, who has appeared in Bethlehem prophesying in the Spirit and calling to all in the world.

*Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... repeat*

*After the second reading from the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the to the Special Melody Of the wisdom...*

O faithful, let us joyously celebrate the feast of the divine fathers, and, honouring Adam and Abel, blessing Seth and Enos; and let us hymn Enoch, Noah, Shem and Japheth. We praise Abraham, who shone in faith before the Law, and the divine Isaac, Jacob, Judah and Levi, and chaste Joseph, as we faithfully cry out: O God-bearing forefathers, entreat Christ our God, that he grant remission of offences to those who celebrate your holy memory with love.

*Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... repeat*

*After Psalm 118 and the usual Evlogitaria, this Sessional Hymn to the fathers, tone 8  
to the Special Melody Of the wisdom...*

With hymns let us all praise Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, meek David with Joshua, and the twelve patriarchs, together with the three youths who quenched the fiery flame with the power of the Spirit. Let us cry out to them: Rejoice, you that bravely denounced the deception of the mad king. Pray to Christ, that he grant remission of offences to those who celebrate your holy memory with love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *another Sessional Hymn,  
in the same tone and melody*

From the bosom of the Father you came down, and in your ineffable condescension accepted poverty like ours, in a manner surpassing nature, O lover of mankind. It was your good pleasure to dwell in a cave, and as an infant to suckle at your mother's breast, while creator and Lord. The Magi, guided by the star, bring gifts to you and sing: Glory to God in the highest, who comes to earth to be born as a man.

*But if this Sunday fall on either the 18th or the 19th of December, this Theotokion*

Like the widow who gave two mites as an offering, I offer you the praise of thanksgiving which is your due, O Lady, for all your gifts; for you a shelter and aid, ever rescuing me from temptations and tribulations. Delivered from that which causes me grief, as from the midst of a burning furnace, I cry to you with all my heart: O Mother of God, help me by entreating Christ our God to grant me remission of transgressions, for I, your servant, have you as my hope.

*The Hymn of Degrees and the rest of the tone and according to the normal course.*

#### *The Canons*

*If this Sunday fall on either the 18th or the 19th of December: The three Canons from the Octoechos, and the canon of the fathers.*

*But if this Sunday fall between the 20th and the 23rd of December: The canon of the Resurrection from the Octoechos, the canon of the forefeast, and the canon of the fathers, (excluding the initial two Troparia of that canon, which are of the Resurrection).*

*If this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, then the canon of the fathers, and that of the forefeast.*

#### *Ode 1*

##### *Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers, tone 6*

*Irmos* He who in ancient times buried the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, is buried beneath the earth by the children of those he had saved. But, like the maidens, let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously has he been glorified.

Through fear the gates of death are thrown open to you and the everlasting gates are cast down, for through your honourable descent the dead of old have arisen, hymning your resurrection with gladness, O Christ.

God, before whom those of heaven and earth tremble, wishes to stand before the tribunal of Pilate, as one condemned by the judge of an iniquitous trial, and is struck in the face by the hands of the unrighteous.

*To the Fathers* Today the assembly of the divine fathers radiantly celebrates the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and most glorious grace prefigure it, of which Abraham and the children of the Law are an image.

Of old sacred Abraham received the divinity in three persons; and now the Word of the Father, who is equally enthroned with him, through the divine Spirit, comes to the children, him that is gloriously glorified.

The children who cast down godlessness in the furnace are in number and faith an image of the divine Trinity, revealing to the world the hidden mysteries of God.

Abraham was delivered from the hands of the unrighteous, and the divine youths and Daniel the prophet were saved from the flame of the furnace and from the den of wild beasts; which we now celebrate on the forefeast of the nativity of Christ.

*Theotokion* O joyous and unwedded Mother, incorrupt Virgin, we bless you, for you blossomed forth from the generation of Abraham and the tribe of David, and gave birth to Christ, of old foretold by the prophets.

*Canon of the Forefeast, tone 1*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

The Virgin comes to Bethlehem to give birth to Christ, an infant; to him who willingly humbled himself; to him who became visible: let heaven and earth rejoice.

Leap up, you mountains and hills; sing, you divinely eloquent prophets; people and all nations, clap your hands. Our salvation and enlightenment comes to be born in the city of Bethlehem.

*Theotokion* God is known as man through the unwedded Virgin; he who is rich becomes poor, enriching those who, through malice, have been reduced to poverty. Let us all exult him with praises, for he has been glorified.

*Katavasia* Christ is born...

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* You suspended the earth immovably upon the waters: now creation sees you suspended on Golgotha, and it quakes with great amazement and cries: There is none holy but you, O Lord.

Having spent three days in the tomb, by your life-creating resurrection you raised the dead from past ages, who, loosed from condemnation, rejoiced with gladness, crying out: Behold, you have come as our deliverance, O Lord.

Glory to your rising, O our Saviour, for, as Almighty, you have delivered us from hell, corruption and death, and, crying out, we say: There is none holy but you, O Lord.

*To the Fathers* Faithfully preserving the glory of the image and likeness of God, with the fire of the Spirit the children, as champions, extinguished the fire of the golden image, singing: We know but one Lord.

The captive children, clothed with the wisdom and power of the Spirit, shamed the wise men of Babylon and boldly cried out: There is none holy but you, O Lord.

The Law rejoices and joins chorus with the children and the prophets in exultation today before the divine advent of the Lord: Abraham rejoices, for from his seed the incarnate Lord has appeared.

*Theotokion* A conception without pain, and your acceptance of birthgiving has transpired in a manner beyond recounting, O Mother of God, for the Word of God, who is God proclaimed by the prophets, has revealed himself, a mystery beyond nature.

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Born of the Father before the ages in a manner beyond understanding, he has become incarnate of the Virgin in latter times, in his foreknowledge, wishing to renew humanity corrupt through the counsel of the evil serpent.

The unoriginate Son of God, enthroned on high with the Father and the Spirit, seeing human nature humbled, accepts a beginning and chooses to be incarnate as a man.

*Theotokion* She who is more holy than the angels and all creation now gives birth without seed to the Angel of Great Counsel incarnate for the restoration of all who unceasingly sing to him: You are holy, O Lord.

*Ipakoe, tone 8*

The Angel who bedewed the youths in the furnace,  
has now put an end to the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women, saying:  
Why bring you myrrh? Whom do you seek in the tomb?  
Christ our God is risen, the life and salvation of the human race.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* Foreseeing your divine self-emptying upon the cross, Habakkuk cried out marvelling: You have shattered the strength of the powerful, O blessed and almighty one, and preached to those in Hades.

Your descent into hell, O Christ our God, brought life for the dead: you confined the realm of the enemy below, O good one, and opened the path for men to heaven.

The most pure body of the deliverer did not decay in the tomb, but, as mighty, you broke down the gates of Hades and arose in glory on the third day, O Christ.

*To the Fathers* Let us honour Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the first fruits of the fathers, for from their seed Christ has come, incarnate of the Virgin, as he is almighty.

Indicating the coming events of the descent of Christ to all, Daniel clearly showed the lions to be as sheep, for, as a prophet of God, he foresaw the future.

Not attracted by the poison of sin, O youths, you were delivered from the flame: of wisdom more pure than gold, you were not melted in the furnace of deception.

*Theotokion* O honoured and most pure one, your child, who surpasses nature, is proclaimed as the expectation of the nations and the salvation of the world; and today the multitude of the fathers sings to him.

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You gave rise to a staff from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, putting forth the unfading blossom of the creator of all, who, as God, adorns with flowers all the earth, which cries out to him: Glory to your power, O Lord.

O Word of God, you have come to edify me, despoiled through evil food and dragged down in mind and made like the dumb beasts; for, becoming an infant, you rested in a manger of dumb beasts: glory to your power, O Lord.

*Theotokion* O Jesus, Habbakuk foresaw you incarnate of the Virgin, the mountain overshadowed, breaking down the mountains and hills of evil, and giving over to utter destruction the arrogance of the evil one and the uprisings of the demons.



Ode 5

*Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* Isaiah saw the unsetting light, the light of your theophany, dawning from the night in your tender love for us, O Christ, and he cried out: The dead shall arise and they that dwell in the tombs shall awaken, and all born on earth shall rejoice greatly.

The angel, symbolizing that which radiates joy, appeared as a light-bearer in the tomb proclaiming the resurrection to the women; and, setting aside their lamentation, they rejoiced in the risen Christ, from whom they received unending joy.

O good one, who with loving kindness assumed a form like ours, you were willingly nailed to the cross for the sake of me, who, of old in paradise, rejected your holy commandment for the sake of food; and you died as a man, granting me life.

*To the Fathers* Let us honour today divine Daniel, of the race of Abraham, the first fruit of the fathers, as a leader of the Law and of grace; for, as a prophet of God, he foretold the advent of Christ from the Virgin, anticipating his divine nativity.

Clearly prefiguring through the Angel's descent the coming of the Lord to us, the children of Abraham extinguished the furnace; and, rendering the flame dewy with their faith, they consumed the splendour of the golden image.

Through the Spirit, Daniel closed the mouths of the lions in the pit; and, through grace, the children of Abraham quenched the mighty fire. Saved from corruption, they proclaimed Christ, virgin-born, entreating him, the bringer of our salvation.

*Theotokion* Revealing through the divine Spirit your painless assumption of our nature, and keeping vigil in the Law of grace, O Lord, Isaiah cried out: From the race of Abraham and the tribe of Judah the Virgin comes, giving seedlessly giving birth.

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

The most perfect Son of God, the Master by nature, in his loving kindness was pleased to be called the Son of man and be counted among slaves. Willingly humbling yourself, you come to be born in a cave, O most compassionate one.

O Christ our king, uncontainable by nature, how can a little cave receive you? How can a manger contain you, who comes to your own in the flesh from an unwedded Mother, for our sake, to save those who have been estranged from you, O Lord?

*Theotokion* The mother of the shepherd, as a lamb comes to give birth. Be ready, O holy cave; hasten O shepherds, to see the newborn shepherd and lamb; Magi, prepare yourselves with gifts to worship him as king incarnate.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* Beholding the sea of life, surging with the storm of temptations, I run to your calm haven and cry to you: Raise my life from corruption, O most merciful one.

By your three-day burial, you brought about the death of death and the destruction of Hades; and risen, O good Jesus, you divinely pour life upon those in the world. *twice*

*To the Fathers* Hospitable was the nature and exalted was the faith of Abraham the forefather who rejoiced to receive the image of the divine mystery, and who is glad to have anticipated Christ.

The faith of the youths brought creation, the gift of the creator, under subjection, as the devouring and bold fire stood in awe of those who honoured Jesus Christ, the creator of fire.

Daniel the prophet, closing the lions' mouths in the pit, divinely showed that through the coming of Christ the savagery of the world is in harmony with divine peace.

*Theotokion* O unwedded Mother Mary, from a virgin womb you gave birth to Christ, whom the prophets beheld in the Spirit, as the forefathers join chorus before his nativity.

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

O Lady, you come as a new heaven, that Christ, the sun of glory, might shine as through a cloud, incarnate of you in the cave; for, in his boundless loving kindness, he wishes splendidly to illumine all of this earth with rays of his light.

Seeing our infirmity and misery, O compassionate Christ, and not forsaking us, without leaving the Father, you emptied yourself to make your abode in the womb of the unwedded one, who now comes to give painless birth to you in the cave.

*Theotokion* O mountains and hills, fields and vales, people and generations, nations and every creature: exult, filled with divine gladness, for the deliverance of all, the Word of God who is beyond time, in his loving kindness, hastens to come under time.

*If this Sunday falls on the 18th or 19th of December,  
we sing this Kontakion to the fathers, tone 6*

Defended by the indescribable essence, O thrice- bless'd ones,  
you shunned the adoration of the image made by hands:  
glorified by your ordeal by fire,  
you stood in the midst of unbearable flames and called upon God:  
Hasten to our aid, O compassionate and merciful one;  
for you have the power to do as you will.

*Ikos* Stretch forth your hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsts for us, not swallow us up: spare our souls, as you once spared the three youths in Babylon, who glorified you unceasingly, as cast for your sake into the furnace, they cried out to you: Hasten to our aid, O compassionate and merciful one; for you have the power to do as you will.

*But if this Sunday falls on or after the 20th of December,  
we sing this Kontakion, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody The choir of angels...*

Be glad, O Bethlehem  
and be prepared O Ephratha.  
For behold, the Virgin now hastens to give birth;  
she who bears the lamb and great shepherd in her womb.  
Seeing this, the God-bearing fathers are glad,  
~ and together with the shepherds  
they will hymn the Virgin who is nursing him.

*Ikos* Beholding the splendid radiance of your maternity, O Virgin, God-loving Abraham, ever-memorable Isaac, Jacob and all the divinely assembled choir of saints rejoice; and, with joyous utterances, they lead creation forth to meet you; for you have become the vehicle of joy for all, having conceived him who once was seen in Babylon, who preserved unconsumed the youths cast unjustly into the furnace, and who indicated you in manner past all comprehension. Therefore, the young maidens sing to him who is borne in your arms, hymning you as the Virgin who is nursing him.

### *Ode 7*

#### *Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* It is an inexpressible wonder, that he who delivered the holy children from the fiery furnace is laid in the tomb as a corpse without breath, for the salvation of us who sing: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

## December 18

What a strange wonder, that the Lord, who sits upon a throne in the highest, in assuming flesh has endured death; but he has arisen through the might of the divinity, with him raising the dead of ages past.

You shook the might of death and arose, granting resurrection to those who truly glorify you, the Lord, and who sing to you with Orthodox faith: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

*To the Fathers* O father Abraham, founder of your race, as the ancestor of Christ in the flesh, you are clearly revealed by the Spirit as the father of nations, for the salvation of us who sing: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

The hymn of the inspired ones shames those who utter soul-less noises, for the youths, bodily trampling down flames of the fiery furnace, unharmed sang: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

Of old, the prophet Daniel, gazing with spiritual vision, therein foretelling the awesome things which shall come to pass, revealed the second coming of Christ, as he sang: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

*Theotokion* A strange wonder, known among the prophets and revealed of old to the fathers: a pure Virgin has come, to give birth to the salvation of us who sing: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

### *Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The divine vine, on which the incorrupt cluster ripens, approaches, coming to give birth to him who pours the wine of gladness and waters us who sing to him: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The divine phial containing the fragrant myrrh comes to pour it out in the cave of Bethlehem, filling with mystic fragrance those who sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* The tongs, seen of old by the prophet Isaiah, comes, holding within her Christ, the divine coal, who burns up the fuel of sin and enlightens the souls of the faithful.

### *Ode 8*

#### *Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* Be amazed with fear, O heavens, and be shaken O foundations of the earth. For, behold, he who dwells on high is numbered among the dead and sheltered as a stranger in a narrow tomb. You children bless, you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

How great is your ineffable condescension toward us sinners, O Christ, for having tasted death, though immortal God, you were laid in the tomb as a man. But you arose, O Word, with you raising those below who exalt you above all for ever.

Every ear is struck with awe at how the Most High willingly came to earth to destroy the power of hell with his cross and burial, and how he has raised all with him to sing: You children bless, you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*To the Fathers* Prefiguring your sacrifice, O Christ, Abraham, in obedience to you went forth with faith, to sacrifice on the mountain his son; but he returned with him, rejoicing and glorifying and exalting above all you, the deliverer of the world.

When you robed yourself in the most fiery flame as in a divine robe, O Christ, you utterly extinguished the fire for the three holy youths, and by your descent the dew cried out to those who sing: You priests, praise and exalt him above all for ever.

The prophet Daniel was given to the lions as an unjust trial, but, through the precept of abstinence, the wild beasts became fellow fasters in the depths of the pit. Through his prayers and those of Abraham and the children, save those in the world who hymn you, O Christ.

*Theotokion* The voices of the prophets faithfully proclaimed him as Jesus Immanuel, who came in human form, both God and man; and the Virgin Mary, without having known man, gave birth in the city of Bethlehem to a Son, the co-unoriginate Word, through the Holy Spirit.

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the lord and exult him above all for ever.

In gladness let us cry out with the angels: Glory to God in the highest; the Saviour is born. The Master comes, whom the star indicates; the Magi hasten to see him, a baby in a manger. Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

You chose to be enrolled with slaves, O Master, subjecting yourself to the law of Caesar to free mankind from slavery to the evil one. Therefore, rejoicing, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* O unoriginate Word, I bear you as a newborn infant, although I have in no way known man, said the Virgin, marvelling. Whom on earth can I name as your father? I know not. Therefore, with all I sing to you: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Resurrection and the Fathers*

*Irmos* Weep not for me, O Mother, as you see in the sepulchre the Son whom you conceived without seed in your womb. For I shall arise and be glorified, and as God I shall raise to eternal glory those who magnify you with faith and love.

Why do you lament, O creation, to see the giver of life as a mortal upon the cross and in the tomb? For he shall arise, renewing you with light; with his resurrection on the third day he casts down Hades and with him raises the dead who praise him.

Though you descended into the grave as one dead, O Christ the giver of life, yet you destroyed the might of Hades. Raising up with you the dead which it had swallowed up in the past, as God you give resurrection to those who magnify you with faith and love.

*To the Fathers* Celebrating the feast of the fathers from before the Law, let us honour Christ, who, in a godly manner, is begotten of them in the flesh; for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who, through faith, are proclaimers of the Spirit and grace, are shown to be the foundation of the prophets and the Law.

God, who by the fire in the bush showed to Moses the godly mystery in a manner past understanding, having descended into the fire for the children, made the flame of the furnace to be dew through the fire of the essence of his divinity.

The holy children, assembling with Abraham, and Daniel, the wondrous prophet of God, Isaac and Jacob, with Moses and Aaron, faithfully join chorus before the nativity of Christ, praying unceasingly that we be saved.

*Theotokion* All creation rejoices in your birthgiving, O Virgin, for Bethlehem has opened Eden to us; and delighting in the tree of life, we all earnestly cry out in faith: You fulfill our prayers, O Lady.

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain. Him we praise and magnify.

O mysteries strange, awesome and most glorious: the Lord of glory comes to earth and, humbling himself, enters a cave incarnate, seeking to restore Adam and to deliver Eve from her pangs.

By your swaddling clothes you loosen the bonds of our sinful falls; by your great poverty you enrich us all; and by being laid in a manger of irrational animals you release men from irrational malice, O unoriginate Word of God.

*Theotokion* The preaching of the prophets reaches the ends of the earth, for they foretold him who was to come in the fullness of time; who came incarnate of the pure Virgin: him let us receive with a pure mind.

*Exapostilarion of the Resurrection,  
Glory be to the Father..., of the Fathers,  
to the Special Melody To the disciples...*

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the elect of the patriarchs, the fathers before the Law, shine like beacons, as all the prophets and the righteous shine forth from them like radiant lamps: they illumine creation with rays of honourable prophecy, and earnestly pray to God for the world.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* How wondrous it is, that the unblemished lamb, the daughter of Adam and David, gives birth to the lamb, the unoriginate Word, in the latter days. The forefeast of her ineffable birthgiving is fittingly celebrated by the company of the fathers.

*But if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December,  
the Exapostilarion of the Resurrection is not sung, but is replaced by this one to the Fathers*

From the seed of Abraham and the divine forefather David is born the unoriginate Word, who of old wondrously saved the youths equal in number to the Trinity by the descent of the Angel into the flame, and who transformed the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women into joy.

Glory be to the Father...

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... *as above*

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Be glad, O Bethlehem, and be prepared, O Ephratha, for the Mother of God is coming to the cave and the manger to give birth ineffably to God: O how dread is the mystery. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the patriarchs and prophets, angels and men, now radiantly celebrate the forefeast of his divine advent.

Let everything that has breath... *and the Praises,*

*with 8 verses: 4r of the Resurrection, and 4 of the Fathers, tone 5,  
to the Special Melody Rejoice...*

Lift up your voice, O Zion, truly divine city, and proclaim the divine memory of the fathers, honouring Abraham, Isaac and the ever-memorable Jacob; for we all magnify Judah and Levi, great Moses and wondrous Aaron, and we honour David, Joshua and Samuel. Weaving divine hymns into godly praise on the forefeast of Christ's nativity, we ask that we receive grace from him, and that he grant the world great mercy. *twice*

*Verse* Blessed art you, Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is your name for ever.

O Elias, who once rode upon a divine chariot of fire, come forth; and you, O divinely wise Elisha; and rejoice with Ezekiel and Hosea. O honoured and divinely inspired twelve prophets, join chorus, and all you righteous, sing hymns to the nativity of Christ; O blessed youths who quenched the flames of the furnace with the dew of the Spirit, entreat Christ for us, that he impart great mercy to our souls.

*Verse* For righteous are you in all that you have done for us.

The Virgin Mother of God, she who through the ages has been preached on earth by the prophets in their utterances, she whom the wise patriarchs and the assemblies of the righteous proclaim, with whom the comeliness of women joins chorus: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Hannah, together with glorious Miriam, the sister of Moses. With them all the ends of the world rejoice and all creation renders honour, for the creator and God of all comes to be incarnate and to grant us great mercy.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8*

The compilation of the teachings of the Law reveals the divine birth of Christ in the flesh as being from those who, before the Law, proclaimed the glad tidings of grace to those who lived beyond the Law. In that this birth is the means of deliverance from corruption, for the sake of the resurrection they declared to the souls held fast in Hades: Glory to you, O Lord.

*But if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December,  
the following verses are sung, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody Called from on high...*

The proclamation of Isaiah is fulfilled, for the Virgin bears the incomprehensible and indescribable one in the flesh, and she comes most gloriously to receive God. Be ready, O Bethlehem, for it is the king's pleasure that you become his abode. O manger, receive Christ wrapped as an infant, who in his goodness wishes to loosen the bonds of man's offences.

Enrolled with slaves, the Master wished to erase thoroughly the record of our transgressions and to enter in the book of the living all slain by the thievery of the serpent.



And the Virgin bears you, who bears all things, wrapped in mortal flesh and pleased to dwell in a lowly cave. Marvelling at your might, the heavenly choirs of angels and the godly shepherds praise you who is to be born.

The radiant living cloud laden with the heavenly rain now approaches to pour it upon the earth, that it might water the face of the earth. The spring of grace, the noetic swallow, who is pregnant, gives birth to the ineffable Word, putting an end to the winter of godlessness. The pure and undefiled palace brings forth the incarnate king in the cave.

Glory be to the Father...

The compilation of the teachings of the Law... *as above*

Both now and for ever...

Most blessed are you...

*Great Doxology with the Troparion of the Resurrection;  
Litanies and the Dismissal.*

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, ten verse: six from the Octoechos, and four from Ode 3 of the canon to the Fathers.*

*At the Entrance, the Troparia to the Resurrection and to the Fathers;  
Glory be to the Father... Both now... the Kontakion to the Fathers.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4 the Hymn of the Fathers*

Blessed are you, Lord God of our ancestors, and worthy of praise; and glorious is your name for ever.

*Verse* For you are just in all you have done for us.

*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews, number 328*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what things you did in their time, in the days of old.

How by your own hand you drove out the nations, and planted us in; how you crushed the peoples, but caused us to root and grow.

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 1*

*Communion Verses*

Praise the Lord from the heaven; praise him in the heights.

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 18

### Martyr Sebastian and those with him

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... verses tone 1,  
to the Special Melody O most lauded martyrs...*

With the dye of your precious blood \* you made for yourself a costly robe of purple, \* and, having arrayed in it, \* you truly dwell \* in the kingdom on high, \* standing before God, the king of all. \* Entreat him, \* to grant to our souls \* peace and great mercy.

With Sebastian also suffered Zoe, \* Mark and Marcellinus, \* and divinely wise Tiburtius. \* Enduring stormy waves of torture, \* they have now made their abode \* where is divine peace, devoid of pain, \* and where they pray \* that peace and great mercy \* be granted to our souls.

Blessed invincible martyrs, \* having forsaken earthly things, \* you hastened to heaven, \* adorned with your wounds \* and splendidly arrayed \* in your honoured sufferings. \* Therefore, pray, \* that peace and great mercy \* be granted to our souls.

*If Alleluia is to be sung at Matins,  
the following verses of the Mother of God are sung before the verses of the martyrs,  
in the same tone and melody.*

Incorruptibly you give birth to God \* who has destroyed corruption \* and flowed with incorruption, \* O pure and undefiled Lady. \* Therefore, I beseech you: \* By your prayers, O pure one, \* renew me, become corrupt through wicked deeds, \* that with love I may glorify and magnify you \* who has exalted our race.

O exalted Lady, \* the hope and confirmation, \* refuge and help of the faithful, \* we entreat you: \* Protect from misfortune your servants \* who worship your birthgiving with faith, \* and pray to Christ, \* that he grant our souls \* peace and great mercy.

Alas, what shall become of me \* defiled in mind, soul and body through transgressions? \* What shall I do? \* How will I be able to avoid the unquenchable flame \* and the everlasting and unbreakable bonds? \* But before the end \* entreat your Son, O immaculate Lady, \* to grant me forgiveness.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, in the same tone and melody*

Within your body \* you carried Christ, \* the fire of divinity, \* O most pure one. \*  
Beseech him, \* that he quench my readily kindled passions, \* deliver me from eternal fire,  
\* and grant me the splendour of the righteous \* when he comes to judge all things.

*Theotokion of the Cross* The undefiled Virgin, \* saw on the tree \* him to whom she had  
given birth from her seedless womb, \* and unable to bear such innermost wounding, \*  
said, rending her hair: \* How is it that you who holds all creation in the palm of your  
hand \* are lifted up on the cross \* as one condemned, \* who desires to save mankind in  
whatever way is possible?

*Troparion, tone 4*

In their sufferings, O Lord, your martyrs | received imperishable crowns from  
you, our God. | Armed with your might, they cast down tyrants | and crushed the feeble  
audacity of demons. || Through their intercessions, save our souls.

## **Matins**

*Both canons from the Octoechos; and that of the martyrs, tone 1,  
upon the acrostic I wisely render divine honour to you, O martyr  
composed by Joseph.*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* As befitted your divine majesty, your triumphant right hand has been glorified in  
strength. In its almighty power it dashed the enemy to pieces, O immortal Lord, and  
made a new path through the deep for the people of Israel.

Illumined by the divine rays of the worshipful Trinity, O ever-memorable one, by  
your supplications may those who with faith honour your luminous and sacred feast be  
partakers of the light.

Radiant of mind and replete with honourable brilliance, as one sensible and wise,  
O martyred athlete, your only desire was He Who Is, and through faith you received  
him.

With beads of sweat you truly erased the thoughts of your flesh, and with the  
blood of your suffering you dried the turgid streams of polytheism, O divinely wise  
martyr.

By your divine teaching you brought a regiment of athletes to the master, casting  
down the impiety of the torturer by the grace of the Holy Spirit; and with them you pray  
that we be saved.

*Theotokion* You gave birth to an infant, him who has been with the Father from before the beginning of time; and you renewed the laws of nature, O pure virgin Mother, by your supernatural, honoured and divine birthgiving.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* As you alone know human frailty, having in mercy assumed its form, gird me with strength from on high that I may cry out to you, O holy one: indescribable is the living temple of your glory, O lover of mankind.

O invincible martyr who led an honourable army, arrayed in the divine armour of the faith, you cast down the legions of the foe and the wiles of the tyrants by the power of the Spirit.

Having established the aspirations of your heart with pious wisdom upon the noetic rock, O much-suffering martyr, you did not fall prey to the wiles of the deceitful serpent; but in spirit have become a foundation of piety for all.

Bound and suspended on a tree, you endured the cruel piercing of your body, O martyr; yet by the divine power of God you were immediately shown to be whole and unharmed, putting the wiles of the enemy to shame.

*Theotokion* Immaculate Lady, you appear to be the noetic sanctuary and pure abode of him who sanctifies all things; for from you has God appeared incarnate, known to the world in two natures, but in a single person.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* Having been lifted up...

With the staining of your blood you dyed a robe of martyrdom, and arrayed yourself therein as with a costly robe of purple, O Sebastian. You made your abode with Christ in the ageless kingdom on high, and with those who suffered with you have received a cross. Joining chorus with them, be ever mindful of us.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* He who sits upon the throne of the cherubim and abides in the bosom of the Father sits in your bosom as upon his holy throne, O Lady; for as God incarnate he truly reigns over all the nations; and we now sing to him with understanding. Entreat him, that your servants be saved.

*Theotokion of the Cross* She who in latter times gave birth in the flesh to you, begotten of the unoriginate Father, beholding you hanging upon the cross, cried out: Woe is me, O most beloved Jesus; how is it that you who are glorified as God by the angels are now crucified by iniquitous men, O my Son? I hymn you, O long-suffering one.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* Habakkuk with prophetic eyes saw you, O mountain, overshadowed by the grace of God, and he foretold that the holy one of Israel should come from you for our salvation and regeneration.

The Lord gave you power to vanquish the enemy in your weak flesh, O mighty martyr Tiburtius; for when the fire was kindled, you entered it like the youths, and received the dew of heaven.

You joined the heavenly ministers, O Tiburtius; for, serving Christ, you offered pure sacrifices in spirit, O sacred minister, the glory and boast of martyrs; therefore, we joyfully honour you.

Suspended upright, lacerated with sharp blades, pierced with the bitter wounds of arrows, and buried in a pit where he met his divine end, Castulus of valiant mind rejoiced.

Performing healings in the Holy Spirit, O blessed Sebastian, you magnificently proclaimed salvation to the people who piously looked for enlightenment, as you finished the race of martyrdom.

*Theotokion* The transcendent God chose you alone from all generations, O immaculate Lady; and becoming man, the creator of human nature assumed the essence of humanity.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* O Christ who has enlightened the ends of the earth with the light of your coming and has made them shine by your cross, enlighten with the knowledge of God those who in the right faith sing your praises.

Your paths and ways, which led to the Lord alone, tripped the aimless steps of the enemy and were for many a straight and firm path, O honourable martyr of Christ.

Wise Marcellinus and Mark spoke before the tribunal with eloquence of the saving advent of Christ; and, bound together, were pierced with sharp blades, receiving the adornment of martyrdom.

Marcellinus and Mark, mightily emulating the suffering of him who has slain our passions, were pierced with spears; and crowned, they joined the choir of passion-bearers.

*Theotokion* O Lady, radiant cloud of the sun, by your prayers dispel the clouds of my soul and illumine my mind darkened by negligence, that I may hymn you.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The uttermost depth has encompassed us and there is none to deliver us: we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. But save your people, O our God, for you are the strength and restoration of the weak.

By steadfastness of mind you were tireless when pitilessly beaten with staves and pierced by many arrows. You passed, rejoicing, over to the never-waning light, O martyr.

Christ imparted life to you, for you struggled and fought demons, sustained bitter wounds, and looked to him with the eyes of your heart, O invincible martyr Sebastian.

With the hard staves of your wise words you smashed falsehood, demolished the sanctuaries of the enemy, destroyed their idolatrous temples and built yourself up as a temple of the divine Spirit.

*Theotokion* You have restored our nature, corrupt through the disobedience, having given birth to him who renews all things by his divine will, O divine joyous one, who alone among women is blessed.

*There is no Kontakion for this service,  
so we use the Sessional Hymn of the Martyrs for Matins in the Octoechos.*

#### Ode 7

*Irmos* We the faithful perceive you as if a furnace, O Mother of God, for as the Most High saved the three children, so he fully restored the world through your womb, the God of our fathers who is praised and glorified above all.

Strengthened by your mighty power, O Christ, your passion-bearers vanquished the foe, trampled falsehood underfoot, and gave their bodies over to wounding, singing: The God of our fathers is praised and glorified above all.

Having struggled well, Marcellinus and glorious Mark, Tiburtius and wise Castulus, the divinely radiant passion-bearers and martyrs, have passed over to heaven, hymning our praised and glorified God.

As a youth you noetically trod upon the flame, O athlete Tiburtius, like the youths of old, receiving the dew of the Spirit from on high, and singing earnestly: The God of our fathers is praised and glorified above all.

Suspended like a lamb, O glorious martyr Zoe, you choked the enemy with the cords of your patiently-endured pangs, and you live even after death, singing: The God of our fathers is praised and glorified above all.

*Theotokion* O pure Lady, we call you the golden jar, the most holy table of the divine bread of life, the place of sanctity, the throne where God the Most High has rested: the praised and glorious God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* In the furnace as in a crucible the children of Israel shone purer than gold with the beauty of godliness as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, sing and exalt him above all for ever.

Desiring to die to the world and all things in the world, O honoured one, you were granted the things of life, crying out earnestly: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, sing and exalt him above all for ever.

The iniquitous cruelly set you in a deep pit, and filling it in, slew you, O ever-memorable Castulus, who sang fervently: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, sing and exalt him above all for ever.

As the namesake of life, O Zoe, you obtained blessed life; for you left this life of corruption by violent strangulation, singing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, sing and exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* In giving birth to the beautiful God and Master who adorns the human race with divine beauties, O pure one, you yourself were adorned. To him we sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord, sing and exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Burning but unconsumed, the bush prefigured your pure birthgiving, O Mother of God. Therefore we now entreat you to quench in us the raging furnace of temptations, that we may never cease to magnify you.

That you might be granted divine splendour, everlasting glory and beauty, O blessed Sebastian, you manfully endured torture, pain and death; and so we magnify you.

You were like the sun amid stars, with those who suffered with you, O martyr; and now, through your sacred sufferings, you illumine with pure splendour the divine foundation of the Church, and dispel the boastfulness of the demons.

Tiburtius, Marcellinus and Mark, Zoe and Castulus, loving Christ, suffered together with the divinely wise Sebastian their instructor, and equally received crowns of victory, praying ever for us.

The divine choir of the martyrs, taken up to dwell in the radiant mansions, traverse the heavens rejoicing, ever entreating him who loves mankind for us who ever bless them.

*Theotokion* The noetic armies are filled with awe, beholding the divine brilliance of the Father ineffably held in your arms and assuming our form, that he might deify mortals, O immaculate virgin Mother.



## December 19

### The Martyr Boniface

#### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... these verses, tone 4  
to the Special Melody You have given a sign...*

Desiring the excellent name \* given to martyrs, \* O much suffering passion-bearer,  
\* you endured pangs \* with bold resolve, O blessed one, \* looking to the place of rest  
where there is no pain, \* and seeking to receive heavenly honours, \* a dwelling-place in  
paradise, \* never-waning light and everlasting life.

You endured the most savage of pangs: \* the tearing away of your fingernails, \*  
cruel piercing, \* molten lead \* and the severing of your head, \* and joined the choir of  
athletes, rejoicing, O much suffering one. \* Therefore, we celebrate your annual  
memorial, \* O athlete Boniface, \* conversor with the angels.

Sending you before her, O Boniface her manservant, \* Aglais acquired a divine  
master \* who tamed the passions, \* attained mastery over tyrants, \* cast down the enemy,  
\* and was arrayed in a crown of victory. \* Having constructed a holy church all-adorned,  
\* she enshrined you there, praising you in sanctity.

*But if Alleluia is to be sung at Matins instead of God is the Lord...  
the following verses of the Mother of God are sung before the foregoing verses of the martyr,  
in the same tone and melody.*

O Lady, rain down upon me \* the depths of your mercy, \* and in your mercy, O  
Maiden, \* give drink to my heart, consumed by the burning heat of the passions; \* cause  
drops of remorse \* to pour continually, I pray, O pure one, \* whereby I may be granted  
the consolation, \* which those who shed tears in sincerity \* shall receive.

O Lady, take pity on me \* shaken by the assaults of the demons \* and cast into the  
pit of destruction; \* and establish me upon the rock of the virtues. \* Destroying the  
counsels of the enemy, \* grant that I may follow \* the precepts of your Son and our God,  
\* that I may receive remission \* on the day of judgment.

I have fallen among vile and murderous thieves, \* O immaculate Maiden, \* and  
by their assaults I have been stripped \* of the incorrupt garments of heavenly splendour, \*  
and have been pitilessly wounded by them \* and cast barely alive to a place of affliction. \*  
\* Lead me, extend your hand \* and raise me up, I pray.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* I lie upon the bed of despondency, O immaculate one, \* and pass my life in slothfulness, \* and I fear the time of my end. \* Let not the most evil serpent \* rend my lowly soul asunder \* without pity, like a lion. \* Going before me in your goodness, \* before my end \* raise me up to repentance.

*Theotokion of the Cross* Beholding Christ, who loves mankind, crucified, O most pure one, \* his side pierced by a spear, \* you cried out, weeping: \* What is this, O my Son? \* How can the ungrateful people reward you thus, \* for the good you did to them? \* How can you hasten to leave me childless, O most Beloved? \* I marvel at your voluntary crucifixion, \* O compassionate one.

*Troparion of the martyr Boniface, tone 4*

In his suffering, O Lord, Boniface your martyr | received an imperishable crown from you, our God. | Armed with your might, he cast down tyrants | and crushed the feeble audacity of demons. || By his intercessions, save our souls.

## **Matins**

*Both canons from the Octoechos; and that of the martyr, tone 4,  
upon the acrostic With faith I hymn you, O most radiant martyr  
composed by Joseph.*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* O virgin-born, I pray you, drown the three parts of my soul in the depths of dispassion, as of old you drowned the mighty commanders; that in the immortality of my body, as on a timbrel, I may sing a hymn of victory.

Emulating the feats of the valiant athletes with zealous intent, you suffered mightily, slaying the serpent with your life-bearing sufferings, O athlete Boniface, conversor with the angels.

Beholding the falsehood of the enemy cruelly poured upon the earth, O valiant passion-bearer, and, having enkindled your soul and divine longing, you entered the arena with fearless resolve.

Illumined with divine wisdom, you made foolish the unwise foe, proclaiming Christ, who made himself like us in the coarseness of the flesh, in which he desired to become manifest, O much-suffering martyr Boniface.

*Theotokion* We the faithful, all hymn pure Mary with oneness of mind: the mountain of God which Daniel foresaw; the noetic tabernacle, the sanctuary of glory, the table which held the divine bread.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* Like a barren woman the Church of the gentiles has given birth, and she can scarcely bear the great assembly of children who came forth from her. Let us cry out to our wondrous God: Holy are you, O Lord.

Desiring the freedom on high, O glorious one, you were delivered from the yoke of slavery, having emulating the honoured sufferings of him who in his loving kindness became a servant.

Shown to be above carnal understandings by divine favour, O martyr Boniface, rejoicing, you suddenly endured every assault of evils.

Denying yourself, you went forth to struggles and contests against the enemy, armed with the cross as a weapon; and were glorified as a victor, O martyr Boniface.

*Theotokion* The transcendent God poured himself into your womb without leaving the bosom of the Father, O immaculate Lady, and became your Son, saving mankind.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 4*  
to the *Special Melody* Having been lifted up...

You became a true martyr, sent to the company of martyrs, having suffering mightily for Christ, O praiseworthy one; and you gave yourself to her who sent you forth with faith, O blessed Boniface. Earnestly pray, that we all may receive perfect forgiveness.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Though sin-loving, I implore you who gave birth to the sinless God who takes away the sins of the world: Have pity on my greatly sinful soul and wash away my many sins, O most pure Lady, the cleansing of sinners, the salvation and help of the faithful.

*Theotokion of the Cross* Having given birth to you, incarnate in latter times, begotten of the unoriginate Father, beholding you hanging upon the cross, she cried out: Woe is me, O most beloved Jesus. How is it that you, glorified as God by the angels, are now crucified by iniquitous men, O my Son? I hymn you, O long-suffering one.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* As an example of mercy and love, you mounted the cross and the nations were scattered before you: you are the lover of mankind, my strength and my praise.

Blessing the endurance of those who suffer, O divinely wise martyr most rich, you likened yourself to them, emulating their honoured sufferings.

Going forth with faith to the divine company of the martyrs, you gave yourself to her who desired a truly wondrous burden, O divinely wise one.

Purified like gold in the crucible of wounds, O martyr, you became most pure, bearing the image of the sufferings of the creator.

*Theotokion* Realizing that your virginity was sealed in your birthgiving, O Maiden, with faith you magnified the Word who was ineffably born of your womb.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* O Lord, send your light and deliver us from the darkness of sin; in your goodness, grant us your peace.

Like a radiant star you arose above the western lands and set amid the endurance of sufferings, O martyr, shining upon the lands of the West, illumining their ends.

You suffered in martyrdom, the tearing away of your fingernails and the beating with sharp reeds, O martyr, breaking the sting of the evil one by faith and grace.

You weakened the machinations of the enemy directed against you, O divinely wise one, for, constantly directing your gaze toward God, you endured the wounding of your flesh as though incorporeal.

*Theotokion* I cry to you: Wash my soul clean of all defilement, O pure Virgin who gave birth on earth to God, our true Saviour.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The prophet Jonah in the belly of the whale prefiguring your burial for three days cried out and prayed: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus king of hosts.

Beaten, you inflicted fleshly wounds upon the ungodly who were incurably afflicted with ignorance, and you became a physician of the sick, O athlete Boniface.

Exalted to God by your contest of struggles, O blessed passion-bearer, you cut down the invisible foe and became an ally of the downtrodden.

Dragged across the ground, O athlete, like a precious stone you cast down the foundation of falsehood, and with faith made yet more steadfast the hearts of the faithful.

*Theotokion* The bush, which burned of old yet in no way was consumed, prefigured you, O immaculate Virgin: you were similarly not consumed when you gave flesh to God.

*Kontakion, tone 4*  
*to the Special Melody* You have appeared...

You willingly brought yourself to be an unblemished sacred offering to him who was born of the virgin for your sake, O most wise Boniface, holy crown-bearer.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* Once in Babylon, the children of Abraham trampled upon the flames of the furnace, crying out in hymns: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Refusing to bend your knee before graven images, you were truly cast into a furnace for yet greater trial; and, bedewed therein, you gave thanks to Christ for ever.

Seeking to destroy the might of your confession, the false-minded one pitilessly caused molten lead to be poured down your throat; yet he was the one put to shame.

Earnestly enduring the severing of your precious head, you cut off the most wily head of the deceitful foe with the sword of your courage, O divinely wise martyr of Christ.

*Theotokion* Let me hymn you with fitting melodies, O Maiden, who by your supplications delivers me from sufferings, misfortunes and tribulations, and from the evil who seek to oppress me.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* O almighty deliverer of all, descending into the midst of the flame, you bedewed the pious youths and taught them to sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Christ strengthened you, who sought the relics of the victorious martyrs, O Boniface, bringing beneficial salvation for you as you became such a one also through faith.

You were given as a blessed treasure to your blessed lady, O blessed one; and having been enriched thereby, she sang with gladness of heart: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Having erected a most sacred church with zeal, the glorious woman enshrined you therein, O Boniface, passion-bearer of Christ, the temple of the divine Trinity.

Having died for love of the creator who slays the corrupting passions, by your prayers you bestow life upon those who sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Theotokion* He who is most divine descended upon you, the pure one, and incarnate, as he knew how, O Virgin, has deified those who sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Ode 9*

## December 19

*Irmos* Eve, through weakness, lived under the curse of disobedience; but O Virgin Mother of God, you have put forth a blessing for the world through the fruit of your childbearing; therefore we all magnify you.

Beholding you as a sacred burden, the ever-memorable handmaid rejoiced, crying: I sent you forth, O blessed one, but I accept you as my true master, delivering me from slavery to evils by your right acceptable entreaties.

You blossomed like a lily in the noetic valleys of the martyrs, O Boniface; like a palm-tree you grew tall; like a cedar you are recognized as sweetly fragrant; and like a choice cypress perfume our souls.

Today the day of your commemoration shines like the sun with the radiance of divine gifts, O passion-bearer, illumining the souls of those who hymn you and dispelling the gloom of the passions.

You shone from the West like the sun, reaching a city of the East, where, having suffered and set in death, you hastened to life and reached splendid Rome, which you protect by your entreaties.

*Theotokion* With your light illumine me, enmeshed in the darkness of sin, O Mother of God; and grant that I may walk in the daylight of the divine precepts, hymning you, the exulted Bride of God.

## December 20

### Forefeast of Christmas, hieromartyr Ignatius of Antioch

*On the same day we commemorate the death of St John of Kronstadt,  
but because of the forefeast, we move his commemoration to October 19, his nameday.*

### Vespers

*At Lord, I call to you... 6 verses,  
3 of the Forefeast and 3 of the hieromartyr.*

*Verses of the Forefeast, tone 1, to their own melody  
composed by Anatolius*

O people, let us celebrate the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ,  
and lifting our thoughts to Bethlehem let us raise the mind;  
and with the eyes of the soul let us gaze upon the Virgin,  
coming to give birth in the cave to our Lord and God.  
Joseph, beholding the magnitude of this miracle,  
supposed that he saw a man, an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands,  
but perceived from the evidence that this was the true God,  
who grants great mercy to our souls.

O people, let us celebrate the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ,  
and lifting our thoughts to Bethlehem let us raise the mind;  
and see the great mystery in the cave, as Eden is opened  
and God issues from the pure Virgin, perfect in divinity and humanity.  
Therefore, let us cry out:  
Holy God, the unoriginate Father;  
holy mighty, the Son who became incarnate;  
holy immortal, the Spirit and Comforter;  
glory to you, O Holy Trinity.

Hearken, O heaven, and give ear, O earth;  
see, the Son and Word of God the Father born of the unwedded Maiden,  
at the goodwill of him of whom he was begotten in dispassion  
with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit.  
Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem;  
open your gates, O Eden,  
for the author of all creation remains what he was before,  
yet takes form, granting the world great mercy.

*And 3 verses of the hieromartyr, tone 4,*

*to the Special Melody Called from on high...*

O blessed Ignatius, \* you were fittingly called God-bearer \* when the Master, in his mercy, embraced you, \* revealing to you the dogmas \* of the highest philosophy. \* Then you received most splendid radiance, \* as a sponge soaks up water, \* drawing it forth from the depths of enlightenment. \* You followed in the steps \* of Christ our God, who called you: \* entreat him to save and illumine our souls.

When zeal for salvation enkindled your soul, \* impelling you to go to the Master, \* O most sacred father, \* wounded with perfect love \* you gave voice to those much repeated words: \* I am the wheat of the creator, \* and it is fitting that I be ground fine by teeth of the wild beasts, \* that I may be made into pure bread \* for the Word, my God. \* Entreat him to save and illumine our souls.

You were crucified with Christ, \* when you, manifest in sanctity, \* cried out the divinely inspired words: \* My love was crucified, \* and I hasten to share in his suffering. \* O blessed Ignatius, making your transit \* from the East to the West, like the sun, \* you shed enlightenment; \* and, adorned with a royal diadem, \* you were brought before Christ. \* Entreat him to save and illumine our souls.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8*

God-bearing Ignatius, soaring aloft to Christ for whom you longed, you have received the reward of your sacred ministry of the Gospel of Christ, which you completed in the shedding of your blood. As the wheat of the immortal husbandman, you were ground by the teeth of the wild beasts and were made sweet bread for him. Pray for us, O blessed athlete.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

Bethlehem, the metropolis of God, receive the never-waning light, who comes to be born within you. Angels, marvel in the heavens; men, give glory on earth; Magi, bring most glorious gifts from Persia; shepherds, piping, sweetly sound the thrice-holy hymn. Let every breath praise the creator of all.

*If this day of Forefeast of the nativity of Christ fall on Saturday,  
at Friday Vespers the Dogmatic Theotokion of the tone of the week is not sung,  
and likewise during the Forefeast of the Theophany.*

*Aposticha, tone 2,  
to their own melody  
composed by Cyprian*

Behold, the time of our salvation approaches. Prepare yourself, O cave, for the Virgin is coming to give birth. Adorn yourself and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah, for from you our Lord shall shine: hearken, mountains and hills, and surrounding regions



of Judea, for Christ is coming that he might save man whom he created, as he loves mankind.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

O Bethlehem, land of Judah, splendidly prepare the divine cave for human habitation, for therein God will be born, incarnate of the holy Virgin who knew not man, that he might save our race.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

*Composed by Andrew Pyrrhus*

Come all, and with faith let us celebrate the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and noetically offering hymnody like a star, with the shepherds let us give voice to the glorification of the Magi: Salvation has come to men through the Virgin's womb, summoning the faithful.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 1,*  
*composed by the Studite*

How firm was your rock-hard soul, O truly blessed Ignatius who, with unwavering desire for him who loves you, said: Within me is no fiery love of material things; rather there is in me living water which speaks, saying within: Come to the Father. Afire with the divine Spirit, you allowed the wild beasts to separate you quickly from the world and send you to Christ whom you desired. Entreat him, that he save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

O people, let us celebrate the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ,  
and lifting our thoughts to Bethlehem let us raise the mind;  
and with the eyes of the soul let us gaze upon the Virgin,  
coming to give birth in the cave to our Lord and God.  
Joseph, beholding the magnitude of this miracle,  
supposed that he saw a man, an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands,  
but perceived from the evidence that this was the true God,  
who grants great mercy to our souls.

*Troparion of Ignatius of Antioch, tone 4*

You shared in the ways of the apostles | and occupied their throne, | and your deeds were a passage to the divine vision, | O divinely inspired one. | Obedient to the word of truth, | you suffered for the faith even to the shedding of your blood, || Hieromartyr Ignatius entreat Christ our God that our souls be saved.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Troparion of the Forefeast, same tone*

Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem, | be open to all, O Eden. | Adorn yourself O Ephratha, | for the tree of life has blossomed from the Virgin in the cave. | She appears as a noetic paradise having a divine garden, | eating from which we live, not dying like Adam. || Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old.

## Compline

*We sing a Triodion, to which is added a Diodion in Odes 8 and 9.*

*The [first] Irmos of each Ode is sung twice, with the Troparia repeated to make up six.*

*After each Ode both choirs together sing the Irmos of the Ode.*

*This is done at every Compline of the Forefeast of Christmas and of Theophany.*

*Triodion, tone 2*

*upon the acrostic To the second*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Let us sing to the Lord, who by his divine command dried up the turbulent sea where none may walk, and led Israel across it on foot: for he has been greatly glorified.

*Refrain* Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Ineffable is the condescension of the Word of God; for Christ is himself known as God incarnate, not made God by being caught up to heaven, but as he has revealed himself to us in the form of a servant: for he has been greatly glorified.

Christ comes voluntarily to serve, as the creator receives the image of impoverished Adam, enriching him with divinity, and granting him a strange restoration and regeneration, as he is compassionate.

Lord, have mercy. *thrice*

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*

*to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

## Ode 8

*Irmos* The bodies of the pious youths, clad in the same purity as their souls, quivered with awe, as the irresistible fire recoiled, though fed with boundless fuel; but as the ever-living flame faded away, an everlasting hymn was sung: All you works of the Lord, sing to the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Christ, born from the womb of the pure one, tells mankind: I shall make all of you my kinsfolk, if you keep my commandments. Granting peace to them, he now proposes to look upon the lowly: Those who know me as Lord, hymn and exalt me above all for ever.

Your nativity was contrary to what is normal for the flesh, O Word of God, for flesh and blood did not bring your holy flesh into being, but rather the coming of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the Most High; and we who know you as the Lord hymn and exalt you above all for ever.

*Diodion, in the same tone,  
upon the acrostic* Of the third.

*Irmos* Refusing to obey the edict of the tyrant, the three venerable youths were cast into the furnace, and confessed God, they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Let us cast aside the dreams of slothfulness, and with vigilance of soul greet Christ who is born of the pure Maiden, as we sing: Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord.

Let good works be sufficient for us, as the treasure of our soul, that with radiant appearance we may sing to Christ who is born: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Having caused our talant to increase through good works, as gifts for the giver, instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh let us offer them to Christ, who is coming to be born of the divine Virgin Maiden.

*Refrain* We praise, bless, and worship the Lord...

*Again the Irmos* Refusing to obey the edict... *and a prostration.*

## Ode 9

*Irmos* You have magnified the Mother of God who gave you birth, O Christ our creator, for through her you clothed yourself in a body subject to passions like ours, but which looses our transgressions. All of us, the generations of men, in blessing her, magnify you.

*And each choir, having sung this Irmos, makes a prostration.*

Having cast off every defilement of the passions, with chaste mind let us fittingly receive the advent of Christ; for he is coming to take flesh without defilement, and to grant divine restoration to all through the Spirit.

Gazing upon Christ who abases himself, let us raise ourselves above the passions which drag us down; and having learned the faith, with goodly zeal let us humble ourselves in spirit, rather than be haughty in mind, that having done high deeds we may exalt him who is born.

*Imos* We hymn you, O Virgin Mother of God, who contained the uncontainable God in your womb, and has given birth to joy for the world.

Christ commands those of noble mind to be vigilant as they look forward to his advent from the Virgin. For, see, he is coming to be born.

At your second coming, O Christ, may I dwell with your sheep at your right hand, as I honour your advent in the flesh.

*Again the Imos* We hymn you, O Virgin Mother of God... *and a prostration.*

## **Matins**

*At God is the Lord... the Troparion of the Forefeast, twice;  
Glory be to the Father... that of the hieromartyr;  
Both now and for ever... and that of the Forefeast.*

*After the first reading from of the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymns, tone 1  
to the special melody Your tomb O Saviour...*

Be glad, O Bethlehem; prepare yourself, O Ephratha. See, the lamb, bearing the great shepherd in her womb, is coming to give birth; and the are Magi rejoicing, having already seen the divine star, singing with the shepherds in uprightness of heart.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *same tone*

He who bowed down the heavens and made his abode within the Virgin is coming in the flesh, to be born in the cave of Bethlehem as was written, and to be seen as an infant, he who imparts life to infants in the womb. With rejoicing, let us greet him with uprightness of heart.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody Go quickly before....*

Virgins, anticipate the joy of the Virgin. Mothers, with the Magi and the angels, the shepherds and us, praise the journey of the Mother of Christ our God; for the Virgin is coming to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to a Son, the pre-eternal God who saves the world from corruption.

Glory be to the Father.... Both now and for ever.... *same tone*

Rejoice, O Sion; adorn yourself, O Bethlehem; for the sustainer of all, having sent a star, has announced his infinite condescension, before which the hosts of heaven tremble: truly he who alone loves mankind is immutably born of the Virgin.

*We sing the Canon of the Forefeast and that of the hieromartyr.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the Forefeast, tone 1,  
upon the acrostic These hymns of the Forefeast are chanted  
composed by Joseph*

*Irmos* Let us all sing a hymn of victory to God who has wrought wondrous miracles with his upraised arm, and saved Israel, for he has been glorified.

Let us begin today to celebrate the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ, incarnate of the Virgin Mother in the cave of Bethlehem in his surpassing loving-kindness.

The pre-eternal God, is seen as a baby, wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger, releasing me from the bonds of sin. Glory to his might.

*Theotokion* Eden is opened to you, O Master, incarnate in Bethlehem of the divine virgin Maiden. We hymn your awesome dispensation.

*Canon of the hieromartyr, same tone  
composed by Andrew of Crete.*

*Irmos* Let us all sing a hymn of victory... *as before*

The martyr Ignatius sacredly summons the Church of Christ to his exalted suffering, saying: Let us be orderly as we celebrate with splendour.

O Ignatius, as the radiant luminary of the Church you enlighten all the ends of the earth, and, having arrived from the East, you shine upon the lands of the West.

Emulating the tribulations of Paul in the cities and towns as a prisoner, O Ignatius, you were never troubled, strengthening the Churches of Christ by your frequent epistles.

O blessed Ignatius, we all hymn your glorious memory, and in song we honour him who crowned your most precious head, O blessed of God.

The martyr cried out: Let my flesh be lacerated, let my blood flow; ready for the wild beasts and adorned for crushing, with longing I hasten to the fire and the sword, and to be devoured.

*Theotokion* Adorn yourself, O Eden, for Ephratha is preparing for the creator to be born of the virgin Mother in the cave of Bethlehem, in his surpassing loving-kindness.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This is the rock on which Christ established the Church that he redeemed from the nations.

Let all creation sing pre-festal hymnody to him who was begotten of the Father before the morning-star, who now shines ineffably from the Virgin, born in Bethlehem, incarnate in his surpassing loving-kindness.

A star shines from the tribe of Judah, which kings recognize: they journey from the lands of the East, and hasten to arrive, that they might gaze upon Christ who in the flesh is born in Bethlehem.

*Theotokion* Perceiving the incarnation of Christ, Isaiah clearly prophesies in the Holy Spirit, saying: The Lord is born from the Virgin as an infant, for our regeneration; and government is upon his shoulders.

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* The stone that the builders rejected... *as before*

Truly you were called the God-bearer, O father; for, held in the arms of the Lord while an infant, you were set forth by him who says to us: Let me be like this child.

O father, you cried out: I am the pure wheat of God, and I hasten to be ground by the wild beasts, as my body is crushed and my members devoured as food for the beasts, that I may be pure bread for God.

You completed the singular contest of martyrdom with endurance, and showed wondrous courage surpassing all who suffered before you, consumed with persistent zealous love which, like fire, set your soul aflame.

Ever burning in spirit, the hieromartyr cried out with love in the midst of his afflictions: I press on toward Christ, rejoicing; I am crucified with Christ; I no longer live myself, but Christ alone lives within me.

*Theotokion* Come forth, Isaiah, and proclaim: Behold, the Virgin shall conceive the deliverer of the world, and shall give birth in a cave; and the name of him who will be born is Jesus, God is with us, Emmanuel, Sabaoth.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3  
to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* What a wonder truly awesome and past speech, for in his goodness, he who causes  
all things to exist has entered the womb of the holy Virgin and comes to be born in a cave  
and laid in a manger. His star preaches from on high to the Magi coming to do him  
homage with gifts, urging them to hasten from afar, following the prophecy of Balaam,  
who said: A star will proclaim a young child, the pre-eternal God.

*Sessional Hymn of the hieromartyr, tone 3  
to the Special Melody* Awed by the beauty of your virginity...

Guided by Christ our God, you make your sacred vesture bright,  
having truly received martyrdom, O God-bearer;  
for you provoked the wild beasts to separate you from the world.  
Emulating the wondrous apostle Paul, O father,  
in Rome you fittingly finished your martyrdom.

Glory be to the Father...

*Another Sessional Hymn of the hieromartyr, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody* Of the Wisdom...

Shining as a star from the East, you illumined the world, resplendent in your  
discourses; you drove away darkness, and like Paul valiantly finished the race, enduring  
tribulations among the nations and cities. Like wheat you were ground by the teeth of  
wild beasts as an offering for the Lord, O God-bearer Ignatius. Entreat Christ our God,  
that he grant remission of transgressions to those who honour your holy memory with  
love.

Both now and for ever...

*Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast, same tone and melody*

The Word of God, who shone forth from the bosom of the Father before time  
began, within time is coming seedlessly from you, O most pure one, lifting up him who  
grievously stumbled of old, raising him up to his primal beauty. The hosts of the bodiless  
comes for his nativity and mystically sends hymns of victory to men, crying: Glory to God  
who has given us peace, breaking down the middle wall of enmity, in his good pleasure.

Ode 4

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* In the Spirit foreseeing the incarnate Word, O prophet Habakkuk, you cried out, saying: You shall be acknowledged when the years draw nigh; you shall be made manifest when the time comes. Glory to your power, O Lord.

Mountains and hills, groves of trees, rivers and seas, and every living creature, leap for joy, for Jesus our salvation comes to be born of the Virgin in the city of Bethlehem.

Take up your psaltery, O prophet David, and sing, inspired by the Holy Spirit; for Christ God, the Lord of glory, who without confusion shone forth from the bosom of the Father before the morning-star, is born of the Virgin.

How can the least of caves, greatly poor, receive you, the incarnate Word? How can you be wrapped in swaddling-bands, who clothes the sky in clouds? How can you lie in a manger of dumb beasts as a infant?

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* In the Spirit foreseeing the incarnate Word... *as before*

As a prisoner you illumined the earth with the brilliance of your sufferings, O sacred Ignatius; for making your transit like the sun, shedding rays of martyrdom, you enlightened the whole evening, shining from the East.

Bound like Paul between noetic beasts, you hastened to Rome, O wise Ignatius; yet even chained you did not cease to strengthen the Church, sending epistles to all the cities, that all the hierarchs of Christ be of good cheer.

Thus you cried out, O athlete: I hasten to become Christ's; I desire Christ alone, for I am wholly Christ's; I press onward toward him; I strive, that I might reach him. And so I endure fire, the sword and wild beasts, that I may receive life.

You cried out, O athlete: Sweet to me is affliction, and lovely are the chains I bear for him I desire: persecutions are sweeter to me than my homeland, and being broken is sweeter than any gladness; my pangs are dearer to me than the health of my body.

You cried out, O athlete: Let the mouths of the wild beasts be my death and their bellies my tomb; let no one hinder, let no one break my resolve; for I hasten to be ground like wheat, that God may find me to be pure bread.

*Theotokion* As God, O good one, you chose to be born for us in a cave of the earth, abasing yourself to embrace our low estate in your loving-kindness; issuing forth, incarnate of the Virgin, yet remaining the only Son of the Father and of your Mother.



Ode 5

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* O Son of God, give us your peace, for we know no other God but you. We call upon your name, for you are God of the living and the dead.

Rejoicing, let the clouds drop sweetness; for the Lord is already approaching to be born as a babe of the pure Virgin in a lowly cave.

Leap up, you divine prophets of God, for Christ the truth is coming to fulfill your godly words, being born as a babe.

*Theotokion* O Eden, locked against me of old, open yourself and see Christ who becomes a baby, pleased to be born in the city of Bethlehem of the virgin Maiden.

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* O Son of God, give us your peace... *as before*

Such a hierarch is given to us wise, venerable, faithful, undefiled and innocent, said Paul, describing beforehand the hallowed image of your sacred character.

Bound and led as a hierarch and prisoner of Christ, O Ignatius, you wrote to the Churches and cities, confirming all in their confession.

Moved to contend by the zeal of Paul, with chains on your hands you travelled the world, O hieromartyr, that by your sacred sufferings you might be revealed to all.

We hymn your struggles, we honour your fetters with incensing and psalms, we venerate the dust of your relics as rendered redolent of myrrh by your sacred sufferings.

*Theotokion* Becoming like us through you, O Bride of God, God is born as an infant for us, yet remains wholly immutable. God, having become man, is seen in the flesh.

Ode 6

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Like the prophet Jonah, I cry out: Free my life from corruption, O good one, and save me, O Saviour of the world, as I sing: Glory to you.

Heaven now shines on earth to the astrologers in the city of David; the king of heaven, born for our sake.

Clearly the prophet speaks with eloquence, crying out: Leap up and dance, O Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, wherein God shall appear from the Virgin.

*Theotokion* In the cave of Bethlehem the Virgin shall give birth to the Lord and creator of all, and wrapping him as man in swaddling bands, she shall lay him in the manger.

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* Like the prophet Jonah, I cry out... *as before*

You truly loved him with unwavering desire, O Ignatius, and with a noetic fire for him kindled within you, you possessed the living water, him who spoke of you.

Fulfilling the testimony of your conscience, you were not dissuaded upon seeing the wild beasts, nor were you dismayed, for you desired to be ground like wheat by their jaws.

O hieromartyr, your long torments and unbroken bonds, your rending asunder in Rome, and the fire of the torturers, endured for your creator, you considered as nothing.

Burning greatly with the love of Christ, O athlete, you trod upon the fire of your trials as upon the morning dew, that thereby you might attain him who loves you.

Thirsting, you drained the cup of Christ, ever preferring to suffer than to live; and you cried out: These things are to me no more than the means whereby I may attain life.

*Theotokion* Adorn yourself, O Bethlehem; prepare yourself, O Ephratha, for he who was begotten of the Father without a mother is carried within her without a father, and is born, saving us.

*Kontakion, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody* Today the Virgin

The luminous day of your radiant struggles | leads us to him who shall be born in the cave, | for thirsting to delight in his love, | you hastened to be devoured by the wild beasts. | Therefore you are called the God-bearer, || O Ignatius most wise.

*Ikos* Abraham once offered his son in sacrifice, prefiguring the slaying of him who sustains all things; and you, O divinely wise one, have offered your whole self to him in sacrifice, becoming food for the wild beasts, as pure wheat for your creator, truly abiding for ever in the granaries of heaven, delighting him by your zeal. Having forsaken the whole world for his sake, you are called the God-bearer, O Ignatius most wise.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The fire did not touch or threaten your youths in the furnace, O Saviour, for the three with one voice then praised and blessed you, saying: Blessed be the God of our Fathers.

Indicating the advent of Christ in the flesh, Jeremiah cried out: God has appeared on earth, incarnate: he has found every path of impoverishment, the maternity in Bethlehem from the Mother.

Behold, the root of Jesse a rod has sprouted, producing Christ as flower: the Spirit of understanding, counsel and divine vision rest on him who is now born in the cave.

Let us hear the sacred words: for unto us a child is born, the Lord; government is upon his shoulders, and he is called the Angel of the Great Counsel of the Father, Christ, the Prince of Peace.

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* The fire did not touch or threaten... *as before*

You held within you no fire which loves fuel, O Ignatius, but rather the living water which speaks, the water which cries: Come to the Father; the water which runs from life to the life which transcends us.

Let the fangs of the wild beasts be for me a sword, weapons and slaughter; let the bellies of the lions be for me a tomb; and let fire consume me before corruption devours my remains, thus said Ignatius.

He said: To me death is sweet, to me the pangs of my labours are dear: the wild beasts are delightful, and this fire is like dew, for it does not withhold life from me: I hasten to die, that I may live with Christ.

I prefer not to live in the body, for I desire to live in spirit. It is a thing of divine love to live for Christ: I go to him whom I love whom I hope to receive.

*Theotokion* He who was foretold by the prophet of old approaches as a child born of the Virgin. Adam rejoices, and Eve, our first mother, is released from her pangs, and David, the father of her who gives birth, dances with her.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* As their creator and Lord, before whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe, you priests hymn, you children glorify and you people exult above all for ever.

By an unusual birth the Lord is coming to his own: let us receive him, born in the cave, as he again makes his own those exiled of old from the sweetness of paradise.

Behold our restoration is coming: let us zealously raise hymns of joy, and let us sing pre-festal hymnody to him who is to be contained by the least of caves.

*Theotokion* That which the Lord has promised, he has already fulfilled, having given us his virgin Mother from the seed of David: from her a child is been born in the city of Bethlehem, in manner past recounting.

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* As their creator and Lord... *as before*

Let Ignatius be hymned, the godly hierarch, twice crowned as martyr and pastor; who, having suffered for the love of God, desiring to be desired, was not dissuaded from suffering.

With journeys of faith, like the sun from the heavens you valiantly passed over the ends of the earth; and having passed without waning from the earth to Christ, you illumine the world with the light of incorruption.

Thirsting for the cup of the suffering of Christ, you hastened in bonds, O wise Ignatius; and having reached the arena, you did not pause, crying out: I thirst for Christ with an eternal thirst.

O how wondrous is the love and ardour of divine zeal, for he is crucified to the desires that he might live for him who loves; he thirsts for him who thirsted and loves him who loves, preferring to die, that he might live for ever.

Putting aside the flesh, he immaterially furnished wings to his mind to soar aloft to Him Who Is, desiring him whom he loves; for he is truly the eternal desire, wisdom, the life of all who exist.

*Theotokion* Christ, the star, shines out of Jacob, and the Magi hasten to the city of Bethlehem, to hymn, worship and honour him who was born of the pure Mother of God.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* We all magnify the pure Mother of our God as the luminous cloud upon which the unoriginate Master of all descended from heaven as rain upon the fleece, who assuming flesh, became man.

With the patriarchs and the righteous, and with the holy prophets let us leap up, for the Lord Jesus, our deliverance, enlightenment, life and salvation, is now born of the Virgin in the city of David.

Already the outer gates of the incarnation of the divine Word are opened to all. Rejoice, O heavens; Angels, leap up; let the earth be glad in the Spirit with men, with the shepherds and the Magi.

*Theotokion* The Virgin holds Christ as a noetic phial, as ointment not yet poured forth; for he is coming to be poured forth by the Spirit in the cave, that he might fill our souls with his sweet fragrance.

*Canon of the Hieromartyr*

*Irmos* We all magnify the pure Mother of our God... *as before*

Ignatius who saw things from afar, a servant of the highest mysteries, performing the immaculate service, as a priest makes himself a sacrifice through martyrdom, and prepares himself for the wild beasts and the fire.

By your sufferings you made your sacred vesture yet more sacred, O hieromartyr; and having received a twofold crown, with the martyrs and pastors you ever hymn Christ our God.

You said: I am the pure wheat of God, ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that in sanctity I may be made into pure bread for God who loves men; and, loving him, I do not refuse to die.

Illumined with the unapproachable light and dwelling in the mansions on high, O sacred Ignatius, praying continually to God your creator for your flock, may you never fail in your supplications.

*Theotokion* Rejoice, O pure one, the animate city of God, where God was pleased to make his abode. For, without leaving the highest, he descended to you, like rain upon the earth, O Mother of God, and is born as a babe in the city of Bethlehem.

*Exapostilarion of the hieromartyr,  
to the Special Melody* By the Spirit in the sanctuary...

The unoriginate Word, the Wisdom of God, communing with men in his ineffable goodness, taught the people of old, holding you in his arms, O God-bearer Ignatius; and, living in God, you passed with rejoicing through the suffering of martyrdom.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Exapostilarion of the Forefeast,  
to the Special Melody* Make ready beforehand...

Adorn yourself, O Bethlehem, as a new dwelling-place. Manger and cave, band of shepherds and Magi from the Eastern lands, come speedily to him, guided by the radiant star; for there the Virgin is to give birth to him who is most perfect, as an infant.

*Praises, tone 6*  
*4 verses of the Forefeast, to their own Special Melody,*  
*upon the [Greek] alphabet,*  
*composed by Roman the Melodist*

Go forth, you angelic hosts, and prepare the manger in Bethlehem; for the Word is born, Wisdom issues forth, and the Church receives his salutation. Seeing the rejoicing of the Mother of God, let us say, O people: Glory to you, our blessed God who has come forth.

Let the mountains drop sweetness, for, behold, God is coming from Teman: you nations, submit yourselves. Rejoice, prophets; leap up, patriarchs; clap your hands, O men, for Christ, the mighty and great prince, is born; the king of heaven is coming to earth.

Lifting mankind up from the earth, the creator comes, making his royal image new again. Rejoice together, you hosts on high, and sing. The middle wall of enmity is broken down; he comes who is our expectation; for God becomes man, Christ our God, the king of Israel.

Come, O hardhearted Israel; part the cloud which lies over your soul, and recognize the creator born in the cave. He is the expectation of the nations: he shall abolish your feasts; yet you do not dare to cry out: Christ is come, the king of Israel.

*Glory be to the Father... same tone and melody*

Christ draws near: prepare yourself, O Bethlehem. The salvation of the nations already is shining. Adorn the manger, assemble the shepherds, summon the Magi from Persia, and gather together the hosts of the bodiless intelligences, as the king of heaven is coming to earth.

*Both now and for ever... same tone and melody*

Jealousy and fire devours you, O truly mindless deceiver, together with the curse of the law. Behold, as Isaiah foretold, the Virgin has conceived, and lays in the manger the king in whom no mighty ruler shall be lacking in the tribe of Judah.

*Aposticha, tone 4*

Adorn yourself, O Bethlehem; sing, O city of Sion; rejoice, O wilderness, betrothing pre-festal joy. For the star comes to Bethlehem, heralding Christ, who is to be

born; the cave receives him whom nothing can contain, and the manger prepares to accept life eternal. To him let us all sing: Save our souls, Jesus our God, incarnate for us.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Christ our God shall arrive, he is coming and will not delay; he shall manifest himself through the unwedded one. He whom heaven cannot contain shall rest in the cave, and lie in a manger of dumb animals. O cave, receive within yourself him who desires to be wrapped in swaddling-bands, who by his Word releases us from irrationality. The star proclaims him, the Magi offer worship, the shepherds pipe, seeing the strange wonder: the angels sing on earth, seeing the deliverance of our race.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Dance for joy, O Isaiah, to receive the message of God. Prophecy to the maiden Mary, the bush which burnt yet was not consumed by the brilliance of the divinity. Adorn yourself well, O Bethlehem; open your gates, O Eden. Magi, come to see salvation wrapped in swaddling-bands in the manger, whose star shines above the cave: the Lord, the giver of life, who saves our race.

Glory be to the Father...

*Of the hieromartyr, tone 1,  
composed by the Studite.*

Your annual festival, O God-bearer Ignatius, arises like an animate pillar and an inspired cloud, proclaiming your mysteries and the mighty deeds which you showed when upholding the faith even to the shedding of your blood. Moreover, blessed and ever memorable was your voice when you said: As the grain of God I am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts. As an emulator of the suffering of your Christ, pray that our souls be saved.

Both now and for ever... *of the Forefeast, tone 6*

Adorn yourself well, O cave, for the lamb is coming, bearing Christ within her. O manger, receive him who by his word releases us mortals from irrationality. Shepherds, piping, bear witness to the awesome wonder. Magi from Persia, bring gold, frankincense and myrrh to the king, for the Lord appears from the Virgin Mother. His Mother, gazing down upon him, bows her head as a handmaid, and exclaims to him held in her arms: How were you sown within me? How did you spring forth within me, O my deliverer and God?

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 verses: 4 from Ode 3 of the canon of the Forefeast,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of the canon of the hieromartyr.*

*Prokimenon, tone 7*

The righteous man shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall put his trust in him.

*Verse* Hear my voice O Lord in my complaining.

*Epistle to the Hebrews, number 311*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Lebanon.

For they are planted in the house of the Lord, and flourish in the courts of the house of our God.

*Gospel of Mark, number 41*

*Communion*

The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance: he will not fear bad tidings.



## December 21

### Forefeast of Christmas, the holy martyr Juliana of Nicomedia

#### Vespers

*At Lord, I call to you... we insert six verses,  
3 of the Forefeast, and 3 of the martyr Juliana.*

*Verses of the Forefeast tone 4,  
to the special melody You have given a sign...*

The prophet exclaimed in the Spirit:  
he is our God, and no other shall take his place.  
He has devised every path of knowledge,  
thereby assuming the form of men, and clothing himself in flesh;  
for he comes to be born of the divine Maiden and Virgin,  
and he whose inner reality is unapproachable  
becomes approachable to me.

O most immaculate Mother of God,  
your womb is seen as a fruitful place of germination,  
for it ineffably bears the wheat which has not been cultivated,  
in a manner beyond understanding and description.  
You will give birth in the cave of Bethlehem  
to him who nurtures all creation with divine understanding and grace,  
who delivers mankind from soul-destroying famine.

The unblemished one as a heifer bearing the fatted calf within her,  
comes to the holy cave to give birth to him in a manner most glorious,  
to wrap him as a man in swaddling bands,  
and to lay him in a manger as a child.  
Celebrate the forefeast, O creation,  
joyfully magnify him who does such glorious things on earth.

*And 3 verses of the martyr, in the same tone,  
to the special melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

Having dyed for yourself a robe of salvation in the crimson of your blood, O  
exulted martyr Juliana, and having illumined yourself in spirit, you betrothed yourself to  
the immortal king who preserves you in the mansions of heaven as a virgin highly  
adorned and unsullied, incorrupt and undefiled to the ages of ages.

You received wounds and were cast into the fire, enduring the tearing of your flesh and bravely bearing the boiling cauldron: your resolve was not defeated, for you did not sacrifice to graven images; and bowing your neck to God, you ascended to heaven as a crown-bearer through martyrdom by the sword.

Adorned with drops of your blood, you seem to be as resplendent as the sun, O most praised martyr Juliana. You have dispelled the gloom of ungodliness by grace, and you illumine the faithful who honour your brave struggles and your splendid and radiant memory, which is salvific for all.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 6*  
*Of the Forefeast*

Exult, O Zion, and be glad,  
O Jerusalem, city of Christ our God,  
receive the creator who is contained by the cave and the manger.  
Open your gates to me, that, entering thereby,  
I may see him who holds creation in his hand,  
an infant wrapped in swaddling bands,  
whom the angels hymn with unceasing songs:  
the Lord, the giver of life, who saves our race.

*Aposticha*  
*Of the Forefeast, tone 2,*  
*to the special melody* O house of Ephratha...

The predictions of all the prophets \* are now fulfilled; \* for Christ is born \* of the pure divine Maiden \* in the city of Bethlehem.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

O honored Bethlehem, \* the glory, joy and boast \* of mortal men, \* divine metropolis: \* receive your creator.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

The Word of the Father, \* by whom all things came into being, \* is seen as a single person \* dispassionate and unchanged \* in two natures.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Tone 6,*  
*composed by Byzantius*

From where have you come O Virgin who knew not wedlock?  
 who gave birth to you and who was your mother?  
 How is it that you hold the creator in your arms?  
 How is it that your womb has not experienced corruption?  
 How most glorious and awesome are the mysteries accomplished in you,  
 which we see performed on earth, O most holy one.  
 On earth we fittingly prepare what is due for you, the cave;  
 and from the heavens we ask that a star be given.  
 The Magi come from the lands of the East to those of the West,  
 to behold the salvation of mankind  
 wrapped in swaddling bands in the manger.

*Troparion of the martyr, tone 4*

Your martyr Juliana loudly cries out to you, O Jesus: | I love you, my bridegroom.  
 | Seeking you I pass through many struggles; | in your baptism I am crucified and buried  
 with you: | I suffer for your sake that I may reign with you; | I die for you that I may live  
 with you. | Accept me as an unblemished sacrifice | as I sacrifice myself with love for  
 you. || By her intercessions save our souls, as you are merciful.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Troparion of the Forefeast, in the same tone*

Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem, | be open to all, O Eden. | Adorn yourself O  
 Ephratha, | for the tree of life has blossomed from the Virgin in the cave. | She appears  
 as a noetic paradise having a divine garden, | eating from which we live, not dying like  
 Adam. || Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old.

## Compline

*We sing a Canon of three Odes, the Irmos of each Ode of which we sing twice, the Troparia being repeated to make up six in number. After each Ode both choirs together sing the Irmos of the Ode.*

*Triodion, upon the acrostic To the fourth tone 2*

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* Established upon the rock of faith, I may boast over my enemies, and my spirit  
 rejoices and sings: There is none as holy as our God, and none righteous but you, O  
 Lord.

At the Herod's behest the vile and murderous company assembles in vain, to slay  
 Christ our newborn Lord, to whom we sing: You are our God, and there is none  
 righteous but you, O Lord.

The cruel counsel of Herod, who in soul is opposed to God, is brought down, for he desired to slay Christ the Master with the infants. We sing to him: You are our God, and there is none righteous but you, O Lord.

Lord, have mercy. *thrice*  
Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*  
*to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* Because the words of the tyrant prevailed, the furnace was heated sevenfold, but the youths there were not consumed, for they trampled the edict of the king underfoot and cried out: Let all creation sing to the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

For Christ who is born for us, we offer the myrrh of our tears with which we wash away our defilement; cleansed we approach the most pure one and cry out: Let all creation sing to the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

With tears of contrition let us avoid the tears of the coming dread torments, and follow the steps of Christ who is laid as a babe in swaddling bands, and cry out: Let all creation sing to the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Knowing that deliverance would be wrought in sanctity from within our midst, and having already washed ourselves for Christ in a fountain of tears, O faithful, let us approach him who is incarnate in the cave, crying: Let all creation sing to the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Come, and with pure souls and undefiled lips let us magnify the undefiled and most pure Mother of Emmanuel, offering supplication to him who was born of her, saying: Take pity on our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

Let there be no foolishness and no wicked sign of jealousy among those who now offer to God, instead of myrrh, gold and frankincense, the pleasing gifts of the sweet fragrance of the virtues, and who sing to Christ who is born: Take pity on our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

Cruel Herod, with murder in his heart, said to the Magi when they arrived: Go and search for the king who is now born, and when you have found him, tell me. Take pity on our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

O blind and vile murderer, O most audacious Herod, who aflame with rage savagely slaughtered the infants, you have earned oblivion, for no one lifts his hands to slay God. Take pity on our souls, O Christ our God, and save us.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the Troparion of the Forefeast, twice;  
Glory be to the Father... that of the martyr;  
Both now and for ever... and that of the Forefeast.*

*After the first reading from of the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 2  
to the special melody Noble Joseph...*

Our unapproachable God, willingly becoming approachable in his loving kindness, comes to be born as a man of the Virgin Maiden in Bethlehem. Let us earnestly hasten to receive him, crying out with fear: Glory to you, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Another, tone 1,  
to the special melody Your tomb, O Saviour...*

He who bowed down the heavens and made his abode within the Virgin comes in the flesh, to be born in the cave of Bethlehem as was written; and he who imparts life to babes in the womb is seen as a babe. Rejoicing, let us greet him with uprightness of heart.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 5,  
to the special melody The Word who is equally unoriginate...*

Bethlehem, prepare yourself to greet the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; for, behold, she comes to you, bearing the infant Christ, equally unoriginate with the Father and the Spirit. She will give birth to him in the cave, and will remain a virgin.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Another, tone 3,  
to the special melody Awed by the beauty of your virginity...*

A most glorious miracle is seen today, as our Saviour now hastens to be born in the flesh of the Virgin for our sake, in the cave. The Magi pay homage to him with gifts

as to a king, and the shepherds and angels glorify him; and with them we also cry out: Glory to him who became man for our sake.

*We sing the Canon of the Forefeast, and that of the martyr.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the Forefeast, tone 4,  
the acrostic of which is the alphabet,  
composed by Joseph*

*Irmos* O virgin-born, I pray you, drown the three parts of my soul in the depths of dispassion, as of old you drowned the mighty commanders; that in the immortality of my body, as on a timbrel, I may sing a hymn of victory.

Rejoice, O heaven, and be glad, O earth, for our God, having assumed flesh, is born of the Virgin Maiden and wrapped in swaddling bands; who with compassion breaks the bonds of our transgressions.

The pure queen gives birth in manner beyond understanding to the king of all who opens the kingdom on high to the faithful and utterly removes the sin which ever accursedly reigns within us.

The writings of the prophets are fulfilled, for behold, Christ whom they proclaimed beforehand is revealed, incarnate, in the city of Bethlehem. Let us hasten today to celebrate the Forefeast of his nativity with uprightness of mind.

*Canon of the martyr,  
upon the acrostic May God confer the grace to hymn you, O martyr  
composed by Joseph, in the same tone*

*Irmos* Having traversed the depth of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, Israel of old vanquished the might of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms stretched out in the form of a cross.

Clearly resplendent with the radiance of martyrdom, you dance before God, deified in sanctity, O most praised one, and by your supplications you bestow illumination upon those who hymn you.

Wounded by sweet love of Christ, O martyr, and, having put away carnal passions and your corruptible bridegroom, you betrothed yourself to him who created you.

God, the creator of all, illumining your mind with beauties of physical brilliance, has joined you to the choir of virgins in the mansions of heaven, O divinely wise martyr.

*Theotokion* The Virgin comes to give birth in the cave to the creator of nature who has ineffably and supernaturally taken his human person from her, to deify mankind.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Like a barren woman the Church of the nations has given birth, and she could scarcely bear the great assembly of children coming forth from her. Let us cry out to our wondrous God: You are holy, O Lord.

Daniel saw you, O Word, as the stone cut from the mountain of the Virgin, through your might broke in pieces the temples of the idols: we glorify you with awe.

Guided to you by the star, O Christ, the king of all, the Magi from the east bring gifts of gold frankincense and myrrh, marvelling at your condescension.

The unploughed field bears the life-bearing grain; Mary comes to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to him who feeds the souls of all who cry: You are holy, O Lord.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* The Church rejoices in you, O Christ, and sings: O Lord, you are my strength, my refuge and my firm support.

You made your soul a most holy temple of God, O glorious one, ever remaining in the churches of God in hymnody and supplication.

Desiring to obtain the greatest of gifts, O honourable one, you endured the pangs of the flesh as in another body.

With the drops of your blood you extinguished fire, and now you water the thoughts of the faithful, O Juliana.

*Theotokion* Delivering men, the deliverer is born in Bethlehem of the pure one, and wrapped as an infant in swaddling-bands.

*Kontakion of the martyr Juliana, tone 3,  
to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Rendered fully pure by the beauties of virginity, and now crowned with wreaths of martyrdom, O virgin Juliana, you grant healing and salvation to those in need and affliction who approach your shrine; for Christ pours forth divine grace and eternal life.

*Sessional Hymn of the martyr, tone 4,  
to the special melody* Quickly anticipate...

Having come to love the Bridegroom, creator and God, you abandoned your corruptible bridegroom, O honoured martyr; and, rejoicing, you endured torments,

laceration and fiery torture. Therefore, crowned, you have entered the divine bridal-chamber, where you implore forgiveness of transgressions for all.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast, tone 3,  
to the special melody* Awed by the beauty of your virginity...

Be filled with joy, O ends of the earth; for the Mother of God draws near to give birth to the king of all. How ineffable the mystery; as the unoriginate one begins to be, the bodiless one becomes incarnate, and the cave receives him who holds all things. Rejoice, Bethlehem, and dance, creation, on this day of his Forefeast.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* He who sits in glory upon the divine throne amidst the clouds of the air, Jesus the most high came with a strong hand to save those who loudly cry: Glory to your power O Lord.

The holy phial of precious sanctity comes to the city of Bethlehem to pour forth him who imparts sanctity to all of us who cry: Glory to your power O Lord.

O divinely eloquent Isaiah, rejoice and dance as you see the physical fulfillment of your honoured prophecies. For without seed the Virgin has given birth to the uncontainable one, incarnate in the cave of Bethlehem.

Jesus is born; he who is beyond time is seen incarnate as an infant in time, who by his ineffable abasement deifies me, impoverished through corrupting disobedience.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Seeing you hanging on the cross, the Sun of Righteousness, the Church stands according to her rank and singing as is right: Glory to your power, O Lord.

Having acquired a mind stretching out toward the Lord of all, stretched in the flesh and cruelly wounded, you in no way rejected him, O goodly virgin Juliana.

With love for the Master you succeeded in casting things of the flesh into darkness, O martyr; therefore, you scorned riches, your bridegroom and various tortures.

Rending you, the unblemished lamb, wounded as if by jackals, O martyr, the torturers made you a divine lamb, sacrifices for God, unblemished and whole.

*Theotokion* Beholding your virginity sealed after birth giving, O Mother of God, and standing by in awe, you cried out: O my child, how am I able to wrap you with swaddling bands, who girds the sea with sand?



Ode 5

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The impious do not see your glory, O Christ, as do we who keep watch before you through the night: we praise you, only begotten Son, divine brightness of the Father's glory and lover of mankind.

God Emmanuel is born of the Virgin; and willingly laid in a manger, he brings about our restoration. Therefore, we piously celebrate the Forefeast of his nativity.

O unoriginate Word, equal in essence with the Father, laid in a manger of irrational beasts, you have released from irrationality us who piously celebrate the Forefeast of your nativity.

Blessed was the root of Jesse which produced the pure one who bears the divine flower, Christ the Lord; as with rejoicing we celebrate the Forefeast of his nativity.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* You have come as a light into the world, O my Lord; a holy light which turns from the darkness of ignorance those who hymn you with faith.

With the outpouring of your blood unjustly shed, you have dried up the stream of wicked ungodliness, O martyr, and you have quenched the fire of falsehood.

You offered yourself wholly to God, having splendidly made the robe of your virginity purple with the dye of your blood.

Wounded in soul by your beauty, O Master, the virgin passed over visible beauties, radiant in her suffering.

*Theotokion* It is a new wonder, that the most pure Virgin comes to the cave of Bethlehem to give birth to the incarnate God.

Ode 6

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* I have come to the depths of the sea, and the storm of my many sins has engulfed me; but as you are God, lead up my life from the abyss, O greatly merciful one.

Born for us as an infant on earth, who shone forth ineffably from the Father before time began, may you free all from the ancient disobedience, as you are compassionate.

## December 21

Strange and most glorious things were heard in the city of Bethlehem at your birth, O unoriginate Word, as angels with shepherds offered hymnody to you as Master.

The star of righteousness ineffably proclaims to the Magi the Sun who has been born; and with rejoicing we now celebrate the Forefeast of his honoured nativity.

### *Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* I will sacrifice to you with a voice of praise, O Lord, the Church sings to you, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which for mercy's sake, flowed from your side.

Wounded by divine desire, you cried out: I go forth to reach Christ who is comely in beauty; and therefore I endure tortures, rejoicing with unwavering resolve.

The evil tyrant commanded that this lamb of the Lord, whose mind was set on Christ, be mercilessly stretched out and broken with iron rods.

You arose early to Christ, the never setting Sun, O divinely wise one; and illumined in heart and soul with his splendour you have been translated to eternal light.

*Theotokion* The creator who wrapped the sea in mist is willingly born of the Virgin Maiden: he who delivers the world condescends to be wrapped in swaddling bands as an infant.

### *Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 2, to the special melody Seeking the highest...*

Beholding him who holds the whole world in his hands wrapped in swaddling bands in Bethlehem, let us offer up hymns of the Forefeast to her who gave birth to him; for she rejoices maternally, holding the Son of God at her bosom.

*Ikos* Holding the Son of God in her arms, and kissing him with maternal tenderness, the Virgin exclaimed: In conceiving I knew no seed, and in giving birth I suffered no corruption, and I am as pure now, after giving birth, as before. Therefore I proclaim your supreme loving-kindness, O my child, and the unapproachable majesty with which you have honoured me; and so I rejoice, holding the Son of God at my bosom.

### *Ode 7*

### *Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The three youths in Babylon, having mocked the tyrant's command, cried out in the midst of the flame: Blessed are you, Lord God of our fathers.

How can a cave contain you, the uncontainable one, who comes to be born for our sake? How can the Virgin give suck to you, the nourisher of all, O compassionate Jesus?

Following the words of the magus Balaam, the Magi hastened to pay homage to Christ with gifts, perceiving him to be the one who reigns over everything that has breath.

Let human nature, barren of any virtue, rejoice and dance, for Christ comes to be born in the flesh of the Virgin, that he might cause you to be truly fruitful in good works.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* The children of Abraham in the Chaldean furnace were consumed by a burning love of godliness rather than by the flame, and they sang in the destructive fire: Blessed are you, O Lord, in the temple of your glory.

Pitilessly the judge mindlessly cast you into the heated cauldron, O martyr; but by an angel the Lord preserved you unharmed as you worshipped him.

Undaunted, with manly mind you entered the fire, sensing only coolness, O honoured martyr, and cried out: Blessed are you, O Lord, in the temple of your glory.

You offered your Bridegroom, like a wreath, to the people who had come to believe in him, and with your radiant miracles you cut through the gloom of falsehood.

*Theotokion* Rejoice, O Virgin Mother, dwelling-place of the uncontainable one who desired to be born in a cave, a mortal man who guides all creation by his hand.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* O almighty deliverer of all, descending into the midst of the flame, you bedewed the pious youths and taught them to sing: Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord.

In your ineffable loving kindness, O Christ, it was your will to be born of the pure Virgin in a cave, to save me who through great disobedience has become a den of thieves.

Signing a writ of complete remission for me, you, the author of creation, registered yourself with servants in accordance with the edict of Caesar. I hymn the unfathomable depths of your loving-kindness, O Master.

O radiant palace of the Master, how is it that you enter the least of caves to give birth to the Lord and king, incarnate for our sake, O most holy Virgin Bride of God?

*Canon of the Martyr*

## December 21

*Irmos* Daniel stretched forth his hands, and stopped the mouths of the lions in the den; while girded with virtues, the youths who loved to worship quenched the mighty fire as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

With eyes and mind lifted to God who is able to save, by the grace of the divine Spirit you extinguished the boiling of the cauldron, O martyr, singing with faith the hymn of the children: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Obedying the words of the wicked tyrant, the vain-minded ones who were worthy of fire cast you alive into fire, O martyr; yet, bedewed by the love of your Bridegroom, you were not consumed by it as you honoured him.

You stood before the tribunal, professing Christ to be the immortal God who has endured crucifixion and slain falsehood, who grants immortal life to the faithful who cry: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Theotokion* The Lord who appoints clouds for his ascent, through the cloud of the Virgin comes to be born for us, that he might dispel the dark cloud of sin from the souls of us who cry out to him: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

### *Ode 9*

#### *Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Eve, through weakness, lived under the curse of disobedience; but O Virgin Mother of God, you have put forth a blessing for the world through the fruit of your child bearing: therefore we all magnify you.

O faithful, let us dance, leap up and cry out together: The salvation of all comes; the Lord draws near to be born, that he might save those who with godly wisdom celebrate his nativity.

Take up the psaltery and harp, O holy David, and sing in hymnody: O house of Ephratha, be glad, for he who was begotten from the Father from within himself is most radiantly born in you, incarnate of the Virgin.

Like a downpour, like a mighty rainfall has the Master descended into you, O Virgin Mother of God, and he has watered lands hardened by dark ungodliness and seas dried up by falsehood.

#### *Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* From you O Virgin, the unquarried mountain, was hewn Christ, the cornerstone not cut by man, who joined in himself the separate natures. We therefore with rejoicing magnify you, O Mother of God.

The angels marvelled at the struggles which God-bearing Juliana undertook for the faith: how in her womanly nature she put to shame him who had brought death to our first mother in paradise.

As a passion-bearer fully adorned and an excellent virgin you have rightly received the crown of righteousness, having bodily trampled the bodiless foe underfoot and emerged triumphant.

We honour you, the noetic swallow, the incorrupt turtledove and dove, whose wings were gilded by your witness, and who soared aloft and found rest in God.

You blossomed in the valley of martyrdom like a lily, O passion-bearer Juliana, and in virginity you were fragrant as a rose; divine perfume for your comely Bridegroom.

*Theotokion* Bearing him who sustains all things, the Virgin comes to Bethlehem to give birth, and to lay in a manger as an infant him who excellently accomplishes the restoration of men.

*Exapostilarion,  
to the special Melody* He has visited us...

O come, all you faithful, let us offer up hymns of the Forefeast of the nativity, for Christ is now coming to be born in Bethlehem, that he might save the world, as he truly loves mankind.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Another Exapostilarion*

O Bethlehem, land of Judah, adorn your gates, for the Virgin Mother of God now approaches to give birth within you, in a cave and a manger, to my Lord and God.

*We recite the Praises,  
inserting 4 verses, tone 6,  
to the special melody* Go forth, angelic hosts...

The creative wisdom now comes forth, as the clouds of prophecy part: grace flourishes and truth shines as the shadows of indistinct images cease to be. The gates of Eden are opened: dance, O Adam, our creator of his own will assumes human form.

Fulfilling the sayings and visions of the prophets, the Word is made flesh, taking on coarse matter and born, he lies in a manger of dumb beasts. Behold the extreme condescension and the awesome dispensation, for which we sing: Christ, the king of Israel, has now arrived.

Behold, in manner past understanding and recounting, the pure one gives birth to the Son of God whom the prophets of old proclaimed, foreseeing through the Holy

## December 21

Spirit, who preserves her undefiled, and releases Adam from sin. O people, let us say: Christ our king has now arrived in the flesh.

Without leaving the bosom of the Father, you reveal yourself as man, and held in the arms of the Virgin, you summon the Magi from Persia by a star, to worship you as king and God. You destroy the ungodly princes of the heathen with the spirit of your lips, and shepherd the people whom you have created.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone and melody*

The Word who is consubstantial with the Father, receiving human form from the precious blood of the Virgin, takes form and grows with the passing of time; and he is born in the cave. Great is the awesomeness. The angels sing, and man clap their hands: Christ the king of Israel has now arrived.

Both now and for ever... *same tone and melody*

The prophecies of Balaam the magus are fulfilled; for those who were filled with Persian miracles, illumined with the brilliance of the unusual star by Christ, the never setting Sun incarnate in Bethlehem, by their bestowal of gifts indicate God the king, who of his own will became a mortal man.

*Aposticha, tone 2,  
to the special melody* O house of Ephratha...

The star shines forth, \* signalling beforehand \* him who is born in the cave. \* O shepherds and angels, \* Magi with gifts, \* hasten to approach.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

That he might fulfill \* the predictions of the prophets, \* the Lord is born in Bethlehem, \* and he opens Eden \* to the descendants of Adam.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

O Bethlehem, anoint \* the holy manger with myrrh, \* for the Master will shine forth \* the rays of his divinity.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

Come, O mortals, \* and let us together \* unceasingly hymn Mary, \* the Virgin Mother of God, \* from whom Christ is born.

## December 22

### **Forefeast of Christmas the great martyr Anastasia, the deliverer from bondage**

### **Vespers**

*At Lord I call to you... we sing 6 verses.*

*Of the Forefeast, tone 1,  
to the special melody O all-praised martyrs...*

Beholding the condescension of God, all the earth is glad:  
the Magi bring him gifts;  
the sky proclaims it on high with a star;  
the angels render glory, and the piping shepherds are amazed;  
the manger holds him like a fiery throne.  
Seeing these things, rejoice O Mother.

Ineffable offspring of the unoriginate Father,  
the unoriginate Son, clad in the likeness of my person,  
you come, the light of revelation to the nations,  
to the poor humanity in which you are now clad.  
You come to enrich that which had become impoverished,  
I hymn your loving-kindness, O Lord.

Seeing me as an infant resting in your arms,  
be glad, O Mother,  
for I have come to take away the pain of Adam,  
suffered through the evil counsel of the serpent,  
when he tasted from the tree,  
and found himself removed from the sweetness of paradise  
and subject to corruption.

*And 3 verses of the great martyr, tone 8,  
to the special melody What shall we call you...*

Rejecting the beautiful things of the world and sparing not your flesh, O honourable one, you committed yourself wholly to minister to the saints in a godly manner, patiently tending their wounds amid their sufferings, and wisely urging them with your words of encouragement: pray that our souls be saved.

## December 22

You dispersed your transitory wealth to those in need, O honourable martyr, fervently seeking that which is eternal. Following the divine steps of Christ with undaunted faith, you cried out: I am wounded with longing for you, O immortal Lord; let me be a partaker of the divine glory of your sufferings, as you are compassionate and loving to mankind.

Having endured blessed suffering, O Anastasia, truly you ever cleanse our sufferings with the outpourings of your healings, and so we fittingly call you blessed. We lovingly celebrate your memory and bow down before your relics, drawing sanctity therefrom: pray that our souls be saved.

Glory be to the Father...

*Of the great martyr, tone 2*

Having suffered at the tribunal, you received the gift of resurrection, O most praised Anastasia; for, routing a multitude of demons, you committed them to the sea, O truly wondrous athlete and martyr.

Both now and for ever...

*Of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Adorn yourself, O Bethlehem:  
sing, O city of Sion, and rejoice, O wilderness,  
as you betroth yourself to joy in anticipation;  
for the star shall come to Bethlehem announcing Christ who is to be born;  
the cave shall receive him whom nothing can contain;  
and the manger is ready to accept life everlasting.  
To him let us all sing and cry out:  
Save our souls, O Jesus our God, incarnate for our sake.

*Aposticha, tone 2,  
to the special melody O house of Ephratha...*

Christ is coming \* to crush the evil one, \* to enlighten those in darkness, \* and to loosen those in bonds. \* Let us go forth to meet him.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Dance, O Sion: \* adorn yourself well, O cave: prepare yourself, O Bethlehem. \* For, see, the Virgin is coming \* to give birth to the Messiah.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.



Sing praise and glory, \* you fatherlands of the gentiles: \* O Magi, bearing your gifts; \* O shepherds piping; \* hasten in earnest.

Glory be to the Father...

*Of the Great-martyr, tone 4  
composed by the Studite*

As the namesake of the life bearing resurrection of Christ, you excellently fulfilled your calling with an honourable life and strength of character. Gaining courage through wisdom, you wove for yourself a robe dyed purple in your blood, and bearing the cross royally, like a sceptre, you now reign with God the Saviour, O blessed Anastasia. Entreat him, that he illumine us with his divine glory.

Both now and for ever...

*Of the Forefeast, same tone*

Dance for joy, O Isaiah, to receive the message of God.  
Prophecy to the maiden Mary, the bush which burnt  
yet was not consumed by the brilliance of the divinity.  
Adorn yourself well, O Bethlehem;  
open your gates, O Eden.  
Magi, come to see salvation  
wrapped in swaddling-bands in the manger,  
whose star shines above the cave:  
the Lord, the giver of life, who saves our race.

*Troparion of the great martyr Anastasia, tone 4*

Your martyr Anastasia loudly cries to you, O Jesus: | I love you, my bridegroom.  
| Seeking you I pass through many struggles; | in your baptism I am crucified and buried  
with you: | I suffer for your sake that I may reign with you; | I die for you that I may live  
with you. | As an unblemished sacrifice | accept me as I sacrifice myself with love for  
you. || By her intercessions save our souls, as you are merciful.

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*And the troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem, | be open to all, O Eden. | Adorn yourself O  
Ephratha, | for the tree of life has blossomed from the Virgin in the cave. | She appears  
as a noetic paradise having a divine garden, | eating from which we live, not dying like  
Adam. || Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old.

## Compline

*We sing the Canon of the Forefeast tone 6  
upon the acrostic I sing the hymn of great Thursday*

### *Ode 1*

*Irmos* The Red Sea is parted by that which was cut down, and the wave-ridden deep is dried up, becoming a path for the defenseless and a grave for the armed; and a hymn of beauty divine is sung: Christ our God has gloriously been glorified.

The all-accomplishing and omnipotent life, the infinite wisdom of God, has made for himself a habitation of the pure unwedded Mother; for, clad in a bodily dwelling, Christ our God has gloriously glorified himself.

Mystically leading the Magi, the Wisdom of God summons the first-fruits from among the nations; and to nurture mystically the irrational ones he lays a mystical meal in the manger of dumb beasts; and with the star shining before them they hasten there, journeying with gifts.

Let us now listen to the words of the prophets fulfilled by the Spirit; for the Virgin, having conceived, comes to give birth to him who is above all being. The heavens show him to the Magi as a babe in arms, and also the angels to the shepherds.

### *Ode 3*

*Irmos* God, the Lord and creator of all, the dispassionate one, impoverishing himself, united himself to that which he had fashioned; and as a child born in the flesh he is worshiped in a poor manger, who cries out: Eat my body, and make yourselves strong through faith.

As a premonition of the madness of Pilate, Herod is impatient to slay Christ who is coming now to shed his blood as deliverance for the world. Therefore, in his murderous savagery he slaughters a multitude of infants.

The foolish man says: There is no God. And he who is filled with utter insanity is sick with lust for the murder of the Messiah. Degraded by his audacious intent, he arms himself fully for the murder of innocent babes and defiles the earth with their blood.

### *Ode 4*

*Irmos* The prophet, foreseeing your ineffable mystery, O Christ, declared: You have shown us the steadfast love of your might, O compassionate Father; for you have sent to the world the only-begotten Son, O good one.

Descending upon the fleece like rain, and upon her who gave birth to you like dew upon the ground, O Lord, in your mercy you came to be born and to dwell with men; for the Father has sent you, the only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

You share human flesh through the seed of Abraham, O Christ, and come to bestow grace upon grace and to save your image and render it incorrupt; for the Father has sent you, the only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

The new drink, which of old David longed to quaff in his thirst, comes to be poured out in the cave of Bethlehem, to quench the long-standing thirst of Adam and David, from whom Christ is born in the flesh.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* The apostles, bound with a bond of love, offered themselves to Christ the Master of all: with their beautiful feet cleansed, they announced to all the glad tidings of peace.

The wisdom of God, who holds the unrestrainable waters in their allotted spaces, who bridles the deep and restrains the seas, descending like rain upon a fleece, makes his abode within the Virgin.

By a star Christ calls to wisdom the Magi, disciples of the magus Balaam; he who clothes the heavens with clouds is wrapped in swaddling bands; he before whom the Cherubim tremble lies in a manger; and he who fills all things is contained by a cave.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The uttermost abyss of sins has engulfed me, whose surges none can withstand; and like Jonah I cry to you, O Master: Lead me up from corruption.

Knowing you to be the Lord, the heavens now declare your glory with a star, O Saviour, summoning the Magi with gifts to come to acknowledge you and to worship you.

Let those who avoid defilement come forth, and thus, pure, let them touch Christ, the pure infant who lies in the manger and cleanses the depths of men's hearts.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The youths in Babylon did not fear the fires of the furnace, but, cast into the midst of the flames, bedewed, they sang: Blessed are you, Lord God of our fathers.

Mentally disturbed and foreseeing dire things, Herod was shaken, and sought an opportunity to slay the God of life and death, the Lord of all and master of creation.

All who are friends of Christ, flee with him who is escaping to Egypt; and, worshiping him rightly, cry out in a godly manner and glorify him together.

He who is not with me works against me, said Christ; he who does not gather with me is like one who scatters: let us stand in awe of his descent to the flesh.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* The blessed youths in Babylon, braving danger for the laws of their fathers, reviled the mindless command of the ruler, and, united by the fire which burned them not, they sang a fitting hymn to the Almighty: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Let us, the divinely wise who have come to the Word in Bethlehem, gaze with wonder with the angels and shepherds, sending glory to God in the highest, who bestows his good will and peace to men, and let us exalt him above all for ever.

*Instead of Glory... the refrain* Let us bless the Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Holding fast to the law of love, let us embrace the intent of brotherly love, building peace with one another and in oneness of mind; for Christ, the giver of peace, comes, bringing peace to all things and saving those who sing: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

With false words iniquitous Herod paid homage to the new-born Christ, and told the Magi to render homage for him in his name: he was not ashamed to persecute the coming Messiah, neither did he have pity on the infants; and he knew not how to sing: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

*Then both choirs together:*

We praise, bless and worship the Lord;  
praising him and exulting him above all for ever.

*And again the Irmos* The blessed youths in Babylon...

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* O come, all you faithful, and with uplifted minds let us delight in the hospitality of the Master and the feast of immortality in the lowly cave, knowing the Word, whom we magnify, and who has become incarnate ineffably.

Come and seek out the child; and when you find him, tell me quickly of him; thus said Herod to the chief among the Magi, devising deceit in his heart; but the deceiver was foiled, plotting his iniquity in vain.

The creator, begotten of the Father from before time began, is born of the Virgin, being the wisdom, word and power of God. Knowing him to be the only Son, we magnify God made man.

You revealed yourself as a man in essence, not in pretence, O Saviour: through the nature which you assumed and your quality of recompense, you showed yourself to be God. Honouring your divine advent through the Virgin, we magnify you.

*Then we repeat the Irmos O come all you faithful...  
and make a prostration.*

## Matins

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 1  
to the special melody* When the stone had been sealed...

Creation is illumined, as in his ineffable mercy, the creator comes to be born in the cave. Shepherds, assemble with haste, and see the awesome wonder. Come, Magi bearing gifts in your arms, and say: Glory to the new-born king: glory to him who has led us on our journey. We worship him in the flesh as the king of all.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Tone 4,  
to the special melody* Go quickly before...

All creation rejoices today in a godly manner, for Christ the Lord, the Son of God, is born of the pure Virgin, rendering the whole race of man immortal, and annulling the curse of our first mother Eve. Therefore, we offer hymnody to our benefactor.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 6  
to the special melody* Hope of the world...

The kings of old brought gold, myrrh and frankincense from Persia to the new born king and God; but now we celebrate with divine honour and wisdom the Forefeast of his nativity with all our soul, and offer him hope, faith and love, hymning the Virgin.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Tone 3,  
to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Hymning the Virgin who shall give birth to the pre-eternal Word, righteous Joseph cried out: I perceive you to be the temple of the Lord, who bears him who is come to save all and who, in his loving-kindness, shall show as temples of God those who sing to him.

*We sing two canons, of the Forefeast and of the great-martyr.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the Forefeast, tone 6*

*Irmos* Traversing the deep on foot as if it were dry land, Israel looked upon the tyrant Pharaoh as he drowned and cried out: Let us sing to God a song of victory.

Jesus our enlightenment, the great sun, has shone upon us through the cloud of the Virgin; and we who are in darkness sing to him, brightly illumined with his splendours.

The king of peace, the expectation of the nations, comes to slay the enemy. Let us hasten to meet him who is born in Bethlehem for our salvation.

Telling of the awesome appearing of Christ, the sayings of the prophets are fulfilled as the lamb, the mother prepares to give birth to the lamb, deliverer and Lord of all.

*Theotokion* With faith we call you blessed, O blessed of God, pure dove of the Master, honoured, immaculate and comely among women, who gave birth to the God of all.

*Canon of the great martyr, tone 8*

*upon the acrostic* I hymn you with love, O martyr Anastasia  
*composed by Joseph*

*Irmos* O people, let us offer a hymn to our wondrous God who freed Israel from bondage, singing and crying out a hymn of victory to him who alone is the Master.

Let us offer hymnody to God, who chose to be incarnate of the Virgin in the city of Bethlehem, and to be laid in an infant's manger as an infant, to save the human race.

Seeking only desirable beauties, those of Christ, O glorious martyr Anastasia, with strength of character you passed by the beauties of the world and inherited immortality.

Enlightened by the radiance of the Spirit, you traversed the darkness of deception, O martyr, and now dwell where the divine splendour of the uncreated Trinity shines.

*Theotokion* The invisible God has appeared, born of you supernaturally in his great loving-kindness, O virgin Mother. He who is rich has impoverished himself, that he might enrich the human race with immortality.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* There is none holy as you O Lord my God, who has exalted the strength of your faithful O good one, and has established us on the rock of your confession.

Christ who stretched out the heavens by his word enters the cave to recline in a manger of dumb beasts, desiring in his loving kindness to deliver us from folly.

The prophet clearly cried out: This is our God, and there is no other who can take his place. Uniting himself to men, he has revealed every path of knowledge.

The cherubim cannot bear to gaze upon you, O Lord who loves mankind. How then can the manger hold you, who is infinite in nature but born for our sake of the Virgin in your great loving-kindness?

*Theotokion* Daniel the prophet foresaw you, O Mother of God, as the mountain from which the stone was cut which crushed and destroyed the temples of idolatry.

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* O Lord the fashioner of heaven's vault and creator of the Church, establish me upon your love, O summit of desire and confirmation of the faithful, O true lover of mankind.

The untouchable Lord desires to be rest in the manger as an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands. Leap up, O mountains, and be clothed in divine joy, filled with light.

Enriched by the Saviour's words, boldly you blunted the darts of the persecutors' burning words, O Anastasia, ruling the stirrings of your soul with divine love.

You simply cried out, O martyr: I seek the Lord to whose love alone I have bound my soul, and with simplicity I go to be richly illumined by his most pure splendour.

*Theotokion* O unwedded Maiden, you carry in your womb, incarnate, him who holds all creation in his hand, the pre-eternal, whom born as an infant you lay in a manger.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3  
to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* What a wonder truly awesome and past speech, for in his goodness, he who causes all things to exist has entered the womb of the holy Virgin and comes to be born in a cave and laid in a manger. His star preaches from on high to the Magi coming to pay him

homage with gifts, urging them to hasten from afar, following the prophecy of Balaam, who said: A star will proclaim a young child, the pre-eternal God.

*Sessional Hymn of the great martyr, tone 1,  
to the special melody Your tomb, O Saviour...*

We praise you as a bride of Christ, O virgin, and we rightly acclaim you with honourable Thecla. Streams of healings flow on the day of your commemoration; for you have received grace, for empowered by the Spirit you kept the commandments of the Lord.

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast, tone 8,  
to the special melody That which was mystically commanded...*

Celebrating the days of the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ, let us celebrate, O faithful; and bearing the virtues like the gift-bearing Magi, let us worthily proceed to sing in greeting the new hymn of the angels to our God who has been born in Bethlehem of the divine Maiden and Virgin without seed, him whom all the world glorifies.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Christ is my strength, my God and my Lord, sings the holy Church in reverent piety, raising her voice with a pure mind, and keeping festival in the Lord.

Behold, the star has shone from afar which was proclaimed of old by Jacob. The infinite God, becoming man, is seen wrapped in swaddling-bands.

The Lord, the deliverance of all, is seen as an infant, sitting in the bosom of the Virgin: he who, as the Son, rests in the bosom of the Father.

Open wide, O Eden, once was closed to me because of the theft of the fruit; for now, in Bethlehem, he is born who has clad himself in me and has set me apart to share in your painless delights.

*Theotokion* The prophet Habbakuk foresaw you in the Spirit, O Virgin, as the mountain overshadowed with the virtues, from where he who illumines our souls would appear to us.

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* I have heard the mystery of your dispensation O Lord; I have understood your works, and I glorify your divinity.



Now perfected are the sayings of those who prophesied in the divine Spirit; for the Virgin comes to give birth in the cave to him who is most perfect.

Seeking the glory of martyrdom with love, you received it, suffering steadfastly with undaunted will, O martyr patient of soul.

When your body was stripped, O praiseworthy athlete and martyr, you were truly vested in a robe of grace woven from on high.

*Theotokion* O most pure Lady, the king of heaven comes from your light-bearing womb as a mortal, lying in a manger as though on a royal throne.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* I pray you, O good one, illumine with your divine light the souls of those who rise at dawn with love for you, that they may know you O Word of God to be truly God, who calls them back from the deep gloom of transgression.

O Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, the prince shall come forth from you for Israel, summoning the rejected gentiles, as Micah foretold, illumined by the Spirit.

Jesus alone is born of the Virgin, to shepherd his flock with strength. He is magnified to the end of the earth, whom the divinely eloquent prophet proclaimed of old.

The spirit of wisdom, the spirit of God, the spirit of strength and counsel, of knowledge and understanding, the spirit of the fear of God filled the Son who was incarnate of you, O Virgin.

*Theotokion* O most pure Lady, you caused all the weaponry of the enemy to fail utterly; for you gave birth to the God of all, who with a spear has brought low his savagery.

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* Waking at dawn we call to you to save us, O Lord; for you are our God and we know no other than you.

The star of Judah has shone from the land of Chaldea, moving the Magi to worship, as it was written.

You contended under the law, vanquishing the iniquitous with the power of the Spirit, O glorious martyr.

By your name you portray the resurrection of God, cursing the invisible foe, O most praised one.

## December 22

*Theotokion* Christ comes to be born of the Virgin in a subterranean cave, that all things may be glad.

### *Ode 6*

#### *Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Beholding the sea of life, surging with the storm of temptations, I run to your calm haven and cry to you: Raise my life from corruption, O most merciful one.

Behold, Christ comes to his own; for we are made his through grace and godly virtues, O faithful; and, illumined in soul and heart, we receive him.

The root of Jesse has sprouted, from which our God has come, the expectation of the nations, their peace and honour, as divinely illumined Isaiah foretold of old.

Incarnate, you make yourself poor, O my Jesus; enriching me, grievously impoverished by evil, and wrapped in swaddling clothes you loose the bonds of my many sins.

*Theotokion* The winter of adverse thoughts besets my lowly heart with assaults of evil spirits, O rightly beloved Lady: calm it by your mediation.

#### *Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* I pour out my prayer to the Lord, and I declare my grief to him; for my soul is replete with evil and my life approaches Hades; and like Jonah I pray: Lead me up from corruption O God.

He who is compassionate, who forms babies in their mothers' wombs, took human nature from us and is seen as an infant: he who is wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in the manger releases the intricate bonds of my passions by grace.

Patiently following the struggles of the holy martyrs for Christ's sake, ministering to their needs, and cleansing their wounds, O venerable one, you were splendidly enriched, illumining them with glory.

You pour drops of healing with showers of divine gifts, hold in check rivers of the passions, and help those who are in cruel misfortune, O most glorious martyr of Christ, namesake of the divine resurrection.

*Theotokion* Healing human nature corrupted through the ancient transgression, a new child is born without corruption, who sits in your womb as on a throne, O unwedded one, without leaving the throne he shares with the Father in his divinity.

*Kontakion, tone 2,  
to the special melody* Seeking the highest...

Those who have recourse to your church,  
 finding themselves amid temptations and sorrows,  
 receive precious gifts through the divine grace which dwells within you, O  
 Anastasia;  
 for you ever pour forth healings upon the world.

*Ikos* As you are the namesake of the resurrection of Christ, O martyr, by your  
 supplications raise me who is now fallen, letting drops of your miracles fall upon my soul  
 to quench the burning of bitter sin: you ever save the world from the multifarious sins by  
 which I also am tempted; for you ever pour forth healings upon the world.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* An angel moistened the furnace with dew for the holy youths, but the  
 commandment of God consumed the Chaldeans with fire and caused the tyrant to cry  
 out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

He who is most perfect is born as a baby wrapped in swaddling bands; and he who  
 is unoriginate receives a beginning in time from the Virgin, seeking to deify that which he  
 had taken upon himself: let heaven rejoice, and let the earth be glad.

Clad in flesh as in a robe of royal purple, the king of peace emerges from you, O  
 Maiden, destroying his enemies, as he is mighty, and bringing peace to our stormy life.

God who is with us is revealed incarnate: understand this, you nations, and submit  
 yourself. See, our restoration chooses to lay in the manger of Bethlehem as a baby.

*Theotokion* The king who dwelt within you, from all generations chose you as his  
 undefiled palace, O Maiden: to him we now sing: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* The hebrew children in the furnace bravely trampled upon the flames, and  
 transformed the fire into dew as they sang: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

The bodiless choirs give glory on high, and we render homage on earth, seeing  
 you, resting in the manger, who made yourself like us mortals, O Christ the God of all.

You reduced the fire of deception to ashes, partaking of the flame as did the  
 children, showing fervent love for your Master and Bridegroom, O divinely wise one.

You pour showers of healings, soothing the fever of illness, and ever cause the  
 people to sing: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

*Theotokion* A wonder amazing the mind is wrought in you, O Mother: you give birth to God and lay in a manger him who is infinite and unapproachable even to the Cherubim.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* You caused dew to gush from the flames upon the venerable youths, and you burnt the water poured on the sacrifice of your righteous one: for you, O Christ, perform all things by the power of your will alone, and we exalt you above all for ever.

The sayings of the divinely eloquent prophets are now fulfilled, as the Virgin comes to give birth to the Lord: let all the earth sing and be glad, and let it rejoice for ever.

Christ the bestower of light shines, radiant with beams of divine grace and abolishing the shadow of the law. Those who are in darkness see the great light.

O Lord born in the cave, let me, the lair of brigands, be a temple of you, and of the Father and your divine Spirit, that I may glorify you for ever.

*Theotokion* A heavenly star has shone from you, and the astrologers are moved to look upon it, illumined by the Spirit through the knowledge thereof, O most pure Virgin.

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* Trampling upon the fire and flames in the furnace, the divinely eloquent sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The cave holds the new-born, before whom thousands and myriads of angels stand on high. Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Seen as a temple of the Trinity, in the churches of God you exercised yourself in fasting and supplication, O Anastasia, crying: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Strengthening Chrysogonus with your fortifying words, O passion-bearer, you trampled upon the feeble cruelty of the idols, as you suffered valiantly.

*Theotokion* Having held God within yourself, O Maiden, you gave birth to the infant who created time, the immutable Lord, born in the city of Bethlehem in ineffable mercy.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* It is not possible for man to see God, upon whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through you, O most pure one, appeared to us the incarnate Word, whom magnifying with the heavenly hosts, we call you blest.

Behold Christ, the restoration, cleansing, salvation and power of all, has come. The priceless treasure is hidden within the cave; and the Magi enriched thereby offer him gold, as to a king.

Keep watch, O shepherds of Christ, and come noetically to the city of Bethlehem; and sing to God in the highest: Glory and majesty to him who in his goodness chose to reveal himself as an infant for our sake.

Wrapped in swaddling clothes in the flesh, as you shroud the earth in darkness and set bounds for the sea with sand, you have broken the bonds of my evil deeds and with righteousness gird those who have become weak through the assaults of the enemy.

*Theotokion* O chamber and throne of the ruler, mountain of God, chosen city, garden of paradise, most radiant cloud of the sun: illumine my soul, dispelling the cloud of my manifold iniquities.

*Canon of the Great martyr*

*Irmos* We who are saved by you, O pure Virgin, confess you to be the true Mother of God, and with the bodiless choirs we magnify you.

Leap up in gladness, O mountains, and gird yourselves about with joy, O hills; for the Virgin now comes to give birth to the Lord.

Today, creation offers you gladness, O Anastasia, glorifying the memory of the Word whom you glorified with your blood.

Illumined now with a most pure light, O truly noble martyr, by your supplications ask that we all receive illumination from on high.

*Theotokion* Let all creation now rejoice in splendour, for the Mother of God comes to give birth to God the Word, who though God, became man.

*Exapostilarion*  
*to the special melody* By the Spirit in the holy place...

You ministered to Chrysogonus imprisoned in the dungeon, O Anastasia, and, submitting to his words, you finish the course of martyrdom in God; and receiving the grace of healing from him, you heal the infirmities of men.

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*Of the Forefeast, same melody*

Let heaven rejoice, and let the earth be glad. Be enlightened, O cave: O manger, receive him who created man with his own hand and is born as a babe of the Virgin. O multitude of angels, cry out clearly: Glory to God in the highest.

*Praises, 4 verses, tone 6,  
to the special melody* Come forth, you angelic hosts...

Now are the ancient indications made manifest: for the Virgin has conceived; the stone has been cut from the mountain, the rod of Jesse has sprouted, and the dew of Gideon has now been poured upon the earth. O people, let us sing: Christ, the King of Israel, comes forth.

Now are seen strange aspects of a unusual maternity, for how can he who sits with the Father in the highest choose to be laid in a manger of dumb beasts? How can he whom no one can touch be wrapped in swaddling clothes? How can he who is everywhere present be contained in a cave? O people, let us sing: Christ, the king of Israel, comes forth.

He who works miracles, smiting Egypt with plagues and raining manna upon his foolish people, is incarnate and nurtured with milk. As a babe, he flees the tyrant Herod, borne by his virgin Mother as upon a cloud; as seen by Isaiah with most godly foresight.

The child who has been king from before time began is born of his own will: unto us a son is given. Hear this, you nations, and pay heed, O Israel: understand and submit yourselves. For he is with us who will grind down and wipe from the earth every kingdom and principality which does not obey him.

Glory be to the Father... *same melody*

You shall be shepherded with a staff of iron, O Judea, for you have not submitted and have not believed the prophets; for when the Son is born the Father will give to the gentiles the inheritance and dominion over all the world, and will drive you out, for you will not submit to cry out: Christ, the King of Israel, comes forth.

Both now and for ever... *same melody*

Leap up, O David, for Christ has sprung forth from within you: rejoice, O Jesse, for your stock has blossomed. From your loins, O Judah, the Lord shall come, according to the prophecy of Balaam. See, you nations, following the great Isaiah: Lo, the most pure Virgin gives birth to the infant Emmanuel.

*Aposticha, tone 2,  
to the special melody* O house of Ephratha...

Christ draws near, \* the star shines before him, \* the heavenly multitude \* of the army of the noetic hosts \* bends low to see.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, \* the shepherd has come forth, \* he who is to save Israel. \*  
No longer shall you be the least \* among the princes of Judah.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Come, you mortals, \* and let us form a choir \* with the angels. \* Let us cry out to  
God: \* Glory in the highest.

Glory be to the Father...

*of the great-martyr,  
composed by Byzantius, tone 5*

The day of the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ our God, the feast of the most praised martyr Anastasia, shines today. See, the Virgin approaches Bethlehem to lay her child, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, in a manger of dumb beasts, him who has delivered us from the ancient curse and saves our souls.

Both now and for ever...

“Do not be worried at the sight of my womb, O Joseph; for you shall see him who is to born of me, and shall rejoice and worship him as God” thus the Mother of God said to her betrothed when she was to give birth to Christ. Let us sing to her: Rejoice, O favoured one, the Lord is with you; and, because of you, he is with us as well.

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 verses:*

*4 from Ode 3 of the canon of the Forefeast, and 4 from Ode 6 of the canon of the great-martyr.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

God is wonderful in his saints, the God of Israel.

*Verse* In their choirs they bless God, those that are sprung from the fount of Israel.

The Epistle to the Galatians *No 208 [Gal 3:23-29]*

*Alleluia, tone 1*

*Verses* I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He brought me up from the pit of roaring waters, out of the mire and clay.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 33 [Luke 7:36-50]*

*Communion Verse*

The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance: he will not fear bad tidings.



## December 23

### Forefeast of Christmas the Ten martyrs of Crete

#### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... we sing 6 verses,  
3 of the Forefeast, tone 4,  
to the special melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

With uprightness of mind  
let us sing the pre-festal hymns of the nativity of Christ;  
for, though equal in honour to the Father and the Spirit,  
in his loving-kindness  
he has clothed himself in our matter  
to be born in the city of Bethlehem.  
The shepherds and angels hymn his ineffable nativity.

Let us shout to the sound of cymbals,  
let us cry out in hymns: The advent of Christ has come.  
The predictions of the prophets are fulfilled,  
concerning him of whom they foretold  
that he would appear to men bodily,  
born in the holy cave,  
an infant lying in a manger wrapped in swaddling-bands.

Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem.  
O Eden, be now opened:  
the most holy one comes to give birth.  
Let the heavens be glad and let men leap for joy;  
for he who is our rich life, in the greatness of his mercy,  
comes to the manger and the cave,  
assuming the poverty of Adam without change or confusion.

*And 3 verses of the martyrs, in the same tone and melody*

With sacred acclamations \* let us loudly praise today \* the ten divinely called, \*  
the lamps ten-times radiant, \* illumining the fullness of the Church with divine brilliance;  
\* the unshakable pillars, \* the luminous stars, \* who have rendered the earth heavenly \*  
by the splendour of their magnificent struggles.

## December 23

Let Theodulus be praised \* with Zoticus and Pompey, \* Basilides, Eyporus, Agathopus and Satorninus, \* Gelasius and the divine Evaristus, \* and with them also \* let Evnikian be honoured with hymns: the truly calm havens for the storm-tossed, who denounced falsehood \* and have received the crown of victory.

Let us give honour \* to the ten holy passion bearers of the Trinity, \* the offspring of Crete, \* the foundations of the Church, \* the imperishable adornments of the faithful, \* the precious and fragrant flowers of paradise, \* the beautiful sacrifices \* truly acceptable to Christ, \* the offerings of the temple of heaven.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 3*

On this day of festal preparation the feast of the martyrs has dawned, preparing us for the day of the nativity of the sun, the Son who shines forth, heralding God who has appeared from the Virgin in the flesh. The ten martyrs who suffered mightily in Crete have received crowns from heaven: to them let us sing: O holy martyrs, choir elect in holiness, entreat Christ for those who with faith celebrate your most honoured memory.

Both now and for ever...

*Same tone*

Adorn yourself well, O Bethlehem, for Eden is opened. Prepare yourself, O Ephratha, for Adam is restored, and Eve with him: the curse is annulled and salvation blossoms forth: the souls of the righteous are adorned, offering hymnody instead of myrrh as their gift, and receiving salvation of soul and incorruption. Behold him in the manger who directs those who cry out to sing unceasingly in spirit: Glory to you, O Lord.

*Aposticha, tone 6,*  
*to the special melody* On the third day...

In manner past understanding the boundless wisdom of God has made himself a house from the Virgin, and incomprehensibly desires to be born in the flesh in the cave, and laid in a manger of dumb beasts.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

You revealed yourself to the prophets as far as they were able to behold you, the creator, O Christ; but in latter times you showed yourself to all men, becoming man in the city of Bethlehem.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

The star made its transit, heralding Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, to those who observed the stars, and in the city of Bethlehem the angels now announce glad tidings to the shepherds. With them let us also hasten, O divinely wise.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 2*

Today Crete celebrates the Forefeast of the nativity of Christ at the memorial of the passion-bearers. Through their supplications, O Lord, save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

Behold, the time of our salvation is coming; be ready, O cave, for the Virgin comes to give birth. O Bethlehem, the land of Judah, adorn yourself and be glad, for from you our Lord shall shine. Hearken, you mountains and hills and surrounding lands of Judea, for Christ comes to save man whom he created, as he loves mankind.

*Troparion of the martyrs, tone 4*

In their sufferings, O Lord, your martyrs | received imperishable crowns from you, our God. | Armed with your might, they cast down the tormentors | and crushed the feeble audacity of demons. || By their intercessions, save our souls.

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*And the troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Prepare yourself, O Bethlehem, | be open to all, O Eden. | Adorn yourself O Ephratha, | for the tree of life has blossomed from the Virgin in the cave. | She appears as a noetic paradise having a divine garden, | eating from which we live, not dying like Adam. || Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old.

## Compline

*We sing a Triodion, the Irmos of each Ode of which we sing twice, the Troparia repeated to make up six in number. After each Ode both choirs together sing the Irmos of the Ode.*

*Triodion, tone 6*

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* I rise early to you, O Word of God, who, in your compassion immutably humbled yourself and assumed the form of a servant from the Virgin: grant peace to me who has fallen, O lover of mankind.

Having cleansed our thoughts and purified ourselves by partaking of the mysteries of the awesome dispensation, let us go up to the city of Bethlehem in body and soul, to see the Master who is born.

See, and fear not, O friends, for insane Herod rages in vain, seeking to slay the new-born creator who, as one who has dominion over life and death, lives and saves the world, as he is loving to mankind.

Lord, have mercy. *thrice*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*  
*to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* The godly children denounced the pillar of evil opposed to God; and Herod, raging savagely against Christ, devises empty plots, intending to slay him who holds life in the palm of his hand, whom all creation blesses and glorifies above all for ever.

O faithful, let us all shake the sleep of slothfulness from our eyelids, and, fending off temptations from the evil one, let us keep vigil in prayer: with the shepherds let us be witnesses of the glory of the newborn Christ, whom all creation blesses and glorifies above all for ever.

Who among men can plumb the depths of the wisdom and understanding of the creator? What wise man can fathom the abyss of the judgments of God, whereby, having bowed down heavens, he dwells as a mortal with men? All creation blesses and glorifies him above all for ever.

O faithful, let us halt every vile word from leaving our lips; and having learned the words of God, let us now offer them to Christ who has released us from worldliness as he lies in a manger of dumb beasts, whom all creation blesses and glorifies above all for ever.

Let us hasten to renounce carnal passions and the beauties of this world, and let us confine ourselves to spiritual concerns, O divinely wise, through our works presenting ourselves worthily to the Master whom all creation blesses and glorifies above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* More honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who in purity gave birth to God the Word; the very Mother of God, we magnify.

The pernicious order of the malicious one who troubled the nativity of Jesus wrought the slaughter of innocent babies, but with faith we honour him who is born.

Cruel Herod, flouting the laws of nature and casting aside the divine commandments, iniquitously deprived mothers of their infants and slaughtered the innocent babies in place of the life of all.

The gates of Eden were opened to the nations when the deliverer was born in the cave, as the Lord of glory pours a fountain of immortality upon those who thirst: him, we magnify.

The angels surround the manger as if it were the throne of the Cherubim, for they see the cave to be heaven as the Master lay there; and they sing: Glory to God in the highest.

*The Irmos is repeated, followed by a prostration.*

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the Forefeast, twice;  
Glory be to the Father... troparion of the martyrs;  
Both now and for ever... that of the Forefeast, once.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 3  
to the special melody Of the divine faith...*

Today the Church rejoices, sings and adorns herself; she truly celebrates the Forefeast of the nativity: for a most holy celebration is held, and she arrays herself for the Lord of glory. We all cry out to Christ our God: O lover of mankind, have mercy on us who sing to you.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*After the second reading from of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the special melody Of the wisdom...*

You descended from the bosom of the Father, and in ineffable abasement assumed our poverty, O lover of mankind; transcending nature you were pleased to make your dwelling in a cave, O Lord; and you, the creator and Lord, took nourishment as an infant from your Mother's breast. Therefore, the Magi, guided by the star, bring gifts to you as the Master of creation, and the shepherds and angels marvel as they sing: Glory in the highest to God who comes to be born as a man on earth.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*We sing the Canon of the Forefeast, with 8 Troparia, including the Irmos;  
and that of the martyrs, with 6 Troparia.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the Forefeast tone 6,  
the acrostic of which is the [Greek] alphabet,  
composed by Joseph*

*Irmos* Herod seeks to slay him who of old covered the tyrannical persecutor with the waves of the sea, who is now concealed in a manger; but we sing with the Magi: Let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously has he been glorified.

As was written of old, Judah shall not lack a prince, for the promise was made to him, and Jesus Christ, the expectation of the nations, comes, born in a cave in his abundant goodness.

Be glad with great joy, O Bethlehem, for in you is born Christ the Lord. Let the whole world leap up, receiving deliverance, and let all creation dance in celebration.

Desiring to save the human race, he who is most good made his abode in the womb of the unwedded Virgin; and behold, he is coming to be born. Let us worship him, for gloriously has he been glorified.

*Canon of the martyrs, tone 2,  
upon the acrostic contained in the Theotokia,  
composed by George*

*Irmos* Come, O you people, let us sing a hymn to Christ our God, who divided the sea and guided the people whom he had led forth from the bondage of Egypt, for he has been glorified.

Today shine the most radiant beams of the noetic sun, proclaiming to all on earth his brilliant outpouring and advent in the flesh.

Today the passion-bearers set before all a spiritual banquet of the Forefeast which mystically nourishes us with the radiance of the new-born Christ.

Shining like radiant stars, the holy ones followed the noetic sun of glory during their struggles, and having reached him, they are illumined.

United in soul, the martyrs cut down hordes of the enemy and have ineffably received crowns of victory from Christ who was born in the cave.

*Theotokion* The human race offers you pre-festal praises, O Bride of God, glorifying the lover of mankind who was born of you, the mediator and cause of universal joy.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Seeing you born in the cave, who suspended the whole earth unsupported upon the waters, creation was seized with great awe and cried out: None is holy but you, O Lord.

You desired to clothe yourself in the form of a servant, to deliver me from slavery to evil: I hymn your loving-kindness, O Word, equally unoriginate and consubstantial with the Father: Glory to your dispensation.

The Virgin is coming to give birth to the Lord in the cave. Come, Magi and shepherds: angels, sing out your hymns on high: The deliverance of men has come.

Seeking me, lost and by barren deeds made a den of thieves, O Master, you have now arrived at the cave to be born of the Virgin. Glory to your advent, O Word.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* Establish us in you, O Lord, who has slain death by the tree; and plant the fear of you in the hearts of us who sing to you.

Wrapped in swaddling-bands, the incarnate Word has rent asunder the garments of our ancient condemnation, and has clothed us in incorruption.

You destroyed the legion of ungodliness, O most wise ones, by the power of Christ our God who has appeared in the flesh, and you bound yourselves together with his love.

*Theotokion* Released from the bonds of condemnation when the creator was wrapped in swaddling-bands, we are clothed in the vesture of our primal beauty, O Mother of God.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*  
*to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* What a wonder truly awesome and past speech, for in his goodness, he who causes all things to exist enters the womb of the holy Virgin and comes to be born in a cave and laid in a manger. His star preaches from on high to the Magi coming to do him homage

## December 23

with gifts, urging them to hasten from afar, following the prophecy of Balaam, who said: A star will proclaim a young child, the pre-eternal God.

*Sessional Hymn of the martyrs, tone 1,  
to the special melody Your tomb, O Saviour...*

The splendid and honourable guardians of the cities of Crete, having suffered mightily, with faith overcame the serpent, the author of evil, and have been lawfully crowned. Let us celebrate their truly praiseworthy memorial today, glorifying the Lord of all with loud voices. *twice*

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast, same tone and melody*

Rejoice, O Sion; adorn yourself, O Bethlehem. For the sustainer of all, having sent a star, has announced his infinite condescension, before which the hosts of heaven tremble: truly he who surely loves mankind is immutably born of the Virgin.

### *Ode 4*

#### *Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Foreseeing your advent from the Virgin, Habbakuk cried out in awe: Incarnate, you have come from Teman, O deliverer, to restore Adam who had been expelled.

The radiant cloud comes to shine forth from her maternal womb Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who illumines the whole earth with divine rays.

God revealsd himself in the form of men: he abases himself by assuming flesh that he might deify us, and is born in a cave. O faithful, let us receive him with a pure heart.

Behold, Christ is born in the city of Bethlehem that he might open to us Eden, closed of old through the disobedience instigated by the serpent. Let us celebrate a divine festival.

#### *Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* I heard the report of you and was afraid, O Lord; I understood your works, and marvelled and cried out: Glory to your power, O Lord.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be filled with mystic gladness; for Christ has come to restore all things.

The ten athletes, heralding the nativity of the creator, dance and rejoice with us.



The condescension of Christ has divinely elevated the valiant martyrs to heaven by their suffering.

*Theotokion* O Mother of God, in pre-festal celebration, all creation honours you with hymns as the joy of all.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* I rise early to you, O Word of God, who, in your loving-kindness, immutably humbled yourself and through the Virgin assumed the form of a servant. Grant peace to me who has fallen, O lover of mankind.

Let the hearts of mortals leap up, and let creation be glad, for the Lord is born of the pure Maiden in the cave of Bethlehem, and the Magi offer him fitting gifts.

O people who of old sat in the shadow of death, behold the light which has shone upon us from the Virgin, and be filled with great sweetness of soul, ever magnifying the Word who humbled himself.

You come to be contained in a little cave, though infinite by nature, that, in your boundless mercy, you might magnify me, made small through the disobedience.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* O Lord, bestower of light and creator of the ages, guide us in the light of your commandments, for we know no other God than you.

O faithful, let us offer the gold of faith, the pleasing incense of hymnody, and the myrrh of pure love, to Christ whose good pleasure it is to be born in the flesh for our sake.

The defending athletes, having laid low the various wiles of the enemy, are gathered today into the one company of Christ, worthily receiving the honours of victory.

The wise martyrs, having clearly come to know of the advent of Christ in the flesh, spurned carnal love. Therefore, they suffered for love of him.

*Theotokion* Delivered from the delusion of idolatry, O most pure Lady, through you we have come to know the one creator and Saviour: at his nativity we honour you with love.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The depths enclose me, a follower of sin, and unable to endure the waves, like Jonah I cry to the Master: Deliver me from corruption.

Transcending the laws of the body, O Lord, the Virgin comes to give birth to you in the cave and to lay you bodily in a manger as an infant.

In his mercy, the most divine one born of the unwedded Maiden shows me to be a citizen of heaven, though I had become a stranger to God through the disobedience.

Mountains, hills and valleys, be glad; for the Lord is born in the flesh, restoring creation which had become corrupt through the wicked disobedience.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of your loving kindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God.

The star of the East, from on high has shone upon us in God's ineffable mercy, proclaimed a greeting and announcing his illumination of those in the world.

Illumining those who walk in the night of life, in the depths of falsehood, O most glorious ones, by the light of Christ you guided men to him.

He who in his ineffable mercy was born in the cave, as he loves mankind, drew the martyrs up from the depths of ungodliness to the heights of the knowledge of God.

*Theotokion* We mortals have been granted the honour of divine regeneration from Christ our God, who beyond understanding was born of you in the flesh, O Bride of God.

*Kontakion of the martyrs, tone 4,  
to the special melody* You have appeared today...

The honourable contest of the martyrs  
shines upon us as the morning star,  
giving prior illumination of him  
who is to be born in the cave,  
to whom the Virgin will give seedless birth.

*Ikos* Loving Christ, the giver of life, who for us was born of the Virgin in the cave, the warriors raised a splendid legion to combat Belial; and having clearly trounced him on earth, they cast down him who of old boasted without measure. They shine upon those in darkness as luminaries of the noetic sun; for as the star stood before the Magi, guiding them to Bethlehem, the city of Judah, so do they, through their torments, proclaim to us him to whom the Virgin gave seedless birth.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The children in Babylon did not fear the fiery furnace, but standing together in the midst of the flames, bedewed they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

How can the least of caves hold you, O Word, who in your supreme abasement assumed the poverty of Adam and enriched men with the wealth of divine grace?

Hearing strange words, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem to see him who lies in a manger of irrational beasts, who releases all men from irrationality.

With mouth and heart let us hasten to hymn and worship with faith Christ who comes to be born in the cave, in the flesh of the virgin Maiden.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* When the golden image was worshipped on the plain of Dura, your three youths spurned the ungodly command; and, cast into the fire, bedewed they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Abasing himself in the flesh, Christ has shown the richness of his ineffable love for man; for having become man, he has disclosed an abundance of good things to those who cry out unceasingly: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Noetically delighting in the divine fragrance of Christ, the passion-bearers spurned all sweet and beautiful things, and by their suffering followed him, crying: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Showing yourselves to be a pre-festal sacrifice to Christ, O wise ones, you offered him your fragrant suffering as it were myrrh; and so, with the perfume of miracles, he has glorified you who cry: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* O most pure one, by your supplication grant that we who hymn you with faith may with pure noetic sight see the spiritual glory and divine radiance of our God, who in the cave was born of you in the flesh.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The blessed youths in Babylon, braving danger for the laws of their fathers, reviled the mindless command of the ruler, and, united by the fire which burned them not, they sang a fitting hymn to the Almighty: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Holding in your arms, bowing down before, and kissing maternally the one Lord incarnate in a manner beyond description, and clad in human likeness, O Maiden, you

said: O my child most sweet, how is it that I hold you who holds all creation in your hand and frees it from the hand of bondage?

Be ready to sing to him, born on earth, O divine angels. Guided by the star, bring gifts, O Magi. Shepherds, hasten to see him sitting as an infant in his Mother's arms, crying: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

O cloud of the light, how can you wrap in swaddling bands him who clothes the heavens with clouds by his ineffable will? How can you lay in a manger of irrational beasts the Master who delivers men from irrationality in his boundless mercy? All creation worships with fear, hymning him for ever.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* God who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the fire into dew, praise as the Lord and exult above all for ever.

All creation prepares first-fruits for you who will be born of the pure Virgin in the cave, O Christ; and it sings pre-festal praise, glorifying you, the only benefactor.

Following Christ who was born on earth, and with faith as a guide like a radiant star, the passion-bearers saw him, and in their martyrdom offered him divine gifts.

Strengthened by the power of Christ, O wise passion-bearers, you triumphed over the oppression of the enemy whom you showed to be weak, as you hymn Christ for ever.

*Theotokion* He who rests in the bosom of the Father and was born in the cave, found rest in your maternal arms, O Mother of God; and he opens the kingdom in heaven to those who hymn you with faith.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Be not now amazed, O Mother, beholding as an infant him begotten of the Father from within himself before the morning star; for I have clearly come to restore and glorify with me the nature of fallen men, who magnify you with faith and love.

Rejoice, O most pure one, the receptacle of ineffable joy, for, behold, you come to give birth ineffably in the cave to the Master who truly desires to restore all creation, corrupted of old through the disobedience. Singing to him with faith, we magnify you.

Rejoice, souls of the righteous and of those beneath the earth, for the deliverance of all has appeared, born in the city of Bethlehem; the star proclaims him to the Magi who seek him with piety; and, seeing him in the cave, they are filled with joy.

O Virgin, we hymn you as another heaven, who in the morning shall shine forth the Sun of Righteousness upon us from you, illumining those in the darkness of death and corruption; and so we magnify you with fitting praises.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* God the Word who came from God in his ineffable wisdom to restore Adam, who had grievously fallen into corruption through eating, and who ineffably became incarnate of the holy Virgin for our sake; with oneness of mind, O faithful, let us magnify in hymns.

The army of athletes, hastening before the divine coming of the king of all, announces to all creation the banquet of gladness, and receives all the faithful, setting forth their valiant deeds as food.

O wise passion-bearers of the Lord, beholding faith as it were a star, and cleaving steadfastly to the never-setting sun, you were thereby guided to Christ without stumbling; and you offered your blood to him as a gift.

Gathered like flowers from the incorrupt fields of the knowledge of Christ, O passion bearers, suffering, you were filled with his fragrance; and in your martyrdom you offered yourselves to him as fragrant myrrh.

*Theotokion* Grace is poured forth among all generations of man, O Virgin Mother of God, and the wealth of your miracles flows abundantly in the radiant joy of your brightening, enriching those who glorify you with faith and love.

*Exapostilarion of the martyrs,  
to the special melody* With the disciples...

With hymns let us joyously crown the whole company of the ten holy martyrs of Crete, that by their supplications we may be delivered from transgressions and may receive crowns from Christ the Saviour.

Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

*And of the Forefeast,  
to the special melody* hearken, O women...

A mystery hidden and untold even to the angels is soon to be wrought by the good pleasure of the Father and with the cooperation of the Spirit. Let us hasten, for the unoriginate Word, receiving a beginning in time as a man, is born of the Virgin for the salvation of the world.

*Praises, 4 verses, tone 6,  
to the special melody* Go forth, O angels...

Your mystery appointed beforehand by the Father before time began, and proclaimed of old by the prophets, has been revealed in the latter days: God has become man, receiving flesh from the Virgin, the uncreated one takes form of his own will, and He who Is enters temporal existence: Christ comes, the King of Israel.

I hymn you, O king wrapped in swaddling-bands, for you loose the bonds of my fallings into sin, and, honouring me with immortal and incorruptible glory, you have made me wholly the Father's own, refashioning and restoring me. Therefore, I cry to you: Christ comes, the King of Israel.

The Magi, observers of the stars, beholding through the star the Light which has proceeded from the light and shone forth from the Virgin upon those on earth, cast off the darkness of Persia and the deception of astrology, and sang in joy to God who was born: Blessed is our God who has come, glory to you.

Mocked by the wise Magi, Herod furiously cut down the infants as though they were grass, intending to raise up against you his hand befouled with murder; but you went to the Egyptians, dispelling their profound darkness. With them we sing: Blessed is our God who has come, glory to you.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone and melody*

Sing a new song, O new Israel, sing the hymnody of heaven. Be glad and adorn yourself with joy; dance and in splendour utter pre-festal hymnody, for God has appeared bodily out of Teman, who intends to be washed in the streams of the Jordan as a man.

Both now and for ever... *in the same melody*

Appearing on earth, dwelling with mankind, and being registered with servants at the command of Caesar; you took on form without undergoing change, and have remained immutable, being wholly God, even though incarnate. Glory, honour, praise and majesty be to your dispensation, now and for ever.

*Aposticha, tone 2,*  
*to the special melody* O house of Ephratha...

Make fragrant, O Sion, \* the holy manger; \* for in you the Master \* will put forth \* the rays of his divinity.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Faith instead of gold, \* love instead of myrrh, \* and good works instead of frankincense \* let us bring to the creator \* who comes to his own.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Christ approaches, \* the star shines beforehand, \* and the heavenly multitude \* of the armies of the noetic hosts \* bow down.

Glory be to the Father...

*composed by the Studite, tone 3*

O valiant martyrs of the truth, neither the violence of the tyrants, nor their false blandishments, neither the severing of your limbs, nor the threat of death were able to separate you from divine love. As you have boldness before Christ, who is God over all, ask of him as reward for your painful sufferings, that he grant us great mercy.

Both now and for ever...

*composed by Anatolius, tone 8*

The creator of all is born in Bethlehem; the pre-eternal king opens Eden. He turns back the flaming sword, and the middle wall of enmity is broken down. The hosts of heaven unite with mortals, angels and men form a mighty celebration. The pure offer hymnody to the pure one. As the glorious throne of the Cherubim we see the Virgin who contained God whom nothing can contain, who bears him whom the Seraphim glorify in awe, that he may grant the world great mercy.

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 Troparia:  
4 from Ode 3 of the canon of the Forefeast,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of the canon of the martyrs.*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.  
*Verse* I have set the Lord always before me: he is at my right hand and I shall not fall.

*Epistle to the Ephesians, 233*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

The righteous cry and the Lord hears it, and frees them from all their affliction.  
The trials of the righteous are many but our God delivers him from them all.

*The Gospel of Luke, 106*

*Communion*

Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.



## December 24

### Forefeast of Christmas, the venerable martyr Evgenia

#### Vespers

*At Lord, I call to you... 6 verses,  
beginning with 3 of the Forefeast, tone 5,  
to the special melody Rejoice...*

Bearing Adam's form but supremely perfect in the image of God,  
by your might holding all things in your hands,  
you now desire to be held by human hands.  
The pure and immaculate Lady proclaimed:  
How can I wrap you as a baby in swaddling bands;  
how can I feed you at my breasts, who sustains all things?  
How can I marvel at your impoverishment beyond understanding?  
How can I call you my Son, as I am now your handmaid?  
I hymn and bless you, who grants great mercy to the world.

Seeing the pre-eternal God as an infant incarnate of her,  
holding him in her arms and kissing him often,  
the immaculate Lady, filled with joy, exclaimed to him:  
O God the Most High, how can I look upon you, the invisible king?  
I cannot grasp the mystery of your boundless impoverishment.  
The least and most humble of caves contains you,  
the newly born, who did not violate my virginity  
but preserved me intact as before giving birth;  
and who grants great mercy.

The pure one heard the Magi standing outside the cave,  
and, in awe, she spoke these things to them as a servant:  
whom do you seek, for I see that you have come from a far country,  
for you have the appearance and wisdom of the Persians.  
You have made a strange passage and journey,  
and have hastened to worship him who journeyed from on high,  
who made his abode strangely within me, as he knows how,  
who grants great mercy to the world.

*And 3 verses of the martyr, tone 8,  
to the special melody O most glorious wonder...*

Forsaking the beauty of the world, \* you illumined the nobility of your soul \* with the beauties of nobility, \* O most praised Evgenia, \* preserving the grace of the image of God \* untroubled throughout your life, \* O invincible martyr, \* divinely regarded reflection of virginity \* and flower of most noble nature.

Having adorned yourself \* with discourse, life and grace, \* and with patience of soul, \* you led an army of athletes \* and an assembly of virgins \* to him who shone forth from the Virgin \* who clearly disclosed to you all the means of witness, \* O most wise Evgenia: \* with them entreat him, \* that he save your flock.

The founder of righteousness \* has magnificently adorned you \* with a twofold crown, \* as a pure virgin and glorious martyr, \* giving you a beautiful bridal-chamber \* illumined with radiance, \* where you dwell, clearly enriched \* with eternal blessedness, \* O bride of Christ.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*of the Forefeast, tone 7*

Behold, the time of our salvation draws near;  
prepare yourself, O cave, for the Virgin approaches to give birth.  
O Bethlehem, you land of Judah, adorn yourself and be glad,  
for our Lord shines forth from you.  
Hearken, you mountains and hills, and you lands of Judea round about:  
for Christ is coming, that he might save man whom he created,  
as he loves mankind.

*Aposticha, of the Forefeast, tone 1,  
to the special melody O most praised martyrs...*

Bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh \* to you, O Son, \* the kings of the East have arrived, \* knowing that you were to be born; \* and, behold, they stand at the doors. \* Give the command \* that they behold you \* an infant held in my arms, \* who is far older than ancient Adam.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Come, and hasten to enter, \* the Virgin said to the Magi of old, \* and see him, the invisible one \* who has become visible \* in becoming a baby. \* And so they entered with ardour \* and rendered homage \* and offered gifts, \* fulfilling the divine prophecies.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

In my arms I bear you as a child, \* who holds all things, \* and I am amazed, \* said the unwedded Maiden. \* How can I feed you with milk who feeds all, \* O my Son and

creator? \* I glorify your boundless condescension toward mankind, \* whereby you save the world which is perishing.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*of the Forefeast, tone 6*

Hold festival, O Sion. Be glad, O Jerusalem, city of Christ our God. Receive your creator, who is contained by the cave and the manger. Open your gates to me, and, entering therein, I shall see as an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands him who holds creation in the palm of his hand, whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices: the Lord and bestower of life, who saves our race.

*Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy,  
as it is written, went to be registered in Bethlehem  
with elderly Joseph, who was of the seed of David.  
While they were there, the time of her delivery drew near.  
There was no room for them in the inn  
but the cave proved to be a beauteous palace for the queen;  
where Christ is born, to raise up the image that fell of old.

## Compline

*Canon of the Forefeast, tone 6,  
upon the acrostic I hymn today the great Sabbath*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* He who in ancient times  
covered the pursuing tyrant with the waves of the sea,  
is now concealed in a manger,  
for Herod seeks to slay him;  
but with the Magi let us sing to the Lord,  
for gloriously has he been glorified.

O Lord my God, I sing the hymnody of your nativity and pre-festal hymns to you who by your divine nativity bestows regeneration upon me and leads me up to man's primal nobility.

Perceiving you enthroned above and in the manger below, O my Saviour, those of heaven and of earth marvel at your might, for in manner past understanding you have appeared as God and man, twofold in nature.

Bowing down the heavens, you have come to earth, that you might fill all things with your glory; for you descended into the Virgin's womb like rain upon the fleece, and from there you now come to be born, both God and man.

*Then both choirs together sing the Irmos again.*

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* You suspended the earth immovably upon the waters:  
now creation sees you born in the cave,  
and it quakes with great amazement and cries:  
There is none holy but you, O Lord.

Revealing images of your ineffable incarnation, O compassionate one, you multiplied visions and inspired prophecies which you have now fulfilled in your coming, born of the pure Maiden in the city of David.

The earth has spread out its shoulders, receiving the creator who accepts glory from the angels, the star from the heavens, praise from the shepherds, gifts from the Magi, and recognition from the whole world.

The indistinct images of the magus Balaam, the counter of the stars, are now fulfilled; for a star has shone out of Jacob which has guided to the sun of glory the Magi, the gift-bearing kings of Persia.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* Foreseeing your advent from the Virgin,  
Habbakuk cried out marvelling:  
You have come from Teman, O deliverer,  
incarnate to restore Adam who had been expelled.

The Lord now comes, the expectation of the nations and salvation of the world draws near. Prepare the cave, O city of Bethlehem: shepherds, hasten with the Magi.

Having mingled with men in the might of your divinity, by unconfused union in the form of the flesh which you assumed, O Saviour, you restore and save Adam.

Manifesting himself bodily, the Word enters physical matter and dwells among us in his ineffable providence. Come, you faithful, let us see his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of God the Father.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* Isaiah saw the unsetting light,  
the light of your Theophany,  
dawning from the night in your tender love for us, O Christ,

and he cried out:  
Behold the Virgin shall conceive in her womb  
and give birth to the incarnate Word,  
and all born on earth shall rejoice greatly.

Becoming dust, you renew mortals, O creator: the manger, the swaddling bands and the cave were manifestations of your humility. The betrothed of your Mother, your supposed father in the flesh, now follows the counsel of the Father who begat you.

Bearing gifts to you, born in the cave of Bethlehem of a Mother who knew not man, the kings of the nations show your death with myrrh, your royal might with gold, and your unsurpassed divinity with frankincense, offering them to you as first-fruits.

O Word, consubstantial with the Father, dawning from the unwedded one, in a cave you made your abode in the flesh, reclining in the manger as if upon a throne; and by your awesome dispensation you amaze the Magi and shepherds, and fill the angels with awe: glory to your might.

#### *Ode 6*

*Irmos* Jonah was enclosed but not held fast in the belly of the whale;  
for, given as a sign of you, born, and appearing in the flesh,  
he came forth from the monster as from a bridal chamber.  
Born now in the flesh, it is your desire to enter the tomb and death,  
and to arise on the third day.

The middle-wall of ancient enmity has now been broken and destroyed by your advent in the flesh, O Christ, and the flaming sword withdraws from all. I partake with faith of the life-bearing tree of Eden, and immediately become an dweller in the gardens of immortality.

Hades reigned with sin from the time of Adam to you; yet its shameless tyranny perished when you were born of the tribe of David, O deliverer, clearly taking your seat upon the throne of his kingdom, and reigning for ever.

Cruel Herod became a slayer of infants but not a slayer of Christ; for though he reaped a bitter harvest of children as though they were grass, yet he was unable to seize and slay the grain of life; for as God, the giver of life, you concealed yourself from the persecutor by divine power.

#### *Ode 7*

*Irmos* It is an inexpressible wonder,  
that he who delivered the holy children from the fiery furnace  
is laid in a lowly manger as an infant,  
for the salvation of us who sing:  
Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

The deceiving foe was wounded, seeing God lying as an infant in the lowly manger, and he is slain by the mighty hand of God, for the salvation of us who sing: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

Blessed is the manger, for, receiving the creator as an infant, it seems to be the throne of the cherubim, for the salvation of us who sing: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

Appearing as an infant, you condescend to be wrapped in swaddling-bands according to the customs of men, and thereby you loose the bonds of our transgressions, granting freedom to those who sing: Blessed are you, O God our deliverer.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* Be amazed with fear, O heavens,  
and be shaken O foundations of the earth.  
Behold, he who holds all things in the palm of his hand  
is wrapped in swaddling-bands  
and sojourns as a stranger in a small manger:  
you children bless, you priests praise  
and you people exult him above all for ever.

Adam who was bound has been released, for freedom was given to all the faithful when you were wrapped in swaddling-bands, O Saviour, and laid in the manger of dumb beasts in the lowly cave. Rejoicing, with faith we offer you pre-festal hymnody on the day of your birth.

The falsehood of Persia has ended, for when Christ the king of all was born, the kings of the East, observers of the stars, brought gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh: you children bless, you priests praise and you people exult him above all for ever.

How new is the wonder, how good is the ineffable patience: see, he who dwells in the highest is confined as an infant; of his own will God flees from Herod: you children bless, you priests praise and you people exult him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* Be not amazed, O Mother, to see him as an infant,  
begotten of the bosom of the Father before the morning star;  
for I have clearly come to restore and glorify with me  
the nature of fallen men, who magnify you with faith and love.

In your strange nativity she who supernaturally escaped the pangs of giving birth was blessed, O unoriginate Son; and now, seeing you fleeing from Herod, she cries out: I am terrified in soul by the sword of grief; save me who honours you.

I go to the land of Egypt, O my Mother, yet by an earthquake I will cast down the graven images of the Egyptians. The enemies who seek in vain for my life I will consign to Hades, for I alone am might: I shall exalt and save you who honour me.

Let creation rejoice, for the creator who exists from before time takes new form and is recognised as God. Let the Magi greet him with gifts, let the shepherds clap their hands in faith at the wonder, and let men and angels be glad.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the Forefeast, thrice*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 6  
to the special melody Hosts of angels...*

The sayings of the prophets are been fulfilled,  
for in the morning our God is to be born  
in manner past description of the Virgin Mary,  
and she remains as she was before giving birth.  
The Magi arrive bearing gifts, and the shepherds pipe;  
let us also sing: Glory to you O Lord, born of the Virgin.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 8*

Halting the hymns of the shepherds' pipes, the angelic army sang out to them:  
Cease your piping, O foremost among those who tend flocks, and cry out in song,  
for Christ the Lord is born, who, as God, is pleased to save the human race.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*We sing the Canon of the Forefeast, and that of the martyr.*

### *Ode 1*

*Canon of the Forefeast, tone 2  
the acrostic of which is the [Greek] alphabet,  
composed by Joseph*

*Irmos* The almighty power once overwhelmed the army of Pharaoh in the deep, and the incarnate Word has destroyed pernicious sin. The Lord is all-glorious, for he has been greatly glorified.

You were registered according to the edict of Caesar, desiring to enter man in the book of life, O king of all; and in a strange manner you came to your own, summoning to heaven him who had grievously been exiled from paradise.

Receive Christ, O Bethlehem, for he comes, incarnate, to you, opening Eden to me. Prepare yourself, O cave, for you shall see the infinite one most gloriously contained within you, having now humbled himself in the richness of his compassion.

Christ comes to be born, bestowing a strange regeneration upon the descendants of Adam, as he is God. Be glad, O human nature, you barren desert, for the Master has come to make you bear many children.

*Canon of the martyr, in the same tone  
composed by Theophanes,  
upon the acrostic* In songs I eminently hymn the great glory of Evgenia.

*Irmos* Same as that of the preceding canon.

O Evgenia, martyr of Christ, joyfully dancing now with the angelic host, as a richly crowned virgin and martyr, pray that he grant grace to those who hymn you with love.

With nobility you soared aloft to the Most High, O bride of Christ, hearing divine hymnody, the theology of which shone in your heart, driving away all ungodliness.

Unmindful of your womanly nature, your mind hastened to manly feats, finding courage through grace, being directed toward the providence of God, O martyr Evgenia, namesake of divine nobility.

Illumined with noetic light, O divinely wise one, you caused a great many to share the radiant light: by your entreaties grant deliverance from sin those who hymn you.

*Theotokion* Slain by the tree of knowledge, O pure one, by Christ our God, the tree of life who beyond understanding sprang forth from you, O Mother of God, we the faithful have been called back to life. Entreat him with boldness, that our souls be saved.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The desert flowered as a lily at your coming, O Lord, just as the temple of the heathen that was barren; and thereby my heart is established.

Delivering me from the bonds of evil, O Lord who loves mankind, you come to be wrapped as an infant in swaddling-bands. I worship your divine dispensation.



The Virgin comes to give birth to you, begotten timelessly from the Father, who has become subject to time, releasing our souls from immemorial passions.

Seeking me, lost through the disobedience, you made the cave a dwelling like heaven, where you prepare mansions for me, O compassionate and most merciful one.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Established upon the rock of faith, I may boast over my enemies, and my spirit rejoices and sings: There is none as holy as our God, and none righteous but you, O Lord.

With perfect resolve you offered yourself to the Master as an unblemished sacrifice, having spurned corrupting wealth, O wise one, crying: You are our God, and there is none more holy than you, O Lord.

Your purity was seen, and the might of your sufferings has shone forth, O martyr; for you made your deeds an ascent of vision, crying: You are our God, and there is none more holy than you, O Lord.

Held fast by the desire for chastity, you preserved the boast of purity, and became pleasing in wisdom, crying out to Christ: You are our God, and there is none more holy than you, O Lord.

*Theotokion* O divinely wise, let us hymn Mary, the pure Mother of God, who has been shown to be the vehicle of salvation, and let us sing: There is none as pure as you, O most pure one, and none more immaculate than you, O Lady.

*Sessional Hymn of the martyr, tone 8,  
to the special melody Of the wisdom...*

Confining yourself to feats of struggle, you became glorious  
through the struggles of martyrdom, leading many of the saved to your creator.  
Forsaking the transitory, you accomplished courageous struggles with divine love;  
and after your end you found endless life, abiding ever with your bridegroom, O  
angelic Evgenia.

Entreat Christ our God, to grant remission of transgressions to those who honour  
your most precious memory with love.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Sessional Hymn of the Forefeast, same tone and melody.*

Today the earth has become like heaven for me,  
for within it the creator is born and laid in a manger, in Bethlehem of Judea.  
Shepherds sing unceasingly with the angels: Glory in the highest and on earth peace.

For they beheld the star which journeyed with the Magi,  
who hastened to bring gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the God of all,  
the eternal king and creator of all, who in his loving-kindness is born in a cave.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* You have come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but the Lord himself incarnate, and have saved me, and the whole of mankind. Therefore I cry to you: Glory to your power O Lord.

Now creation has cast of all aging, seeing you, the creator taking form and newness in becoming an infant, leading it back to its pristine beauty.

Marvelling at his most glorious nativity, the Magi led by the divine star stood and beheld the sun shining from the cloud of the Virgin, and they offered him gifts.

Behold, the Virgin comes as a heifer, bearing the fatted calf who takes away the sins of the world, that creation may rejoice in celebration.

The predictions of the prophets which proclaimed the manifestation of Christ have now received their salvific fulfillment; for he has come bodily to enlighten those who languish in darkness.

*Canon of the martyr*

*Irmos* Same as that of the preceding canon.

You have come, taking flesh from the Virgin, O Most High, betrothing companies of virgins to yourself, who love you alone as their virginal Bridegroom.

You shed the garment of your fleshly birth, O glorious martyr, and by baptism splendidly clothed yourself in the incorrupt garment of regeneration.

Luminous radiance shone upon your heart, the brilliance of grace dispelling the gloom of falsehood which had been poured forth, O Evgenia, martyr of Christ.

You illumined your life with beauty and comeliness, firstly causing carnal passions to wither away through abstinence, and later shining radiantly in suffering, O Evgenia.

*Theotokion* You were raised higher than the angels, having given birth to the Angel of Great Counsel incarnate in his great compassion and love for mankind, O exalted one.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* You are the mediator between God and man, O Christ our God, for by you, O Master, we are led up from the night of ignorance to your Father, the author of light.

Let the people who once sat in darkness behold the never-waning light which has shone forth, whom the star announced of old to the Persian kings who worshipped fire.

The great king hastens to enter the little cave, that he might magnify me who has become of little account, and with boundless wealth enrich me who has become poor.

Now is Christ born of Jacob, as Balaam said, and he has dominion over the nations, and his kingdom, which abides immutably, is exalted by grace.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* O Christ my Saviour, the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and the salvation of the despairing, I rise early to you, O king of peace: enlighten me with your radiance, for I know no other God than you.

Seeing your path to salvation, the soul-destroying serpent raised up trials against you, striving to weaken your power, O passion-bearer; but you trampled him underfoot.

To Christ, the accomplisher of all good things, the benefactor and bridegroom of souls, you appeared adorned in ascetic struggles by abstinence and resplendent with the suffering of martyrdom, O goodly virgin Evgenia, martyr of Christ.

A crown of gifts was set upon your brow, for you cherished divine wisdom, spurning the riches and glory of your father; and with might you followed after your beloved bridegroom, O venerable martyr.

*Theotokion* The life who shone forth from you upon the world, O Mother of God, by communion calls to everlasting life those who were before held fast by death, who cry out with faith: We know none other God than you.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of your loving kindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God.

Christ comes to his own in a strange manner. Let us estrange ourselves from sin and receive him who makes his abode in the souls of the meek.

In no way shall you be the least among cities, O Bethlehem; for in you is born the king and Lord, that he might shepherd his rich people.

How can a lowly cave receive you whom the whole world cannot contain, O immutable one? How can you see as an infant the unoriginate one who shares the mind of the Father?

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Same as that of the preceding canon.

You gave no slumber to your eyelids until you extinguished all passionate attachments, and you made yourself a pure dwelling-place for your creator.

Emulating the morals of the wife of Potiphar, she who was black in deed and name violently slandered your honourable life, O venerable martyr.

Showing steady radiance and enriched with the grace of healings, and a wealth of faith, you became the teacher of a company of nuns.

*Theotokion* All the prophets mystically learned of your ineffable birth giving, O most pure one, in the Spirit describing and foretelling to all those things which were to come.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*  
*to the special melody* Today the Virgin...

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing this, O world, dance for joy,  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* The sacred sayings of the prophets have received their fulfillment, for, behold, the Virgin gives birth to the supremely perfect one in the city of Bethlehem, within a cave. All creation has been refashioned. Rejoice and dance, for the Master of all has come to dwell with his servants, delivering from the dominion of the alien one us who were cast down by corruption, and he is seen as an infant, wrapped in swaddling clothes, in the manger as a young child, the pre-eternal God.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* The command of the iniquitous tyrant, opposed to God, raised a lofty flame; but Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths: blessed is he and glorified above all.

Let the clouds drop down water from on high, as he who honourably appointed the clouds for his ascent is borne by a cloud, the Virgin, and comes to shine never-waning light upon the benighted and afflicted.

O army of divine angels, prepare yourself well to hymn the ineffable dispensation of the Lord. Come, Magi; hasten, shepherds, for Christ has come as he should, the expectation and deliverer of the nations.

Holding Christ in her arms, with awe the most pure one said: What is this strange wonder most great? How can I bear you who bears all things by your word? Ineffable is your nativity, O my unoriginate Son.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Same as that of the preceding canon.

You made clear to all the truth of the divinely inspired Scriptures, having rendered manly your womanly nature, gloriously astonishing those whom you led in splendour to Christ when they came to belief in him, O honoured one, most rich.

By your divine teachings you clearly denounced the insanity of idolatry, O honoured martyr, by your blood betrothing an innumerable and radiant multitude of virgins to Christ who reigns over all.

Seeing your radiant life, glorious Vasilla, with divine zeal betrothed herself to Christ, abandoning passionate attachments: she now is granted the joy of the martyrs.

*Theotokion* Having seedlessly given birth to him who is life itself, O immaculate Virgin, you have healed the pasturage of death. Rejoicing, we call you the fount of immortality.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* In Babylon of old by the command of God, the fiery furnace worked in divided ways: while it burned the Chaldeans, it refreshed the faithful as they sang: All you works of the Lord, bless the Lord.

Beholding the height of the truly ineffable mystery which covered the heavens with wisdom, the immaculate one marvelled and said: O my Son, how can I bear you who sits upon the flaming throne of heaven?

You bear the likeness of the Father, O my Son: how can you abase yourself and assume the likeness of a servant? How can I lay you in a manger of irrational beasts, who delivers all from irrationality? I hymn your loving kindness.

Rejoice, all the earth, for see, Christ approaches Bethlehem to be born. Be glad, O sea, leap up, you assembly of prophets, beholding today the fulfillment of your words; and rejoice, all you righteous.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* God who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the fire into dew, praise as the Lord and exult above all for ever.

Your endurance was tested in the river and the fire; and, transcending nature, you passed through them mightily, crying out: Hymn Christ, you works, and exalt him above all for ever.

Christ who appeared in a strange manner to you when held in prison, richly nourished you: by his nativity he unites you to the armies on high to glorify him for ever.

Your bridegroom adorns you with twofold crowns, O divinely wise Evgenia, and he grants you the splendid bridal-chamber: him we exalt above all for ever.

The grace of God, having radiantly illumined you, now shines in the mansions of heaven: pray unceasingly that those who celebrate your memory may be filled therewith, O divinely wise one.

*Theotokion* We know you to be the fount of the radiance of immortality, O Mother of God, for you gave birth to the Word of the immortal Father, who delivers from death all who exalt him above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Forefeast*

*Irmos* Our God and Lord has appeared to us, the Son of the Father without beginning, incarnate of the Virgin, to give light to those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Therefore let us magnify the all-hymned Mother of God.

Let all the kingdoms of the earth sing with rejoicing, and let the nations of the gentiles be glad. Mountains, valleys and hills, the rivers and the sea, and all creation, magnify the Lord who now is born.

You were seen as much as the prophets were able to see you; and, becoming a man in latter times, you have revealed yourself to all men in Bethlehem, the city of Judah, the star showing you to the astrologers, O ineffable one.

O sweetest child, how can I feed you, the nourisher of all? How can I hold you, who holds all things in your hand? How can I wrap you in swaddling-bands, who wraps the whole world in dark cloud? cried the most pure Lady, whom we magnify unceasingly.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Same as that of the preceding canon.

Making your abode in the mansions of heaven, O glorious one, as a martyr most true and an immaculate virgin among martyrs, you have now been granted the sweetness of paradise with the virgins, O blessed Evgenia.

You have obtained a desire past understanding and conceiving, standing in splendour before him who is the ultimate desire, clearly shining with the brilliant rays of the sovereign Trinity, O divinely wise and goodly virgin Evgenia.

Keeping the lamp of virginity ever-burning, you were adorned with the crown of martyrdom. Never cease in your prayers for those who with piety and love honour you, that we may be saved by your supplications, O glorious Evgenia.

You have now departed to divine coolness, having passed through the unbearable fire of wounding and the surging waters of temptation, O martyr Evgenia. Therefore, entreat Christ, that he save our souls.

*Theotokion* Having conceived the rain of heaven which descended upon the fleece, O immaculate Lady, you have given birth to him who grants immortality for us who piously hymn him and magnify you, the immaculate Mother of God.

*Exapostilarion of the Forefeast,  
to the special melody* With the disciples...

He who dwells in light unapproachable and sustains all things is born of the Virgin in his ineffable loving-kindness: he is wrapped in swaddling-bands as a babe, and in the cave he is laid in the manger of dumb beasts. Let us all hasten to Bethlehem, to render homage to him with the Magi, bearing as gifts the fruits of most excellent deeds.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Another Exapostilarion*

O faithful, let us offer hymnody to the Virgin Mary. See, she now comes to give birth to Christ the Saviour in the city of Bethlehem. Therefore, O Magi, guided by the star hasten with gifts to render homage with us. Shepherds, hasten to cry out with the angels to him who is born: Glory to you, resting in the manger in the cave.

*Praises, 4 verses, tone 4,  
to the special melody* Go forth, you angels...

A star out of Jacob shines forth in the cave:  
celebrating these pre-festal days, let us come,  
let us hasten with the Magi, let us go with the shepherds,  
and let us see God wrapped in swaddling-bands,  
let us see the Virgin feeding him with her milk.  
O awesome sight,  
Christ, the king of Israel, comes forth.

With hymns the choir of angels now honours you,  
the radiant unwedded Mother,  
and, rejoicing, it dances at your birth giving, O most pure Lady.  
Rejoice, hope of the Orthodox.  
Rejoice, intercession for those who hymn you.  
Therefore, let us say: Blessed are you, our God,  
glory to you, who has come.

A flower stems from the root of Jesse,  
foretold by the radiant prophet;  
for we see the Virgin giving birth in manner past nature  
to the lovely rose in the cave,  
who is equally enthroned with the Father in the highest.  
O people, let us say: Blessed are you, our God,  
glory to you, who has come.

Today Adam has been recalled from the deception  
and from captivity to the dark and deceiving foe;  
for Christ is incarnate as a man from the Virgin,  
and he restores Adam,  
annulling the curse through the Virgin.  
O people, let us say: Blessed are you, our God,  
glory to you, who has come.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone and melody*

Come, O Bethlehem,  
prepare the place of birth;  
come, O Joseph, and register yourself with Mary.  
The most precious manger and the God-bearing swaddling-bands  
which wrapped Christ our God, our life,  
break apart the bonds of death,  
swaddling mankind in incorruption.

Both now and for ever... *same tone and melody*

O blessed womb of the divine Maiden,  
noetically shown to be greater than heaven,  
bearing within you him whom heaven cannot contain:  
O how wondrous the blessed breasts of the Virgin,  
from which he now suckles who feeds every creature,  
as Christ creates flesh for himself  
from the body of the unwedded Maiden.

*Aposticha, verses of the Forefeast, tone 2,  
to the special melody O house of Ephratha...*



You have been shown to be \* a dwelling place of the Almighty, O Virgin; \* for, making his abode within you, \* the Lord of glory \* now issues forth to be born.

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

In Bethlehem, the pre-eternal God \* is born of the Virgin \* as a little babe, \* in a manger of dumb beasts. \* O how wondrous.

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Noetic ranks of the angels, \* with the shepherds and the Magi \* lift your voices in song \* to him who is born: \* Glory to God in the highest.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *same melody*

Glory to you, O Father, \* O Son and Spirit, by whom this awesome mystery \* has been accomplished \* for the regeneration of men.

# The Eve of Christmas

## Royal Hours

*If the feast of Christmas falls on Sunday or Monday, then the Royal Hours are sung on the previous Friday morning. But if Christmas is on any other day of the week, then the Royal Hours are sung on the morning of the Eve of Christmas, that is, on December 24.*

### Prime

*At the beginning of the second hour of the day [that is, at 0800], the bells are rung. When we have assembled in the Church, the priest vests in the Stole and Phelonion, and the Deacon in the Sticharion and Deacon's Stole. A stand, suitably decorated, is placed in the centre of the Church.*

*The Priest with the Gospel book and Deacon bearing the censer [and the Deacon's candle] proceed through the Royal Doors to the centre of the Church, preceded by an assistant with a lighted candle. The Gospel book is placed on the stand and the candle is placed behind it. Standing before the stand, the Priest begins Blessed is our God... and the Reader recites the opening prayers in full. After the exclamation upon the Lord's Prayer, the Priest, with the Deacon, incenses the Gospel book from each side, the Altar, Sanctuary, Iconostas and the entire Church. The Reader continues as usual, but with the following three Psalms.*

Hear my words, O Lord, give heed to my groaning: listen to my cry, you that are my king and my God. In the morning when I pray to you, surely you will hear my voice: at daybreak I lay my prayers before you, and look up. For you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor can any evil dwell with you. The boastful cannot stand in your sight: you hate all those that work mischief. Those who speak lies you destroy: you abhor the treacherous, O Lord, and those that are stained with blood. But because of your great goodness I will come into your house: I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe and fear of you. Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness, for my enemies lie in wait: make straight your way before me. For there is no truth in their mouth and within they are eaten up by malice. Their throat is an open sepulchre and their tongue speaks smooth and flattering words. Destroy them, O God, let them fall by their own contriving: cast them out for their many offences, for they have rebelled against you. But let all who put their trust in you rejoice, let them shout with joy for ever. Be the defender of those who love your name, let them exult because of you. For you will bless, O Lord, the man that is righteous: you will cover him with your favour as with a shield. *Psalm 5*

My heart is astir with fine phrases, I make my song for a king; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. You are the fairest of the sons of men, grace flows from your lips; therefore has God blessed you for ever and ever. Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty warrior; in glory and majesty tread down your foes, and triumph. Ride on in the cause of truth and for the sake of justice. Your right hand shall teach a terrible instruction; peoples shall fall beneath you, your arrows shall be sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies. Your throne is the throne of God, it endures for ever, and the sceptre of

your kingdom is a righteous sceptre. You have loved righteousness and hated evil, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. All your garments are fragrant with myrrh, aloes and cassia; music from ivory palaces makes you glad. Kings' daughters are among your noble women; the queen is at your right hand in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, consider and incline your ear, forget your own people and your father's house. The king desires your beauty; he is your lord, therefore bow down before him. The richest among the people, O daughter of Tyre, shall entreat your favour with gifts. The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is embroidered cloth-of-gold. In robes of many colours she is led to you, O king, and, after her, the virgins that are with her. They are led with gladness and rejoicing, they enter the palace of the king. In place of your fathers you shall have sons, and make them princes over all the land. And I will make known your name to every generation; therefore the peoples shall give you praise for ever. *Psalms 45*

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains are shaken in the midst of the sea; though the waters rage and foam, and though the mountains quake at the rising of the sea. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling-place of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not be moved: God will help her, and at break of day. The nations make uproar, and the kingdoms are shaken, but God has lifted his voice, and the earth shall tremble. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Come then and see what the Lord has done, what destruction he has brought upon the earth. He makes wars to cease in all the world; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, and burns the chariots in the fire. 'Be still, and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted upon the earth.' The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold. *Psalms 46*

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to you, O God. (*thrice*)

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father...

*Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy,  
as it is written, went to be registered in Bethlehem  
with elderly Joseph, who was of the seed of David.  
While they were there, the time of her delivery drew near.  
There was no room for them in the inn  
but the cave proved to be a beauteous palace for the queen;  
where Christ is born, to raise up the image that fell of old.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion*

What can we call you, O full of grace?  
heaven, for the Sun of Righteousness shone forth from you;  
Paradise, for you budded forth the flower of Immortality;  
Virgin, for you have remained in purity.  
O pure Mother, you held in your holy embrace  
your Son who is God of all:  
implore him to save our souls.

*Then these verses*

*composed by Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, tone 8*

Prepare yourself O Bethlehem,  
let the manger be adorned and let the cave show its welcome,  
for the truth has come and the shadow has passed away.  
Born of a Virgin, God has appeared to man:  
he takes our form, thereby deifying the garment he has assumed.  
Therefore Adam is renewed, and with Eve proclaims:  
Grace has appeared on earth in order to save our kind. *(twice)*

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain  
overshadowed by the forest.

*Tone 3*

The prophecy is now fulfilled, where it says:  
And you, Bethlehem, one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel.  
The cave is already prepared,  
and you shall see Christ our God, the leader of the nations,  
who shall come forth from the Virgin maiden,  
and he shall shepherd his people, the new Israel.  
Let us all give him glory. *(twice)*

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 8*

Joseph spoke thus to the Virgin:  
O Mary, what is this that I see in you?  
I do not understand; and amazed, my mind is filled with awe;  
depart from me, then, quickly.

O Mary, what is this that I see in you?  
 Instead of honour, you have brought me shame;  
 instead of joy I have sorrow, and instead of praise, I have reproof:  
 no more can I bear the mockery of men.  
 I received you as one immaculate from the priests of the Temple of the Lord,  
 and what is this that I now see?

Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*Prokimenon<sup>2</sup>, tone 4*

The Lord said to me: You are my Son, this day have I begotten you.

*Verse* Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.

A reading from the Prophecy of Micah

Thus says the Lord: But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

A reading from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." And, "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end."

---

<sup>2</sup> Prior to the Prokimenon and the readings, there are the usual announcements.

## December 24

*Deacon* Wisdom. Be upstanding. Let us listen to the holy Gospel.

*Priest* Peace be to all.

*People* And with your spirit.

*Priest* A reading from the Gospel of Matthew.

*People* Glory to you, Lord, glory to you.

*Deacon* Let us attend.

### *The Gospel of Matthew, number 2*

*People* Glory to you, Lord, glory to you.

*Reader* Order my steps according to your word that no evil may get mastery over me. Deliver me from man's oppression that I may keep your precepts. Make your face to shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes. Let my mouth be filled with your praise O Lord, that I may sing of your glory and honour all the day long.

Holy God... to Our Father... Amen.

### *Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing of this, O world, dance for joy  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

Lord have mercy. (*40 times*)

At all times and at every hour you are worshipped and glorified in heaven and on earth, O Christ our God; long suffering, plenteous in mercy and most compassionate. You love the righteous and have mercy on sinners, calling all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. At this very hour receive our prayers O Lord, and guide our life toward your commandments. Sanctify our souls, chasten our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Surround us with your holy angels, so that guided and guarded by their array, we may attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of your unapproachable glory, for you are blessed to the ages of ages, amen.

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father... both now...

More honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who in purity gave birth to God the Word, the very Mother of God we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, Father, bless.

*Priest* May God be gracious to us and bless us, show us the light of his countenance and be merciful to us.

*Reader* Amen.

*Reader* <sup>3</sup> O Christ the true light who illumines and sanctifies all on earth, let the light of your countenance appear to us, so that in it we may see the light ineffable. Guide our steps rightly so that we may keep your commandments, through the prayers of your most pure Mother and of all the saints, amen.

## Terce

*At the beginning of Terce and Sext, the Deacon incenses only the Gospel book, the icons, the Superior and the Choirs [ie, he does not enter the Sanctuary]*

*Reader* O come let us worship...

O God, you are my God, eagerly will I seek you. My soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs for you, as a dry and thirsty land where no water is. So it was when I beheld you in the sanctuary and saw your power and your glory. For your unchanging goodness is better than life, therefore my lips shall praise you. And so I will bless you as long as I live, and in your name will I lift my hands on high. My longing shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; my mouth shall praise you with exultant lips. When I remember you upon my bed, when I meditate upon you in the night watches, how you have been my helper, then I sing for joy in the shadow of your wings, then my soul clings to you and your right hand upholds me. Those that seek my life are marked for destruction, they shall go down to the deep places of the earth. They shall be delivered to the sword, they shall be a portion for jackals. The king will rejoice in God, and all who take oaths on his name shall glory, but the mouths of liars shall be stopped. *Psalms 63*

He has founded it upon a holy hill, and the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things shall be spoken of you, O Zion, city of our God. I might speak of my kinsmen in Egypt or in Babylon; in Philistia, Tyre or Nubia, where each was born. But of Zion it shall be said, many were born in her, he that is Most High has established her. When the Lord draws up the record of the nations, he shall

---

<sup>3</sup> In some places it is customary for the Priest or the superior to read the prayer at the end of each Hour.

take note where every man was born. And the singers and the dancers together shall make their song to your name. *Psalms 87*

Have mercy on me, O God, in your enduring goodness, according to the fullness of your compassion blot out my offences. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my rebellion and my sin is ever before me. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your eyes; so you will be just in your sentence and blameless in your judging. Surely in wickedness I was brought to birth and in sin my mother conceived me. You that desire truth in the inward parts: teach me wisdom in the secret places of the heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear of joy and gladness: let the bones which you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me out from your presence; do not take your holy spirit from me. Give me the gladness of your help again and support me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors your ways and sinners shall turn to you again. Lord God of my salvation, deliver me from bloodshed, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness. Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. You take no pleasure in sacrifice, or I would give it; burnt-offerings you do not want. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. In your graciousness do good to Zion: rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt-offerings and oblations: then will they offer young bulls upon your altar. *Psalms 51*

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to you, O God. (*thrice*)

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father...

*Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy,  
as it is written, went to be registered in Bethlehem  
with elderly Joseph, who was of the seed of David.  
While they were there, the time of her delivery drew near.  
There was no room for them in the inn  
but the cave proved to be a beauteous palace for the queen;  
where Christ is born, to raise up the image that fell of old.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, tone 6*

O Mother of God, you are the true vine  
which has blossomed forth for us the fruit of life.



We implore you, O Lady,  
to intercede together with the holy apostles  
that our souls may find mercy.

*Then these verses tone 6*

This is our God and no other shall be compared with him:  
born of the Virgin he comes to dwell with men.  
Laid in a manger,  
we see the only begotten Son as a mortal man,  
the Lord of glory wrapped in swaddling clothes.  
A star guides the Magi to worship him, and we sing:  
O holy Trinity, save our souls. *(twice)*

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain  
overshadowed by the forest.

*Tone 8*

Before your birth, O Lord,  
the angelic hosts were amazed to see this mystery,  
how you that adorned the vault of heaven with stars,  
were pleased to be born as a babe;  
how you, holding the ends of the earth in the palm of your hand  
are laid in the manger of dumb animals.  
By such deeds your loving kindness and great mercy are revealed:  
glory to you. O Christ. *(twice)*

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 3*

Tell us, O Joseph,  
about the Maid you received from the Sanctuary and now bring to Bethlehem.  
And he said: I have searched the prophets  
and have been warned by an angel,  
and I know that Mary shall give birth to God in ways surpassing explanation,  
and Magi from the east shall come to worship him with precious gifts.  
Glory to you, O Lord, incarnate for us.

Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

For unto to us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

*Verse* Authority rests upon his shoulders.

A reading from the prophecy of Baruch

This is our God; no other can be compared to him. He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel, whom he loved. Afterward he appeared on earth and lived with mankind. This is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures for ever. All who hold it fast will live, and those who forsake it will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of its light. Do not give your glory to another, or your advantages to an alien people. Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.

A reading from the Epistle of the holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians.

Brethren, before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Wisdom. Be upstanding. Let us listen to the holy Gospel... *as before*.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 3*

*Then the reader continues:*

Blessed is the Lord God, blessed is the Lord day by day. The God of our salvation shall prosper us along the way: our God is the God of our salvation.

Holy God... *to* Our Father... Amen.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing of this, O world, dance for joy  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

Lord have mercy. (*40 times*)

At all times and at every hour you are worshipped and glorified in heaven and on earth, O Christ our God; long suffering, plenteous in mercy and most compassionate. You love the righteous and have mercy on sinners, calling all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. At this very hour receive our prayers O Lord, and guide our life toward your commandments. Sanctify our souls, chasten our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Surround us with your holy angels, so that guided and guarded by their array, we may attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of your unapproachable glory, for you are blessed to the ages of ages, amen.

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father... both now...

More honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who in purity gave birth to God the Word, the very Mother of God we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, Father, bless.

*Priest* Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us.

*Reader* Amen.

*And the prayer of St Madarios*

*Reader* O Master, God the almighty Father, O Lord the only begotten Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, one divinity and one power: have mercy on me a sinner, and in the final judgement, save me your unworthy servant, for you are blessed to the ages of ages, amen.

## **Sext**

*Reader* O come let us worship...

Give the king your judgement, O God, and your righteousness to the son of a king, That he may judge your people rightly and the poor of the land with equity. Let the mountains be laden with peace because of his righteousness, and the hills also with prosperity for his people. May he give justice to the poor among the people, and rescue the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor. May he live while the sun endures, and while the moon gives light, throughout all generations. May he come down like rain upon the new-mown fields, and as showers that water the earth. In his time shall righteousness flourish, and abundance of peace, till the moon shall be no more. His dominion shall stretch from sea to sea, from the Great River to the ends of the earth. His

adversaries shall bow down before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring tribute: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. All kings shall fall down before him and all nations do him service. He will deliver the needy when they cry, and the poor man that has no helper. He will pity the helpless and the needy and save the lives of the poor. He will redeem them from oppression and violence, and their blood shall be precious in his sight. Long may he live, and be given of the gold of Sheba: may prayer be made for him continually, and men bless him every day. Let there be abundance of wheat in the land, let it flourish on the tops of the mountains; Let its ears grow fat like the grain of Lebanon, and its sheaves thicken like the grass of the field. Let his name live for ever and endure as long as the sun. Let all peoples use his name in blessing, and all nations call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does great wonders. Blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, Amen. *Psalms 72*

Lord, remember David and all his trouble, how he swore an oath to the Lord, and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob; 'I will not enter the shelter of my house, nor climb into the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, till I find out a place for the ark of the Lord, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.' Lo, we heard of it at Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of Ja-ar. Let us go to the place of his dwelling, let us fall upon our knees before his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into your resting-place, you, and the ark of your might. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness and let your faithful ones shout for joy. For the sake of David your servant, do not turn away the face of your anointed. The Lord has sworn to David, an oath which he will not break; 'One who is the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne. If your children will keep my covenant and the commands which I teach them, their children also shall sit upon your throne for ever.' For the Lord has chosen Zion for himself, he has desired it for his habitation. 'This shall be my resting-place for ever: here will I dwell, for my delight is in her. I will bless her provisions with abundance, I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her faithful ones shall shout for joy. There will I make a horn to sprout for the family of David: I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. As for his enemies, I will cover them with shame, but upon his head shall his crown be bright.' *Psalms 132*

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides under the shadow of the Almighty, he will say to the Lord 'You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I trust.' For he will deliver you from the snare of the hunter, and from the destroying curse. He will cover you with his wings, and you will be safe under his feathers: his faithfulness will be your shield and defence. You shall not be afraid of any terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day, Of the pestilence that walks about in darkness, or the plague that destroys at noonday. A thousand may fall beside you, and ten thousand at your right hand, but you it shall not touch; Your own eyes shall see and look on the reward of the ungodly. The Lord himself is your refuge, you have made the Most High your stronghold. Therefore no harm will befall you, nor will any scourge come near your tent. For he will command his angels to keep you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands lest you dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. 'He has set his love upon me, and therefore I will deliver him, I will lift him out of danger, because he has

known my name. When he calls upon me I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and bring him to honour. With long life I will satisfy him and fill him with my salvation.' *Psalm 91*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to you, O God. (*thrice*)

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father...

*Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy,  
as it is written, went to be registered in Bethlehem  
with elderly Joseph, who was of the seed of David.  
While they were there, the time of her delivery drew near.  
There was no room for them in the inn  
but the cave proved to be a beauteous palace for the queen;  
where Christ is born, to raise up the image that fell of old.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion*

As there is no boldness in us because of our many sins,  
invoke him who was born of you O virgin Mother of God,  
for the request of a mother does much to win the Master's favour.  
Reject not the prayers of sinners, O most pure one,  
for he is merciful and mighty to save who condescended also to suffer for our sake.

*Then these verses tone 1*

O come, all you faithful, inspired by God  
let us arise and see in Bethlehem  
the divine condescension from on high that is revealed to us.  
Cleansing our minds, let us offer a life of virtue instead of myrrh,  
preparing with faith our entry into the feast of the nativity,  
singing from the treasury of our souls:  
Glory to God in the highest,  
to him who exists in the Trinity  
whose good pleasure is now revealed to man,  
that in his love for mankind  
he may release Adam from the ancestral condemnation. (*twice*)

## December 24

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain overshadowed by the forest.

### *Tone 4*

Hearken O heaven and give ear, O earth.  
Let your foundations be moved and let the nethermost depths tremble.  
For our God the creator clothes himself in created flesh,  
and he who fashioned creation by his mighty hand  
reveals himself in a womb which he has made.  
O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.  
How unfathomable are his judgements,  
and how inscrutable his ways. (*twice*)

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

### *Tone 5*

Glory be to the Father...

O come, you faithful Christ-knowing people,  
and let us see the wonder  
that strikes and captivates every mind with amazement;  
and with reverent worship let us sing praises.  
Today the immaculate Virgin comes to Bethlehem to give birth to the Lord,  
and the choirs of angels hasten on before.  
Seeing them, Joseph the betrothed cried out:  
What is this strange mystery within you, O Virgin?  
How is it that you shall give birth,  
the calf who has not felt the yoke?

Both now and for ever... *repeat*

### *Prokimenon, tone 4*

Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: "hear then, O house of David. Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him

Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. Then the Lord said to me, Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, “Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz,” and have it attested for me by reliable witnesses, the priest Uriah and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the child knows how to call “My father” or “My mother,” the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria. Band together, you peoples, and be dismayed; listen, all you far countries; gird yourselves and be dismayed; gird yourselves and be dismayed. Take counsel together, but it shall be brought to naught; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

A reading from the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews

In the beginning the Lord founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.” But to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 3*

*Then the reader continues:*

Let your compassion quickly precede us O Lord for we have become exceedingly poor. Help us O God our Saviour, for the glory of your name. O Lord, deliver us and be gracious regarding our sins, for your name's sake.

Holy God... to Our Father... Amen.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing of this, O world, dance for joy  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

Lord have mercy. (40 times)

At all times and at every hour you are worshipped and glorified in heaven and on earth, O Christ our God; long suffering, plenteous in mercy and most compassionate. You love the righteous and have mercy on sinners, calling all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. At this very hour receive our prayers O Lord, and guide our life toward your commandments. Sanctify our souls, chasten our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Surround us with your holy angels, so that guided and guarded by their array, we may attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of your unapproachable glory, for you are blessed to the ages of ages, amen.

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father... both now...

More honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who in purity gave birth to God the Word, the very Mother of God we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, Father, bless.

*Priest* Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us.

*Reader* Amen.

*And the prayer of St Basil the Great*

*Reader* O God and Lord of Hosts and maker of all creation, by the tender compassion of your mercy which transcends comprehension you sent your only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our race; who by his precious cross tore up the record of our sins and thereby triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkness. O Master, lover of mankind, accept also from us sinners these prayers of thanksgiving and entreaty, and deliver us from every destructive and dark transgression and from all enemies visible and invisible that seek to do us harm. Restrain our flesh with reverence for you and do not let our hearts incline to words or thoughts of evil, but pierce our souls with longing for you, so that ever looking to you and being guided by your shining, unapproachable and everlasting light, we may send unceasing praise and thanksgiving to you, the unoriginate Father, with your only begotten Son and your most holy, good and life giving Spirit, now and for ever and to the ages of ages, amen.

## **None**

*The Priest with the Deacon incenses the entire Church, in the same way as at the start of Prime, as the Reader recites the Psalms.*



*Reader*      O come let us worship...

The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.' The Lord commits to you the sceptre of your power: reign from Zion in the midst of your enemies. Noble are you, from the day of your birth upon the holy hill: radiant are you, even from the womb, in the morning dew of your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not turn back, 'You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' The king shall stand at your right hand, O Lord, and shatter kings in the day of his wrath. Glorious in majesty, he shall judge among the nations, and shatter heads over a wide land. He shall slake his thirst from the brook beside the way, therefore shall he lift up his head. *Psalm 110*

O praise the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart; in the company of the upright and among the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, and studied by all who take delight in them. His deeds are majestic and glorious, and his righteousness stands for ever. His marvellous acts have won him a name to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and merciful. He gives food to those that fear him: he remembers his covenant for ever. He showed his people the power of his acts in giving them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are faithful and just, and all his commandments are sure; They stand firm for ever and ever, they are done in faithfulness and in truth. He sent redemption to his people, he ordained his covenant for ever; holy is his name and worthy to be feared. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and of good understanding are those that keep his commandments: his praise shall endure for ever. *Psalm 111*

Incline your ear to me, O God, and answer me, for I am poor and in misery. Preserve my life, for I am faithful. My God, save your servant who puts his trust in you. Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I call to you all the day long. Make glad the soul of your servant, for I put my hope in you, O Lord. For you, Lord, are good and forgiving, of great and continuing kindness to all who call upon you. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give heed to the voice of my supplication. In the day of my trouble I call upon you, for you will surely answer. Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord, nor are there any deeds like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, they shall glorify your name. For you are great and do marvellous things and you alone are God. Show me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth: let my heart delight to fear your name. I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify your name for ever. For great is your abiding love toward me, and you have delivered my life from the lowest depths of the grave. Insolent men have risen against me, O God: a band of ruthless men seek my life, they have not set God before their eyes. But you, Lord, are a God gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, full of goodness and truth. Turn to me and be merciful, give your strength to your servant and save the son of your handmaid. Show me some token of your goodness, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because you, Lord, are my helper and my comforter. *Psalm 86*

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to you, O God. (*thrice*)

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*)

Glory be to the Father...

*Troparion of the Forefeast, tone 4*

Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy,  
as it is written, went to be registered in Bethlehem  
with elderly Joseph, who was of the seed of David.  
While they were there, the time of her delivery drew near.  
There was no room for them in the inn  
but the cave proved to be a beauteous palace for the queen;  
where Christ is born, to raise up the image that fell of old.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion, tone 8*

For our sake you were born of the Virgin and suffered crucifixion, O good one,  
and destroyed death by death and as God revealed the resurrection.  
Forsake not those who were fashioned by your hand but show your love for  
mankind, O merciful one.  
Receive the intercession for us of the Mother of God who gave you birth,  
and save us, your despairing people, O our Saviour.

*Then these verses, tone 7*

Herod was amazed to see the piety of the Magi,  
and overcome with wrath he enquired closely when the child was born.  
Mothers were bereft of their infants  
as their youngest babes were bitterly harvested.  
Breasts grew dry and the sources of milk were stopped:  
great was this calamity.  
Let us the faithful gathered in devotion,  
worship the nativity of Christ. (*twice*)

*Verse* God shall come forth from Teman, and the holy one from the mountain  
overshadowed by the forest.

*Tone 2*

O Virgin, when Joseph went to Bethlehem wounded with grief,  
you cried out to him:  
Why are you so downcast and troubled:  
do you not perceive the awesome mystery accomplished in me?

Lay aside every fear and understand this most glorious thing;  
 how God descends to earth in his mercy and now takes flesh in my womb.  
 You shall see him born in his good pleasure;  
 and, filled with joy, you shall worship him as your creator.  
 The angels praise him without ceasing in song  
 and glorify the Father and the Holy Spirit. *(twice)*

*Verse* Lord, I heard your report and was afraid; I consider your works and am amazed.

*The Canonarch, standing in the middle of the Church, sings loudly the entire verse which follows.*

*Tone 6*

He who in essence is the intangible God  
 is born of the Virgin:  
 he who holds the whole of creation in the hollow of his hand  
 is wrapped as a mortal in swaddling clothes:  
 he who established the heavens by his word in the beginning  
 lies in a manger:  
 he who rained down manna on the people in the wilderness  
 is fed on milk from his mother's breast:  
 he who is the Bridegroom of the Church summons the Magi,  
 and the Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts.

We worship your nativity O Christ. *(thrice, and we make a prostration each time)*  
 Show us also your divine Theophany.

*Then, the Deacon intones aloud the following. But let it be known that this chanting of Many Years is performed in Cathedrals in the presence of the Bishop. In other places it may be done where convenient, after Compline, after the Dismissal of the Liturgy, or after Vespers, when the Eve of Christmas falls on a Saturday or Sunday. For monastic communities all typicons prescribe that this rite be inserted at this point during the Royal Hours.*

To the holy Orthodox Patriarchs, to our Patriarch N; and to our Bishop (or Archbishop) N: Many years.

*To this and the subsequent petitions, both choirs sing together:*

God grant them many years. *(thrice)*

To those who govern us<sup>4</sup>, and to our civil authorities and to all Orthodox Christians, grant O Lord, peace and prosperity, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and many years.

*And in monasteries, we add:*

Save, O Christ our God, our venerable father Abbot (or Archimandrite) N and his brethren in Christ; preserve this holy community in peace, and establish this holy Church to the ages of ages.

---

<sup>4</sup> We pray generally for those who govern us, but do not mention their names. Note that if there is a reigning monarch who is Orthodox and who has received Orthodox coronation, then the name of that monarch may be mentioned here.

*And to this petition, both choirs chant: Save them, O Christ our God (thrice)*

*Then both Choirs together sing:*

*Tone 6*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

He who in essence is the intangible God  
is born of the Virgin:  
he who holds the whole of creation in the hollow of his hand  
is wrapped as a mortal in swaddling clothes:  
he who established the heavens by his word in the beginning  
lies in a manger:  
he who rained down manna on the people in the wilderness  
is fed on milk from his mother's breast:  
he who is the Bridegroom of the Church summons the Magi,  
and the Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts.

We worship your nativity O Christ. *(thrice)*  
Show us also your divine Theophany.

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

Of Zion it shall be said, many were born in her, he that is Most High has established her.

*Verse* He has founded her upon a holy hill: the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

A reading from the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.

Brethren, the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "here am I and the children whom God has given me." Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were

held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 4*

*The Priest takes the Gospel book, and preceded by the Deacon and assistant bearing the candle, returns to the Sanctuary. The Royal Doors are closed and the curtain drawn.*

*Meanwhile, the reader continues:*

For the sake of your holy name, do not utterly deliver us up, neither disannul your covenant, nor cause your mercy to depart from us; for the sake of Abraham your beloved, Isaac your servant, and Israel your holy one.

Holy God... to Our Father... Amen.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably  
to the pre-eternal Word in the cave.  
hearing of this, O world, dance for joy  
and with the angels and shepherds glorify him  
who chose to appear as a young child,  
the pre-eternal God.

Lord have mercy. *(40 times)*

At all times and at every hour you are worshipped and glorified in heaven and on earth, O Christ our God; long suffering, plenteous in mercy and most compassionate. You love the righteous and have mercy on sinners, calling all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. At this very hour receive our prayers O Lord, and guide our life toward your commandments. Sanctify our souls, chasten our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Surround us with your holy angels, so that guided and guarded by their array, we may attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of your unapproachable glory, for you are blessed to the ages of ages, amen.

Lord have mercy. *(thrice)*

Glory be to the Father... both now...

More honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who in purity gave birth to God the Word, the very Mother of God we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, Father, bless.

*Priest*            May God be bountiful to us and bless us, show us the light of his countenance and be merciful to us.

*Reader*            Amen.

*And the prayer of St Basil the Great.*

*Reader*            O Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, with patience towards our sins you have led us to his present hour in which you were hanging on the life giving tree, making the way to paradise for the wise thief and destroying death by death. Be gracious even to us sinners and your unworthy servants, for we have sinned and dealt iniquitously, and we are not worthy to lift up our eyes and look upon the heights of heaven, since we have departed from the path of righteousness and have followed the desires of our own hearts. But we implore your boundless goodness, spare us O Lord according to your great mercy, and save us for your holy name's sake, for our days have passed away in vanity. Rescue us from the hand of the adversary, forgive our sins and mortify our carnal imagination, that putting aside the old, we may be clothed with the new and live for you, our master and benefactor, so that, following your commandments we may attain eternal rest in the abode of all who rejoice. For you are truly the joy and exultation of those who love you, O Christ our God, and to you we ascribe glory together with your unoriginate Father who is from everlasting and your holy, good and life giving Spirit, now and for ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*And there usually follows the Typica*

## **The Typica**

*Immediately the Reader begins:*

Praise the Lord, O my soul. Blessed are you, O Lord. Praise the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sin, and heals all your infirmities, who redeems your life from the Pit, and crowns you with mercy and compassion; who satisfies your being with good things, so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, and his works to the children of Israel. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great goodness. He will not always be chiding, nor will he keep his anger for ever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness. For as the heavens are high above the earth: so great is his mercy over those that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he set our sins from us. As a father is tender towards his children, so is the Lord tender to those that fear him. For he knows of what we are made: he remembers that we are but dust. The days of man are but as grass: he flourishes like a flower of the field. When the wind goes over it, it is gone, and

its place will know it no more. But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures for ever and ever toward those that fear him: and his righteousness upon their children's children; upon those who keep his covenant and remember his commandments to do them. The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the Lord, all you his angels, you that excel in strength: you that fulfil his word, and obey the voice of his commandment. Praise the Lord, all you his hosts, his servants who do his will. Praise the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion praise the Lord, O my soul.

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

Praise the Lord, O my soul: while I live I will praise the Lord; while I have any being I will sing praises to my God. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, who cannot save. For when their breath goes from them, they return again to the earth, and on that day all their thoughts perish. Blessed is the man whose help is the God of Jacob: whose hope is in the Lord his God, the God who made heaven and earth; the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith for ever: who deals justice to those that are oppressed. The Lord gives food to the hungry and sets the captives free. The Lord gives sight to the blind: the Lord lifts up those that are bowed down. The Lord loves the righteous: the Lord cares for the stranger in the land. He upholds the widow and the fatherless: as for the way of the wicked, he turns it upside down. The Lord shall be king for ever: your God, O Zion, shall reign through all generations.

Both now and for ever and to the ages of ages, amen.

Only begotten Son and immortal Word of God, who for our salvation condescended to be incarnate of the holy Mother of God and ever virgin Mary; who without change became man, and was crucified, trampling down death by death. O Christ our God, one of the Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us.

In your kingdom remember us O Lord, when you come into your kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven.

Remember us O Lord, when you come into your kingdom.

Remember us O Master, when you come into your kingdom.

Remember us O Holy One, when you come into your kingdom.

*The reader continues:*

The heavenly choir praises you, saying: Holy, holy, holy Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Come to him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed.

The heavenly choir praises you, saying: Holy, holy, holy Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

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

The choir of holy Angels and Archangels with all the heavenly Host praises you saying: Holy, holy, holy Lord of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Both now and for ever and to the ages of ages, amen.

*If there is to be Liturgy, we omit the Creed.*

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is, seen and unseen. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Light from Light, true God from true God. Begotten, not made, of one being with the Father, through whom all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered and was buried. On the third day he arose in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. And in one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, amen.

Forgive, remit and pardon our offences, O God, both voluntary and involuntary, in deed and word, deliberately or in ignorance, by night and by day, in mind and thought: forgive us all things since you are good and the lover of mankind.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

*Priest* For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, both now and for ever and to the ages of ages.

*Reader* Amen.

*Kontakion of the Forefeast, tone 3*



Today the Virgin is coming to give birth indescribably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave. Hearing of this, O world, dance for joy and with the angels and shepherds glorify him who chose to appear as a young child, the pre-eternal God.

Lord have mercy. *(40 times)*

Most holy Trinity, consubstantial power, undivided kingship, the cause of all good: be gracious even to me a sinner; confirm and instruct my heart and take from me every defilement. Enlighten my mind that I may always glorify, praise and worship you, saying: One is Holy, One is the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father, amen.

*If there is to be Liturgy, we omit the following Psalm and sing Truly it is right... and the Dismissal, as below.*

*But if there is no Liturgy, we continue:*

Blessed be the name of the Lord, from now and for ever. *(thrice)*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

I will bless the Lord continually, his praise shall be always in my mouth. Let my soul boast of the Lord, the humble shall hear it and rejoice. O praise the Lord with me, let us exult his name together. For I sought the Lord's help and he answered and he freed me from all my fears. Look towards him and be bright with joy, your faces shall not be ashamed. Here is a wretch who cried and the Lord heard him and saved him from all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps round those who fear him and delivers them in their need. O taste and see that the Lord is good: happy the man who hides in him. Fear the Lord all you his holy ones, for those who fear him never lack. Lions may suffer want and go hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack nothing good. Come my children, listen to me and I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Which of you relishes life, wants time to enjoy good things? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies, turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of God are on the righteous and his ears towards their cry. The Lord sets his face against wrong doers, to root out their memory from the earth. The righteous cry; the Lord hears it and frees them from their afflictions. The Lord is close to those who are broken-hearted, and the crushed in spirit he saves. The trials of the righteous are many, but our God delivers him from them all. He guards all his bones so that not one is broken. Evil will slay the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be destroyed. The Lord ransoms the lives of his servants and none who hide in him will be destroyed.

*Priest*            Wisdom.

*Choir*            Truly it is right to call you blessed, the Bearer of God; the most blessed and immaculate Mother of our God.

*Priest*            Most holy Mother of God, save us.

## December 24

*Choir* More honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who in purity gave birth to God the Word, the very Mother of God we magnify.

*Priest* Glory to you, Christ our God and our hope, glory to you.

*Choir* Glory be to the Father... both now and for ever...

Lord have mercy. (*thrice*) Father bless.

*And the Dismissal of the day.*

*Let it be known that if the Eve of Christmas falls on Saturday or Sunday, then the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom is celebrated, while on the feast itself we celebrate the Liturgy of St Basil. This procedure also applies to the feast of the Theophany and its Eve. If the Eve falls on any other day than Saturday or Sunday, we celebrate the Liturgy of St Basil on the Eve, and that of Chrysostom on the feast itself. This also applies to the feast of Theophany.*

*Let it also be known that from the feast of Christmas to that of Theophany, there is no fasting, and the knees of the faithful are not bent during prayer in Church or at home.*

*Let it also be known that if the feasts of Christmas or Theophany fall on a Sunday, the hymns of the feast completely replace those of the Resurrection from the Octoechos.*

# December 25

## Christmas, the Nativity of Christ

### Vespers

*At the seventh hour of the day [that is, at 1300 on December 24], we ring the great bell and then upon all the bells, and having gathered in the Church we begin Vespers. The Deacon says Master, bless and the Priest [standing at the Altar and making the sign of the cross with the Gospel, just as at normal Liturgy; the usual preparatory prayers and the dialogue with the Deacon having been said] exclaims: Blessed is the kingdom... After Amen the Superior says Glory to you, our God, glory to you. Heavenly king, comforter... and the Reader: Holy God... to Our Father and the rest as usual. After the Litany of Peace, if it is Saturday afternoon we sing Blessed is the man... the whole Kathisma, and if it is Sunday afternoon we sing only the first Antiphon; but on other days the Kathisma is omitted and we immediately begin Lord I call to you...*

*At Lord I call to you... we sing 8 verses tone 2*

*Composed by Germanos,*

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord  
as we describe this present mystery.  
The middle wall of partition has been demolished;  
the flaming sword turns aside,  
the Cherubim withdraw from the tree of life,  
and I partake of the delight of Paradise  
from which I was cast out through disobedience.  
For the immutable image of the Father, the imprint of his eternity,  
takes the form of a servant,  
and without change he comes forth from the unwedded Mother.  
He retains that which he was before, true God:  
and that which he was not, he assumes,  
becoming man through love for mankind.  
Let us sing to him:  
O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us.

*Composed by Anatolios, same tone*

When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin,  
the whole world was enlightened.  
The shepherds piped, the Magi adored and the angels praised in song;  
but Herod was troubled,  
for God appeared in the flesh,  
the Saviour of our souls. *(twice)*

Your kingdom is an eternal kingdom, O Christ our God,  
and your rule is from generation to generation.  
Incarnate of the Holy Spirit  
and made man through the ever-Virgin Mary,  
you have enlightened us by your coming.  
Light of Light, the brightness of the Father,  
you have made the whole creation shine with joy.  
All that has breath praises you, the image of the Father's glory.  
O God, existing from eternity,  
who has shone forth from the Virgin, have mercy on us. *(twice)*

What shall we offer to you, O Christ,  
who for our sakes as appeared on earth as man?  
Every creature made by you offers thanksgiving:  
the angels offer you a hymn and the heavens provide a star;  
the Magi give gifts and the shepherds offer their wonder;  
the earth provides a cave and the wilderness gives a manger:  
but we offer you a Virgin Mother.  
O God, existing from eternity, have mercy on us. *(twice)*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

*Composed by Kassiani the Nun, same tone*

When Augustus reigned alone upon the earth,  
the rule of many men came to an end;  
and when you were made man of the pure Virgin,  
the many gods of idolatry were destroyed.  
The cities of the world passed under one single rule  
and the nations came to believe in one sovereign divinity.  
The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar,  
but we the faithful are enrolled in your name, O God, who became man.  
Great is your mercy: glory to you, O Lord.

*Entrance with the Gospel, O gladsome light... and the Prokimenon of the day,  
but if Christmas Eve falls on a Friday,  
we sing the Great Prokimenon tone 7:*

Who is so great a god as our God? You are the God that works wonders.

*Verse* You made known your power among the nations; by your mighty arm you  
redeemed your people,

*Verse* I will declare the mighty acts of the Lord: I will call to mind your wonders of old.

*Verse* I will think on all that you have done, and meditate upon your works.

*And the following readings, with their Troparia and verses.*

## A reading from Genesis

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

## A reading from Numbers

Then the spirit of God came upon Balaam, he uttered his oracle, saying: "How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel. Like palm groves that stretch far away, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that the Lord has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall have abundant water, his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God who brings him out of Egypt, is like the horns of a wild ox for him; he shall devour the nations that are his foes and break their bones. He shall strike with his arrows. He crouched, he lay down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you."... A star shall come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the borderlands of Moab, and the territory of all the Shethites. Edom will become a possession, Seir a possession of its enemies, while Israel does valiantly.

## A reading from the prophecy of Micah

In those days, says the Lord, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away, and those whom I have afflicted. The lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion now and forevermore. . But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the

## December 25

majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

*All standing, the Reader with raised voice chants this verse,  
which, with the rest, is repeated by the choir*

*Tone 6*      You were born secretly in a cave,  
but the heavens spoke through a star  
and proclaimed you to all, O Saviour;  
and it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith.  
Have mercy on them and on us.

*Verse*      He has founded it upon a holy hill, and the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things shall be spoken of you, O Zion, city of our God.

*And again*      And it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith. Have mercy on them and on us.

*Verse*      I might speak of my kinsmen in Egypt or in Babylon, in Philistia, Tyre or Nubia, where each was born, but of Zion it shall be said, many were born in her, he that is Most High has established her.

*And again*      And it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith. Have mercy on them and on us.

*Verse*      When the Lord draws up the record of the nations, he shall take note where every man was born. All rejoice to have their habitation in her.

*And again*      And it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith. Have mercy on them and on us.

Glory be to the Father...

*First choir*      And it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith. Have mercy on them and on us.

Both now...

*Second choir*      And it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith. Have mercy on them and on us.

*Then the Reader recites the entire Troparion:*

You were born secretly in a cave, but the heavens spoke through a star and proclaimed you to all, O Saviour. And it brought the Magi who worshipped you with faith. Have mercy on them and on us.

*And the readings continue.*

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

A reading from the prophecy of Jeremiah

This is our God; no other can be compared to him. He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to his servant Jacob and to Israel, whom he loved. Afterward she appeared on earth and lived with humankind. She is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures for ever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light. Do not give your glory to another, or your advantages to an alien people. Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.

A reading from the prophecy of Daniel

Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar: "You were looking, O king, and lo. there was a great statue. This statue was huge, its brilliance extraordinary; it was standing before you, and its appearance was frightening. The head of that statue was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its middle and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked on, a stone was cut out, not by human hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, were all broken in pieces and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. "This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation... And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall this kingdom be left to another people. It shall crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever; just as you saw that a

stone was cut from the mountain not by hands, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. The great God has informed the king what shall be hereafter. The dream is certain, and its interpretation trustworthy.”

*All stand and the reader chants this verse which is repeated, with the rest, by the choir*

*Tone 6*

Shining forth from the Virgin O Christ,  
you, the intelligible Sun of Righteousness whom nothing can contain,  
are shown by a star to be contained within a cave.  
You have led the Magi to worship you,  
and joining with them we magnify you.  
Glory to you, O giver of life.

*Verse* The Lord is king, and has put on robes of glory; the Lord has put on his glory, he has girded himself with strength. He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved. Your throne is established from of old, you are from everlasting.

*And again* You have led the Magi to worship you, and joining with them we magnify you. Glory to you, O giver of life.

*Verse* The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves, the voices of many waters.

*And again* You have led the Magi to worship you...

*Verse* But mightier than the sound of many waters, than the mighty waters or the breakers of the sea; the Lord on high is mighty. Your decrees are very sure; and holiness, O Lord, adorns your house for ever.

*And again* You have led the Magi to worship you...

Glory be to the Father...

*And again* You have led the Magi to worship you...

Both now and for ever...

*And again* You have led the Magi to worship you...

*And the Reader recites the entire Troparion once more.*

Shining forth from the Virgin O Christ, you, the intelligible Sun of Righteousness whom nothing can contain, are shown by a star to be contained within a cave. You have led the Magi to worship you, and joining with them we magnify you. Glory to you, O giver of life.



*And the readings continue*

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

A child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: “hear then, O house of David. Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. Then the Lord said to me, Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, “Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz,” and have it attested for me by reliable witnesses, the priest Uriah and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the child knows how to call “My father” or “My mother,” the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria. Band together, you peoples, and be dismayed; listen, all you far countries; gird yourselves and be dismayed; gird yourselves and be dismayed. Take counsel together, but it shall be brought to naught; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

*Then the Little Litany, the Hymn of the Thrice-holy and the Prokimenon*

*Prokimenon, tone 1*

I will announce the Lord’s decree: You are my son, this day have I begotten you.

*Verse* Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.

A reading from the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire.” But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.” And, “In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like clothing; like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.”

*Alleluia, tone 5*

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

*Verse* The Lord commits to you the sceptre of your power from Zion.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

*The Gospel of Luke, number 5*

*And the rest of the Liturgy of St Basil the Great*

*Instead of Truly it is right... we sing* All creation rejoices in you...

*The Communion verse is* Praise the Lord from heaven...

*Immediately after the Dismissal of the Liturgy, a candle is lit and set in a candle stand in the middle of the Church, and we gather around it and sing:*

*Troparion, tone 4* Your nativity O Christ our God, has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge; for thereby, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you, the Sun of Righteousness; and to know you, the Dayspring from on high. Glory to you, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

*Kontakion, tone 3* Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and Wise Men journey with a star; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Then, unless it has been sung earlier at the Royal Hours, Many years is sung.*

*Note that on this day we do not eat fish, but only foods cooked in oil, or seeds with honey; but we drink wine, giving thanks to God.*

## Great Compline

*At the tenth hour of the night [that is, at 0400], a bell is rung to announce the service and then is rung the triple peal on all bells. The Priest and Deacon vest and begin incensing, in the usual way at a Vigil.*

*The Deacon says Master, bless and the Priest exclaims Blessed is our God... and the Priest incenses as we recite Great Compline from the beginning: Glory to you our God, glory to you. Heavenly king... and the rest. In due course we sing God is with us... with hymnody.*

*In place of Illumine my eyes... we sing the Troparion of the feast.*

*Tone 4*      Your nativity O Christ our God,  
has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge;  
for thereby, those who worshipped the stars  
were taught by a star  
to worship you, the Sun of Righteousness;  
and to know you, the Dayspring from on high.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

*In place of Have mercy on us O Lord... we sing the Kontakion of the feast*

*Tone 3*      Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being,  
and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach.  
Angels with shepherds give glory,  
and Wise Men journey with a star;  
for unto us a child is born,  
the pre-eternal God.

*After the Doxology Glory to God in the highest... we proceed with the Entreaty*

### *Entreaty*

*Tone 1, their own melody,  
composed by John the Monk*

Heaven and earth are glad today, as the prophets said,  
and angels and men keep the spiritual feast.  
For God is born of a woman,  
and appears in the flesh to those who sit in the shadowy darkness.  
A cave and a manger receive him;  
shepherds announce the wonder,  
and Magi from the east offer gifts in Bethlehem.  
Let us offer from our unworthy lips the praise of the angels:  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.  
For the expectation of the nations has come;  
he has come to save us from the bondage of the enemy.

Heaven and earth are united today, for Christ is born.  
God has come upon the earth today, and man ascends to heaven.  
He who is invisible by nature is today seen incarnate for us.  
Therefore let us also give glory and sing to him:  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.  
Glory to you, O our Saviour,  
for you have given us your advent.

Glory to God in the highest,  
is heard from the angels today in Bethlehem,  
sung to him whose good pleasure it was to bring peace on earth,  
for light has shone upon those in darkness,  
the Virgin is now more spacious than the heavens;  
and he has exalted the lowly who sing with the angels:  
Glory to God in the highest.

Seeing man, made in his image and likeness, fallen through the transgression,  
Jesus bowed the heavens and descended,  
without change dwelling in the Virgin's womb,  
to restore corrupted Adam who sings to him:  
Glory to your appearing, O my deliverer and God.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 5, also by John the Monk*

The Magi, kings of Persia,  
were assured that you the heavenly king had been born on earth.  
Led by the light of the star, they came to Bethlehem  
and offered their chosen gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
Falling before you they worshipped you,  
for they saw the timeless one, an infant lying in the cave.

Both now and for ever...

*Tone 6, composed by Germanos*

Today the angels exult in heaven and men rejoice greatly.  
All creation leaps for joy  
because the Lord and Saviour is born in Bethlehem;  
the falsehood of idolatry ceases,  
and Christ reigns eternally.

*Aposticha, tone 2  
their own melody,*

*composed by Germanos*

A great and mighty wonder has come to pass this day.  
The Virgin bears an infant, and her womb suffers no stain.  
The Word becomes incarnate,  
yet ceases not to dwell with the Father.  
Angels and shepherds give glory and with them we sing:  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

*Tone 3* Today the Virgin gives birth to the maker of all.  
Eden offers a cave  
and a star discloses Christ the Sun to those in darkness.  
Magi, enlightened by faith, worship with gifts;  
shepherds behold the wonder  
and angels sing praises, saying:  
Glory to God in the highest.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies  
your footstool.

*Same tone, composed by Anatolios*

When the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah,  
Magi coming from the east worshipped the incarnate God.  
Eagerly opening their treasures, they offered him precious gifts:  
pure gold as befits the king of the ages,  
incense for the God of all,  
and myrrh they offered to the immortal one, as to one three days dead.  
Come all you nations,  
let us worship him who was born to save our souls.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 4, composed by John the Monk*

Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and let all who love Zion celebrate.  
Today the ancient bonds of Adam's condemnation are loosed.  
Paradise is opened to us and the serpent is destroyed.  
He who of old deceived the woman in Paradise  
now sees a woman become the Mother of the creator.  
O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.  
The sinful vessel that brought death upon all flesh  
through the Mother of God is the beginning of salvation for all the world.  
For from her the most perfect God is born,

and by his birth he seals her virginity.  
Through his swaddling clothes he looses the bands of sin,  
and through becoming a child he heals Eve's pangs of travail  
Therefore let all creation sing and dance for joy,  
for Christ has come to save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

You have come to dwell in a cave, O Christ our God:  
the manger received you and shepherds and Magi worshipped you.  
The preaching of the prophets was then fulfilled,  
and the angelic powers marvelled as they sang:  
Glory to your condescension, O lover of mankind.

*Then* Lord now let your servant depart... *and the Thrice-holy, and after Our Father...*

*Troparion, tone 4*

Your nativity O Christ our God,  
has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge;  
for thereby, those who worshipped the stars  
were taught by a star  
to worship you, the Sun of Righteousness;  
and to know you, the Dayspring from on high.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

*Then* Blessed be the name of the Lord... *and the rest.*

*We read the Explanation of Matthew, [by Chrysostomos] chapter 4.*

## **Matins**

*At* God is the Lord... *we sing the Troparion of the feast, thrice.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
this Sessional Hymn, tone 1,  
to the special melody, Your tomb O Saviour...*

For us, you were laid in the manger of dumb animals,  
willingly becoming a child, O most patient Saviour.  
The shepherds carolled to you with the angels:  
~Glory and praise to Christ our God,  
born on earth to deify our mortal nature.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
this Sessional Hymn, tone 3  
to the special melody, Awed by the beauty of your virginity...*

O Mother of God, in your womb you held  
the pre-eternal one whom no man may approach,  
the one unmingled divinity of the Trinity,  
ever existing with the invisible Father.  
Your grace has shone forth in the world, O exalted one,  
therefore we sing without ceasing:  
Rejoice, O pure Virgin Mother.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *repeat*

*Polyelios, and this Magnification:*

We magnify you, O Christ the giver of life, who for our sake has now been born in  
the flesh of the immaculate Virgin Mary who new not wedlock.

*Verse* Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to the honour of his name, and  
give him glory as his praise.

*After the Magnification, Little Litany and Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the special melody* Joseph marvelled...

O come, you faithful,  
and let us see where Christ is born.  
Let us join the Magi, the kings from the east,  
and follow the guiding star  
to the place where angels sing unceasing praises  
and shepherds pipe a fitting song, as they sing:  
Glory in the highest to him who is born  
of the Virgin Mother of God this day in the cave,  
in Bethlehem in Judea.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *repeat*

*The first Antiphon of the Hymn of Degrees tone 4* From the days of my youth...

*Prokimenon, tone 4*

I have begotten you from the womb, before the morning star: the Lord has sworn  
and will not turn back.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies  
your footstool.

Let every breath...

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 2*

*After Psalm 51 Have mercy... instead of Through the prayers... we sing:*

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

All things are filled with joy today: Christ is born of the Virgin.

Both now and for ever and to the ages of ages, amen.

All things are filled with joy today: Christ is born of the Virgin.

Have mercy on me O God, in your enduring goodness; according to the fullness of your compassion, blot out my offences.

*Then, tone 6*

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace.  
Today he who is eternally enthroned with the father  
is received in Bethlehem.  
Today angels glorify with holy hymns the child that is born.  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of goodwill.

*We sing two Canons of the feast.*

*Ode 1*

*The first Canon, tone 1, composed by Cosmas of Maiuma  
upon the acrostic* Having become man, Christ remains God as he was before.

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him.  
Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him.  
Christ is on earth, be exulted.  
Sing to the Lord, all the earth;  
sing praises in gladness, O people,  
for he has been glorified.

Though made in the image of God, man fell from the divine and better life,  
through the transgression becoming wholly corrupted; and now the wise creator restores  
him: for he has been glorified.



Seeing that which he fashioned with his own hands perishing, the creator bowed the heavens and descended, becoming truly incarnate and taking the fulness of human nature from the pure Virgin: for he has been glorified.

As he is the wisdom, the Word and power, Christ our God, the Son and brightness of the Father has restored us; and in a manner hidden from those above the earth and from those on earth, he was made man: for he has been glorified.

*The second Canon, also tone 1,  
composed by John of Damascus in iambics upon an elegiac verse<sup>5</sup>*

*Irmos* Of old the master working wonders saved his people,  
making the watery waves of the sea into dry land.  
Who now of his own will is virgin-born,  
making a heavenward path for us to tread:  
who praise the one whose nature is both God and man.

Foreshadowed clearly by the burning bush that was not consumed,  
a hallowed womb has borne the Word.  
God is mingled with mortal man, and thereby  
he looses the womb of Eve saddened by the bitter curse of old.  
Let us mortals give him glory.

To the Magi a star revealed the Word,  
who was before the sun, come to make an end to sin.  
They saw you in the humble cave,  
the merciful one, wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
and in joy they gazed on you, both Lord and man.

*Katavasia: the first choir sings the Irmos of the first Canon,  
then the second choir sings the Irmos of the second Canon.*

### *Ode 3*

#### *The first Canon*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began,  
who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us  
sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Though Adam, formed from dust, shared the higher breath of life, yet he stumbled into corruption through the woman's beguilement. But now he sees Christ, born of a woman, and says: Holy are you, O Lord, who for my sake has become like me.

---

<sup>5</sup> With hymnody of eloquence these songs proclaim  
God's Son, for mortals born on earth to reign,  
Abolishing the world's grim miseries:  
O King, deliver singers from such pain.

O Christ, by taking the form of a creature of clay, thus sharing in that which is worse, that is, our flesh, you have made us partakers of the divine nature; for you have become mortal man yet remaining God. You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, for you are noblest of the princes of Judea; for from you comes forth, in the sight of all, the shepherd who tends Israel, Christ who sits upon the Cherubim. He who has exalted our strength reigns over all.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos*      Graciously accept the praises of your servants, O benefactor,  
and bring down the boastful pride of the enemy.  
O good one who sees all, raise us up far above sin,  
and establish those who sing to you  
unshakably firm on the foundations of faith.

The choir of pipers, given the sight of riches,  
bowed in awe-filled homage, strangely seeing,  
beyond the mind, a child from a bride most pure.  
They also saw angellic ranks who sang  
the praises of the king, Christ, incarnate without seed.

He who rules the heights of heaven, in his mercy  
has become as we are, born of the unwedded Maid.  
The formerly immaterial Word has, in these latter times,  
assumed the physical substance of the flesh,  
to draw to himself fallen Adam, the first-formed man.

*After the Little Litany, the Ipakoi, tone 8*

The heavens brought the first fruits of the Gentiles to you, | who lies in the manger as an infant, and who had summoned the Wise Men by the star; | and they were amazed to see neither sceptre nor throne, but only utter poverty. | For what can be more lowly than a cave and what can be more humble than swaddling clothes? || Glory to you, O Lord, for therein has shone forth the riches of your divinity.

*Ode 4*

*The first Canon*

*Ode 4*

*Irmos*      As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You have shone forth from the tribe of Judah, O Christ, the expectation of the nations whom Jacob foretold in days of old. You have come to overthrow the power of Damascus and to plunder Samaria, transforming their error into godly faith. Glory to your power, O Lord.

O Master who has risen as a star out of Jacob, you have filled with joy the wise watchers of the stars who followed the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old. You received them as the first offering of the Gentiles as they worshipped you. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You descended upon the Virgin's womb as dew upon the fleece and as drops of rain falling upon the earth, O Christ. Ethiopia and Tarshish, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and the rulers of the land of the Medes have fallen down before you, O Saviour. Glory to your power, O Lord.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* Of old the prophet Habakkuk was granted  
to behold ineffably the figure and symbol of Christ's birth;  
and he foretold in song of the renewal of mankind.  
For the Word now comes forth from the mountain, the Virgin,  
a new-born child, for the renewal of the peoples.

The Most High came an equal to us mortals,  
of his own will taking flesh from the Virgin  
to purge the poison of the serpent's head.  
As he is God, he leads us all  
from the sunless gates of Hades to the life-giving light.

The peoples which of old were sunk in corruption  
have now escaped the perdition of the foe.  
They lift their hands with praiseful hymns of joy,  
in honour of Christ alone, our benefactor,  
who with compassion has come into our midst.

O Virgin, springing from the root of Jesse,  
who passed beyond the laws of human nature,  
you bore the Father's pre-eternal Word,  
who by a strange abasement was well pleased  
to traverse your womb, yet keeping it unharmed.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of Great Counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

Submitting to the decree of Caesar, you were enrolled among his servants, O Christ, and you have released us, former servants of the enemy and sin. Having humbled yourself for us, you have made our clay divine by your union and participation in it.

Behold the Virgin has conceived, as it was foretold in days of old, giving birth to God made man, and she remains a virgin. Reconciled to God through her, let us sinners sing her praises with faith, for she is truly the Mother of God.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos* From the night of the dark deeds of falsehood we stand in vigil,  
and sing to you, O Christ, our benefactor.  
Come to us and grant us cleansing;  
make straight the path for us  
whereby we may ascend and find resplendence.

By his coming in the flesh, the Master has cut through  
the harsh hostility of the flesh directed at us,  
and has destroyed the might of the murderer of our souls.  
Uniting immaterial beings to the world,  
he has made the creator accessible to creation.

The people who of old in darkness walked  
now see the light, the radiance of the Most High.  
The Son offers to God the nations as an inheritance,  
bestowing grace beyond description  
where sin once flourished exceedingly.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

Begotten of the Father before the morning star, Christ our God comes forth incarnate. He who rules over the undefiled powers lies in the manger of dumb beasts; and he who is wrapped in swaddling clothes looses the tangled bindings of sin.

A young child, a Son is born of the clay of Adam and is given to the faithful. He is the Father and prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of Great Counsel, the Mighty God who holds all creation in his dominion.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos*      Enclosed in the uttermost depths of the sea,  
Jonah entreated you to come and still the storm.  
And I, pricked by the dart of the tyrant,  
call on you, O Christ, the slayer of evil,  
that you come quickly to my slothfulness.

God the Word, with God in the beginning,  
desired to save the nature shared with us:  
to that which was so weak he gives new strength,  
abasing himself, a second act of sharing,  
in which once more he frees us from the passions.

For our sakes he has come forth from the loins of Abraham,  
to raise as his own the ones who were sadly fallen  
into the darkness of sin that bound them to the earth:  
he who dwells in light has now been pleased, despite his dignity,  
to dwell in a manger for the salvation of mankind.

*Kontakion,  
composed by Roman the Hymnographer,  
to its own melody, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being,  
and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach.  
Angels with shepherds give glory,  
and Wise Men journey with a star;  
for unto us a child is born,  
the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos*      Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place,  
so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the  
unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the  
unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth  
to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to  
this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ode 7*

*The first Canon*

*Irmos*      The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the  
threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God  
of our fathers.

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light, for the glory of the Lord shone about them and an angel cried: Sing praises to Christ, for he is born, the blessed God of your fathers.

At the voice of the angel, the heavenly hosts sang: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill; Christ has shone forth. Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

What words are these, said the shepherds; Let us go and see what has happened, and see the blessed Christ. Hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Mother of God and said: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos*      Caught by the love of the king of all,  
the children scorned the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant  
in his uncontrollable fury.  
And as the terrible fire withdrew before them,  
they sang to the Master: Blessed are you for ever.

The furnace roaring with sevenfold heat,  
savagely burned the servants of the king  
but spared the youths full of godly fear.  
For as the flames encircled them, the Lord,  
rewarding their piety, poured on them abundant dew.

O Christ our helper, you have shamed man's adversary,  
using as a shield your ineffable incarnation.  
Taking man's form, you have given him the joy  
of becoming godlike: for it was in hope of this  
we fell of old, from the heights to the earth's dark depths.

By your almighty power you have overthrown  
the fierce sin that raised its head in wanton pride,  
which rages with blasphemy in a world gone mad.  
Those dragged down of old, today you save from its snares,  
O benefactor, incarnate of your own will.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos*      The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin into whom it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

The daughter of Babylon carried off the captive children of David from Zion to herself, but now she sends her own children, the Wise Men bearing gifts, to entreat the

God-pleasing daughter of David. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Sorrow once silenced the harps of the children of Zion, for they could not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem dispels all the falsehood of Babylon and her instruments. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Babylon received in plunder the kingdom of Zion and its captive riches; but Christ draws its treasures to his Zion, guiding the stargazing kings by a star. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

*The second Canon*

*Irmos*      The youths of the Old Covenant who were cast into the fire  
prefigured the womb of the Maiden that remained sealed  
when surpassing nature she gave birth.  
Divine grace wrought these wonders as a single miracle,  
which moves the people to sing in praise.

Shunning the guilt of its vain attempt to become as God,  
creation sings like the youths in praise of the eternal Word  
who now empties himself; yet it sings in trembling,  
as if afraid to render meager praise to God, as subject to decay,  
although it is ever sustained by divine wisdom.

You came, the restoration of the nations,  
to bring back the nature of man from its wanderings,  
back from the hills of the wilderness to pastures rich in flowers.  
That you might destroy the violent force of the slayer of man,  
you condescend to come as God and man.

*Ode 9*

*The brethren light the candles. We do not sing the Canticle of the Mother of God, but immediately the first choir sings the first refrain and the Irmos of the first Canon.*

*The first Canon*

*Refrain* Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Mother of God, who is more honourable and more glorious than the hosts on high.

*Irmos*      I see a strange and glorious mystery:  
the cave is heaven,  
the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim,  
the manger is the place in which Christ is laid,  
the God whom nothing can contain:

whom we praise and magnify.

*This same refrain and Irmos is repeated by the other choir.*

*A refrain is sung at each [repeated] troparion of the first Canon,  
and the choirs alternate in the usual manner.*

*Refrain* Magnify O my soul, God who was born in the flesh of the Virgin.

*Refrain* Magnify O my soul, the king who was born in the cave.

The Magi beheld the strange course of an unknown newly shining star that exceeded the brightness of all in heaven, which signified on earth that Christ the king was born in Bethlehem for our salvation.

*Refrain* Magnify O my soul, God who is worshipped by the Magi.

*Refrain* Magnify O my soul, him who was proclaimed to the Magi by the star.

The star revealed the new-born infant king to the Magi who said: Where is he, for we have come to worship him? But Herod who fought against God was troubled, and in his fury he sought to slay the Christ.

*Refrain* Magnify O my soul, the pure Virgin who gave birth to Christ the king.

*Refrain* Magi and shepherds come to worship Christ who has been born in the city of Bethlehem.

Herod inquired regarding the time the of the appearing of the star, following which the Magi came to Bethlehem to worship Christ with gifts; but guided thereby back to their homeland, they left behind in mockery the cruel murderer of infants.

*The second Canon*

*The first choir sings the Refrain and Irmos of the second Canon.*

*Refrain* Today the Virgin gives birth to the Master within the cave.

*Irmos* It would be easier for us to be silent out of fear,  
for that is not threatening for us, O Virgin.  
As it is difficult to fashion hymns  
fittingly wrought for you, O Mother,  
give us the strength to hymn you, for it is our will.

*The second choir sings this Refrain:*

*Refrain* Today the Master is born as a babe of the Virgin Mother.



— and repeats the same *Irmos*.

*Then the following Refrains with these Troparia:*

*Refrain* Today the shepherds see the Saviour wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

*Refrain* Today the Master who is intangible is wrapped in rags as a babe.

*Refrain* Today all creation rejoices and is glad, for Christ is born of the Virgin Maiden.

O pure Mother, we have seen the Word  
in hazy images and pale shadows from the past;  
and now he newly appears through the gate that is closed;  
now mindful of his true radiance,  
as is meet and right, we bless your womb.

*Refrain* The heavenly hosts proclaim to the world the Saviour, Lord and Master who has been born.

*Instead of* Glory be to the Father... *Refrain* Magnify O my soul, the might of the indivisible Godhead in three persons.

*Instead of* Both now... *Refrain* Magnify O my soul, her who has delivered us from the curse.

The people who delight in Christ have attained their hope,  
being granted now to see the advent of our God,  
and are comforted by this regeneration.  
Grant them life-bearing grace, O pure Virgin,  
as they pay homage to this glory.

*Then both choirs together sing the first Refrain of the first Canon and its Irmos,  
then the first Refrain of the second Canon and its Irmos; then all bow down.*

*Exapostilarion*

Our Saviour, the Dayspring from the east, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and shadows have found the truth: for the Lord is born of the Virgin. (*thrice*)

*At the Praises*

*we sing 4 verses tone 4, composed by Andrew of Jerusalem,  
to their own melody.*

Be glad O you righteous;

rejoice greatly O heavens,  
and dance for joy, you mountains, for Christ is born.  
Like the Cherubim, the Virgin makes a throne,  
carrying at her bosom God the incarnate Word.  
Shepherds glorify the new born child  
and Magi offer gifts to the Master.  
Angels sing praises, saying:  
Glory to you, O unfathomable Lord.

O Virgin Mother of God  
who gave birth to the Saviour,  
you have abolished the ancient curse of Eve,  
for you became the Mother of him in whom the Father is well pleased,  
bearing at your bosom God the incarnate Word.  
Unable to fathom this mystery,  
with faith alone we all glorify it, and cry out with you:  
Glory to you, O ineffable Lord.

Come, let us hymn the Mother of the Saviour,  
who even after giving birth remained a virgin.  
Rejoice O living city of God the king,  
wherein Christ has dwelt and has wrought our salvation.  
With Gabriel we sing and with the Magi we offer glory:  
O Mother of God, entreat him, incarnate of you, that we be saved.

In the good pleasure of the Father,  
the Word is incarnate as the Virgin gives birth to God made man.  
The star proclaims him, and the Magi offer him worship;  
the shepherds marvel, and creation rejoices.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 6, composed by Germanos*

When it was time for your coming to earth,  
the first enrolment of the world was held.  
You prepared to enrol the names of those who believe in your birth.  
Such a decree was proclaimed at that time by Caesar;  
but your birth revealed the timelessness of your eternal kingdom.  
Therefore we offer to you the wealth of our Orthodox theology  
which far surpasses a registry of taxation,  
O God and Saviour of our souls.

Both now and for ever...

*Tone 2, composed by John the Monk*

Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem.  
Today he who knows no beginning begins to be,  
as the Word is made flesh.  
The powers of heaven rejoice and earth and men are glad.  
The Wise Men offer gifts to the Master  
and the shepherds marvel at him who has been born.  
And unceasingly we sing:  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of goodwill.

*Great Doxology, Troparion, Litanies and Dismissal.*

*The Superior anoints the faithful with holy oil from the lamp which burns by the icon of the feast, while we sing the sticheron idiomelon of the feast.*

*Prime is read, then the final Dismissal.*

*Be it known that if the Eve of Christmas falls on a Saturday or Sunday, there is no fast; and the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom is celebrated, then on the feast itself, the Liturgy of St Basil is invariably celebrated. This order is also observed for the feast of Theophany.*

## The Liturgy

### *Antiphon 1, tone 2*

*Verse* I will give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will tell of all the wonders you have done.

Through the intercessions of the Mother of God, O Saviour, save us.

*Verse* In the company of the upright and among the congregation: the works of the Lord are great.

Through the intercessions...

*Verse* They are studied by all who take delight in them.

Through the intercessions...

*Verse* his deeds are majestic and glorious, and his righteousness stands for ever.

Through the intercessions...

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

Through the intercessions...

### *Antiphon 2, in the same tone*

*Verse* Blessed is the man who fears the Lord and greatly delights in his commandments.

O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to you: Alleluia.

*Verse* his children shall be mighty in the land, a race of upright men who will be blessed.

O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to you: Alleluia.

*Verse* Riches and plenty shall be in his house, and his righteousness stands for ever.

O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to you: Alleluia.

*Verse* Light arises in darkness for the upright: gracious and merciful is the righteous man.

O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to you: Alleluia.

Glory be to the Father... Both now...

O only begotten Son and immortal Word of God...

*Antiphon 3, tone 4*

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

*Troparion* Your nativity O Christ our God,  
has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge;  
for thereby, those who worshipped the stars  
were taught by a star  
to worship you, the Sun of Righteousness;  
and to know you, the Dayspring from on high.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

*Verse* The Lord commits to you the sceptre of your power: reign from Zion in the midst of your enemies.

*Troparion* Your nativity O Christ our God...

*Verse* Noble are you, from the day of your birth upon the holy hill.

*Troparion* Your nativity O Christ our God...

*At the Entrance*

*The entrance verse:* Radiant are you, even from the womb, in the morning dew of your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not turn back: You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

*Then<sup>6</sup>, in a higher voice:*

*Troparion* Your nativity O Christ our God...

Glory be to the Father.... Both now...

*Kontakion, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being,  
and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach.  
Angels with shepherds give glory,  
and Wise Men journey with a star;  
for unto us a child is born,  
the pre-eternal God.

---

<sup>6</sup> *If it is a pontifical service, we firstly sing: O come let us worship... O Son of God, born of the Virgin, save us who sing to you: Alleluia.*

*Instead of Holy God... we sing*

All those who have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.

*Prokimenon, tone 8*

All the earth shall worship you and sing to you, and sing praises to your name.

*Verse* Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to the honour of his name, and give him glory as his praise.

*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians*

*[Number 209, Galatians 4: 4-7]*

Brethren, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba. Father." So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

*Alleluia, tone 8*

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. One day tells it to another and night to night communicates knowledge.

*A reading from the Gospel of Matthew*

*[No 3, Matthew 2: 1-12 In the time of King Herod...]*

*Instead of Truly it is right...*

*we sing the first Refrain of the first Canon and the Irmos of the second Canon, Ninth Ode:*

Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Mother of God, who is more honourable and more glorious than the hosts on high.

It would be easier for us to be silent out of fear, for that is not threatening for us, O Virgin. As it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for you, O Mother, give us the strength to hymn you, for it is our will.

*Communion verse*

The Lord has sent redemption to his people.

*On the day of the feast the faithful eat sumptuously, no matter what day of the week. There is a general dispensation from all fasting until the Eve of Theophany.*

## December 26

### **The Sunday after Christmas the righteous ones, Joseph the Betrothed, David the King and James the Brother of the Lord**

*Let it be known that if this Sunday, that is, the one following the Nativity, falls on either the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th or 30th of December, then at Little Vespers we sing the hymnody of the Resurrection and to the Mother of God, as usual.*

### **Great Vespers**

*After the opening psalm, we sing the first kathisma in its entirety.*

*At Lord, I call to you... 10 verses, 3 of the resurrection in the tone of the week,  
4 verses of the feast from those used on the feast itself, and 3 verses of the Righteous Ones.*

*Verses of the Righteous Ones, tone 1  
to the Special Melody Joy of the heavenly hierarchies...*

Let us all praise the ancestor of God, David the King  
from whom sprang the rod of the Virgin,  
for from her blossomed the flower, which is Christ,  
who has called forth Adam and Eve from corruption,  
as he is full of loving kindness.

In old age Joseph, the betrothed  
beheld clearly fulfilled that which the prophets foretold,  
having received a strange betrothal and hearing a revelation  
from angels who cried, Glory to God,  
who has imparted peace upon the earth.

Let us all praise the brother of God,  
the holy hierarch who shone forth nobly in martyrdom.  
Through his prayers save all who sing to you,  
Jesus, our God, wrapped in swaddling clothes in the cave.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Let us celebrate the memory of pious David and James,  
king and prophet, apostle and first bishop;  
delivered from deception by their teachings,  
we glorify Christ, incarnate of the Virgin to save our souls.

Both now and for ever... *Dogmaticon of the tone of the week*

*Entrance with incense, Prokimenon of the day.*

*At the Entreaty, the verses sung on the feast itself*

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 5,*  
*composed by John the Monk, of Damascus*

The Magi, kings of Persia,  
were assured that you the heavenly king had been born on earth.  
Led by the light of the star, they came to Bethlehem  
and offered their chosen gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
Falling before you they worshipped you,  
for they saw the timeless one, an infant lying in the cave.

*Aposticha of the Resurrection, with*  
Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Your birthgiving has become the memorial of priests,  
and the dominion and gladness of kings, O lover of mankind,  
and, rejoicing in it, we may say:  
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

Today invisible nature is joined to man through the Virgin.  
Today the infinite essence is wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem.  
Today by a star God leads the Magi to worship,  
foretelling his three-day burial  
in their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
To him let us sing: O Christ our God,  
incarnate of the Virgin, save our souls.

*At the Blessing of the Loaves,*  
*the troparion* Your nativity, O Christ our God... *twice,*  
*and that of the saints, once, tone 2*

Proclaim, O Joseph, the glad tidings to David the ancestor of God,  
for you have seen the Virgin give birth.  
With the shepherds give glory, and with the Magi offer worship.  
O Joseph, instructed by an angel,  
entreat Christ our God that he save our souls.

*Where the Vigil is not held, at Compline, after the Trisagion, the Kontakion of the ancestors of God;*  
Glory be to the Father... Both now... *the Kontakion of the feast.*



## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the Resurrection, twice;  
Glory be to the Father... that of the saints; Both now and for ever... that of the feast.*

*After the readings from the Psalter, the Sessional Hymns of the Resurrection with their Theotokia.*

*Reading from the Interpretation of the Gospel: from Matthew, for the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ,  
or the discourse of Gregory of Nyssa on the Holy Trinity and on Abraham, divided into two parts.*

*And we sing Psalm 119 and the Evlogitaria of the Resurrection.*

*The Ipakoe, Hymn of Degrees and Prokimenon are of the tone of the week.  
Resurrection Gospel. Having beheld the Resurrection... and the rest as usual on Sundays.*

*We sing the Canons: of the Resurrection, and of the Mother of God from the Oktoechos,  
and of the feast with 4 verses,  
and the following Canon of the Righteous Ones.*

*The Canon of the Righteous Ones, tone 4,  
composed by Cosmas the Monk, of Maiuma*

### Ode 1

*Irmos* I shall sing to you, O Lord my God, for you lead your people from the bondage of Egypt and overwhelmed the chariots of Pharaoh and his might.

As we celebrate the natal festivities of him who was incarnate for us, let us hymn with joy James, the brother of God, and David, the forefather of God.

The choirs of angels stood before Joseph in Bethlehem, saying: Glory to God in the highest: with them let us hymn him whose good pleasure it was to become incarnate.

O David, the forefather of God, calling to righteous James with the harp, hymn the Lord incarnate of the root of Jesse.

*Theotokion* I shall sing to you, O Lord my God, for you were born of the holy Virgin Mother and has shown her to be the hope of our souls.

*Katavasia* Christ is born...

### Ode 3

*Irmos* O Christ our God, the confirmation of those who hope in you, make us steadfast in your Orthodox faith, for you are the lover of mankind.

With the angels let us all hymn Christ our God, who without seed has been born in the flesh of the Virgin, singing: Glory to God in the highest.

O faithful, with David and James let us fittingly honour with hymns the most jubilant feast of him who emptied himself for our sake.

Like a bridegroom from a bridal chamber the Lord will come from his mother's womb: thus said David, whom, with James, we now hymn.

*Theotokion* Let us honour Mary, the unwedded Mother of God, for through her, the Sun of Righteousness has shone forth upon us.

*Kontakion of the feast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to him who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory; and Wise Men journey with the star; for unto us child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place, so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 3, to the Special Melody* Today the Virgin...

Let us fittingly hymn righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin, with James and David; for, having trod the righteous path, they have attained the mansions of heaven, and fittingly joining chorus with the angels, they implore for us remission of sins.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone and melody*

The Virgin has given birth to the creator of all things, and the Magi come to worship him incarnate. Men and angels render glory; the cave and the manger offer gifts, lauding him who has been newly born as a babe, the pre-eternal God.

Both now and for ever... *tone L, to the Special Melody* The choir of angels...

The choir of prophets divinely celebrates the wonder which took place in you, O Virgin; for you gave birth to God, incarnate upon earth. Therefore, angels and shepherds hymn, and the Magi and Joseph sing of the wonders to David, the forefather of God.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* Proclaiming the approach of your appearance on earth, O Christ our God, the prophet cried out with joy: Glory to your power, O Lord.

With the Magi let us worship him who has been born; and with the angels and Joseph let us join chorus, singing in godly manner: Glory to Christ our God in the highest.

Christ, who reigns over all kings and who has been born in the flesh of the seed of David, has accepted James, his chosen brother, as it was his good pleasure so to do.

The Lord God, who appeared in the flesh through the Virgin, has glorified your joint memorial, O holy ones: James, chosen of the apostles, and David most blessed.

*Theotokion* Rejoice, O unwedded Mother of God, who surpasses the ranks of the cherubim, having given birth in the flesh to God who is carried upon your arm.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* O Jesus, Son of God, who has shone forth the light, illumined the morning and made manifest the day.

Glory to you; glory to you, O God incarnate, whose good pleasure it was to take flesh of the pure Virgin; thus Joseph sang.

Glory to you; glory to you, O Jesus, Son of God, born of the Virgin and rendering the memory of David and James illustrious.

James has preached Jesus, the Son of God, whom the prophet David, by divine inspiration, called the rain upon the fleece.

*Theotokion* Unable to keep silent, creation offers you the angel's salutation, O Virgin: Rejoice, O pure Mother of Jesus, the Son of God.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The prophet Jonah in the belly of the whale prefiguring your burial for three days cried out and prayed: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus king of hosts.

Awe-struck, the heavenly hosts stood before the cave and, unable to keep silent, hymned your most pure nativity, singing: Glory in the highest to the newborn God.

You are enthroned, as you swore to the prophet David, O Master, who came from the fruit of his loins; and to James you committed the throne of the Church, O Christ.

David the king is revealed as a wondrous prophet and forefather of the incarnation of God; and James, the disciple of Jesus, as the first bishop.

*Theotokion* We implore you, O Virgin Mother of God: For your servants entreat him, incarnate of you, for we know you to be our sole intercessor.

*Kontakion, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody Today the Virgin...*

Today the divine David is filled with gladness, and Joseph offers praise with James. They rejoice, receiving a crown through kinship with Christ; they praise him, ineffably born on earth as they sing: O compassionate one, save those who give you honour.

*Ikos* The incorporeal one is, through ineffable counsel, born in the flesh; he who is uncontainable is now contained in a body and preserves both essences immutably; he who is without beginning and who alone is beyond time takes a beginning as an infant of supreme perfection is beheld; he who bears all things is borne in arms. As God, he crowns through his birth those who are honoured by their kinship with him. Glorifying them with faith, we cry out unceasingly: O compassionate one, save those who give you honour.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* Once in Babylon, the children of Abraham trampled upon the flames of the furnace, crying out in hymns: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Amazed beyond words by the birthgiving of Mary, the Mother of God, the angelic choirs cried out to Joseph: Glory in the highest, and on earth peace.

David, the leader of the bride, and James, who was the chamberlain of the divine Church, said: Blessed are you, O God, incarnate for us.

O king among prophets and a prophet among kings, sing with the divinely wise James and lift your voice in song for us: Blessed are you, O Christ, incarnate for us.

*Theotokion* Prefigured in the unconsumed bush and in the bedewed furnace, O Mother most pure, you carried without seed God incarnate, O ever blessed one.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* The captive children confessed Christ the king, proclaiming with a loud voice in the furnace: All you works of the Lord, hymn and exalt him above all for ever.

Christ incarnate, glorified by the hosts of heaven, is also unceasingly hymned by Joseph the betrothed: All you works of the Lord, hymn and exalt him above all for ever.

Christ incarnate, whom David the forefather of God foretold, James preached to the people, crying out: All you works of the Lord, hymn and exalt him above all for ever.

Christ, born of the Virgin and who has exalted the sacred memory of David and James, as they are his friends, hymn and exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* Mary the Mother of God has given birth Christ the king, remaining a virgin even after birthgiving: hymn, all you works of the Lord, and exalt him above all for ever

*Ode 9*

*Irmos* On the mountain Moses behold the unconsumed bush; and in the cave Joseph witnessed the ineffable birth: O Mother of God, Virgin undefiled and unwed Mother, we magnify you in hymns.

With trembling all creation minister to him, born of the Virgin: the heavens with a star; the earth with a manger; the mountain with a cave; the Magi with gifts; the shepherds with wonder; and the angels with the hymn: Glory to God in the highest.

Of old David was chosen king from among the shepherds; and from the royal tribe of Judah, you, O James, became a shepherd of the flock of the incarnate one, the lamb, the Son of God the Most High.

Be glad now, O Bethlehem, having become the city of the new David. O Zion, citadel of the Churches, exult now in the general celebration of the king of all and his favoured ones.

*Theotokion* The assemblies of angels glorify you, O Mother of God, and the human race unceasingly honours you with hymns; for by your divine birthgiving you have united the earthly to the heavenly: therefore, we honour you.

*Exapostilarion of the Resurrection;*  
Glory be to the Father... *and that of the saints,*  
*to the Special Melody With the disciples...*

Let us hymn David, the forefather of God, and divine Joseph, the betrothed of the Mother of God, with James, the glorious brother of God, for, with the angels, the Magi and the shepherds, they ministered in godly manner at the divine nativity of Christ in the city of Bethlehem, singing a hymn to him as God and Master.

Both now and for ever... *that of the feast.*

*At the Praises,*  
*4 verses of the Resurrection, and 4 of the feast, tone 4, with the festal refrains.*

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8*

Blood and fire and clouds of smoke are the wonders which Joel foresaw on earth. The blood is the incarnation; the fire is the Godhead; the clouds of smoke are the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the Virgin making the world fragrant. Great is the mystery of your incarnation: glory to you, O Lord.

Both now and for ever.... Most blessed are you, O Virgin Mother of God...

*Great Doxology, Troparion of the Resurrection, Litanies and Dismissal.*

*At the Hours, the Troparia of the Resurrection and of the feast;  
We alternate the Troparion of the saints with that of the feast.  
After the Lord's prayer, the Kontakion of the feast, alternating it with that of the saints.*

## **Liturgy**

*Beatitudes, 12 verses: 4 from the Octoechos, 4 from the Canon of the feast,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of the Canon of the venerable ones.*

*After the Entrance, the Troparia of the Resurrection, of the feast and of the saints;  
Glory be to the Father... the Kontakion of the saints; Both now and for ever... Kontakion of the feast.*

*Prokimenon of the tone of the week,  
and that for the saints, tone 4*

God is wonderful in his saints, the God of Israel.

*Verse* In their choirs they bless God, those that are sprung from the fount of  
Israel.

*The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, number 200*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

Lord, remember David and all his trouble.

How he swore an oath to the Lord, and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 4*

*Communion*

Praise the Lord... *and*

Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 26

### **Synaxis of the Mother of God, the hieromartyr Evthemius, bishop of Sardis**

### **Vespers**

*There is no reading from the Psalter unless this feast falls on Sunday.*

*At Lord, I call to you... we sing 6 verses of the feast, to their own melody, tone 2*

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord  
as we describe this present mystery.  
The middle wall of partition has been demolished;  
the flaming sword turns aside,  
the Cherubim withdraw from the tree of life,  
and I partake of the delight of Paradise  
from which I was cast out through disobedience.  
For the immutable image of the Father, the imprint of his eternity,  
takes the form of a servant,  
and without change he comes forth from the unwedded Mother.  
He retains that which he was before, true God:  
and that which he was not, he assumes,  
becoming man through love for mankind.  
Let us sing to him:  
O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us.

When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin,  
the whole world was enlightened.  
The shepherds piped, the Magi adored and the angels praised in song;  
but Herod was troubled,  
for God appeared in the flesh,  
the Saviour of our souls.

Your kingdom is an eternal kingdom, O Christ our God,  
and your rule is from generation to generation.  
Incarnate of the Holy Spirit  
and made man through the ever-Virgin Mary,  
you have enlightened us by your coming.  
Light of Light, the brightness of the Father,  
you have made the whole creation shine with joy.  
All that has breath praises you, the image of the Father's glory.  
O God, existing from eternity,  
who has shone forth from the Virgin, have mercy on us.

What shall we offer to you, O Christ,  
who for our sakes as appeared on earth as man?  
Every creature made by you offers thanksgiving:  
the angels offer you a hymn and the heavens provide a star;  
the Magi give gifts and the shepherds offer their wonder;  
the earth provides a cave and the wilderness gives a manger:  
but we offer you a Virgin Mother.  
O God, existing from eternity, have mercy on us.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 6*

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace.  
Today he who is eternally enthroned with the father  
is received in Bethlehem.  
Today angels glorify with holy hymns the babe that is born.  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of goodwill.

*Entrance, and Great Prokimenon, tone 7*

Who is so great a god as our God? You are the God that works wonders.

*Verse* You made known your power among the nations; by your mighty arm you  
redeemed your people,

*Verse* And I said: Now have I made a beginning; this change has been wrought by  
the right hand of the Most High.

*Verse* I will declare the mighty acts of the Lord: I will call to mind your wonders of old.

*Verse* I will think on all that you have done, and meditate upon your works.

*But if it is Saturday evening, we sing the usual prokimenon, tone 6.*  
*The Great Prokimenon* Who is so great a god as our God... *and its verses*  
*are sung on the eve of the feast itself, while the daily Prokimenon is omitted.*

*Aposticha, verses idiomela, composed by John the monk, tone 8*

A most glorious mystery is wrought today: nature is restored and God becomes man. He remains what he was before, and what he has not been, he takes upon himself, without undergoing either confusion or division.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

Arriving in Bethlehem, O Lord, you made your abode in the cave; though you have heaven for your throne, you were laid in a manger; though the armies of the angels surround you, yet you descended to shepherds, that you might save our race, as you are compassionate: glory to you.



*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

How can I describe this great mystery? He who is incorporeal becomes incarnate, the Word becomes flesh; the invisible becomes visible; the intangible is touched; the unoriginate begins to be. The Son of God becomes the Son of Man: Jesus Christ, yesterday, today, and for ever.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *same tone*

The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, proclaiming the true shepherd who sits on the cherubim and rests in the manger, having taken on the form of an infant for our sake: glory to you, O Lord.

*Troparion of the feast, tone 4*

Your nativity, O Christ our God, has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge; for thereby those who worship the stars were taught by a star, to worship you, the Sun of righteousness, and to know you, the Dayspring from on high. Glory to you, O Lord.

*At Compline, the canon of the hieromartyr Evthymius is chanted some other day,  
the text of which may be found elsewhere.*

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the nativity, thrice.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 1  
to the Special Melody* When the stone had been sealed...

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem O Judea, creation was enlightened, recognizing its creator; and the choirs of angels were amazed to see the Master, inseparable from the Father, taking the form of a servant on earth. Glory to God incarnate; glory to him, born on earth; glory to him whose pleasure it is to save our race.

*After the second reading from the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, tone 4  
to the Special Melody* Joseph marvelled...

Why do you marvel, O Mary; for surely are you in awe of what has taken place within you? And you say: Because I have given birth within time to the timeless Son, and unaccustomed to conceiving a child, since I have not known man, how is it I give birth to a Son? Who has ever seen a seedless birthgiving? As is it written, when God so wills, the

order of nature is overturned. Christ is born, that he might restore his image which fell of old.

*We sing both Canons of the feast.*

*After Ode 3, the Litany, and then:*

*Kontakion of the feast, tone 3* Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and Wise Men journey with a star; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place, so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ipakoe, tone 8* The heavens brought the first fruits of the Gentiles to you, | who lies in the manger as a babe, and who had summoned the Wise Men by the star; | and they were amazed to see neither sceptre nor throne, but only utter poverty. | For what can be more lowly than a cave and what can be more humble than swaddling clothes? || Glory to you, O Lord, for therein has shone forth the riches of your divinity.

*After Ode 6, the Litany, and the Kontakion of the Synaxis, tone 6*

He who was born of the Father  
without a mother before the morning star  
today is incarnate on earth from you, without a father;  
and so the star announces glad tidings to the Magi,  
and the angels and shepherds hymn  
your ineffable birth giving, O full of grace.

*Ikos* O mystic vine, you have given rise to the uncultivated grapes, for you carried him in your arms as on branches, and said: You are my fruit; you are my life. And so I know that I continue to be what I was. You are my God; for, with the seal of my virginity intact, I proclaim you the true Word who is incarnate. I have not known seed, and I acknowledge you to be the destroyer of corruption: I am pure, since you have issued forth from me, and have left my womb as you found it; and moreover, I see that it is pure. Therefore, all creation joins chorus, crying out to me: Rejoice, O full of grace.

*At Ode 9 we omit the usual canticle and sing instead the Canons and refrains as on the feast itself.*

*Exapostilarion of the feast*

Our Saviour, the Dayspring from the east, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and shadows have found the truth: for the Lord is born of the Virgin.

Let everything that has breath... *and the Praises*  
*4 verses tone 4, composed by Andrew of Jerusalem, to their own melody.*

Be glad O you righteous;  
 rejoice greatly O heavens,  
 and dance for joy, you mountains, for Christ is born.  
 Like the Cherubim, the Virgin makes a throne,  
 carrying at her bosom God the incarnate Word.  
 Shepherds glorify the new born child  
 and Magi offer gifts to the Master.  
 Angels sing praises, saying:  
 Glory to you, O unfathomable Lord.

O Virgin Mother of God  
 who gave birth to the Saviour,  
 you have abolished the ancient curse of Eve,  
 for you became the Mother of him in whom the Father is well pleased,  
 bearing at your bosom God the incarnate Word.  
 Unable to fathom this mystery,  
 with faith alone we all glorify it, and cry out with you:  
 Glory to you, O ineffable Lord.

Come, let us hymn the Mother of the Saviour,  
 who even after giving birth remained a virgin.  
 Rejoice O living city of God the king,  
 wherein Christ has dwelt and has wrought our salvation.  
 With Gabriel we sing and with the Magi we offer glory:  
 O Mother of God, entreat him, incarnate of you, that we be saved.

In the good pleasure of the Father,  
 the Word is incarnate as the Virgin gives birth to God made man.  
 The star proclaims him, and the Magi offer him worship;  
 the shepherds marvel, and creation rejoices.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6*

Today invisible nature is joined to man through the Virgin.  
 Today the infinite essence is wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem.  
 Today by a star God leads the Magi to worship,  
 foretelling his three-day burial  
 in their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.  
 To him let us sing: O Christ our God,  
 incarnate of the Virgin, save our souls.

Both now and for ever.... *tone 2,*  
*composed by John the monk*

Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem.  
Today he who knows no beginning begins to be,  
as the Word is made flesh.  
The powers of heaven rejoice and earth and men are glad.  
The Wise Men offer gifts to the Master  
and the shepherds marvel at him who has been born.  
And unceasingly we sing:  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men of goodwill.

*Great Doxology, Troparion, Litanies and Dismissal*

*At the Hours, the troparion of the feast and the Kontakion of the Synaxis.*

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 verses: 4 from Ode 3 of the first Canon, and 4 from Ode 6 of the second Canon*

*At the Entrance*

O Son of God born of the Virgin, save us who sing to you: Alleluia.

— *and likewise up to and including the Apodosis of the feast.*

*Troparion of the feast; Glory be to the Father... Both now... Kontakion of the Synaxis.*

*We sing the Thrice-holy.*

*Prokimenon, tone 3: The Canticle of the Mother of God*

My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

*Verse* For he has looked with favour on his lowly servant: from this day all generations will call me blessed.

*The Epistle to the Hebrews, number 306*

*Alleluia, tone 8 [or 2 in some sources]*

*Verses* Arise O Lord into your resting place; you and the ark of your might.  
The Lord has sworn to David an oath which he will not break.

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 4*

*Communion Verse*

The Lord has sent redemption to his people.

## December 27

# Afterfeast of the Nativity Apostle and Protomartyr Stephen Venerable Stephen the Branded, brother of Theophanes the Hymnographer

## Vespers

*At Lord, I call to you... 6 verses;  
3 for the apostle, tone 4, to the Special Melody As valiant among the martyrs...*

Having enlightened your mind \* with the grace of the Spirit, \* your countenance,  
O Stephen \* was like that of an angel, \* and your body, radiant with inner splendour, \*  
emitted spiritual radiance upon those who saw you, \* as you received a vision of light, \* as  
the heavens were gloriously opened to you, \* first among martyrs and their boast.

The casting of stones \* were to you like steps \* and a ladder leading up to heaven;  
\* for, entering thereon you saw \* the Lord standing at the right hand of the Father, \*  
holding out to you the crown for which you were named \* with his life-bearing right  
hand. \* You stand close before him \* as a worthy victor, the foremost of athletes.

Radiant with signs and wonders, and with your teaching \* you destroyed the  
assembly of the iniquitous; \* and, slain by them, \* put to death by stoning, \* you prayed  
for the forgiveness \* of those who slew you, \* emulating thereby the Saviour's cry, \* into  
whose hands you committed your spirit, \* O sacred Stephen.

*And 3 verses to the venerable one, same tone and melody*

To the bitterness of your exile \* was added the bitter misery of imprisonment, \* O  
venerable father, \* when he who iniquitously usurped the lawful throne \* grievously  
perverted the laws of the faith \* and cast down the most pure image of the Saviour. \* But  
by the grace of God, O favourite of Christ, \* you put him to shame.

Neither prison, nor confinement, \* nor lightless gloom, \* nor wounds, nor  
beatings, \* nor affliction grievous, long and unbearable, \* nor lack of food, \* could  
separate you from your love for God, \* O divinely eloquent father Theodore; \* for you  
steadfastly endured them, \* foreseeing the reward of your labours.

In place of tribulation \* the just judge of the contest has given you liberty; \* in  
place of darkness, radiance. \* For that which was graven on your face, O wondrous one,  
\* you have been written in the book of life, \* numbered among the firstborn of the  
Church in the highest, \* and most joyously have attained \* the feast of the angels.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 2, composed by Anatolius*

A most splendid crown is offered to the king and master of all, who was born on earth, fashioned not of rubies, but resplendent with the drops of your blood, O Stephen. Come, all who love the martyrs, and, taking up hymns as if flowers, let us crown him; and with hymns, let us say: O protomartyr, who illumined your soul with wisdom and grace, entreat Christ our God that he grant us peace and great mercy.

Both now and for ever... *in the same tone*

A great and mighty wonder has come to pass this day. A Virgin bears an infant, and her womb suffers no stain. The Word becomes incarnate, yet ceases not to dwell with the Father. Angels and shepherds give glory and with them we sing: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.

*Aposticha, tone 1, to the Special Melody* Joy of the heavenly hierarchies...

We sing to him who is now worshipped \* by angels, shepherds and Magi, \* who shone forth from the Father before the ages, \* and, as the Son, ever exists in the bosom of the Father, \* who in latter times has sat upon his Mother's arms \* as upon a throne.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

Assembling in Bethlehem, O faithful, \* let us behold the creator of all lying in a manger \* and those who bear a choice three-part gift from the land of Chaldea to the king and God, who for our sake was to lie three days dead.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

You were born in the cave of the Virgin, \* and, surrounding you, the angelic host cried out: \* Glory to you, O God, in the highest, born in the form of a servant, \* renewing the world \* through the womb of the Virgin, the unwedded Mother.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 6, composed by Anatolius*

First among martyrs and deacons, O apostle Stephen, adornment of athletes, confirmation of the faithful and glory of the righteous; as you stand before the throne of the king of all, implore cleansing of transgressions for us who celebrate your honoured memory, that we be granted the kingdom of heaven.

Both now and for ever... *same tone and melody, composed by Gerasimus*

Today the angels exult in heaven and men rejoice greatly. All creation leaps for joy because the Lord and Saviour is born in Bethlehem; the falsehood of idolatry ceases, and Christ reigns eternally.

*Troparion of St Stephen, tone 4*      You fought the good fight, you denounced the impiety of the oppressors, O protomartyr and apostle of Christ. Stoned at the hands of the iniquitous, you received from on high a crown from the right hand of the Lord; for you exclaimed to God, crying out: Do not hold this sin against them, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father...

*Troparion of Theodore the branded, tone 8*      Instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity; beacon of all the world and divinely inspired adornment of monastics: O Theodore most wise, you have enlightened all by your doctrines. O harp of the Spirit, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

Both now and for ever...

*Troparion of the Nativity, tone 4*      Your nativity O Christ our God, has shone upon the world with the light of knowledge; for thereby, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you, the Sun of Righteousness; and to know you, the Dayspring from on high. Glory to you, O Lord.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord..., the troparion of the feast, once; troparion of the protomartyr;  
Glory be to the Father... troparion of the venerable one;  
Both now and for ever..., troparion of the feast.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody Today the Virgin...*

She who conceived without seed gave birth to the deliverer; Magi come to worship him who is life, and men and angels give glory. The manger and the cave offer gifts, raising a hymn to the newborn child, the pre-eternal God.

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody Joseph was amazed...*

How can he who in no way is confined be confined in a womb? How can he who is in the bosom of the Father rest in the arms of a Mother? He knows all things as he has been pleased and has willed; for, though incorporeal, he willingly became incarnate, and for our sake became that which he had not been, and, without departing from his essence, shared our nature. Christ has been twice begotten, wishing to fill the world on high.

*The first canon of the feast; and two canons to the saints.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the Feast, tone I*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

Though made in the image of God, man fell from the divine and better life; and through the transgression he became wholly corrupted. And now the wise creator restores him: for he has been glorified.

Seeing that which he fashioned with his own hands sinking, the creator bowed the heavens and descended, and was truly incarnate, taking man's substance from the pure Virgin: for he has been glorified.

As he is the wisdom, the Word and power, Christ our God, the Son and brightness of the Father has restored us; and even for those above the earth as for those on earth, he was made man: for he has been glorified.

*Canon of the apostle and protomartyr, composed by John of Damascus, tone 5*

*Irmos* Halting the battle with his upraised arm, Christ shook the horse and rider into the Red Sea, while he saved Israel singing a hymn of victory.

Come, and with wreaths of hymns let us gloriously crown the first martyr of the Church of Christ: crowned with the divine grace of Stephen, let us sing a hymn of victory.

Possessed of the meek mind of the teacher and humility wrought by God through love, O Stephen, you became the foremost of the deacons and an intercessor for widows.

Fittingly called to help the apostles of Christ, you were a faithful deacon: through blood you passed on to the place where Christ is, O Stephen, namesake of crowns.

*Theotokion* Born of the Virgin, you were wrapped as an infant in swaddling clothes for us, O Christ; and your protomartyr, covered by stones cast at him, shed his human life.

*Canon of the Venerable One, tone 4,  
upon the acrostic I weave your praises, O my brother  
composed by Theophanes*

*Irmos* Traversing the depth of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, Israel of old vanquished the might of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms stretched out in the form of a cross.



The cherubim, seeing the inscription graven on your honoured brow, withdrew from the Tree of Life; and the fiery sword deferred to you, O wise Theodore.

The inscription above the head of Christ the king was written on the tree of the cross; but your inscription was written magnificently on your face, O wise one.

On the cross, the Lord's side was pierced; while stretched out on the rack and branded as a prized lamb, you patiently endured the red-hot needles, O sharer in sacred mysteries.

Adorned with all wisdom, O father Theodore, you openly denounced the ruler for his evil actions; and by enduring torments you disquieted his heretical thoughts.

*Theotokion* As the abode of wisdom all-wise, O pure Mother of God, you alone are the salvation and song of the faithful, for you gave birth to divine deliverance for us.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Though Adam, formed from dust, shared the higher breath of life, yet he stumbled into corruption through the woman's beguilement. But now he sees Christ, born of a woman, and says: Holy are you, O Lord, who for my sake has become like me.

O Christ, by taking the form of a creature of clay, thus sharing in that which is worse, that is, our flesh, you made us partakers of the divine nature; for you have become mortal man yet remaining God. You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, for you are noblest of the princes of Judea; for from you comes forth in the sight of all, the shepherd who tends Israel, Christ who sits upon the Cherubim. He who has exalted our strength reigns over all.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* By your ordinance you established the earth upon nothing, and suspended its weight unsupported: build your Church upon the immovable rock of your commandments, O Christ who alone is good and loving to mankind.

Stephen, the warrior of Christ, having lawfully opposed the deicides, vested in the invincible power of God, denounced all the wicked opposition of the iniquitous.

Affire with love of Christ and stripped for combat, filled with faith and the Spirit of God, O protomartyr, you proclaimed the divinely appointed preaching of the fishermen.

As a proclaimer of the hidden and truly divine life, heedless of this present life, the protomartyr displayed the triumph of truth, having assented to death, O Master.

*Theotokion* The Master condescended to enter the cave of life for us; and Stephen, chief among the martyrs, departed from the burden of life, overcome by the love of the Master.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* The Church rejoices in you, O Christ, and sings: O Lord, you are my strength, my refuge and my firm support.

Unable to speak against your doctrines, O venerable one, he who was filled with pagan madness resorted to blows.

You patiently endured wounds on your shoulders and breast for Christ's sake, and blows to your head, O divinely-inspired one.

With spiritual wisdom and zeal of mind you put to shame the impious and iniquitous one by your sacred teachings.

*Theotokion* With prophetic eyes David beheld you in Bethlehem, O Mother of God, as a coffer bearing the all-divine infant.

*Kontakion of the feast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and Wise Men journey with a star; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place, so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Sessional Hymn of the Apostle, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody Your tomb, O Saviour...*

O apostle of Christ, first among the deacons, wise protomartyr, chief among the martyrs: having sanctified the ends of the earth with your sufferings, you have also illumined the souls of men with miracles. O praiseworthy Stephen, from all manner of tribulations deliver those who honour you.

Glory be to the Father... *Sessional Hymn to the Venerable One, tone 3,*

*to the Special Melody* Of the divine faith...

You were the voice of boldness, wisely shaming the audacity of the tyrant by your patient endurance of suffering. Branded on the brow for the precious icon of Christ, O Theodore, you teach that all should honour and glorify him, begging great mercy for us.

Both now and for ever...

*Theotokion* Gazing upon him whom she had conceived without seed, the immaculate one exclaimed in wonder to him who was born of her: All things proclaim you to be God, O unoriginate child, even though you are wrapped in human form, co-unoriginate with the unoriginate Father, who grants great mercy to all.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You have shone forth from the tribe of Judah, O Christ, the expectation of the nations whom Jacob foretold in days of old. You have come to overthrow the power of Damascus and to plunder Samaria, transforming their error into godly faith. Glory to your power, O Lord.

O Master who has risen as a star out of Jacob, you have filled with joy the wise watchers of the stars who followed the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old. You received them as the first offering of the Gentiles as they worshipped you. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You descended upon the Virgin's womb as dew upon the fleece and as drops of rain falling upon the earth, O Christ. Ethiopia and Tarshish, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and the rulers of the land of the Medes have fallen down before you, O Saviour. Glory to your power, O Lord.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* Perceiving your divine condescension O Christ, Habakkuk with prophetic eyes cried to you in fear: You have come for the salvation of your people, to save your anointed ones.

Emulating the zeal of the angels, and splendidly adorned with an angelic countenance, you beheld the glory of God and its radiance.

The slanderer, judge and tyrant, the slayer of man and father of lies, appeared, O Stephen, but he vanquished himself, laying the very snares into which he fell.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Seeing you hanging on the cross, the Sun of Righteousness, the Church stands in order, singing worthily: Glory to your power, O Lord.

Stretched upon the rack, O Theodore, with audacious fury and barbaric cruelty you were branded because you venerated the icon of Christ and the Mother of God.

Having served the Master through abstinence from your youth, O blessed one, placing your trust constantly in him, you were immediately splendidly adorned with the blood of your witnessing.

Luminous as the sun, O God-bearer, you hastened from the east, emitting the rays of your confession and your exceeding wise and most valiant opposition.

*Theotokion* Blessed is God the Word, who with loving kindness came to Bethlehem from you, O most pure one: entreat him, that he save those who have recourse to you.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of Great Counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

Submitting to the decree of Caesar, you were enrolled among his servants, O Christ, and you have released us, former servants of the enemy and sin. Having humbled yourself for us, you have made our clay divine by your union and participation in it.

Behold the Virgin has conceived, as it was foretold in days of old, giving birth to God made man, and she remains a virgin. Reconciled to God through her, let us sinners sing her praises with faith, for she is truly the Mother of God.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* I come early in the morning to you, who is clothed with light as with a garment, and I sing to you: Enlighten my darkened soul O Christ as you alone are compassionate.

More exalted than the heavenly spheres and full of your ineffable glory, O Christ, your protomartyr has shone forth like an angel.

With deluges of divinely eloquent words the protomartyr inundated the vile murderers; and, pelted by their countless stones, he received a victor's crown.

The boldness of the divine zeal of the protomartyr was invincible, for manfully he stood against the deicides, even to the shedding of his blood.

*Theotokion* The protomartyr beheld him, born of the unwedded mother, standing in the heavens in the immutable divinity and glory of the Father.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* You have come as a light into the world, O my Lord; a holy light which turns from the darkness of ignorance those who sing to you with faith.

Sojourning in a strange land, you steadfastly endured exile, affliction, wounding, imprisonment, and the vilest of dungeons.

Now you truly rejoice, having received a victor's crown on the splendid and radiant feast of the godly protomartyr.

The vow of piety which you made in your childhood, you kept even to the end, remaining unperturbed, O invincible Theodore.

*Theotokion* We brandish you as an invincible weapon against the foe, O Bride of God, for we have acquired you as our help and hope of salvation.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

Begotten of the Father before the morning star, Christ our God comes forth incarnate. He who rules over the undefiled powers lies in the manger of dumb beasts; and he who is wrapped in swaddling clothes looses the tangled bindings of sin.

A young child, a Son is born of the clay of Adam and is given to the faithful. He is the Father and prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of Great Counsel, the Mighty God who holds all creation in his dominion.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* O Master Christ, calm the sea of the passions raging like stormy waters which destroy the soul, and lead me up from corruption in your compassion.

Stephen, the glorious chief of the martyrs, having by grace transcended the faithful laws of nature, is made luminous by the glory of God.

Being a most renowned emulator of your honored passion, O Master Christ, Stephen repaid his murderers with a blessing.

Preserve untouched by vile murder those who hymn the protomartyr, and grant them your inheritance, as you are compassionate.

*Theotokion* Your birth was the beginning of the salvation of the universe and the foundation of the godly confession of the martyrs.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* I will sacrifice to you with a voice of praise, the Church sings to you, O Lord, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which for mercy's sake, flowed from your side.

Drenched by the sweat of your struggles, you stood before the judge of the contest, who with just judgment, governs all creation, O blessed God-bearer Theodore.

Nothing could separate you from the love of Christ: neither bodily wounding, nor the threat of the death sentence, nor the loss of friends, O blessed Theodore.

You reposed full of light, a most radiant son of light and of the day, growing towards the radiance of God, ever flowing with light, day and night, O God-pleaser.

*Theotokion* Having found you alone to be a lily most pure, a lily of the valley amid the thorns, O Mother of God, the noetic bridegroom made his abode within you.

*Kontakion of the Protomartyr, tone 3,  
to the Special Melody Today the Virgin...*

Yesterday the Master came to us in the flesh, and today his servant departs from the flesh. Yesterday, he who reigns over the flesh was born, and today his servant is slain by stoning. For his sake, the godly protomartyr put to shame their impious wickedness.

*Ikos* Like a radiant star Stephen the protomartyr shines upon the nativity of Christ, illumining and enlightening the ends of the earth, although the impiety of the Jews cast a pall of darkness over all. Reproving them with words of wisdom, discoursing from the Scriptures, and persuading them that Jesus, born of the Virgin, is the Son of God and God, the godly protomartyr Stephen put to shame their impious wickedness.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light, for the glory of the Lord shone about them and an angel cried: Sing praises to Christ, for he is born, the blessed God of your fathers.

At the voice of the angel, the heavenly hosts sang: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill; Christ has shone forth. Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

What words are these, said the shepherds; Let us go and see what has happened, and see the blessed Christ. Hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Mother of God and said: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* The supremely exulted Lord of our fathers extinguished the flame and sprinkled the children with dew as they sang together: Blessed are you O God.

The iniquitous, gnashing their teeth like beasts and falling upon Stephen with murderous intent, slew him as he and in godly manner: Blessed are you, O God.

O Stephen, adorned with stones as with many-colored and comely flowers, you offered yourself to Christ, the giver of life, crying out: Blessed are you, O God.

Almost insurmountable was the opposition of Paul, who at first persecuted the saints, but who later led the Gentiles to Christ for ever.

Caught up by the Holy Spirit, O Stephen, you ineffably beheld the Son and the Father, and you cried out to the Trinity: Blessed are you, O God.

*Theotokion* An animate crown is offered to you, as to a king, O Christ who shone forth from the divine and pure Virgin, as in godly manner we sing: Blessed are you, O God.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* The children of Abraham in the Chaldean furnace were consumed by a burning love of godliness rather than by the flame, and they sang in the destructive fire: Blessed are you, O Lord, in the temple of your glory.

Aflame with Orthodox zeal, O most wise one, with boldness you spurned the food of vile and grievous heresy, crying out: Blessed are you, O Lord my God.

God the Word gave you the discourse of wisdom and of dogmas, and the discourse of most pious doctrines, O father who cried out: Blessed are you, O Lord my God.

Having shone from the east like the sun, O father Theodore, you shone with the radiance of piety upon the earth, enlightening and teaching the veneration of icons.

*Theotokion* Gloriously clothed with the light of virginity, O Mother who gave birth to God in the flesh, you wrapped in swaddling clothes him who clothes all things.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

The daughter of Babylon carried off the captive children of David from Zion to herself, but now she sends her own children, the Wise Men bearing gifts, to entreat the God-pleasing daughter of David. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord, and exult him above all for ever.

Sorrow once silenced the harps of the children of Zion, for they could not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem dispels all the falsehood of Babylon and her instruments. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Babylon received in plunder the kingdom of Zion and its captive riches; but Christ draws its treasures to his Zion, guiding the stargazing kings by a star. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* The children in the furnace weaving a universal chorus, sang to the creator of all: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Come, all who are noetically illumined by the glory of Stephen and sing to God incarnate: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

A wreath of sufferings was fashioned for you, O Stephen who conquered wicked deception; for you cried out: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Christ appeared to you in the glory of the Father, promising recompense for your sufferings: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

The nativity of the Master and the commemoration of the protomartyr are cause for us to join chorus: let us unceasingly praise the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.



*Theotokion* In manner past understanding, O Virgin, you gave birth to the Lord, the incarnate God, yet remained virgin; and we hymn and exalt him above all for ever.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Daniel stretched forth his hands, and stopped the mouths of the lions in the den; while girded with virtues, the youths who loved to worship quenched the mighty fire as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Trusting, like a lion, in the strength of your spirit, O blessed one, you were not afraid of the assault of the heretic, the namesake of savagery; and, spitting upon him, rejoicing you cried out to the people: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Having adorned your soul with manliness and acquired a mind full of understanding, you perfected your will with chastity, O blessed one, and directed your thoughts with righteousness, and cried out: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

By your chastenings you dried up the rushing torrent of heresy, O venerable father, destroying the snares of the impious with your most wise instructions, and crying out: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Theotokion* God, who fashioned human nature in the beginning, is clothed therein, through your most pure and holy womb, being born today in Bethlehem in accordance with the prophecies: we all call you blessed, O Mary, Bride of God.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain: him we praise and magnify.

The Magi beheld the strange course of an unknown newly shining star that exceeded the brightness of all in heaven, which signified on earth that Christ the king was born in Bethlehem for our salvation.

The star revealed the new-born infant king to the Magi who said: Where is he, for we have come to worship him? But Herod who fought against God was troubled, and in his fury he sought to slay the Christ.

Herod inquired regarding the time the of the appearing of the star, following which the Magi came to Bethlehem to worship Christ with gifts; but guided thereby back to their homeland, they left behind in mockery the cruel murderer of infants.

*Canon of the Apostle*

*Irmos* Isaiah dance for joy, for the Virgin has carried in her womb and given birth to a Son, Immanuel, he is both God and man, his name is Orient, and magnifying him we hail the Virgin as blessed.

O Stephen, surpassing every kind of praise, with every word you gained trophies of victory; for the human mind is incapable of weaving a crown of praise worthy of you.

How blessed the voice with which spoke, O Stephen, for you cried: Lay not this sin to the charge of my murderers, O Master Christ; but, as you are my God and creator, receive my soul as a sacrifice of savor most sweet.

You received recompense for your sufferings: a victor's wreath from the right hand of the Almighty. And now, O blessed one, standing before the king of all, with glory and grace crown those who hymn you.

*Theotokion* The timeless Son, begotten of the Father, has received from the Virgin a beginning of existence in time. Slain for his sake, Stephen, the emulator of Christ, has now inherited everlasting life from its very source.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* From you O Virgin, the unquarried mountain, was hewn Christ, the cornerstone not cut by man, who joined in himself the separate natures. Therefore with rejoicing we magnify you, O Mother of God.

Compelled by the will of God, you readily endured the assaults of persecutions, O divinely wise one; and having nullified the savagery of the persecutor, you received a crown for your struggles, O father.

You discovered heavenly riches and an abiding home in place of bitter imprisonment, exile and wandering; and you now live in rapture, in eternal delight.

Offering hymnody to the Master, O father, cease not to offer entreaties for my infirmity, for the sake of our brotherhood and dwelling together, that we may also attain deification together.

*Theotokion* We magnify you, O Virgin, as the true Mother of God and divine Maiden, for, in manner beyond comprehension and recounting, you gave birth in Bethlehem to God the Word and wrapped him in swaddling clothes.

*Exapostilarion,  
to the Special Melody* By the Spirit in the sanctuary...

You behold the all-unoriginate Word standing at the right hand of the Father, and your face was filled with ineffable light, O boast of the apostles and glory of the martyrs. Adorned with a crown fashioned of the rocks of your stoning, you received a divine end.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever...

Born as a child, you were laid in a manger, and the star summoned wise men three in number. Shepherds, marvelling at the wonder, hastened to see God incarnate; and the choirs of angels, amazed, cried out: Glory to God in the highest.

*At the Praises, 6 verses;  
beginning with this in tone 1, composed by Cyprian*

O faithful, let us weave for the protomartyr an athlete's wreath, fashioned of words as of flowers. He prepared a martyrs' way, and cried out in joy: I see the heavens opened and the Son of God standing at the right hand of the invisible Father. *Twice*

*Tone 2, composed by Anatolius*

You became first among the deacons and first among the martyrs, O most holy Stephen; for you were a path for the saints, and brought many martyrs to the Lord. Therefore, heaven was opened to you, and God appeared to you: beseech him that our souls be saved.

Clothed in sanctity, O blessed Stephen, protomartyr and first deacon, you now have a place with the angels: intercede and pray for us to the Lord, the sinless Saviour.

Let us give fitting honour to Stephen, the valiant protomartyr, first deacon and favourite of Christ; for, standing in the midst of the iniquitous, he saw the Son standing at the right hand of the Father.

*Tone 4, composed by John the Monk*

Stephen, the goodly initiator of martyrdom, full of grace and power, working great wonders and signs among the people, was slain by stoning by the iniquitous. Yet he shone as an angel, and saw at the right hand of power the glory of you, crucified for us, and was taken away to heaven by the Spirit of grace; abiding now with the choirs of the angels, he prays that our souls be saved.

Glory be to the Father...

*Tone 5, composed by Cyprian*

O apostle and protomartyr,  
portal of martyrdom, glory of the righteous, and boast of the apostles:  
standing in the tribunal you saw the heavens opened  
and the Son of God standing at the right hand of the invisible Father.  
Your countenance shining like that of an angel,  
in joy you cried out concerning those who were stoning you to death:  
Lay not this sin to their charge.

And now pray for those who praise you with love,  
that they receive cleansing of their sins and great mercy.

Both now and for ever...

*Same tone, composed by John the Monk*

An unapproachable mystery is today accomplished in Bethlehem:  
the invisible becomes visible,  
the incorporeal one is incarnate, the Word takes on flesh,  
and becomes that which he had not been.  
A Virgin gives birth in a cave to an infant, the creator of nature.  
A manger becomes a heavenly throne,  
and beasts represent the ranks of the cherubim.  
Shepherds marvel, Magi bear gifts, and angels sing:  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace, to men of good will,  
O immutable Immanuel.

*Aposticha, tone 6*  
*to the Special Melody* Proceed, you hosts of angels...

All creation rises with joy to meet the feast, and the heavens rejoice with us; for, the creator, incarnate of the Virgin, has most gloriously been seen in a manger in Bethlehem of Judah. Let us say, O people: Glory to you, our blessed God who has been born.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

Being the pre-eternal Word, you came to earth to become incarnate of the Virgin, and be seen as a child, that you might make mortals heavenly. You brought the Wise Men from Persia to worship you, O compassionate one; and with them we cry out in joy: Glory to you, our blessed God who has been born.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

O Jesus, who for us shone forth from the Father before the ages, for our sake you appeared as a little child, wishing to renew all aged through the transgression. Therefore, in thanksgiving we ever cry out to you: Glory to you, our blessed God who has been born.

Glory be to the Father... *tone 8, composed by Cyprian*

Rejoice in the Lord, O crown-bearer Stephen,  
the emulator of the Master,  
for you were the first martyr of Christ our king,

abolishing the falsehood of the iniquitous Jews,  
praying to the Lord for us.

Both now and for ever... *same tone, composed by John the Monk*

How can I describe the great mystery?  
The incorporeal one is incarnate, the Word assumes flesh,  
the invisible one is seen, the intangible one is touched,  
and the unoriginate one has a beginning in time.  
The Son of God becomes the Son of man,  
Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 verses: 4 from Ode 1 of the canon of the feast,  
and 4 from Ode 3 of the canon of St. Stephen.*

*Prokimenon, tone 8*

Their sound has gone out through all the world, and their words to the ends of the earth.

*Verse* The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

*The Acts of the Apostles, number 17*

*Alleluia, tone 1*

Let the heavens praise your wonders O Lord and let your faithfulness be sung in the assembly of the holy ones.

God is glorified in the council of the holy ones.

*The Gospel of Matthew number 87*

*Communion*

Their sound has gone out through all the world, and their words to the ends of the earth.

## December 28

### Afterfeast of the Nativity The twenty thousand Martyrs of Nicomedia

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses; 3 of the feast, tone 5  
to the Special Melody Rejoice...*

As most perfect, you bear the form of Adam in the image of God, and desire to be held in my arms, who in your power holds all things in your hand; and the pure and immaculate one declared: How is it that I have wrapped you in swaddling bands as an infant? How is it that I nurture you with milk, who feeds all? How is it that I marvel at your poverty, which passes understanding? How can I call you my Son, if I am now your handmaiden? I hymn and bless you, who grants the world great mercy.

Seeing the pre-eternal God incarnate from her as a baby, holding him in her arms and kissing him often, full of joy, the most immaculate one declared to him: O God the Most High, invisible king, how is it that I see you, but cannot understand the mystery of your boundless poverty? For this least and strangest of caves contains you, born therein without violating my virginity, but preserving my womb as it was before birthgiving, and granting great mercy to all.

Declaring these things in awe as a servant, the pure one heard the Magi standing together before the cave, and said unto them: Whom do you seek? For I see that you have come from a far away land: having Persian dress and wisdom, you have made a strange departure and journey. With haste you have come to worship him who has journeyed from the highest and within me has strangely made his abode, granting the world great mercy.

*And 3 verses of the martyrs, tone 4  
to the Special Melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

Enlivened by strength, \* fortified mightily \* and endowed with the power of Christ the Master, \* in the weakness of your nature \* you proved to be invincible, O athletes, \* vanquishing the enemy amid your struggles. \* Pray for those who celebrate \* your holy and luminous memory, \* O glorious great martyrs.

Theophilus, Dorotheus and Mygdonius, \* together with Gorgonius and Secundus, \* Peter and Indes, \* who were valourous in word and deed, \* rejoicing, have vanquished \* the hordes of the enemy; \* and they pray that those who faithfully celebrate \* their most honoured memory \* be delivered from all misfortunes.

Youths and virgins, \* elders and children, \* together displayed the same valour. \* Therefore, as equals \* they have received their rewards through grace, \* abiding with God, the king of all. \* Let us honour them with sacred hymns \* as radiant beacons of the whole world, \* twenty thousand in number.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *tone 5*

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; for today angels and men are a single flock. What a wonder that the invisible one becomes visible; the Word becomes flesh; the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin; and the unwedded Virgin is seen to be the Mother of God, and, a mother after giving birth, she is found to be a virgin. The incarnate Word of the Father lies in a manger, and shepherds become his heralds, sharing in the mystery. Magi from the East have brought gifts, guided by the star, and have worshipped the newborn Saviour. Fervently opening the treasures of our hearts, with them we who love the feasts of the Church also offer him good works of faith, hope and love, like the gold, frankincense and myrrh, crying out to him with the words of the bodiless: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill; for he has come to save our whole race from the deception.

*Aposticha, of the feast, tone 2,  
to the Special Melody O house of Ephratha...*

Divinely assuming \* all of the first Adam from the Virgin, \* O Christ, you were born in the cave \* and laid, swaddled, in the manger.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

Sing out prophetically, O David, \* striking your harp, \* for from your loins, \* from whence the Mother of God sprang, \* is Christ born today.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

O you faithful, let us offer \* praise fit for God with the shepherds and Magi, \* and glory with the angels, \* to God who came forth from the Virgin.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 1*

From the bodiless ones in Bethlehem today is heard: Glory to God in the highest; sung to him who was well pleased to become peace on earth. Now the Virgin has become more spacious than the heavens, for light has dawned upon the benighted and lifted up the lowly who sing with the angels: Glory to God in the highest.

*Troparion of the martyrs, tone 2*

O athletes of the Lord, blessed is the earth which drank in your blood, and holy are the habitations which have received your bodies; for you vanquished the enemy in the



arena and preached Christ with boldness. We pray you to entreat his goodness, that our souls be saved.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *Troparion of the feast, tone 4*

Your nativity O Christ our God...

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the feast, twice;  
Glory be to the Father..., that of the martyrs;  
Both now..., that of the feast, once.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 1  
to the Special Melody* When the stone had been sealed...

O Jesus who sits in the highest on the fiery throne with the unoriginate Father and your divine Spirit, you were pleased to be born in the flesh of the Virgin who knew not man; and the star showed you to the Magi from Persia. Glory to your most good counsel; glory to your appearing; glory to your utter condescension toward mankind.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 3  
to the Special Melody* Awed by the beauty of your virginity...

O Mother of God, you carried in your womb, in the flesh, the single and unconfused divinity of the Trinity, the pre-eternal and unapproachable one, who is equally everlasting with the invisible Father. Your grace has shone forth in the world, O exalted Lady; therefore, we cry out unceasingly: Rejoice, O pure Virgin Mother.

*We sing the second Canon of the feast and the Canon of the martyrs.  
For the Katavasia we sing the Irmos of each of the festal Canons.*

### Ode 1

*We sing the second Canon of the feast, composed by John the Monk, tone 1*

*Irmos* Of old the master working wonders saved his people, making the watery waves of the sea into dry land. Who now of his own will is virgin-born, making a heavenward path for us to tread, who praise the one whose nature is both God and man.

Foreshadowed clearly by the burning bush that was not consumed, a hallowed womb has borne the Word. God is mingled with mortal man, and thereby he looses the womb of Eve saddened by the bitter curse of old. Let us mortals give him glory.

To the Magi a star revealed the Word, who was before the sun, come to make an end to sin. They saw you in the humble cave, the merciful one, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and in joy they gazed on you, both Lord and man.

*Canon of the martyrs, composed by Joseph, tone 1  
upon the acrostic* The multitude of most victorious martyrs saves me.

*Irmos* Let us all sing a hymn of victory to God who has wrought wondrous miracles with his upraised arm, and saved Israel, for he has been glorified.

O vast multitude of honoured martyrs, cleanse the multitude of my many transgressions by your mediation, and grant discourse, that I may hymn your festival.

O all-radiant beacons of the Church, truly victorious martyrs who have glorified Christ with your bodies, you are now glorified in your radiant memorial.

The divine love of the passion-bearers abolished the godless tyranny of the unbelievers and destroyed the evil opposition of the demons with grace.

Confessing the omnipotent God, who assumed flesh and destroyed death by death, the martyrs were slain, and have received life everlasting.

*Theotokion* O exalted and blessed one, I hymn you who gave birth to the all-hymned God in the flesh, who magnifies the athletes who have vanquished the foe.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Graciously accept the praises of your servants, O benefactor, and bring down the boastful pride of the enemy. O good one who sees all, raise us up far above sin, and establish those who sing to you unshakably firm on the foundations of faith.

The choir of pipers, given the sight of riches, bowed in awe-filled homage, strangely seeing, beyond the mind, a child from a bride most pure. They also saw angelic ranks who sang the praises of the king, Christ, incarnate without seed.

He who rules the heights of heaven, in his mercy has become as we are, born of the unwedded Maid. The formerly immaterial Word has, in these latter times, assumed the physical substance of the flesh, to draw to himself fallen Adam, the first-formed man.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* Let my heart be made firm in your will, O omnipotent Christ our God who established the second Heaven above the waters and founded the earth upon the waters.

Burning most beautifully with the love of Christ, O honourable ones, you were in no way afraid when the fire was kindled; and having found your end therein, you were glorified together.

Proclaiming God with lively voice, O praiseworthy warriors of Christ, you were undaunted by the threats of the ungodly, and you met your end, crying out with one voice as did the youths.

Let us not fear the fire, our fellow servant, the valiant ones cried out together, rejoicing in soul; We are slain for you, O Saviour, who has slain and abolished death.

*Theotokion* Past recounting and understanding, O pure Virgin, God became man through you, that he might deify mankind; therefore, we the faithful, call you blessed.

*Kontakion of the martyrs, tone 2  
to the Special Melody* The steadfast...

With their souls made resolute through faith, the twenty thousand holy athletes accepted suffering by fire, crying out to him who was born of the Virgin: O pre-eternal God, accept us as whole burnt offerings to you, as you accepted the gold, frankincense and myrrh from the kings of Persia.

*Sessional Hymn of the martyrs, tone 1  
to the Special Melody* Your tomb, O Saviour...

The honoured army of the twenty thousand martyrs has shone forth upon us, illumining the hearts and minds of the pious for the sake of their faith; for, afire with the divine love of the Master, with zeal the valiant ones accepted a holy end by fire.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *of the feast, same tone and melody*

For us, you were laid in the manger of dumb animals, willingly becoming a child, O most patient Saviour. The shepherds carolled to you with the angels: Glory and praise to Christ our God, born on earth to deify our mortal nature.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Of old the prophet Habakkuk was granted to behold ineffably the figure and symbol of Christ's birth; and he foretold in song of the renewal of mankind. For the Word now comes forth from the mountain, the Virgin, a new-born child, for the renewal of the peoples.

The Most High came an equal to us mortals, of his own will taking flesh from the Virgin to purge the poison of the serpent's head. As he is God, he leads us all from the sunless gates of Hades to the life-giving light.

The peoples which of old were sunk in corruption have now escaped the perdition of the foe. They lift their hands with praiseful hymns of joy, in honour of Christ alone, our benefactor, who with compassion has come into our midst.

O Virgin, springing from the root of Jesse, who passed beyond the laws of human nature, you bore the Father's pre-eternal Word, who by a strange abasement was well pleased to traverse your womb, yet keeping it unharmed.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* I heard your pronouncement and was terrified, O Lord; I contemplated your works, said the prophet, and have glorified you, the lover of mankind.

Having bound their hearts with your love, O Word, the athletes slain for your sake like innocent lambs showed themselves to be emulators of your suffering.

Sailing your souls to the haven of salvation by the Spirit, O blessed and holy ones, you escaped the storm of the madness of idolatry.

In the contest of martyrdom you showed yourselves to be steadfast, unshaken and undaunted, overcoming the opposition of the persecutors with divine faith.

*Theotokion* Delivered from the ancient curse by your birthgiving, O blessed one, we who glorify you as the Mother of God receive blessing, life and deliverance.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* From the night of the dark deeds of falsehood we stand in vigil, and sing to you, O Christ, our benefactor. Come to us and grant us cleansing; make straight the path for us whereby we may ascend and find resplendence.

By his coming in the flesh, the Master has cut through the harsh hostility of the flesh directed at us, and has destroyed the might of the murderer of our souls. Uniting immaterial beings to the world, he has made the creator accessible to creation.

The people who of old in darkness walked now see the light, the radiance of the Most High. The Son offers to God the nations as an inheritance, bestowing grace beyond description where sin once flourished exceedingly.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* O Christ our Master and God who loves mankind, cause the radiant and everlasting light to shine upon us who arise in the morning to ponder the judgements of your commandments.

The luminous memorial of your athlete, has shone and illumined the ends of the earth with divine distributions of miracles, O Christ our God.

The sacred ministers offering sacrifice were themselves offered as perfect wholeburnt offerings, magnifying Christ with all the many other martyrs.

Made temples of God through baptism, the holy ones received a holy end together in the house of God, and have been taken up to the temple of heaven.

*Theotokion* God made his abode within you and became man, O Lady, to unite with those on high those who through disobedience had fallen headlong into the great pit.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Enclosed in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah entreated you to come and still the storm. And I, pricked by the dart of the tyrant, call on you, O Christ, the slayer of evil, that you come quickly to my slothfulness.

God the Word, with God in the beginning, desired to save the nature shared with us: to that which was so weak he gives new strength, abasing himself, a second act of sharing, in which once more he frees us from the passions.

For our sakes he has come forth from the loins of Abraham, to raise as his own the ones who were sadly fallen into the darkness of sin that bound them to the earth: he who dwells in light has now been pleased, despite his dignity, to dwell in a manger for the salvation of mankind.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* Like the prophet Jonah, I cry out: Free my life from corruption, O good one, and save me, O Saviour of the world, as I sing: Glory to you.

You were the leader of the sacred people, O glorious hieromartyr Anthimus, and sent those who suffered before you into the joy of heaven.

Like pure gold in the midst of the fire the piety of your witness was recognized by Jesus, far outshining the brilliance of the sun.

Having died in body, you inherited true life with Christ, who made you to be more powerful than your tortures.

*Theotokion* By the power of Jesus who was born of you, O Mary, you truly remained a virgin after giving birth, as you were before; truly a most glorious wonder.

*Kontakion of the feast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and Wise Men journey with a star; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place, so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ode 7*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Caught by the love of the king of all, the children scorned the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant in his uncontrollable fury. And as the terrible fire withdrew before them, they sang to the Master: Blessed are you for ever.

The furnace roaring with sevenfold heat, savagely burned the servants of the king but spared the youths full of godly fear. For as the flames encircled them, the Lord, rewarding their piety, poured on them abundant dew.

O Christ our helper, you have shamed man's adversary, using as a shield your ineffable incarnation. Taking man's form, you have given him the joy of becoming godlike: for it was in hope of this we fell of old, from the heights to the earth's dark depths.

By your almighty power you have overthrown the fierce sin that raised its head in wanton pride, which rages with blasphemy in a world gone mad. Those dragged down of old, today you save from its snares, O benefactor, incarnate of your own will.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* The fire did not touch or threaten your youths in the furnace, O Saviour, for the three with one voice then praised and blessed you, saying: Blessed be the God of our Fathers.

Looking to that which is truly abiding, O blessed ones, like the three holy youths in Babylon, by divine power you surpassed the fire, and are now illumined with divine light.

Reviling the irrational edict of the tyrants, O wise ones, with the sacred women and the godly children you truly offered yourselves wholly to the king of all in sacrifice.

With the enlightenment of the knowledge of Christ reverently within your souls, you passed through the dark cloud of ungodliness, O athletes, attaining eternal light.

*Theotokion* You surpass the heavens, O birthgiver to the Master and God of all: earnestly entreat him without ceasing, that he save those who hymn you with ardent faith.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The youths of the Old Covenant who were cast into the fire prefigured the womb of the Maiden that remained sealed when surpassing nature she gave birth. Divine grace wrought these wonders as a single miracle, which moves the people to sing in praise.

Shunning the guilt of its vain attempt to become as God, creation sings like the youths in praise of the eternal Word who now empties himself; yet it sings in trembling, as if afraid to render meager praise to God, as subject to decay, although it is ever sustained by divine wisdom.

You came, the restoration of the nations, to bring back the nature of man from its wanderings, back from the hills of the wilderness to pastures rich in flowers. That you might destroy the violent force of the slayer of man, you condescend to come as God and man.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* Christ our God, who preserved the youths singing in the furnace and who transformed the thundering fury into dew, praise and exult above all for ever.

The relics of the martyrs flow with divinely fragrant and healing myrrh, erasing the stench of the passions of those who with faith hymn you as Christ for ever.

Walking in the midst of the fire, O most comely athletes, you showed yourselves to be like roses, crying out with fervour: Hymn and exult Christ above all for ever.

Having suffered together, the youths and virgins, the old and the young, holy infants and a countless multitude of women received a place in the choirs on high.

*Theotokion* Ezekiel saw you, O Virgin, as the closed portal through which Jesus passed, making his abode within you, and assuming flesh from your blood without undergoing confusion.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* It would be easier for us to be silent out of fear, for that is not threatening for us, O Virgin. As it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for you, O Mother, give us the strength to hymn you, for it is our will.

O pure Mother, we have seen the Word in hazy images and pale shadows from the past; and now he newly appears through the gate that is closed; now mindful of his true radiance, as is meet and right, we bless your womb.

The people who delight in Christ have attained their hope, being granted now to see the advent of our God, and are comforted by this regeneration. Grant them life-bearing grace, O pure Virgin, as they pay homage to this glory.

*Canon of the Martyrs*

*Irmos* We all magnify the pure Mother of our God as the luminous cloud upon which the unoriginate Master of all descended from Heaven as rain upon the fleece, who assuming flesh, became man.

Like willingly slaughtered sheep you were immolated together, and as pure sacrifices you brought yourselves to the Master who was slain for us mortals, O victorious martyrs; and together you have fittingly received crowns of triumph.

Standing before the Lord with the holy prophets, the honoured apostles and the choirs of chosen angels, O multitude of sacred martyrs, pray that he save from perils and misfortunes those who bless you with faith.

Your holy memory far outshines the sun's rays, O exulted athletes, dispersing demonic darkness and enlightening all who rightly bless you with faith and love.

*Theotokion* O immaculate one who gave birth to the divine light, shining from the Father, take pity on my soul, darkened by the deceptions of life and the plaything of the demons, and grant that through light it may find saving repentance.

*Exapostilarion of the feast*

Our Saviour, the Dayspring from the east, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and shadows have found the truth: for the Lord is born of the Virgin.

*Aposticha, verses of the feast, tone 6*  
*to the Special Melody* Go on before us, O angelic hosts...

O house of Ephratha, \* holy city of Sion, with joy receive the Master of all \* who within you is ineffably born of the Virgin, \* desiring to record in the census of paradise \* those who had fallen away. \* To him we cry out: \* Blessed are you who has come: \* glory to you, O our God.



*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

The choir of those who piped, \* seeing you, O Word, who has manifested yourself as one like us, \* wrapped in swaddling bands in the manger, in the cave, \* hymned you with the angels, singing: Glory to God in the highest. \* And with them we cry out: \* Blessed are you who has been born; \* glory to you, O our God.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

He among the prophets whose voice is great cried out: \* The Master desires to be born as an infant \* of the Virgin's womb, \* in manner past recounting and understanding, \* for he is truly the Angel of Great Counsel, \* the life of the living. \* And with them we also cry out: \* Blessed are you who has been born; \* glory to you, O our God.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *tone 1*

Heaven and earth are glad today, as the prophets said, and angels and men keep the spiritual feast. For God is born of a woman, and appears in the flesh to those who sit in the shadowy darkness. A cave and a manger receive him; shepherds announce the wonder, and Magi from the east offer gifts in Bethlehem. Let us offer from our unworthy lips the praise of the angels: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 6 verses: 3 from Ode 4 and 3 from Ode 5 of the festal canon.*

*Prokimenon of the saints, tone 5*

You will surely guard us O Lord, and shield us for ever from this evil generation.

*Verse* Help us, Lord, for there is not one godly man left: the faithful have vanished from among the children of men.

*Epistle to the Romans, number 96 from the middle*

*Alleluia, tone 4*

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to the honour of his name, and give him glory as his praise.

For you have proved us, O God, you have tried us as silver is tried.

*Gospel of Luke, number 51 from the middle*

*Communion Verse*

Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 29

### Afterfeast of the Nativity The Holy Innocents, and our venerable father Marcellus, Abbot of the Monastery of the Unsleeping Ones

### Vespers

*At Lord I call to you... 6 verses; beginning with these for the Holy Innocents, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

The iniquitous one, \* seeking the hidden treasure, \* slew the innocent babies on this day; \* and Rachel was inconsolable, \* beholding their unjust slaughter \* and untimely death, \* and wept for them, her womb wracked with pain. \* But she is gladdened now, \* seeing them in the bosom of Abraham.

The iniquitous king \* searched for the timeless king \* who had come under time, \* and, unable to find and slay him, \* he cut down a multitude of innocent children, \* thereby making them martyrs \* and citizens of heaven on high, \* though he knew it not; \* and they reprove his madness for ever.

When you were Virgin-born, O pre-eternal Lord, \* and became an infant in your goodness, \* a choir of infants was admitted to heaven \* by virtue of the blood of their martyrdom, \* their calm souls illumined; \* and you brought them \* to the mansions of eternal life, \* where they denounce the malice of Herod \* and his cruel insanity.

*And 3 verses of the venerable one, in the same tone and melody*

You are seen as model of abstinence \* for monastics, O wise and God-bearing Marcellus, \* a pillar of fire extending spiritually \* from earth to heaven \* on account of your abstinence; \* a conversor of purity, \* a truly genuine preserver of silence, \* an animate tower of courage, \* and an excellent standard of virtue.

The uprisings of the passions \* you caused to wither away, \* through mighty vigils and study of the Scriptures, \* by earnest supplication \* and the outpouring of tears. \* You have truly become \* a habitation worthy of the Master, \* and grant healing to those who come to you with faith, \* having been granted the delight of immortality.

Delighting directly \* in the beauty of your Master, \* without the mediation of a physical reflection \* and a bodily manifestation before you, \* O blessed one, \* pray for those who in purity \* praise your sacred memory \* and honour it with psalms and hymns, \* that we may obtain mercy on the day of judgment.

Glory be to the Father... *of the Innocents, tone 8*  
*composed by Andrew of Crete*

Iniquitous Herod was troubled, seeing the brightest star of all creation, and seized the suckling infants from their mothers' arms; but Elizabeth, taking up John, entreated the stone, saying: Receive a mother and her child. Glory to you O Lord, the treasure which the manger held, whom the star announced and to whom the Magi paid homage.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

A most glorious mystery is wrought today: nature is restored and God becomes man. He remains what he was before, and what he has not been, he takes upon himself, without undergoing either confusion or division.

*Aposticha, verses of the feast, tone 6*  
*to the Special Melody On the third day...*

I behold an awesome mystery, for God incarnate who holds all creation in the palm of his hand is enclosed in a manger of dumb beasts, and he is wrapped in rags who clothes the sea in darkness.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

Our incorporeal God becomes incarnate; he who is without beginning begins to be; he who is full now empties himself through the Virgin in a little cave; and he who nurtures every creature is nurtured on milk as an infant.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

Shepherds dance at your nativity and offer glory with the angels; the star offers a gift, and Magi pay homage; and men, saved, magnify the Mother of God.

Glory be to the Father... *of the innocents,*  
*composed by Andrew of Crete, tone 8*

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the dominion of the Jews was abolished. Let the infants slaughtered for Christ leap up, and let Judea lament; for a voice was heard in Rama: Rachel, weeping and bewailing her children, as it is written. Iniquitous Herod, in slaying the infants in fulfillment the Scriptures, filled Judea with innocent blood and stained the earth red with their blood; but the Church of the nations is mystically purified thereby and is arrayed in beauty. Truth has come; God, born of the Virgin, has appeared to those who sit in shadow, to save us all.

Both now and for ever..., *composed by John the Monk, in the same tone*

O Lord, having arrived in Bethlehem, you made your abode in the cave; heaven is your throne yet you were laid in a manger; the armies of angels surround you, yet you came to shepherds that you might save our race: glory to you, O compassionate one.

*Troparion of the innocents, tone 1*

May you be entreated by the agonies which these holy ones endured for you, O Lord, and we pray to you to heal our pangs, O lover of mankind.

Glory be to the Father... *of the venerable one, tone 8*

That which was created in the image of God was preserved in you, O Father; | for taking up the cross you followed after Christ. | By your deeds you have taught us to reject the flesh for it passes away, | but to care for the soul as a thing immortal. | | Therefore O venerable Marcellus your soul rejoices with the angels.

Both now and for ever... *of the feast*

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the feast, once; that of the innocents, once;*

*Glory be to the Father..., that of the venerable one;*

*Both now and for ever..., that of the feast.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,*

*the Sessional Hymn, tone 5*

*to the Special Melody* The Word who is equally unoriginate...

With the star brilliantly shining, the Magi arrived from Persia at the cave of Bethlehem, thankfully offering fitting gifts to the newborn king and the virgin Mother, being directed to worship him from among the nations.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,*

*the Sessional Hymn, tone 8*

*to the Special Melody* You have risen from the dead...

As the music of the shepherds' pipes fell silent, the angelic choir exclaimed: Sing divine praises, O watchers over sheep; cry out with singing, for Christ the Lord has been born, whose good pleasure it is, as God, to save the human race.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *same tone and melody*

Most glorious is this mystery, O faithful: as it is known, God is born of the Virgin. The ranks of angels, marvelling at his condescension, cry out in singing, for Christ the Lord is born, whose good pleasure it is, as God, to save the human race.

*We sing the first Canon of the feast; and two Canons of the saints.*

*Ode 1*

*Canon of the feast, composed by Cosmas of Maiuma, tone 1*

*Irmos* Christ is born, glorify him. Christ comes from heaven, go to meet him. Christ is on earth, be exulted. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; sing praises in gladness, O people, for he has been glorified.

Though made in the image of God, man fell from the divine and better life; and through the transgression he became wholly corrupted. And now the wise creator restores him: for he has been glorified.

Seeing that which he fashioned with his own hands sinking, the creator bowed the heavens and descended, and was truly incarnate, taking man's substance from the pure Virgin: for he has been glorified.

As he is the wisdom, the Word and power, Christ our God, the Son and brightness of the Father has restored us; and even for those above the earth as for those on earth, he was made man: for he has been glorified.

*Canon of the Holy Innocents, tone 4*

*Irmos* Dividing the Red Sea, God engulfed Pharaoh therein, leading Moses across to the wilderness with dryshod feet, and raining manna down as food for the people of Israel, as he is mighty.

The star shining in Bethlehem abolished the dark curse of Eden; and salvation is given to the progenitors of our race, for from the Virgin's cloud Jesus shines as the enlightenment of those in darkness.

The contest begins today for the babies who are faithful to Christ, for by their deaths they denounce the princes and authorities of the enemy and with sense manfully reprove the infantile rage of Herod.

*Theotokion* O pure one, truly a divine fortress and impregnable rampart, a noetic bridge and insuperable tower, a foundation and protection, saving us from misfortune.

*Canon of the Venerable One, tone 6*

*Irmos* Traversing the deep on foot as if it were dry land, Israel looked upon the tyrant Pharaoh as he drowned and cried out: Let us sing to God a song of victory.

Creation is restored and human nature is renewed through the flesh of Christ the creator of all, who, past understanding is born of a pure and all-holy Mother.

Receiving understanding from the God of truth, and seeking him unceasingly throughout your pure life, O Marcellus, you pleased him with divine virtues.

*Theotokion* The land of our forefather's curse, Eden, received deliverance when the deliverer was born therein through you, O pure one, who renewed and sanctified it.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* To the Son who was begotten of the Father without change before time began, who in latter times was incarnate without seed of the Virgin; to Christ our God let us sing: You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Though Adam, formed from dust, shared the higher breath of life, yet he stumbled into corruption through the woman's beguilement. But now he sees Christ, born of a woman, and says: Holy are you, O Lord, who for my sake has become like me.

O Christ, by taking the form of a creature of clay, thus sharing in that which is worse, that is, our flesh, you have made us partakers of the divine nature; for you have become mortal man yet remaining God. You are holy, O Lord, who has exalted our strength.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, for you are noblest of the princes of Judea; for from you comes forth in the sight of all, the shepherd who tends Israel, Christ who sits upon the Cherubim. He who has exalted our strength reigns over all.

*Canon of the Innocents*

*Irmos* O Lord who established the thunder and formed the wind, make me steadfast, that I may truly hymn you and do your will, for there is none as holy as you, our God.

Our God and creator, issuing from the Virgin's portal, has ineffably fashioned an abode of flesh for himself: having become an infant, he is laid in a manger.

The infant athletes born at the time of Christ's incarnation, have blinded the insane fury of Herod and have become most splendid eyes of the Church.

*Theotokion* From you, O unwedded Virgin, the Lord, born on earth without father and begotten without mother before time began, appeared and formed himself supernaturally; and he grants the restoration of deification to those born of Adam.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* There is none holy as you O Lord my God, who has exalted the strength of your faithful O good one, and has established us on the rock of your confession.

Let the clouds drop the sweetness of gladness upon the earth, for Christ, born in the flesh in a cave past all understanding, has shone from a cloud of light.

Armed with steadfastness of spirit against the noetic foe, O God-bearer, you mightily cut down their hordes and have been crowned with a wreath of victory.

*Theotokion* The Word of God, ineffably incarnate of your most pure and precious blood, as God has shown you to be the queen of all creatures, O pure one.

*Kontakion of the feast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and Wise Men journey with a star; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place, so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Sessional Hymn of the Innocents, same tone,  
to the Special Melody* You have appeared...

The army of infants is offered up as a pleasing immolation, sacrificed for faith to Christ who, as creator and king, is born today of the Virgin.

Glory be to the Father... *of the venerable one, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* Go quickly on before...

Having cleansed your soul first with the burning embers of purity, you curbed your body for strength incorruptible, O honourable Marcellus, becoming a divine habitation, dispelling infirmities and enlightening with faith those who approach you and praise you.

Both now and for ever... *same tone,  
to the Special Melody* Joseph marvelled...

Cruel Herod wondered when he learned of the young Messiah, and with fury sought, as if for a foe, for the newborn king. Consumed with fear, he sent an army to slaughter with fury the babies born in Bethlehem, attempting to slay the creator who, in his compassion, had humbled himself, issuing from the Virgin's womb to save our race.

*Ode 4*



*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* As the rod from the root of Jesse, and the flower that blossomed from his stem, you have sprung forth from the Virgin, O Christ. You have come from the mountain overshadowed by the forest, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, O God who is immaterial. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You have shone forth from the tribe of Judah, O Christ, the expectation of the nations whom Jacob foretold in days of old. You have come to overthrow the power of Damascus and to plunder Samaria, transforming their error into godly faith. Glory to your power, O Lord.

O Master who has risen as a star out of Jacob, you have filled with joy the wise watchers of the stars who followed the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old. You received them as the first offering of the Gentiles as they worshipped you. Glory to your power, O Lord.

You descended upon the Virgin's womb as dew upon the fleece and as drops of rain falling upon the earth, O Christ. Ethiopia and Tarshish, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and the rulers of the land of the Medes have fallen down before you, O Saviour. Glory to your power, O Lord.

*Canon of the Innocents*

*Irmos* I have heard of your renown and am afraid: I have come to know your works, and I am astonished, O Lord.

The Virgin, the means of the Lord's nativity, past understanding has reconciled heaven and those there with those of earth, destroying the middle wall of enmity.

The host of infants who suffered martyrdom for the God of all received the reward of their suffering from him; for their sake Herod has been grievously shamed.

*Theotokion* O immaculate one, having conceived the divine Word at the angel's awesome word, you indescribably gave birth to him: we glorify you as the Mother of God.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Christ is my strength, my God and my Lord, sings the holy Church in reverent piety, raising her voice with a pure mind, and keeping festival in the Lord.

Seeing your descent to the cave, O Lord Christ, the noetic ranks were stricken with awe and hymned your inconceivable mercy.

Your pangs and sweat are mingled with the streams of the infants' blood, O venerable Marcellus, and are offered as precious gifts to him, born in the flesh.

*Theotokion* The gift-bearing gentiles, seeing you, comely with lustrous beauty, shining splendidly as your Son, O pure one, hymned this new and all-glorious sight.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* As the God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us your Angel of Great Counsel, granting us peace. Thus we are guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify you, O lover of mankind.

Submitting to the decree of Caesar, you were enrolled among his servants, O Christ, and you have released us, former servants of the enemy and sin. Having humbled yourself for us, you have made our clay divine by your union and participation in it.

Behold the Virgin has conceived, as it was foretold in days of old, giving birth to God made man, and she remains a virgin. Reconciled to God through her, let us sinners sing her praises with faith, for she is truly the Mother of God.

*Canon of the Innocents*

*Irmos* Shine the light of your statutes upon me, O Lord, for at dawn my soul rises and sings to you: You are my God, and to you I have recourse, the king of peace.

The physical Sun is veiled in clouds, and the noetic immaterial one is clad in the flesh in his infinite compassion: for us he is wrapped in swaddling clothes in a cave.

Herod is stained with the blood of foul murder; for, seeking to slay God, the Master and king of all, he cruelly rages in fury against the infants.

*Theotokion* Enlighten the blindness of my heart with the radiance of your intercession, O pure Mother of God who alone has shone forth the Lord, the lamp and sun of glory.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* I pray you, O good one, illumine with your divine light the souls of those who rise at dawn with love for you, that they may know you O Word of God to be truly God, who calls them back from the deep gloom of transgression.

The cup of your compassion overflowed upon all your creation, O Christ, which was filled with abundant mercy when you appeared, born in the flesh.

With the pangs of asceticism you rid your soul of material darkness and earthly and corrupt beauty, O venerable Marcellus, appearing to the world as an equal of the angels.

*Theotokion* He who was born of you in the cave, O pure one, flows noetic streams of immortality, watering and enriching human nature with incorruption in his compassion.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The sea monster, as if giving birth, released Jonah like a new born child, just as it had received him; while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh from her, came forth keeping her incorrupt. For since he is not subject to corruption, he preserved free from harm, her that gave birth to him.

Begotten of the Father before the morning star, Christ our God comes forth incarnate. He who rules over the undefiled powers lies in the manger of dumb beasts; and he who is wrapped in swaddling clothes looses the tangled bindings of sin.

A young child, a Son is born of the clay of Adam and is given to the faithful. He is the Father and prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of Great Counsel, the Mighty God who holds all creation in his dominion.

*Canon of the Innocents*

*Irmos* I have come to the depths of the sea, and the storm of my many sins engulfs me; but as you are God, lead up my life from the abyss, O most merciful.

The divine mystery of the incarnation of the Word is realised, O Mother of God, for through you the pre-eternal God came, to deify the flesh which he assumed.

Rachel, weeping for her children, foretold of old the infants untimely slaughtered for Christ: therefore, she turned away and could not be comforted.

*Theotokion* Your divine birthgiving, O most holy one, cut down the curse which blossomed in paradise, and, throwing open the way to the tree of life for men, it has poured forth blessing.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Beholding the sea of life, surging with the storm of temptations, I run to your calm haven and cry to you: Raise my life from corruption, O most merciful one.

The earth itself has exuded a most fragrant myrrh: him who past understanding, was poured as myrrh from the flesh from the Virgin, filling men with divine fragrance.

Surpassing that which is transitory and unstable in life, O Marcellus, with spiritual longing for that which abides eternally, you gained it through the pangs of asceticism.

## December 29

*Theotokion* God the timeless Word is born in the flesh of you, O most pure Virgin, that he may give men everlasting life, an eternal inheritance and glory incorruptible.

*Kontakion of the innocents, tone 4,  
to the Special Melody* You have appeared...

The star sent the Magi to him who was born, while Herod cruelly sent an unrighteous army, seeking to slay him who lay as a babe in the manger.

*Ikos* As those in heaven and those below rejoice together in the appearing of the king of all, only Herod himself and the Jews, the slayers of the prophets, are grieved; for it is fitting that they lament, since they shall reign no longer. But the kingdom of the Lord shall have dominion, suppressing the audacity of the enemy and gathering multitudes of the faithful with the honoured infants, to gaze upon him who lies as an infant in the manger.

### *Ode 7*

#### *Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The youths raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames they sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light, for the glory of the Lord shone about them and an angel cried: Sing praises to Christ, for he is born, the blessed God of your fathers.

At the voice of the angel, the heavenly hosts sang: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill; Christ has shone forth. Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

What words are these, said the shepherds; Let us go and see what has happened, and see the blessed Christ. Hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Mother of God and said: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

#### *Canon of the Innocents*

*Irmos* The children of Abraham in the Chaldean furnace were consumed by a burning love of godliness rather than by the flame, and they sang in the destructive fire: Blessed are you, O Lord, in the temple of your glory.

Bethlehem rejoices with us today; for she receives the infinite one in her cave, crying: Blessed are you, the only God of our fathers.

O Word of God, the innocent and undefiled victims who were slaughtered for you cry out: Blessed are you, Lord God of our fathers.

*Theotokion* Rejoice, tranquil haven of repentance, wherein finding refuge we say: O Mother of God, blessed are you, who alone gave birth to the God of our fathers.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* An angel moistened the furnace with dew for the holy youths, but the commandment of God consumed the Chaldeans with fire and caused the tyrant to cry out: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

By his knowledge, he who was born in the cave has strengthened all creation, formerly whirled about by ungodliness, which now ever cries to him: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

You consumed the pleasures of the flesh with the fire of asceticism, O Marcellus; and with the dew of dispassion you watered your soul, crying out to Christ with splendour: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The furnace moist with dew was an image and figure past nature. For it did not burn the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb into which it had descended. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

The daughter of Babylon carried off the captive children of David from Zion to herself, but now she sends her own children, the Wise Men bearing gifts, to entreat the God-pleasing daughter of David. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord, and exult him above all for ever.

Sorrow once silenced the harps of the children of Zion, for they could not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem dispels all the falsehood of Babylon and her instruments. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

Babylon received in plunder the kingdom of Zion and its captive riches; but Christ draws its treasures to his Zion, guiding the stargazing kings by a star. Therefore let us sing: Let the whole creation bless the Lord and exult him above all for ever.

*Canon of the Innocents*

*Irmos* You have arranged all things by your wisdom O Master, and established the earth like a balance, planting its foundation upon the deep in the measureless waters. Therefore, we all cry out: Bless the Lord unceasingly, you works of the Lord.

The angels glorify the power of him who was born; the shepherds marvel, the Magi offer homage, and the heavens declare the creator with a star. With them we all cry out: Bless the Lord, you works of the Lord.

When you were born, O Christ, a multitude of innocents joined battle with their blood, arming themselves mightily against Herod. Therefore, we all cry out: Bless the Lord, you works of the Lord.

*Theotokion* The prophets of God proclaimed you, the Virgin, the temple, the portal and cloud, the bush unburnt, the jar of manna, the rod which budded, the ark and lampstand, the tablets of the Law, the holy mountain, from whence the stone was quarried.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* You caused dew to gush from the flames upon the venerable youths, and you burnt the water poured on the sacrifice of your righteous one: for you, O Christ, perform all things by the power of your will alone, and we exalt you above all for ever.

Creation arrayed itself in radiant vesture and cast off its former grief when the renewer and master was born on earth: him we exalt above all for ever.

Armed with the virtues, O venerable Marcellus, you battled hordes of demons and, as victor over them, won the trophies of victory, receiving the grace of miracles from God.

*Theotokion* He who was born of you in the cave, O pure Mother of God, has prepared eternal mansions for those who hymn you and exalt above all your ineffable birthgiving.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* I see a strange and glorious mystery: the cave is heaven, the Virgin is the throne of the Cherubim, the manger is the place in which Christ is laid, the God whom nothing can contain: him we praise and magnify.

The Magi beheld the strange course of an unknown newly shining star that exceeded the brightness of all in heaven, which signified on earth that Christ the king was born in Bethlehem for our salvation.

The star revealed the new-born infant king to the Magi who said: Where is he, for we have come to worship him? But Herod who fought against God was troubled, and in his fury he sought to slay the Christ.

Herod inquired regarding the time the of the appearing of the star, following which the Magi came to Bethlehem to worship Christ with gifts; but guided thereby back to their homeland, they left behind in mockery the cruel murderer of infants.

*Canon of the Infants*

*Irmos* The mighty one has done great things to me, and holy is his name; and his mercy is upon them that fear him in every generation.

He who is in the bosom of the Father is wholly within you, and the fashioner of heaven is himself fashioned and abases himself for my sake; and, wrapped in swaddling bands, he looses the bonds of my transgressions.

In Rama is heard the bitter lamentation of Rachel, her weeping, contrition and cries of grief; for Herod, the vile murderous foe, attacked the children of Bethlehem.

*Theotokion* By your birthgiving mortals have been deified, O Virgin; for you gave birth to God, the nurturer of all, equally glorified with the Father; and, a strange wonder, you feed him with milk.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* It is not possible for man to see God, upon whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through you, O most pure one, appeared to us the incarnate Word, whom magnifying with the heavenly hosts, we call you blest.

The mercy of your love for the nations, passing understanding is now revealed, O Christ; for you impoverished yourself by taking on flesh, that you may cause us to share in higher riches, as you are good and of great mercy, O Lord.

Taking the cross of Christ upon your shoulder, O blessed father Marcellus, and emulating his sufferings, you crucified yourself to the world; for you became a participant in the resurrection and higher glory, wherein be mindful of us.

*Theotokion* God who was born in the flesh through you, O most pure one, has made us children of God and imparted pristine dignity to those who accept him, who earnestly glorify you, the Mother of God, and magnify you.

*Exapostilarion of the infants,  
to the Special Melody* The cross is the preserver...

Waging war against God, the accursed Herod, sending forth his soldiers, reaped the yet unripened green meadow of the infants; but he was unable to slay the newborn Lord and is filled with all manner of shame.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever... *that of the feast*

Our Saviour, the Dayspring from the east, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and shadows have found the truth: for the Lord is born of the Virgin.

*The Praises, 4 verses of the Innocents, idiomela,  
composed by Cyprian, tone 1*

The first sacrifice to your all-pure nativity was that of the infants, O Christ God; for Herod, desiring to lay hold of you whom none can hold, did not recognize you, bringing before you instead a choir of martyrs. Therefore, we entreat you who has become man, that you save our souls. *Twice*

*Tone 2* Your slaughter has come to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, O honoured martyrs; for you shed your blood for him, and rest in the bosom of Abraham, having cast aside the vile malice of Herod for ever, through the power of the newborn Christ.

*Tone 3* Abominable is Herod's slaughter of the infants by vile murder, and pure is the sacrifice of the children, for they were of the same age as Christ our salvation, and were sacrificed as a new immolation offered in advance. Weep not for your children, O Rachel, mindful of the bosom of Abraham, the abode of all who rejoice.

Glory be to the Father... *of the venerable one, tone 5*

O venerable father, you gave neither sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids until you freed soul and body from the passions and prepared yourself as a habitation for the Spirit; for Christ, coming with the Father, made his abode within you, a favorite of the consubstantial Trinity. O Marcellus our father, great preacher, pray that we be saved.

Both now and for ever... *same tone*

All creation, beholding you, the creator and fashioner of all, born in the flesh in Bethlehem, is restored and renewed. The light of the sun has spread out, and the earth rejoices; the Magi from Persia offer gifts to the king of all; the shepherds, marvelling, are amazed and, with her who gave birth to God in the flesh, bow down before him. What a wonder: the nurturer is nourished by a most pure Mother for the salvation and restoration of the world.

*Aposticha, of the feast, tone 6  
to the Special Melody* You hosts of angels...

The mountains and hills, \* the valleys and fields, hymned the virgin-born Christ; \* and from heaven the star showed to the Magi \* him who lies in the cave as an infant, \* clad in the body of a servant. \* To him let us cry: \* Blessed are you who has been born: glory to you, O our God.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.



What is this great and incomprehensible poverty \* wherewith Adam has been enriched with divine gifts? \* cried the Virgin, \* holding in her arms Emmanuel, \* our God and creator, \* who received flesh from her. \* To him let us cry: \* Blessed are you who has been born: glory to you, O our God.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

O Virgin, you shone forth Christ, the sun, the noetic dawn, \* holding him in your embrace, \* by whom all rational nature is enlightened \* with the radiance of perfect knowledge, \* and is granted incorruption, \* crying out with faith: \* Blessed are you who has been born: glory to you, O our God.

Glory be to the Father... *same tone and melody*

Now has appeared on earth a child \* begotten of the Father before time began. \* Rejoice, all creation; \* let the heavens be glad, seeing those who before were rejected now reconciled with God once more, \* who cry out to him: \* Blessed are you who has been born: \* glory to you, O our God.

Both now and for ever...

With mouths of eternal flame \* the heavenly hosts above sing to him who was born in a cave \* in his ineffable mercy. \* May we also be granted to sing to him with our tongues of clay, unceasingly crying to him: \* Blessed are you who has been born: \* glory to you, O our God.

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 8 verses: 4 from Ode 7 of the Canon of the feast,  
and 4 from Ode 6 of the Canon of the Innocents.*

*Prokimenon, tone 6*

Praise the Lord, O sing praises, you that are his servants.

*Verse* He causes the barren woman to keep house, and makes her a joyful mother of children.

*Epistle to the Corinthians, number 180*

*Alleluia, tone 5*

Their blood they have spilt like water on every side of Jerusalem, and there is none to bury them.

Let vengeance for the blood of your servants that is shed be shown upon the nations in our sight.

*The Gospel of Matthew, number 4*

*Communion Hymn*

Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, for it befits the just to praise him.

## December 30

### **Afterfeast of the Nativity, the martyr Anysia, and the venerable father Zoticus, and venerable Melania transferred to this day because of the Apodosis on the 31st**

### **Vespers**

*At Lord I call to you... we sing 6 verses,  
beginning with 3 of the martyr, tone 4  
to the Special Melody As one valiant among the martyrs...*

Made radiant by the splendour of virginity, O most praised Anysia, \* you shone forth in the struggles of martyrdom. \* Refusing to worship the sun, \* you endured unjust slaughter, \* and, dyed with your blood, \* you came to stand before the sun of glory, \* illumined by the splendours \* emitted by him, O crowned one.

Showing heartfelt love, O glorious one, \* you drenched the earth with tears of compunction, \* and wiped the footstool of Christ dry with your hair, \* contemplating and looking toward him as transcendent, \* for whom you longed; \* and, touching his feet in mind, \* you enlightened your soul \* with visions most divine.

Having distributed your wealth \* and provided for the poor, \* you betrothed yourself to your incorrupt bridegroom, \* and as a dowry you brought to him \* the streams of your blood \* and the endurance of sufferings \* O Anysia. \* And so the Most High brought you to dwell in his bridal-chamber \* as a passion-bearer and martyr.

*And 3 verses of venerable Melania, same tone  
to the Special Melody Called from on high...*

Enrolled in the choirs of the angels, \* when divine love set you afire \* and caused you surpass visible things \* because of your dispassion and purity. \* With words of trust in God \* you brought your spouse to life, \* leaving the fleeting and fickle tumult of life. \* With him you found eternal life, \* where you pray to the Master, \* that he save our souls.

Desiring the angelic life \* when you vomited up sweet food, \* and having trained yourself in abstinence \* and the keeping of vigil, \* in lying on the ground and in purity, \* you became a pure vessel of the divine Spirit, \* adorned for him with most splendid gifts. \* You drew the people toward his divine love, O Melania, \* and led them to the Master, \* the Saviour of our souls.

Adorned with the beauties of the virtues, \* when you fulfilled the words of the Saviour, \* you gave to the poor and wretched, \* distributing thousands of golden coins, \* and receiving heavenly riches, \* being enriched for ever \* with righteousness, incorruption and deliverance. \* We honour your repose \* and earnestly implore you: Entreat the creator, \* that he enlighten our souls.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *of the feast, tone 1*

Glory to God in the highest, is heard from the angels today in Bethlehem, sung to him whose good pleasure it was to bring peace on earth, for light has shone upon those in darkness, the Virgin is now more spacious than the heavens; and he has exalted the lowly who sing with the angels: Glory to God in the highest.

*Aposticha, tone 2*  
*to the Special Melody* O house of Ephratha...

Christ, shining forth \* as a star from Jacob, \* has enlightened the nations \* with the light of divine knowledge. \* Let us glorify him.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, city of David, \* for he who was begotten of the Father without mother \* is born within you without a father \* of the pure Virgin and divine Maiden.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

The Word of the Father, \* assuming flesh, has been born, \* has been wrapped in swaddling clothes \* and laid in a manger, \* releasing me from irrationality.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *tone 1*

Seeing man, made in his image and likeness, fallen through the transgression, Jesus bowed the heavens and descended, without change dwelling in the Virgin's womb, to restore corrupted Adam who sings: Glory to your appearing, O my deliverer and God.

*Troparion of the feast, tone 4*

*At Compline we sing the Canon of our venerable father Zoticus, tone 8*

*Ode 1*

*Irmos* Let us sing to the Lord, who led his people through the Red Sea, for he alone has gloriously been glorified.

O Zoticus, entreat Christ, that he enlighten from on high my darkened thoughts, that I may hymn you worthily.

You became an emulator of the angels by your life on earth, O divinely wise one, spurning the beauties of life as was fitting.

*Theotokion* The human race is edified because of you, O Virgin, for, without leaving the highest, God came down to earth.

*Ode 3*

*Irmos* You are the confirmation of those who have recourse to you, O Lord: you are the light of those in darkness; and my spirit sings to you.

Come, you sojourners, and let us joyfully lift up our voices today, blessing Zoticus on this, his splendid festival.

Like Abraham in his day, you set up a tent as your dwelling-place, receiving all the poor and richly nurturing them.

*Theotokion* In your birthgiving, O most pure one, you caused every tempest to cease; Therefore, rulers may vanquish the enemy, revelling in peace.

*Ode 4*

*Irmos* I have heard the mystery of your dispensation O Lord; I have understood your works, and I glorify your divinity.

This radiant solemnity of the venerable Zoticus has now shone, summoning all to the celebration of the nativity of Christ.

Having been adorned with miracles, you have left us all-glorious miracles, your honoured corrections on earth, O most blessed one, as a divine model.

*Theotokion* O Mother of God, we have found you to be a mercy-seat and impregnable refuge amid battles; and rulers uphold your dominion, O pure one.

*Ode 5*

*Irmos* Enlighten us through your commandments, O Lord; and with your upraised arm grant us your peace, O lover of mankind.

O wondrous one, adornment of the virtues, your precious corrections are shown to be a divine home and vesture for the naked.

Healing leprosy, O sacred father, you made your honoured house into a hospital, wherein every infirmity is appropriately treated.

*Theotokion* Great and worshipful is the mystery manifest within you, O ever-virgin Mother of God; for, behold, we mortals have truly become reconciled with God.

*Ode 6*

*Irmos* The abyss of sins and the storm of transgressions assail me and cast me violently to the depths of despair, but extend your mighty hand as you did to Peter, O my guide, and save me.

All of us the faithful know you as a temple of the Spirit, O most glorious one; your house is a most splendid temple where every ailment is expelled by your prayers.

Emulating Abraham, you gave hospitality to strangers on earth, most blessedly receiving the homeless, the naked, the wandering, the lame, the poor and the visitors.

*Theotokion* He who made the cave as heaven on earth, O Virgin, has made of you a heavenly temple encircled by angelic choirs singing: Glory in the highest to your child.

*Sessional Hymn, tone 5,  
to the Special Melody* The Word who is equally unoriginate...

With the dew of abstinence, O venerable Zoticus, you extinguished the furnace of the passions, enriched with the gift of healing by God: you received the faithful, to heal their cruel pangs and expel hordes of the demons. With gladness we honour you.

*Ode 7*

*Irmos* The Hebrew children in the furnace bravely trampled upon the flames, and transformed the fire into dew as they sang: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

You have joined all the venerable and the choirs of the incorporeal ones, O most blessed Zoticus, and with them sing: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

By power and grace, O divinely wise one, you became the protector of widows and the weak, and the father of orphans, crying: Blessed are you for ever, O Lord God.

*Theotokion* Destroy the might of the barbarians and save your people, O Mother of God, and strengthen faithful rulers, who cry: Blessed is the fruit of your womb, O most pure one.

*Ode 8*

*Irmos* In his wrath the Chaldean tyrant heated the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones, but seeing them saved by a higher power, he cried out to the creator and deliverer: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

These trophies of victory, admonitions and the tears of poor women have made your church to be higher than heaven, and have opened to them the gates of the kingdom. For they cried out with faith: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

You gave neither sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids, O wondrous God-pleaser, until you completed your godly task as a noetic paradise of Christ, crying: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

*Theotokion* Becoming man for our salvation, you came to us in the loving kindness of your mercy, making your abode within the cave, wrapped in swaddling bands; and you raised mortals up from the passions, who sing: Bless him, you children; you priests praise and you people exalt him above all for ever.

### Ode 9

*Irmos* Heaven was struck with awe and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God should bodily appear to men and that your womb became more spacious than the heavens. Therefore the ranks of angels together with mankind magnify you O Mother of God.

Grace has been given you by God, O father, to heal the infirmities of the poor, the lame and those with withered limbs; and faithfully receiving them as ones beloved of Christ, with them you ever rejoice, abiding in the bosom of Abraham.

You fed to repletion every stranger, naked person and wanderer, O father, and with the patriarchs and the righteous now ever splendidly rejoice where Christ is the wealth and delight, the eternal hope of the saved, the treasure of all.

*Theotokion* As the Mother of God, as the intercessor and haven of those who honour you, as the refuge of all who have recourse to you, O Virgin, as the joy of kings, their glory, confirmation and worthy crown, O Mother of God, save you your people.

## Matins

*At God is the Lord... the troparion of the feast, thrice.*

*After the first reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 1,  
to the Special Melody* When the stone had been sealed...

The Son, who with the Father and the Spirit is eternal, who is the wisdom and knowledge from before time, desired for us to be born of the Virgin in this age, to save the world from the tyranny of the adversary. Glory to you, born in the flesh; glory to you who was thus well pleased; glory to you who has delivered us by your nativity.

*After the second reading from the Psalter,  
the Sessional Hymn, tone 8,  
to the Special Melody That which was commanded...*

Let the heavens rejoice and let the earth be glad, for the Lamb of God has been born on earth, granting deliverance to the world. The Word who is in the bosom of the Father has seedlessly issued from the Virgin. The Magi marvelled at him, beholding God incarnate; and the shepherds cried out: Glory to him who alone is truly God.

Glory be to the Father... Both now and for ever.... *in the same tone,  
to the Special Melody Of the Wisdom...*

O incorrupt and divine glory, who came from the Virgin and saved inviolate her who gave you birth; you rested in the manger as upon a throne, and made the cave to be a beautiful palace. Shepherds hymned you as the king of all, and the star made its transit to show the Magi a divine light. We all cry out to you: O Master Christ our God, impart remission of sins to those who with faith celebrate your divine nativity.

*We sing the second Canon of the feast; and 2 Canons of the saints.*

*Ode 1*

*The second Canon of the feast, composed by John the Monk, tone 1*

*Irmos* Of old the master working wonders saved his people, making the watery waves of the sea into dry land. Who now of his own will is virgin-born, making a heavenward path for us to tread, who praise the one whose nature is both God and man.

Foreshadowed clearly by the burning bush that was not consumed, a hallowed womb has borne the Word. God is mingled with mortal man, and thereby he looses the womb of Eve saddened by the bitter curse of old. Let us mortals give him glory.

To the Magi a star revealed the Word, who was before the sun, come to make an end to sin. They saw you in the humble cave, the merciful one, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and in joy they gazed on you, both Lord and man.

*Canon of the martyr Anysia, composed by Theophanes, tone 4*

*Irmos* Traversing the depth of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, Israel of old vanquished the might of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms stretched out in the form of a cross.

Standing in joy before the Father of lights, O exulted one, shine light upon me who hymns your radiant memory, expelling the storm of my passions by your prayers.

You renewed the meadow of your soul with abstinence, producing the grain of martyrdom for him breathed strength into you, O wondrous virgin martyr.



With your hands which bestow riches far more precious than corruptible wealth, you received the abiding richness of life, a treasure which cannot be taken away.

*Theotokion* For us the creator of all is born of you today, O unwedded one; and he who wrapped the sea in mist is wrapped in swaddling bands, O ever-virgin Mother.

*Canon of the venerable Melania, composed by Joseph, tone 4*

*Irmos* I shall open my mouth and the Spirit will inspire it; and I will sing to the Queen and Mother. I shall be seen keeping festival with splendour; and rejoicing I shall hymn her wonders.

Illumine me with the radiant entreaties of venerable Melania, and cleanse me, wholly blackened by the darkness of the passions, O lover of mankind, and breathe discourse into me who honours her.

Diligently shouldering your cross, you ardently followed him who endured voluntary crucifixion for your sake, O most blessed one, and kept his statutes.

You turned away from the violent attachment of your parents and bodily pleasures, O divinely wise one, desiring only the beauty of Christ, your beloved.

*Theotokion* He who is rich made himself poor, enriching with divinity me who before wickedly impoverished myself with intemperance. Behold, he who is unoriginate receives a beginning, being born of the divine virgin Maiden.

*Ode 3*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Graciously accept the praises of your servants, O benefactor, and bring down the boastful pride of the enemy. O good one who sees all, raise us up far above sin, and establish those who sing to you unshakably firm on the foundations of faith.

The choir of pipers, given the sight of riches, bowed in awe-filled homage, strangely seeing, beyond the mind, a child from a bride most pure. They also saw angelic ranks who sang the praises of the king, Christ, incarnate without seed.

He who rules the heights of heaven, in his mercy has become as we are, born of the unwedded Maid. The formerly immaterial Word has, in these latter times, assumed the physical substance of the flesh, to draw to himself fallen Adam, the first-formed man.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* The Church rejoices in you, O Christ, and sings: O Lord, you are my strength, my refuge and my firm support.

Your creator, desiring your spiritual beauty, truly betrothed himself to you, a goodly and blameless bride, O martyr.

Loving the sufferings and death of the dispassionate one who died for our sake, O honoured martyr, you died a martyr's death.

As a spiritual holocaust, as a sacrifice pure and perfect, she who loved your cross offered herself to you, O God.

*Theotokion* You were a habitation containing the infinite creator, O most pure and gracious one, who contained him in the flesh.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Let us not boast of wisdom, power and wealth, but of you O Christ, wisdom in person, for none is holy but you, O lover of mankind.

O glorious one, having withdrawn from the baser desires, of your volition you piously transferred all your desire over to the eternal things to come.

You adorned your senses with fervent prayers, and became radiant through the shining of the Spirit, having emulated in your body the life of the immaterial ones.

Whether by speech or silence you were an example, the confirmation of the unsure, a model for monastics, O divinely wise Melania. Therefore, we hymn you.

*Theotokion* He who clothed the heavens with clouds is swaddled of his own will and desire: held in the arms of the Virgin, he draws me from the hands of the adversary.

*Sessional Hymn of the martyr, tone 4*  
*to the Special Melody* Having been lifted up upon the Cross...

Gaining dominion over the carnal passions, you became a queen through life-creating sufferings, piously dyeing in your blood a robe of purple for yourself, O honored Anyisia. Therefore, you have become the immaculate bride of the king of all. Deliver from misfortunes us who celebrate your glorious memory.

Glory be to the Father...

*Sessional Hymn of the venerable one, same tone*  
*to the Special Melody* Go you quickly before...

Keeping the divine commandments with zeal, you gave to the poor, distributing tens of thousands of golden coins; and taking your cross upon your shoulders, O Melania, with your husband you faithfully followed Christ crucified in the flesh, our only God.

Both now and for ever...

*Sessional Hymn of the feast, in the same tone*

All creation now rejoices in godliness, for Christ the Lord, the Son of God, is born of the pure Virgin, making the whole human race immortal and lifting the curse of our first mother Eve. Therefore, we offer hymnody to him as to our benefactor.

*Ode 4*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Of old the prophet Habakkuk was granted to behold ineffably the figure and symbol of Christ's birth; and he foretold in song of the renewal of mankind. For the Word now comes forth from the mountain, the Virgin, a newborn child, for the renewal of the peoples.

The Most High came an equal to us mortals, of his own will taking flesh from the Virgin to purge the poison of the serpent's head. As he is God, he leads us all from the sunless gates of Hades to the life-giving light.

The peoples which of old were sunk in corruption have now escaped the perdition of the foe. They lift their hands with praiseful hymns of joy, in honour of Christ alone, our benefactor, who with compassion has come into our midst.

O Virgin, springing from the root of Jesse, who passed beyond the laws of human nature, you bore the Father's pre-eternal Word, who by a strange abasement was well pleased to traverse your womb, yet keeping it unharmed.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Seeing you hanging on the cross, the Sun of Righteousness, the Church stands in order, singing worthily: Glory to your power, O Lord.

Following your life-bearing footsteps, O Master Christ, your servant, hymning you was speared in the side and resolutely passed through the whirling blades.

Shining with the splendour of martyrdom, crowned with incorruption, O exalted martyr Anysia, you stand rejoicing before Christ, your bridegroom.

Defeating by your martyrdom him who caused our first mother Eve to trip, you cast him down, impotent, and singing to Christ: Glory to your power, O Lord.

*Theotokion* He who created the immaterial beings is born of you today as a man in the body, O Mother of God. To him do we sing: Glory to your power, O Lord.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* He who sits in glory upon the divine throne amidst the clouds of the air, Jesus the most high came with a strong hand to save those who loudly cry: Glory to your power O Christ.

Mortifying the carnal lusts with abstinence, O most honoured one, you had the life of the living dwelling within you. Passing from the earth, you made your abode therein, delighting in the kingdom of heaven.

Distributing myriads of gold coins to the hungry, truly you never hoarded them in coffers which moulder away; rather they have purchased for you everlasting life.

The richness of your almsgiving was like a river watering the heart of each pauper, O glorious one, washing away the dirt of poverty; they are riches which cannot be stolen, and which have won for you inexhaustible treasure in the heavens.

*Theotokion* Having submitted to lusts like an irrational beast, I have joined them, even though a being endowed with reason. O birth giver to the eternal Word, reject me not.

*Ode 5*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* From the night of the dark deeds of falsehood we stand in vigil, and sing to you, O Christ, our benefactor. Come to us and grant us cleansing; make straight the path for us whereby we may ascend and find resplendence.

By his coming in the flesh, the Master has cut through the harsh hostility of the flesh directed at us, and has destroyed the might of the murderer of our souls. Uniting immaterial beings to the world, he has made the creator accessible to creation.

The people who of old in darkness walked now see the light, the radiance of the Most High. The Son offers to God the nations as an inheritance, bestowing grace beyond description where sin once flourished exceedingly.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* You have come as a light into the world, O my Lord; a holy light which turns from the darkness of ignorance those who sing to you with faith.

Knowing you, O Lord, as the fount of salvation, your martyr drained the cup of salvation with a sure heart.

O passion-bearer of the Lord, heifer of Christ, God-pleasing immolation, sacrifice offered to God: pray that we be saved.

Having most clearly approached the great light, you have become light, illuminating those who celebrate your radiant memory.

*Theotokion* We wield you as an invincible weapon against the enemy, O Bride of God, and have acquired you as the confirmation and hope of our salvation.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* The impious do not see your glory, O Christ, as do we who keep watch before you through the night: we praise you, only begotten Son, divine brightness of the Father's glory and lover of mankind.

Utterly erasing the ugly forms of the passions from your soul, O honoured one, with the ink of abstinence you recorded dispassion and unfeigned love therein.

Like a bright mirror, O glorious one, you radiantly received the gifts of the divine Spirit and have illumined the faithful with the splendour of your life.

Having quenched the burning of the passions with abstinence, you set your soul afire, shining in your whole life and driving away the darkness of the demons.

*Theotokion* The Virgin gave birth in the city of Bethlehem to Emmanuel, who opened Eden, closed of old to me through the deception of the serpent and my ancestors' failure to abstain from eating.

*Ode 6*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Enclosed in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah entreated you to come and still the storm. And I, pricked by the dart of the tyrant, call on you, O Christ, the slayer of evil, that you come quickly to my slothfulness.

God the Word, with God in the beginning, desired to save the nature shared with us: to that which was so weak he gives new strength, abasing himself, a second act of sharing, in which once more he frees us from the passions.

For our sakes he is born from the loins of Abraham, to raise as his own those sadly fallen into the darkness of sin that bound them to the earth: he who dwells in light has now been pleased, despite his dignity, to dwell in a manger for the salvation of mankind.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* I will sacrifice to you with a voice of praise, the Church sings to you, O Lord, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which for mercy's sake, flowed from your side.

## December 30

Having received a manly intelligence in a woman's body, O martyr, you went forth to battle incorporeal foes, and vanquished them with the sword of patience.

With floods of blood you dried up the sea of false religion, and watered the honoured Church of Christ, O passion-bearer Anysia, the boast of virgins.

You passed over the sea of struggles without foundering or sinking; therefore, you hastened to the tranquil haven to enjoy true serenity, O most glorious one.

*Theotokion* He who created man in his own image in his great loving-kindness, clothed himself wholly in him through you, O virgin Mother of God.

### *Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* I will sacrifice to you with a voice of praise...

You passed through the storm of life without foundering, steered by the hand of him who created all things, O Melania, and you have reached the harbour of salvation.

All the fiery darts of sin were burned up by the sparks of your ardent love for the Lord of all, and the malice of the demons has been utterly destroyed.

Your mind deified by union with that which is higher, as you laboured in asceticism, you were separated from love of the flesh by the hand of the Almighty.

*Theotokion* The Lord who was born of the Virgin deifies me and, wrapped in swaddling bands, he has wrought the unbinding of my transgressions. He who cannot be contained by anything is contained in the cave.

### *Kontakion of the feast, tone 3*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the one who is above all being, and the earth offers a cave to him whom no man may approach. Angels with shepherds give glory, and Wise Men journey with a star; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

*Ikos* Bethlehem has opened Eden; come, let us see. We have found joy in a secret place, so come and let us take possession of the paradise that is within the cave. There the unwatered root has appeared, from which forgiveness flowers forth: there is found the unfailing well from which David of old longed to drink: there the Virgin has given birth to the babe and has quenched the thirst of Adam and David. Therefore let us hasten to this place; for unto us a child is born, the pre-eternal God.

### *Ode 7*

### *Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* Caught by the love of the king of all, the children scorned the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant in his uncontrollable fury. And as the terrible fire withdrew before them, they sang to the Master: Blessed are you for ever.

The furnace roaring with sevenfold heat, savagely burned the servants of the king but spared the youths full of godly fear. For as the flames encircled them, the Lord, rewarding their piety, poured on them abundant dew.

O Christ our helper, you have shamed man's adversary, using as a shield your ineffable incarnation. Taking man's form, you have given him the joy of becoming godlike: for it was in hope of this we fell of old, from the heights to the earth's dark depths.

By your almighty power you have overthrown the fierce sin that raised its head in wanton pride, which rages with blasphemy in a world gone mad. Those dragged down of old, today you save from its snares, O benefactor, incarnate of your own will.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* He who saved the children of Abraham in the fire, slayed the Chaldeans whom justice rightly overtook: blessed are you, O supremely exalted God of our fathers.

The course of torture in no way shook the house of your soul, which was made noetically firm by your confession of Christ, O martyr, crying: Blessed are you.

Having come to know Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, O martyr, you did not wish to offer sacrifice wickedly to the sun when commanded by the tyrant; rather, you sang: Blessed are you, the God of our fathers.

Having dyed a purple robe for yourself in your sacred blood, O martyr, you crowned your head with a wreath of victory; and now you stand in gladness before God.

*Theotokion* He who wrapped the sky in clouds and the earth in mist, having been born of your womb, is wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger, O most pure Lady, saving those who know you to be the Mother of God.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* He who saved the children of Abraham in the fire...

Bearing the yoke of Christ with your husband, O God-bearer, you renewed your souls with the plough of prayers, and, having cultivated the field of good works, you delight for ever in glory on high.

Like the olive-tree of the Psalms planted in the house of God, you mystically anoint with the oil of your pangs the hearts and faces of those who praise your struggles with faith, O venerable one.

Having extinguished the furnace of the passions with the dew of abstinence, with the rain of your prayers you flow with an abyss of healings, engulfing the onslaughts of the passion of those who honour you, O Melania.

*Theotokion* David called you a fleece, O pure one, for you received the rain of heaven who dries up the torrent of iniquity and waters the minds of the faithful withered through sin.

*Ode 8*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* The youths of the Old Covenant who were cast into the fire prefigured the womb of the Maiden that remained sealed when surpassing nature she gave birth. Divine grace wrought these wonders as a single miracle, which moves the people to sing in praise.

Shunning the guilt of its vain attempt to become as God, creation sings like the youths in praise of the eternal Word who now empties himself; yet it sings in trembling, as if afraid to render meager praise to God, as one's subject to decay, though ever sustained by divine wisdom.

You came, the restoration of the nations, to bring back the nature of man from its wanderings, back from the hills of the wilderness to pastures rich in flowers. That you might destroy the violent force of the slayer of man, you condescend to come as God and man.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* Daniel stretched forth his hands, and stopped the mouths of the lions in the den; while girded with virtues, the youths who loved to worship quenched the mighty fire as they sang: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

Loving the commands of the Almighty constantly, you distributed your wealth to the widows, orphans and paupers and to all in need, O honoured virgin, and sought the cup of honourable martyrdom; and having drained it, you caused desire to cease.

As a dowry you brought to Christ fasting and tears, the mortification of the passions, the shedding of your blood and the piercing of your side. Therefore, he who ages not gave you a crown, an incorrupt bridal chamber and heavenly glory.

You dwell in light with the angels and the ranks of virgins, celebrating with the assemblies of martyrs, gazing upon your bridegroom face to face, sharing in radiant glory and crying out: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.



*Theotokion* Behold, a ruler and prince has clearly come from the tribe of Judah, for you, O immaculate one, have given birth to Christ, the expectation of the nations, awaited of old. To him we sing: Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* The birth giving of the Mother of God saved the pious youths in the furnace: then in figure but now in deed; and it moves the whole universe to sing to you: Praise the Lord all you works of the Lord and exalt him above all for ever.

Having made your heart and body a temple for the most divine Trinity, O glorious one, you erected divine churches, in which you assembled ranks of virgins and choirs of monastics, who sing together and exalt Christ above all for ever.

By almsgiving you gained mercy, for you distributed your wealth to the poor. Your righteousness abides eternally, as does the reward you won through it, O venerable God-bearer Melania. Therefore, we honour you as truly victorious.

Shining with understanding, courage, chastity and divine righteousness, O venerable one, your elevating humility exalted you to the heights of heaven, wherewith you cast down the haughty serpent. Therefore, we honour you as truly victorious.

*Theotokion* Waves of the passions beset me and the abyss of despair engulfs me. Rescue me, O immaculate Mother, that I be saved; for you gave birth to the Lord and Saviour who is laid in a manger as a babe, and whom we exalt above all for ever.

*Ode 9*

*Canon of the Feast*

*Irmos* It would be easier for us to be silent out of fear, for that is not threatening for us, O Virgin. As it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for you, O Mother, give us the strength to hymn you, for it is our will.

O pure Mother, we have seen the Word in hazy images and pale shadows from the past; and now he newly appears through the gate that is closed; now mindful of his true radiance, as is meet and right, we bless your womb.

The people who delight in Christ have attained their hope, being granted now to see the advent of our God, and are comforted by this regeneration. Grant them life-bearing grace, O pure Virgin, as they pay homage to this glory.

*Canon of the Martyr*

*Irmos* From you O Virgin, the unquarried mountain, was hewn Christ, the cornerstone not cut by man, who joined in himself the separate natures. Therefore with rejoicing we magnify you, O Mother of God.

Those who rendered worship to stones rather than to the creator, unable to bear your commitment to God, O glorious one, cut you apart with a sword, betrothing divine immortality to you through death.

Thessalonica boasts in your grave-clothes and sufferings, O virgin martyr; and the Church of the firstborn and the righteous is glad, having your divine spirit.

With faith the Magi brought frankincense, gold and myrrh to him who was born in Bethlehem, and the passion-bearer has brought the outpouring of the blood of her martyrdom, entreating him for us.

*Theotokion* O most pure Mother of God, you have caused a rod to bud forth from the root of Jesse, having given birth for us to Christ, the flower of the divinity, the uncontainable God who has now been swaddled as a babe.

*Canon of the Venerable One*

*Irmos* Eve, through weakness, lived under the curse of disobedience; but O Virgin Mother of God, you have put forth a blessing for the world through the fruit of your childbearing; therefore we all magnify you.

You hastened to the summit of utter perfection, O blessed one, and attained the ranks of the incorporeal ones; and having approached to your true desire, you received a fountain of good things. Therefore, we all call you blessed.

You rejoice with the choirs of fasters, having laboured ascetically; and you now gaze directly upon the beauty of God, having mortified the passions: this you acquired through chastity, O most blessed Melania.

Having trodden the narrow path, you reached the broad expanse of paradise, where is the joy of those who keep festival and the tree of life, ever mindful of us who honour your repose.

*Theotokion* He who is awesomely upborne on the shoulders of the cherubim sits now in the arms of the pure Maiden: he is wrapped in swaddling bands, loosing the bonds of our evil deeds; and he is fed milk as a babe, who feeds every creature.

*Exapostilarion of the feast*

Our Saviour, the Dayspring from the east, has visited us from on high, and we who were in darkness and shadows have found the truth: for the Lord is born of the Virgin.

*Aposticha, tone 6*  
*to the Special Melody* Go on before us, you angelic hosts...

Behold, the Lamb of God, \* who as God takes away the sin of the world, \* lies as a babe in a manger, \* desiring to deliver the reason-endowed \* from all the passions of irrationality \* and from everlasting retribution. \* To him we sing: \* Blessed are you who has been born; \* glory to you, O our God.

*Verse* Before the morning star have I begotten you from the womb.

How ineffable are your mysteries \* which pass understanding; \* for in his compassion God is born on earth, \* taking to himself the image of a servant, \* that he might rescue from the slavery of the alien \* those who cry to him with faith: \* Blessed are you who has been born; glory to you, our God.

*Verse* The Lord said to my lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

Let us stand reverently in the house of the Lord \* and together hymn with jubilation \* his loving-kindness \* and his great condescension. \* How has he willed to reveal himself as a babe \* in Bethlehem of Judea? \* Let us cry out: \* Blessed is he who has been born; glory to you, O our God.

Glory be to the Father... Both now... *same melody*

O Christ the sun, how is it that I cover you with swaddling bands? \* How is it that I feed you with milk, \* the nourisher of all creation? \* How can I hold you in my arms, \* who holds all things? \* How can I look without fear at you \* upon whom the many-eyed cherubim dare not gaze? \* Thus she exclaimed, who knew not wedlock, as she held Christ.

## Liturgy

*Beatitudes, 6 verses from Ode 8 of the canons of the feast.*

## December 31

### Apodosis of Christmas, our venerable mother Melania the Roman

*The service of the venerable one is sung on the previous day,  
and on this day we sing only the service of the feast.*

#### Vespers

*The usual reading from the Psalter; at Lord I call to you... the 6 verses of the feast; Glory be to the Father... Both now... and the verse of Kassiani When Augustus reigned alone...; no entrance; Prokimenon of the day; then Protect us O Lord... and the Litany; Aposticha of the feast; after the Lord's prayer, the Troparion of the feast once; then the Litany and Dismissal.*

#### Midnight Office

*As usual with the reading from the Psalter and the usual Troparia.*

#### Matins

*At God is the Lord... the Troparion of the feast thrice; after the readings from the Psalter the Sessional Hymns of the feast; Canons of the feast, each with its Irmos, and the Katavasia is of the first Canon; after the third Ode the Ipakoe of the feast; after the 6th Ode the Kontakion of the feast with its Ikos; at the 9th Ode we sing the magnifications of the feast, and not My soul magnifies... ; Exapostilarion of the feast; Let everything that has breath... and the Praises of the feast, and the Great Doxology with the Troparion of the feast, once. Litanies and Dismissal.*

#### Hours

*Troparion and Kontakion of the feast.*

#### Liturgy

*Typical Psalms; Beatitudes: 8 verses from both Canons, Ode 9; at the Entrance, Troparion Glory be to the Father... Both now... and the Kontakion of the feast; the thrice-holy; Prokimenon, Alleluia and Communion verse of the feast, but the readings are of the day.*

## If the Apodosis of Christmas falls on a Sunday

*This means that it is the Sunday after Christmas, on which we commemorate the Righteous ones, Joseph the Betrothed, David the King and James the Brother of the Lord, whose hymnody is given in the opening pages of December 26.*

*Vespers          Blessed is the man... at Lord I call to you... 3 resurrectional verses in the tone of the week, 4 of the feast tone 2, then 3 of the righteous ones with their glory verse; Both now... and When Augustus reigned... instead of the Dogmatikon; Entreaty verses of the feast; Aposticha of the resurrection in the tone of the week, Glory be to the Father... of the righteous ones, Both now... of the feast. If a vigil, at the blessing of the loaves Virgin Mother of God rejoice... twice, and that of the righteous ones once.*

*Matins          Troparion of the resurrection twice, Glory be to the Father... of the righteous ones Both now... of the feast; Sessional Hymns of the resurrection; Troparia of the resurrection etc with the Gospel of the resurrection followed by the usual verses; Canon of the resurrection, of the righteous ones and both of the feast; Katavasia of the first Canon of the feast; after the 3rd Ode the Kontakion of the righteous ones with its Ikos and Sessional Hymns; after the 6th Ode the Kontakion of the resurrection with its Ikos; at the 9th Ode we sing My soul magnifies... Exapostilarion of the Resurrection, then of the feast; Praises 4 verses of the resurrection, then 4 of the feast with their versets, Glory be to the Father... of the righteous ones, Both now... as usual for Sundays; Great Doxology with its resurrectional troparion; Litanies and Dismissal.*

*Hours          first Troparion of the resurrection, second of the feast and saints alternately; Kontakion of the feast and of the saints alternately.*

*Liturgy          Typical Psalms; Beatitudes 4 of the tone and 4 of the feast from the 1st Canon of Ode 9; and 4 of the Saints, Ode 9 [this adds up to 12, but it is what the Typicon directs]; at the Entrance Troparia of the resurrection, of the feast and of the righteous ones, Glory be to the Father... Kontakion of the saints, Both now... Kontakion of the feast; Prokimenon of the feast and of the saints; Epistle to the Galatians reading number 100, Alleluia of the feast; Gospel of Matthew number 4; Communion of Sunday and of the feast.*

*If the Apodosis of Christmas falls on a Saturday, then on Friday night we do not sing the Dogmatikon.*



# Resurrectional Theotokia

## Tone 1

*Dogmatikon* Let us praise the Virgin Mary,  
who arose from the human race,  
to be the Mother of the Master,  
the glory of the world and gate of Heaven;  
hymned by the angelic hosts, she is the adornment of the faithful,  
revealed as Heaven and the temple of the divinity.  
It is she who, breaking down the middle wall of enmity,  
established peace and opened the kingdom.  
Therefore with her as the anchor of our faith,  
we receive as our defender the Lord who was born of her.  
Be of good courage, then, people of God,  
be of good courage,  
for in his almighty power he will prevail over the enemy.

*Aposticha* Behold, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled in you O Virgin,  
for you have given birth  
and yet remain a virgin after your delivery as before;  
for it was God who was born of you, to restore the nature of man.  
Mother of God, do not reject the supplications  
of your servants offered in your Church,  
but as you held in your arms the compassionate Lord,  
take pity on us your servants, and pray that our souls be saved.

*Dismissal* At the sound of Gabriel's voice  
calling to you: Rejoice, O Virgin,  
the Master of all was conceived in you, the holy tabernacle,  
of which righteous David spoke.  
In bearing your creator you surpass the spaciousness of the heavens.  
~ Glory to him who dwelt in you;  
~ glory to him who came forth from you;  
glory to him who set us free by your giving of birth.

## Tone 2

*Dogmatikon* The shadow of the Law passed away with the coming of grace;  
for as the bush that burned was not consumed,  
so you, O Virgin have given birth while remaining a virgin.  
In place of the pillar of fire has dawned the Sun of Righteousness;  
and in place of Moses,  
we see Christ the salvation of our souls.

*Aposticha* Here is a new wonder greater than all the miracles of old,  
for who has ever known a mother to bear a child without a man,  
and to hold in her arms him who encompasses the whole creation.  
It was the will of God to be born,  
and you, the immaculate one, carried him as an infant in your arms.  
Therefore with your maternal boldness,  
pray to him without ceasing for us who honour you,  
that he save our souls and have mercy on us.

*Dismissal* All of your most glorious mysteries  
are beyond comprehension, O Mother of God;  
for with your purity sealed and your virginity inviolate,  
you are known to be truly the mother who has given birth to God.  
Beseech him to save our souls.

### **Tone 3**

*Dogmatikon* How can we not wonder, O most honoured one,  
at your bearing of both God and man?  
Without blemish and even without knowing a man,  
you have brought forth a fatherless Son in the flesh,  
begotten motherless of the Father before the ages,  
who suffered no change, mixture nor separation,  
but kept in full the identity proper to each nature.  
Therefore, O Lady, Virgin and Mother,  
entreat him to save the souls  
of those who in the true faith confess you to be the Mother of God.

*Aposticha* By the will of the Father, through the divine Spirit  
you seedlessly conceived the Son of God  
who existed before the world began,  
begotten of the Father without a mother.  
You gave birth to him and fed with your milk as an infant  
him who for our sake was incarnate from you without a father.  
Therefore never cease to entreat him  
to deliver our souls from danger.

*Dismissal* We sing your praises, O Virgin Mother of God  
who has mediated the salvation of our race;  
for your Son and our God, by taking flesh from you  
and accepting suffering through the cross,  
has delivered us from corruption,  
as he is the lover of mankind.



## **Tone 4**

*Dogmatikon* David the prophet,  
who through you became the ancestor of God,  
raised his voice to sing in prophecy  
of the great things done for you, saying:  
The queen stands at your right hand.  
For God who was pleased to be made man of you fatherless  
has shown you to be the mother and mediator of life,  
to restore his image corrupted by the passions and save the world:  
for finding the stray sheep lost in the mountains,  
Christ takes it upon his shoulders and brings it to his Father  
and by his will unites it to the heavenly hosts, O Mother of God,  
he who has great and abundant mercy.

*Aposticha* Regard the supplications of your servants, O immaculate one:  
crush the savage assaults that beset us and calm all our distress,  
for your protection is our safe and secure anchor:  
let us not be put to shame, O Lady,  
for in you we have found an intercessor, and we call upon you.  
Speedily heed the entreaties of those who call to you in faith:  
Rejoice, O Lady, the helper of all,  
our joy and protection, and the salvation of our souls.

*Dismissal* The mystery hidden from before the ages,  
and unknown even to the angels,  
through you O Mother of God, has been revealed to those on earth:  
God incarnate in unconfused union,  
who willingly accepted the cross for our sake,  
and thereby raising up the first formed man  
has saved our souls from death.

## **Tone 5**

*Dogmatikon* In the Red Sea of old,  
the image of the unwedded bride was depicted:  
there Moses parted the waters;  
here Gabriel is the servant of the mystery.  
Then, Israel passed dryshod through the deep,  
while now the Virgin gives birth to Christ without seed.  
After the passing of Israel, the sea remained untrodden:  
after the birth of Emmanuel, the undefiled Virgin remains incorrupt.  
O God who existed eternally as now,  
and who has appeared as a man,  
have mercy on us.

*Aposticha* O most honoured Virgin,  
the temple and gate, the palace and throne of the king,  
through whom Christ the Lord, my deliverer,  
appeared to those bound in darkness;  
as he, the Sun of Righteousness, wished to enlighten  
his creatures formed by his hand in his image;  
as you have the boldness of a mother towards him,  
we entreat you, O exalted one,  
unceasingly implore him that our souls be saved.

*Dismissal* Rejoice, gateway of the Lord  
through which none may pass:  
rejoice, wall and protection of those who flee to you:  
rejoice, haven untroubled by storms:  
rejoice, for you have not known wedlock  
and have borne in the flesh your maker and God.  
Do not fail in your intercession  
for those who praise and worship your giving of birth.

### **Tone 6**

*Dogmatikon* Who would not call you blessed, O most holy Virgin?  
Who would not hymn your most pure maternity?  
For the only begotten Son  
who shone forth from the Father from eternity,  
came forth, ineffably incarnate from you, O pure one.  
He who by nature is God,  
for our sakes assumed the nature of man;  
not divided into two persons,  
but known in two natures without confusion.  
O pure and most blessed Lady,  
pray to him to have mercy on our souls.

*Aposticha* Christ the Lord, my creator and redeemer  
proceeded from your womb, O most sanctified Virgin;  
clothed with my flesh, he released Adam from the original curse.  
Therefore most pure one, truly the Mother of God and Virgin,  
we sing unceasingly to you the greeting of the angel:  
Rejoice, O Lady,  
intercessor, protection and salvation of our souls.

*Dismissal* He who called you his blessed mother,  
went to his voluntary suffering,  
shining forth upon the cross in his wish to recover Adam,  
and saying to the angels:  
Rejoice with me, for I have found the lost coin.  
Glory to you, O God, who has ordered all things in wisdom.

## **Tone 7**

- Dogmatikon* You, the Bearer of God, are known to be a mother  
who past nature remained a virgin.  
This is beyond words and understanding,  
and no tongue can describe the wonder of your maternity.  
Most glorious was your conceiving, O pure one;  
and inconceivable the manner of your giving of birth.  
For when God so wills, the order of nature is overturned.  
Therefore, knowing you to be the Mother of God,  
we all fervently beg you to pray that our souls may be saved.
- Aposticha* All we who dwell on earth take refuge  
under your protection, O Lady,  
and cry out to you: O Mother of God, our hope;  
deliver us from our countless transgressions  
and save our souls.
- Dismissal* As the exalted treasury of our resurrection,  
raise from the pit and depths of transgression those who hope in you;  
for by giving birth to our salvation  
you have saved those who are subject to sin:  
a virgin before and during giving birth,  
you have remained in virginity,  
even after giving birth.

## **Tone 8**

- Dogmatikon* The king of heaven in his love for man,  
appeared on earth and dwelt with mankind.  
He came forth from the pure Virgin,  
with the flesh he had received from her:  
he is the only Son,  
twofold in nature but not in persons.  
In proclaiming him truly to be perfect man and perfect God,  
we confess Christ our God.  
Beseech him, O unwedded Mother,  
to have mercy on our souls.
- Aposticha* O Virgin unwedded,  
who inconceivably conceived God in the flesh;  
receive the prayers of your servants.  
Immaculate Mother of God the Most High  
who grants cleansing of transgressions to all:  
receive our entreaty that we all may be saved.

*Dismissal*  
one,

For our sake you were born of the Virgin and suffered crucifixion, O good  
and destroyed death by death and as God revealed the resurrection.  
Forsake not those who were fashioned by your hand but show your love for  
mankind, O merciful one.  
Receive the intercession for us of the Mother of God who gave you birth,  
and save us, your despairing people, O our Saviour.

**Theotokia sung at the Verses<sup>7</sup>,  
that is, at *Lord I call to you* . . and at the *Aposticha*,  
after *Both now and for ever* . . .  
and according to the tone of the *Glory verse***

**Tone 1**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins*      Creation rejoices to see within you the wonder of wonders, O full of grace; for you conceived without seed and ineffably give birth to him whom the ranks of angels cannot see: entreat him on behalf of our souls.

*Monday Lauds*      O most pure Mother of God, who is blessed in the heavens and glorified on earth; rejoice O bride the unwedded.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins*      O Mother of God, full of grace, who without being burnt conceived the divine fire; who without seed gave birth to the Lord, the source of life: save those who magnify you.

*Tuesday Lauds*      You gave birth on earth without a father, to him who, in a manner beyond comprehension and recounting, was begotten in heaven without a mother: O Mother of God entreat him on behalf of our souls.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins*      In you we have an advocate, O most pure one, and by your supplications we are delivered from danger. Guarded in all things by the cross of your Son, we all magnify you with due reverence.

*Wednesday Lauds*      O most pure Mother of God, who is blessed in the heavens and glorified on earth; rejoice O bride the unwedded.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins*      O Mother of God, full of grace, who without being burnt conceived the divine fire; who without seed gave birth to the Lord, the source of life: save those who magnify you.

*Thursday Lauds*      You gave birth on earth without a father, to him who, in a manner beyond comprehension and recounting, was begotten in heaven without a mother: O Mother of God entreat him on behalf of our souls.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins*      Having gained your intercession, O most pure one, delivered from evils by your supplications, and protected wholly by the cross of your Son, we all piously give you fitting praise.

*Friday Lauds*      O most pure Mother of God, who is blessed in the heavens and glorified on earth; rejoice O bride the unwedded.

---

<sup>7</sup> These being, with a few exceptions, the Theotokia provided in the Octoechos for the Aposticha of Vespers and Matins.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* At the sound of Gabriel's voice | calling to you: Rejoice, O Virgin, | the Master of all things was conceived in you, the holy tabernacle, | as the righteous David said. | In bearing your creator, you surpass the spaciousness of the heavens. | ~ Glory to him who dwelt in you; | ~ glory to him who came forth from you; || glory to him who set us free by your giving of birth.

*Saturday Lauds* You gave birth on earth without a father, to him who, in a manner beyond comprehension and recounting, was begotten in heaven without a mother: O Mother of God entreat him on behalf of our souls.

## **Tone 2**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* As the source of him who is compassion, grant mercy to us, O Mother of God. Look upon us sinners and reveal your power as of old; for, trusting in you, we cry out to you, Rejoice! as once did Gabriel, the supreme commander of the bodiless ones.

*Monday Lauds* O holy Mother of the ineffable light: we piously magnify you, honouring you with angelic hymns.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* Through you, the ever-virgin Mother of God, we have become sharers of the divine nature, since for us you gave birth to God incarnate; and so we all piously give you fitting glory.

*Tuesday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, cloud of the unwaning light, who carried the Lord of glory.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* We sing to you, the most glorious Virgin Mother of God, for through the cross of your Son, Hades has been destroyed and death put to death; we mortals have risen, and have been granted life and have received paradise, our ancient delight. Therefore, giving thanks, we glorify Christ our God who alone is mighty and most merciful.

*Wednesday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, staff from which God issued without seed, who destroyed death on the tree.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* Through you, the ever-virgin Mother of God, we have become sharers of the divine nature, since for us you gave birth to God incarnate; and so we all piously give you fitting glory.

*Thursday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, cloud of the unwaning light, who carried the Lord of glory.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* We sing to you, the most glorious virgin Mother of God, for through the cross of your Son, Hades has been destroyed and death put to death; we mortals have arisen, and have been granted life and have received paradise, our ancient

delight. Therefore, giving thanks, we glorify Christ our God who alone is mighty and most merciful.

*Friday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, staff from which God issued without seed, who destroyed death on the tree.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* All of your most glorious mysteries | are beyond comprehension, O Mother of God; | for with your purity sealed and your virginity inviolate, | you are known to be truly the mother who has given birth to God. || Beseech him to save our souls.

*Saturday Lauds* O holy Mother of the ineffable Light: we piously magnify you, honouring you with angelic hymns.

### **Tone 3**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* Awed by the beauty of your virginity and the radiance of your purity, Gabriel called to you, the Mother of God: What worthy praise can I offer, and by what name shall I invoke you? I am in doubt and stand in awe, and as I was commanded, I raise the cry: Rejoice, O full of grace.

*Monday Lauds* Each of us rightly runs to where he is saved; and what other refuge can protect our souls as well as you, the Mother of God?

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Lauds* O Mother of God who alone is blessed, our refuge and strength, the mighty help of the world: by your supplications protect your servants from every necessity.

*Tuesday Lauds* Each of us rightly runs to where he is saved; and what other refuge can protect our souls as well as you, the Mother of God?

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Having gained the cross of your Son as a staff of power, O Mother of God, therewith we cast down the arrogance of the enemy, unceasingly magnifying you with love.

*Wednesday Lauds* O Mother of God who alone is blessed, our refuge and strength, the mighty help of the world: by your supplications protect your servants from every necessity.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* The prophets proclaimed, the apostles taught, the martyrs confessed, and we believe, that you are truly the Mother of God; therefore we glorify your ineffable birthgiving.

*Thursday Lauds* Each of us rightly runs to where he is saved; and what other refuge can protect our souls as well as you, the Mother of God?

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins*      Having gained the cross of your Son as a staff of power, O Mother of God, therewith we cast down the arrogance of the enemy, unceasingly magnifying you with love.

*Friday Lauds*      O Mother of God who alone is blessed, our refuge and strength, the mighty help of the world: by your supplications protect your servants from every necessity.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins*      We sing your praise, O Virgin Mother of God | who has mediated the salvation of our race; | for your Son and our God, by taking flesh from you | and accepting suffering through the cross, | has delivered us from corruption, || as he is the lover of mankind.

*Saturday Lauds*      The prophets proclaimed, the apostles taught, the martyrs confessed, and we believe, that you are truly the Mother of God; therefore we glorify your ineffable birthgiving.

#### **Tone 4**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins*      To her, raised at the Holy of Holies in the Temple, arrayed in faith and wisdom and perfect virginity, Gabriel the supreme commander brought from heaven the salutation: Rejoice. Rejoice, O blessed one. Rejoice, most glorified one, the Lord is with you.

*Monday Lauds*      Unable to hymn you worthily, O Mother of God who is more exalted than all creation, we entreat you: generously have mercy upon us.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins*      To the Mother of God let us now run most earnestly, | we sinners all and wretched ones, | and fall down in repentance calling from the depths of our souls: | O Lady come to our aid and have compassion on us; | hasten for we are lost in a throng of transgressions; | turn not your servants away with empty hands, || for we hope in you alone.

*Tuesday Lauds*      We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the bush unburnt, in which Moses beheld the fire of the divinity as flames.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins*      O immaculate Virgin Mother of Christ our God, a sword pierced your most holy soul when you saw your Son and our God voluntarily crucified: therefore, most blessed one, pray without ceasing that he grant forgiveness of our transgressions.

*Wednesday Lauds*      We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the mountain, from which was ineffably cut the stone which has destroyed the gates of Hades.



*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* We acknowledge that Christ our God, the Word of the Father, was born of you, the Virgin Mother of God, who alone is pure and who alone is blessed. Therefore we magnify you, singing your praises without ceasing.

*Thursday Lauds* Unable to hymn you worthily, O Mother of God who is more exalted than all creation, we entreat you: generously have mercy upon us.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Immaculate Virgin Mother of Christ our God, a sword pierced your most holy soul when you saw your Son and our God voluntarily crucified: therefore, most blessed one, pray without ceasing that he grant forgiveness of our transgressions.

*Friday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the mountain, from which was ineffably cut the stone which has destroyed the gates of Hades.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* The mystery hidden from before the ages, | and unknown even to the angels, | through you O Mother of God, has been revealed to those on earth: | God incarnate in unconfused union, | who willingly accepted the cross for our sake, | and thereby raising up the first formed man | | has saved our souls from death.

*Saturday Matins* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the bush unburnt, in which Moses beheld the fire of the divinity as flames.

## **Tone 5**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* With the angels of heaven and with those on earth, we cry out to you with joyful voices, O Mother of God: Rejoice, portal more spacious than the heavens. Rejoice, the only salvation of those on earth. Rejoice, O pure one, full of grace, who gave birth to the incarnate God.

*Monday Lauds* O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* Show your ready assistance and mercy to your servants, O pure one; calm the waves of vain thought, and raise up my fallen soul, O Mother of God; for I know, O Virgin, that you have the power to do as you desire.

*Tuesday Lauds* Most holy Mother of God, the protection of Christians: as is your way, deliver your people who earnestly cry out to you; battle against our shameful and prideful thoughts, that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Ever-virgin.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Through the cross of your Son, O blessed by God, the deception of idolatry has been destroyed, and the power of the demons trampled down; therefore, we, the faithful, rightly hymn and bless you, acknowledging you to be truly the Mother of God.

*Wednesday Lauds* O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* The strange and saving mystery of the Virgin has been revealed to all the world: you were born from her without seed, and showed yourself bodily without corruption. Glory to you O Lord, the joy of all.

*Thursday Lauds* Most holy Mother of God, the protection of Christians: as is your way, deliver your people who earnestly cry out to you; battle against our shameful and prideful thoughts, that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Ever-virgin.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Through the cross of your Son, O blessed by God, the deception of idolatry has been destroyed, and the power of the demons trampled down; therefore, we, the faithful, rightly hymn and bless you, acknowledging you to be truly the Mother of God.

*Friday Lauds* O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* Rejoice, gateway of the Lord | through which none may pass: | rejoice, wall and protection of those who flee to you: | rejoice, haven untroubled by storms: | rejoice, for you have not known wedlock | and have borne in the flesh your maker and God. | Do not fail in your intercession | | for those who praise and worship your giving of birth.

*Saturday Lauds* O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

## **Tone 6**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* The announcement of Gabriel to the Virgin was the beginning of our salvation; for she heard Rejoice. She did not reject or doubt the salutation, as did Sarah in the tent, but said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done to me as you have said.

*Monday Lauds* You received the word of the Archangel, and were shown to be the throne of the Cherubim; for you carried the hope of our souls in your arms, O Mother of God.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* O blessed virgin Mother of God the hope of the world, we implore your intercession which alone is mighty: take pity on us, who have no other intercessor; beseech the merciful God, that our souls be delivered from every threat, as you alone are blessed.

*Tuesday Lauds* No one who has recourse to you, the most pure virgin Mother of God, departs from you ashamed; for he who asks a favour receives a gracious gift for his favourable petition.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* O Virgin Mother of God, entreat your Son Christ our God, who delivered the world from deception when he was willingly nailed to the cross, that he have mercy on our souls.

*Wednesday Lauds* The Son and Word of God, begotten motherless of the Father before the ages, incarnate in time of your pure blood, O unwedded Mother of God; entreat him, that we be granted remission of sins before the end.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* O holy Lady, the pure Mother of our God, who ineffably gave birth to the creator of all: with the sacred apostles ever entreat his grace, that he deliver us from the passions and grant forgiveness of our sins.

*Thursday Lauds* You were granted great gifts, O pure virgin Mother of God, for you gave birth in the flesh to one of the persons of the Trinity, Christ, the giver of life, for the salvation of our souls.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* O Virgin Mother of God, entreat your Son Christ our God, who delivered the world from deception when he was willingly nailed to the cross, that he have mercy on our souls.

*Friday Lauds* The Son and Word of God, begotten motherless of the Father before the ages, incarnate in time of your pure blood, O unwedded Mother of God; entreat him, that we be granted remission of sins before the end.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* Gideon foretold your conceiving, | and David proclaimed your birthgiving; | for as the dew descended upon the fleece, | so the Word descended into your womb, | and you, O holy ground, without seed produced Christ our God, the salvation of the world, | | O Mother of God, full of grace.

*Saturday Lauds* The Son and Word of God, begotten motherless of the Father before the ages, incarnate in time of your pure blood, O unwedded Mother of God; entreat him, that we be granted remission of sins before the end.

## **Tone 7**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* O undefiled Virgin Mother of God, with the hosts of heaven pray to your Son that before the end comes, forgiveness of transgressions be granted to us who faithfully glorify you.

*Monday Lauds* You have surpassed the heavenly hosts, O blessed Mother of God, for you became a divine temple, in giving birth to Christ, the Saviour of our souls.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* O Mother of God we offer you the cry Rejoice; for, having given birth to God, you have become more exalted than the angels.

*Tuesday Lauds* Through the prayers of the Mother of God impart peace to the lives of us who cry to you: Glory to you, O merciful Lord.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Unceasing entreat Christ our God, crucified for us and destroying the dominion of death, O virgin Mother of God, that he save our souls.

*Wednesday Lauds* Deliver us from the sins which cling, O Mother of God, for we, the faithful, have no other hope but you and God who was born of you.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* O most pure one, the fruit of your womb is the fulfillment of the prophets and the law, in the knowledge of which we piously glorify you, magnifying you as the Mother of God.

*Thursday Lauds* O Bride of God, the fruit of your womb is shown to men as the mediator of salvation; and so, glorifying you with mind and tongue, we the faithful magnify you as the Mother of God.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Unceasing entreat Christ our God, crucified for us and destroying the dominion of death, O virgin Mother of God, that he save our souls.

*Friday Lauds* Deliver us from the sins which cling, O Mother of God, for we, the faithful, have no other hope but you and God who was born of you.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* As the treasury of our resurrection, hymned by all, | raise from the pit and depths of transgression those who hope in you; | for by giving birth to our salvation | you have saved those who are subject to sin: | for you were a virgin before and during giving birth, | and you have remained a virgin, | | even after giving birth.

*Saturday Lauds* Rejoice, O Lady who held within your womb him whom the heavens cannot hold. Rejoice, Virgin preached by the prophets, through whom Emmanuel has shone forth. Rejoice, Mother of Christ our God.

## **Tone 8**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* Rejoice, O Lady through whom the Angel received the joy of the world. Rejoice, O Virgin who gave birth to your creator and Lord. Rejoice, for you were to be the Mother of God.

*Monday Lauds* Rejoice, portal of the king of glory, through which the Most High alone passed, and which he sealed, for the salvation of our souls.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* O faithful, let us magnify with hymns the Mother of God, the steadfast confirmation of the faith and the precious gift to our souls: Rejoice, for you

held in your womb the stone of life. Rejoice, the hope of the ends of the earth and aid of the sorrowful. Rejoice, O bride unwedded.

*Tuesday Lauds* O most pure Virgin, with the depths of your maternal compassion, save us by your supplications to your Son and our God.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Seeing you the lamb and shepherd and Saviour of the world upon the cross, she who gave birth to you said, weeping: The world rejoices to receive deliverance, but my womb burns at the sight of your crucifixion, which you endure for all, O my Son and God.

*Wednesday Lauds* O most pure one, the fruit of your womb is the fulfillment of the prophets and the law, in the knowledge of which we piously glorify you, magnifying you as the Mother of God.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* O most pure Mother of God the noetic portal of life, deliver us who have recourse to you in faith, that we may glorify your most holy birthgiving, for the salvation of our souls.

*Thursday Lauds* O most pure Virgin, with the depths of your maternal compassion, save us by your supplications to your Son and our God.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Seeing you the lamb and shepherd and Saviour of the world upon the cross, she who gave birth to you said, weeping: The world rejoices to receive deliverance, but inwardly I burn at the sight of your crucifixion, which you endure for all, O my Son and God.

*Friday Lauds* The fruit of your womb, O all-pure one, is the fulfillment of the prophets and the law; therefore, glorifying you in knowledge, we piously magnify you as the Mother of God

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* For our sake you were born of the Virgin and suffered crucifixion, O good one, | and destroyed death by death and as God revealed the resurrection. | Forsake not those who were fashioned by your hand but show your love for mankind, O merciful one. | Receive the intercession for us of the Mother of God who gave you birth, | | and save us, your despairing people, O our Saviour.

*Saturday Lauds* O most pure Virgin, with the depths of your maternal compassion, save us by your supplications to your Son and our God.

**Dismissal Theotokia,  
used after the Troparia of the saints at Vespers  
and again at Matins after *God is the Lord* ... and at the end of Matins**

**Tone 1**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins*      Creation rejoices to see within you the wonder of wonders, O full of grace; for you conceived without seed and ineffably give birth to him whom the ranks of angels cannot see: entreat him on behalf of our souls.

*Monday Lauds*      O most pure Mother of God, who is blessed in the heavens and glorified on earth; rejoice O bride the unwedded.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins*      O Mother of God, full of grace, who without being burnt conceived the divine fire; who without seed gave birth to the Lord, the source of life: save those who magnify you.

*Tuesday Lauds*      You gave birth on earth without a father, to him who, in a manner beyond comprehension and recounting, was begotten in heaven without a mother: O Mother of God entreat him on behalf of our souls.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins*      In you we have an advocate, O most pure one, and by your supplications we are delivered from danger. Guarded in all things by the cross of your Son, we all magnify you with due reverence.

*Wednesday Lauds*      O most pure Mother of God, who is blessed in the heavens and glorified on earth; rejoice O bride the unwedded.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins*      O Mother of God, full of grace, who without being burnt conceived the divine fire; who without seed gave birth to the Lord, the source of life: save those who magnify you.

*Thursday Lauds*      You gave birth on earth without a father, to him who, in a manner beyond comprehension and recounting, was begotten in heaven without a mother: O Mother of God entreat him on behalf of our souls.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins*      Having gained your intercession, O most pure one, delivered from evils by your supplications, and protected wholly by the cross of your Son, we all piously give you fitting praise.

*Friday Lauds*      O most pure Mother of God, who is blessed in the heavens and glorified on earth; rejoice O bride the unwedded.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins*      At the sound of Gabriel's voice | calling to you: Rejoice, O Virgin, | the Master of all things was conceived in you, the holy tabernacle, | as righteous David said. | In bearing your creator, you surpass the spaciousness of the heavens.

| ~ Glory to him who dwelt in you; | ~ glory to him who came forth from you; || glory to him who set us free by your giving of birth.

*Saturday Lauds*

You gave birth on earth without a father, to him who, in a manner beyond comprehension and recounting, was begotten in heaven without a mother: O Mother of God entreat him on behalf of our souls.

## **Tone 2**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins*

As the source of him who is compassion, grant mercy to us, O Mother of God. Look upon us sinners and reveal your power as of old; for, trusting in you, we cry out to you, Rejoice! as once did Gabriel, the supreme commander of the bodiless ones.

*Monday Lauds*

O holy Mother of the ineffable light: we piously magnify you, honouring you with angelic hymns.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins*

Through you, the ever-virgin Mother of God, we have become sharers of the divine nature, since for us you gave birth to God incarnate; and so we all piously give you fitting glory.

*Tuesday Lauds*

We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, cloud of the unwaning light, who carried the Lord of glory.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins*

We sing to you, the most glorious Virgin Mother of God, for through the cross of your Son, Hades has been destroyed and death put to death; we mortals have risen, and have been granted life and have received paradise, our ancient delight. Therefore, giving thanks, we glorify Christ our God who alone is mighty and most merciful.

*Wednesday Lauds*

We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, staff from which God issued without seed, who destroyed death on the tree.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins*

Through you, the ever-virgin Mother of God, we have become sharers of the divine nature, since for us you gave birth to God incarnate; and so we all piously give you fitting glory.

*Thursday Lauds*

We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, cloud of the unwaning light, who carried the Lord of glory.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins*

We sing to you, the most glorious virgin Mother of God, for through the cross of your Son, Hades has been destroyed and death put to death; we mortals have arisen, and have been granted life and have received paradise, our ancient delight. Therefore, giving thanks, we glorify Christ our God who alone is mighty and most merciful.

*Friday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: Rejoice, staff from which God issued without seed, who destroyed death on the tree.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* All of your most glorious mysteries | are beyond comprehension, O Mother of God; | for with your purity sealed and your virginity inviolate, | you are known to be truly the mother who has given birth to God. || Beseech him to save our souls.

*Saturday Lauds* O holy Mother of the ineffable Light: we piously magnify you, honouring you with angelic hymns.

### **Tone 3**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* Awed by the beauty of your virginity and the radiance of your purity, Gabriel called to you, the Mother of God: What worthy praise can I offer, and by what name shall I invoke you? I am in doubt and stand in awe, and as I was commanded, I raise the cry: Rejoice, O full of grace.

*Monday Lauds* Each of us rightly runs to where he is saved; and what other refuge can protect our souls as well as you, the Mother of God?

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Lauds* O Mother of God who alone is blessed, our refuge and strength, the mighty help of the world: by your supplications protect your servants from every necessity.

*Tuesday Lauds* Each of us rightly runs to where he is saved; and what other refuge can protect our souls as well as you, the Mother of God?

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Having gained the cross of your Son as a staff of power, O Mother of God, therewith we cast down the arrogance of the enemy, unceasingly magnifying you with love.

*Wednesday Lauds* O Mother of God who alone is blessed, our refuge and strength, the mighty help of the world: by your supplications protect your servants from every necessity.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* The prophets proclaimed, the apostles taught, the martyrs confessed, and we believe, that you are truly the Mother of God; therefore we glorify your ineffable birthgiving.

*Thursday Lauds* Each of us rightly runs to where he is saved; and what other refuge can protect our souls as well as you, the Mother of God?

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Having gained the cross of your Son as a staff of power, O Mother of God, therewith we cast down the arrogance of the enemy, unceasingly magnifying you with love.



*Friday Lauds* O Mother of God who alone is blessed, our refuge and strength, the mighty help of the world: by your supplications protect your servants from every necessity.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* We sing your praise, O Virgin Mother of God | who has mediated the salvation of our race; | for your Son and our God, by taking flesh from you | and accepting suffering through the cross, | has delivered us from corruption, || as he is the lover of mankind.

*Saturday Lauds* The prophets proclaimed, the apostles taught, the martyrs confessed, and we believe, that you are truly the Mother of God; therefore we glorify your ineffable birthgiving.

#### **Tone 4**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* To her, raised at the Holy of Holies in the Temple, arrayed in faith and wisdom and perfect virginity, Gabriel the supreme commander brought from heaven the salutation: Rejoice. Rejoice, O blessed one. Rejoice, most glorified one, the Lord is with you.

*Monday Lauds* Unable to hymn you worthily, O Mother of God who is more exalted than all creation, we entreat you: generously have mercy upon us.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* To the Mother of God let us now run most earnestly, | we sinners all and wretched ones, | and fall down in repentance calling from the depths of our souls: | O Lady come to our aid and have compassion on us; | hasten for we are lost in a throng of transgressions; | turn not your servants away with empty hands, || for we hope in you alone.

*Tuesday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the bush unburnt, in which Moses beheld the fire of the divinity as flames.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* O immaculate Virgin Mother of Christ our God, a sword pierced your most holy soul when you saw your Son and our God voluntarily crucified: most blessed Lady, pray without ceasing that he grant forgiveness of our transgressions.

*Wednesday Lauds* We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the mountain, from which was ineffably cut the stone which has destroyed the gates of Hades.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* We acknowledge that Christ our God, the Word of the Father, was born of you, the Virgin Mother of God, who alone is pure and who alone is blessed. Therefore we magnify you, singing your praises without ceasing.

*Thursday Lauds*                      Unable to hymn you worthily, O Mother of God who is more exalted than all creation, we entreat you: generously have mercy upon us.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins*      Immaculate Virgin Mother of Christ our God, a sword pierced your most holy soul when you saw your Son and our God voluntarily crucified: therefore, most blessed one, pray without ceasing that he grant forgiveness of our transgressions.

*Friday Lauds*                      We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the mountain, from which was ineffably cut the stone which has destroyed the gates of Hades.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins*      The mystery hidden from before the ages, | and unknown even to the angels, | through you O Mother of God, has been revealed to those on earth: | God incarnate in unconfused union, | who willingly accepted the cross for our sake, | and thereby raising up the first formed man | | has saved our souls from death.

*Saturday Matins*                      We magnify you, the Mother of God, crying out: You are the bush unburnt, in which Moses beheld the fire of the divinity as flames.

## **Tone 5**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins*      With the angels of heaven and with those on earth, we cry out to you with joyful voices, O Mother of God: Rejoice, portal more spacious than the heavens. Rejoice, the only salvation of those on earth. Rejoice, O pure one, full of grace, who gave birth to the incarnate God.

*Monday Lauds*                      O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins*      Show your ready assistance and mercy to your servants, O pure one; calm the waves of vain thought, and raise up my fallen soul, O Mother of God; for I know, O Virgin, that you have the power to do as you desire.

*Tuesday Lauds*                      Most holy Mother of God, the protection of Christians: as is your way, deliver your people who earnestly cry out to you; battle against our shameful and prideful thoughts, that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O ever-virgin.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins*      Through the cross of your Son, O blessed by God, the deception of idolatry has been destroyed, and the power of the demons trampled down; therefore, we, the faithful, rightly hymn and bless you, acknowledging you to be truly the Mother of God.

*Wednesday Lauds*                      O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* The strange and saving mystery of the Virgin has been revealed to all the world: you were born from her without seed, and showed yourself bodily without corruption. Glory to you O Lord, the joy of all.

*Thursday Lauds* Most holy Mother of God, the protection of Christians: as is your way, deliver your people who earnestly cry out to you; battle against our shameful and prideful thoughts, that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Ever-virgin.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Through the cross of your Son, O blessed by God, the deception of idolatry has been destroyed, and the power of the demons trampled down; therefore, we, the faithful, rightly hymn and bless you, acknowledging you to be truly the Mother of God.

*Friday Lauds* O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* Rejoice, gateway of the Lord | through which none may pass: | rejoice, wall and protection of those who flee to you: | rejoice, haven untroubled by storms: | rejoice, for you have not known wedlock | and have borne in the flesh your maker and God. | Do not fail in your intercession | | for those who praise and worship your giving of birth.

*Saturday Lauds* O Christ our God who shone forth upon the world from the Virgin, who through her made us the children of light, have mercy on us.

## **Tone 6**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* The announcement of Gabriel to the Virgin was the beginning of our salvation; for she heard Rejoice. She did not reject or doubt the salutation, as did Sarah in the tent, but said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done to me as you have said.

*Monday Lauds* You received the word of the Archangel, and were shown to be the throne of the Cherubim; for you carried the hope of our souls in your arms, O Mother of God.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* O blessed virgin Mother of God the hope of the world, we implore your intercession which alone is mighty: take pity on us, who have no other intercessor; beseech the merciful God, that our souls be delivered from every threat, as you alone are blessed.

*Tuesday Lauds* No one who has recourse to you, the most pure virgin Mother of God, departs from you ashamed; for he who asks a favour receives a gracious gift for his favourable petition.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* O Virgin Mother of God, entreat your Son Christ our God, who delivered the world from deception when he was willingly nailed to the cross, that he have mercy on our souls.

*Wednesday Lauds* The Son and Word of God, begotten motherless of the Father before the ages, incarnate in time of your pure blood, O unwedded Mother of God; entreat him, that we be granted remission of sins before the end.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* O holy Lady, the pure Mother of our God, who ineffably gave birth to the creator of all: with the sacred apostles ever entreat his grace, that he deliver us from the passions and grant forgiveness of our sins.

*Thursday Lauds* You were granted great gifts, O pure virgin Mother of God, for you gave birth in the flesh to one of the persons of the Trinity, Christ, the giver of life, for the salvation of our souls.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* O Virgin Mother of God, entreat your Son Christ our God, who delivered the world from deception when he was willingly nailed to the cross, that he have mercy on our souls.

*Friday Lauds* The Son and Word of God, begotten motherless of the Father before the ages, incarnate in time of your pure blood, O unwedded Mother of God; entreat him, that we be granted remission of sins before the end.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* Gideon foretold your conceiving, | and David proclaimed your birthgiving; | for as the dew descended upon the fleece, | so the Word descended into your womb, | and you, O holy ground, without seed produced Christ our God, the salvation of the world, | | O Mother of God, full of grace.

*Saturday Lauds* The Son and Word of God, begotten motherless of the Father before the ages, incarnate in time of your pure blood, O unwedded Mother of God; entreat him, that we be granted remission of sins before the end.

## **Tone 7**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* O undefiled Virgin Mother of God, with the hosts of heaven pray to your Son that before the end comes, forgiveness of transgressions be granted to us who faithfully glorify you.

*Monday Lauds* You have surpassed the heavenly hosts, O blessed Mother of God, for you became a divine temple, in giving birth to Christ, the Saviour of our souls.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* O Mother of God we offer you the cry Rejoice; for, having given birth to God, you have become more exalted than the angels.

*Tuesday Lauds* Through the prayers of the Mother of God impart peace to the lives of us who cry to you: Glory to you, O merciful Lord.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Unceasing entreat Christ our God, crucified for us and destroying the dominion of death, O virgin Mother of God, that he save our souls.

*Wednesday Lauds* Deliver us from the sins which cling, O Mother of God, for we, the faithful, have no other hope but you and God who was born of you.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* O most pure one, the fruit of your womb is the fulfillment of the prophets and the law, in the knowledge of which we piously glorify you, magnifying you as the Mother of God.

*Thursday Lauds* O Bride of God, the fruit of your womb is shown to men as the mediator of salvation; and so, glorifying you with mind and tongue, we the faithful magnify you as the Mother of God.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Unceasing entreat Christ our God, crucified for us and destroying the dominion of death, O virgin Mother of God, that he save our souls.

*Friday Lauds* Deliver us from the sins which cling, O Mother of God, for we, the faithful, have no other hope but you and God who was born of you.

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* As the treasury of our resurrection, hymned by all, | raise from the pit and depths of transgression those who hope in you; | for by giving birth to our salvation | you have saved those subject to sin: | for you were a virgin before and during giving birth, | and so you have remained, | | even after giving birth.

*Saturday Lauds* Rejoice, O Lady who held within your womb him whom the heavens cannot hold. Rejoice, Virgin preached by the prophets, through whom Emmanuel has shone forth. Rejoice, Mother of Christ our God.

## **Tone 8**

*Sunday Vespers, Monday Matins* Rejoice, O Lady through whom the Angel received the joy of the world. Rejoice, O Virgin who gave birth to your creator and Lord. Rejoice, for you were to be the Mother of God.

*Monday Lauds* Rejoice, portal of the king of glory, through which the Most High alone passed, and which he sealed, for the salvation of our souls.

*Monday Vespers, Tuesday Matins* O faithful, let us magnify with hymns the Mother of God, the steadfast confirmation of the faith and the precious gift to our souls: Rejoice, for you held in your womb the stone of life. Rejoice, the hope of the ends of the earth and aid of the sorrowful. Rejoice, O bride unwedded.

*Tuesday Lauds* O most pure Virgin, with the depths of your maternal compassion, save us by your supplications to your Son and our God.

*Tuesday Vespers, Wednesday Matins* Seeing you the lamb and shepherd and Saviour of the world upon the cross, she who gave birth to you said, weeping: The world rejoices to receive deliverance, but my womb burns at the sight of your crucifixion, which you endure for all, O my Son and God.

*Wednesday Lauds* O most pure one, the fruit of your womb is the fulfillment of the prophets and the law, in the knowledge of which we piously glorify you, magnifying you as the Mother of God.

*Wednesday Vespers, Thursday Matins* O most pure Mother of God the noetic portal of life, deliver us who have recourse to you in faith, that we may glorify your most holy birthgiving, for the salvation of our souls.

*Thursday Lauds* O most pure Virgin, with the depths of your maternal compassion, save us by your supplications to your Son and our God.

*Thursday Vespers, Friday Matins* Seeing you the lamb and shepherd and Saviour of the world upon the cross, she who gave birth to you said, weeping: The world rejoices to receive deliverance, but inwardly I burn at the sight of your crucifixion, which you endure for all, O my Son and God.

*Friday Lauds* The fruit of your womb, O all-pure one, is the fulfillment of the prophets and the law; therefore, glorifying you in knowledge, we piously magnify you as the Mother of God

*Friday Vespers, Saturday Matins* For our sake you were born of the Virgin and suffered crucifixion, O good one, | and destroyed death by death and as God revealed the resurrection. | Forsake not those who were fashioned by your hand but show your love for mankind, O merciful one. | Receive the intercession for us of the Mother of God who gave you birth, || and save us, your despairing people, O our Saviour.

*Saturday Lauds* O most pure Virgin, with the depths of your maternal compassion, save us by your supplications to your Son and our God.