

**THE 20th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AND THE 19th DAY OF THE MONTH OF OCTOBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS FATHER, JOHN OF
KRONSTADT**

(Note: The Service as here given is based on the assumption that it will be celebrated on the 20th December in conjunction with the Forefeast of the Nativity. For other possible combinations (with St. Ignatius in December), or in the event that either should fall on a Sunday, the Typicon should be consulted. In addition, this translation does not agree with the MP service for St. John, but does agree with that for the forefeast)

AT LITTLE VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 4 Stichera, in Tone II:

“O Jesus, Son of God, my strength! O Light of my mind, Thou peace and joy of my heart: Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee Who dost deliver me from my invisible enemies” didst thou cry aloud, O John. Thus do thou also teach us to hymn the Lord with all our heart, O righteous John, servant of Christ. **(Twice)**

Incarnate, Christ called thieves and harlots to repentance, and thou, O merciful pastor, fulfilling the commandment of the Chief Shepherd, ate with publicans and conversed with sinners, calling all to repentance and teaching all to pray: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner! O merciful God, glory be to Thee!

Ye are the image of God, wherefore preserve ye this great image, the image of God's beauty, the image of His boundless love, that ye may be children of our Father Who is in heaven, that ye may be holy as your Father is holy.” Thus, O divinely wise pastor, didst thou instruct thy flock, and thus didst thou thyself live in a holy manner.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Never hath thy love failed, O merciful father John of Kronstadt. Thou art our hope for correction of life, our pastoral protector, O generous benefactor, our hope, O righteous John.

Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VIII:

O house of Ephratha, thou holy city, glory of the prophets: adorn thou the house wherein the Divine One is born.

On the Aposticha, these Stichera of the righteous one, in Tone IV:

Thou didst belong to the Lord from thine infancy, acquiring the sense of a grown man in thy childhood, desiring the wisdom of God; and didst wholly become a dwelling place of God, O gracious John, our father.

Verse: He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, * his righteousness abideth unto ages of ages.

Standing before the Holy Trinity with a mind illumined by grace, O blessed John, with heavenly rays thou hast illumined those who lie in the darkness of sin. Enlighten us also with the light of thy divine vision.

Verse: His heart is ready * to hope in the Lord.

Light unapproachable dwelt within thee, O righteous father, and the Lord set thee as a lamp amid the darkness of sin. Wherefore, instructed by thee, we hymn thy gracious memory, O John.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O Lord, Who didst bind Thine apostles with the bond of love, and hast appointed our father John as a new herald of Thy love: Establish even now the Church's bond of love, O our Savior, that united we may hymn Thee and Thine ineffable goodness.

Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Sing unto the Lord Who is born of the Virgin! Chant a hymn, ye armies of heaven! Clap your hands, ye mortals! For God is come to dwell among you! Man hath become God by a gift. Lo! a wonder taketh place among us today: Christ, the King of Israel, is come!

Troparion of the righteous one, in Tone IV:

With the apostles thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth; * with the confessors thou didst endure sufferings for Christ; * thou didst resemble the holy hierarchs in thy preaching of the Word; * and with the venerable hast thou shone forth in the grace of God. * Therefore, the Lord hath exalted the depths of thy humility above the heavens, * and hath given us thy name as a source of most wondrous miracles. * Wherefore, O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, * take pity in thy love upon people in misfortunes; * and hearken unto thy children, * who with faith call upon thee, ** O righteous John, our beloved pastor.

Or this Troparion, in Tone IV:

O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, * take pity in thy love upon people in misfortunes; * hearken unto thy children who with faith call upon thee, * expecting compassionate aid from thee, ** O John of Kronstadt, our beloved pastor.

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! * Be thou opened unto all, O Eden! * Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! * For in the cave the Tree of Life hath sprung forth from the Virgin. * Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, * in the midst of which is the divine Tree, * whereof eating, we shall live, and not die as did Adam. * Christ is born, that He might restore His image ** which of old fell!

Litany and Dismissal.

AT GREAT VESPERS

We chant “Blessed Is the man ...,” the first antiphon.

On “Lord, I have cried ...”: If the service be for both John, Ignatius, and the forefeast, 10 Stichera: the following 3 of the forefeast, 3 of the holy hierarch, and 4 of the righteous one; but if the service be only for the righteous one and the forefeast, then 8 Stichera: the following 3 of the forefeast, and 5 of the righteous one.,

Stichera of the forefeast, by Anatolius, in Tone I:

Let us celebrate the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ, O ye people, and raising our thoughts on high let us go in spirit to Bethlehem; and with the eyes of our mind let us gaze upon the Virgin, as she hasteneth to give birth unto our God, the Lord of all. Joseph, when he beheld the magnitude of this wonder, thought that he saw a mortal wrapped as a babe in swaddling clothes; but from all that came to pass he understood that it was the true God, who granteth the world great mercy.

Let us celebrate the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ, O ye people, and raising our thoughts on high let us go in spirit to Bethlehem, and let us look upon a great mystery in the cave, for Eden hath been opened once again, when from the pure Virgin God cometh forth, as perfect in His divinity as in His humanity. Wherefore, let us cry aloud: Holy God, Thou Father without-beginning! Holy Mighty, Thou Son made flesh! Holy Immortal, Thou Spirit, the Comforter! Holy Trinity, glory be to Thee!

Hearken, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! For, lo! the Son and Word of God the Father cometh forth to be born of a Maiden who hath not known a man, through the good pleasure of the Father Who begat Him dispassionately, and by the activity of the Holy Spirit. Make ready, O Bethlehem! Throw open thy gates, O Eden! For He Who hath become that which He was not, and He Who formed all creation Himself hath taken our form, granting the world great mercy.

Stichera of the holy righteous one, in Tone VI,

Spec. Mel.: “Having set all aside ...”:

Having set aside all the things of this world, with one voice let us praise the wondrous beacon of the land of Russia and of the whole world, the good shepherd, the priest John, who hath given us a splendid model of life in Christ, who on earth was aflame with the spirit of prayer, and who received from the Lord a twofold gift of healing. Through his prayers may Christ strengthen us in piety and show us to be steadfast children of the Church, for the salvation of our souls.

With all thy heart and mind, O blessed John, thou didst love the life in Christ; thinking and doing all things pleasing to God, thy labors bore fruit abundantly through the grace of the priesthood, and at the Lord's Supper, as if in heaven, with enraptured spirit thou didst stand at the altar of the Lord from day to day with tears of compunction, and now, standing before the Holy Trinity in the highest, offer up prayers, that He grant peace to the world and save our souls.

By the path of spiritual vigilance, reverence, contemplation of the mysteries of God, amendment of soul, and rest in God, thou didst attain unto the heavenly bridal chamber. By acts of mercy and thy miracles the Church is adorned, by the purity of thy life impiety is put to shame, and by the words of thy writings the Faith hath been confirmed. Wherefore, we entreat thee, O all-honored John: Be thou our guide amid all our circumstances, that guided and guarded by thee, we may be deemed worthy of the Kingdom of heaven.

Travailing with all thy heart over the darkness of the nations, thou didst at first think to depart unto the lands of the East. But, beholding Kronstadt, which was far nearer, perishing, thou didst submit to the call from on high, which came once during sleep through a vision of a temple, O righteous John. “I know,” thou didst say, “the loftiness of the priesthood, yet I hope in God; for I know that He is my strength.” O, the divine power of love, which doth draw us to Christ and strengthen us!

Making room for all in thy pastoral heart, and constrained by the wounds inflicted upon the poor by poverty, thou didst call all people by thy words and by thy writings, to build a house of industry, that the poor might find refuge therein. O teacher of good deeds worked through faith! O nurturer of the souls and bodies of the poor! O John, joy of those who before were in despair! Thy care for such here on earth was a likeness of thine intercession now in heaven.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Thou didst believe in righteousness with thy whole heart, O priest of God, and with thy lips thou didst speak of salvation: The Lord is my being; the Lord is my deliverance from everlasting death; the Lord is my eternal life; the Lord is my purification, my deliverance and sanctification; the Lord is my strength in weakness, my freedom when I am straightened, my light amid darkness, my peace amid confusion! Glory to Thee, O my Savior, almighty power! Glory to Thee, O Savior, omnipresent power! Glory to Thee, most kind-hearted Compassion! Glory to Thee, Power ever open to my prayers! Glory to Thee, brightest Eye which ever regarded me and beholdest all my hidden things! Wherefore, O holy John, following after thee we also cry out to the Lord: Glory to Thee, O our God, wondrous in Thy saints whose teachings show forth Thy wonder! Glory be to Thee!

Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VIII:

O Bethlehem, receive standing as the metropolis of God; for the never-waning Light cometh to be born within thee. Ye angels, marvel in the heavens! Ye men, give glory on earth! O magi, bring ye most glorious gifts from Persia! Ye shepherds, piping, sweetly sound forth the thrice-holy hymn! Let every breath praise the Creator of all!

Entrance. Prokeimenon of the Day. Three Lessons:

THE READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON (3, 1-9).

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction, but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded, for God proved them and found them worthy for Himself. As gold in the furnace hath He tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever. They that put their trust in Him shall understand the truth; and such as be faithful in love shall abide with Him; for grace and mercy is to His saints and visitation for His elect.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with his right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them. He shall take to Him His jealousy for complete armor, and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies. He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment for an invincible shield. His severe wrath shall He sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with Him against the unwise. Then shall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds, as from a well drawn bow, shall they be cast as out of a stone bow, and the water of the sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them, and like a storm shall blow them away: thus iniquity shall lay waste the whole earth, and ill dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the mighty. Hear, therefore, O ye kings, and understand; learn, ye that be judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations. For power is given you by the Lord, and sovereignty from the Most High.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine

the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds: that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect unto His chosen.

At the Litiya, the Sticheron of the temple, and these Stichera, in Tone II:

“**O** Jesus, Son of God, my strength! O Light of my mind, Thou peace and joy of my heart: Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee Who dost deliver me from mine invisible enemies!” didst thou cry aloud, O John. Thus do thou also teach us to hymn the Lord with all our heart, O righteous John, servant of Christ.

Incarnate, Christ called thieves and harlots to repentance; and thou, O merciful pastor, fulfilling the commandment of the Chief Shepherd, ate with publicans and conversed with sinners, calling all to repentance and teaching all to pray: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner! O merciful God, glory be to Thee!

“**Y**e are the image of God; wherefore preserve ye this great image, the image of God's beauty, the image of His boundless love, that ye may be children of our Father Who is in heaven, that ye may be holy as your Father is holy.” Thus, O divinely wise pastor, didst thou instruct thy flock, and thus didst thou thyself live in a holy manner.

Glory ..., in Tone I:

“**W**hen we pray, we pray through the Holy Spirit; wherefore, all the prayers of the Church are the breathing of the Holy Spirit, and all we Christians are His offspring. Come, therefore, and abide in us, O Holy Spirit! Have mercy on us and renew us all, that we may be one Body of Christ.” Such was thine unceasing prayer, O most wondrous John our father, and God hearkened unto thee and anointed thee with the oil of eternal joy.

Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone I:

He Who bowed down the heavens and made His abode within the Virgin cometh in the flesh, to be born in the cave of Bethlehem as was written, and to be seen as a babe, imparting life to babes in the womb. Wherefore, rejoicing, let us now greet Him with uprightness of heart.

On the Aposticha: Stichera of the forefeast, in Tone II:

Lo, the hour of our salvation draweth nigh! Make ready, O cave, for the Virgin approacheth to give birth! Rejoice and be glad, O Bethlehem, thou land of Judah, for from thee hath our Lord shone forth as the dawn! Hearken, ye mountains and hills, and all ye lands round about Judea: for Christ cometh in His love for mankind, to save him whom He hath fashioned.

Verse: God shall come out of Theman, * and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

O Bethlehem, thou land of Judah, with Splendor make ready a divine cave for human habitation, wherein God shall be born in the flesh from the holy Virgin who hath not known a man, that He might save the world!

Verse: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; * O Lord, I have considered Thy works, and I was stricken with awe.

The composition of Andrew Pyrrhus: Come ye all, let us faithfully celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and noetically let us put forth like a star the hymn of the glorification of the Magi, and with the shepherds let us cry aloud: The salvation of mankind hath come from the Virgin's womb, summoning all the faithful.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

It was not our fathers that told us, nor our elders that informed us, but we ourselves have seen the miracles that have taken place through thee; we ourselves have experienced the grace that doth pour forth from thee. Our loved ones were healed, those who were dying arose from bed in good health, our every petition was granted through thy prayer. Wherefore, we honor thee as a favorite of God and an intercessor before the Lord.

Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VIII:

O ye people, let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and lifting up our thoughts to Bethlehem, let us elevate ourselves in mind; and with the eyes of our souls let us gaze upon the Virgin who cometh to give birth in the cave to our Lord and God. And Joseph, beholding the magnitude of His miracles, supposed that he beheld a man wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands, but perceived from the testimony of things that He was the true God, Who bestoweth great mercy upon our souls.

Troparion of the righteous one, in Tone IV:

With the apostles thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth; * with the confessors thou didst endure sufferings for Christ; * thou didst resemble the holy hierarchs in thy preaching of the Word; * and with the venerable hast thou shone forth in the grace of God. * Therefore, the Lord hath exalted the depths of thy humility above the heavens, * and hath given us thy name as a source of most wondrous miracles. * Wherefore, O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, * take pity in thy love upon people in misfortunes; * and hearken unto thy children, * who with faith call upon thee, ** O righteous John, our beloved pastor.

Or this Troparion, in Tone IV:

O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, * take pity in thy love upon people in misfortunes; * hearken unto thy children who with faith call upon thee, * expecting compassionate aid from thee, ** O John of Kronstadt, our beloved pastor.

If there be a vigil, this Troparion (Twice), and “Virgin Theotokos, rejoice ...,” (Once).

But if there be not a vigil, then after the first Troparion we chant:

Glory ..., Both now ..., that of the Forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! * Be thou opened unto all, O Eden! * Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! * For in the cave the Tree of Life hath sprung forth from the Virgin. * Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, * in the midst of which is the divine Tree, * whereof eating, we shall live, and not die as did Adam. * Christ is born, that He might restore His image ** which of old fell!

AT MATINS

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone IV:

Thou didst not despise either stranger or sojourner, O father John, but wast kind and merciful and compassionate unto all: A father for orphans and a defender for widows, clothing for the naked and food for the hungry. Remember us also, thy poor children, and deny us not thy gracious love.

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast in Tone I:

He that bowed down the heavens and made His abode in the Virgin hath now come forth in the flesh to be born in the cave of Bethlehem as it was written, and He Who imparteth life to infants in the womb is seen as a babe Himself. Rejoicing now, let us all go forth to meet Him with uprightness of heart.

After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone V:

Strengthened by divine power, thou didst overcome the temptations of the invisible foe, and passed on to the unwaning light. Heal thou the sufferings of our souls and direct us by thy counsel, for thou hast been given by God to all as a physician and comforter, O John, our father.

Glory ..., Both now ..., in Tone IV:

Rejoice, O Sion! Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem! For the Sustainer of all, having sent forth a star, hath announced His infinite condescension, before which the hosts of heaven tremble: Truly He Who alone is the Lover of mankind is immutably born of the Virgin!

After the Polyeleos, this Magnification: We magnify thee, O holy and righteous father John, and we honor thy holy memory, for thou dost entreat Christ God for us.

Selected Psalm:

A: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Alleluia..., Glory to Thee, O God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

A fiery minister of the Word of God and a vessel of faith wast thou, O divinely inspired John; wherefore, the Lord appointed thee a new Abraham, O father of many. Pray thou therefore, O holy father, that we may all be children of God and that our souls may be saved.

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast in Tone VI:

Christ draweth nigh! * Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! * The salvation of the nations already shineth forth! * Adorn the manger, * assemble the shepherds, * call forth the magi from Persia, * and summon the armies of the incorporeal intelligences! * The King of the heavens ** cometh to earth!

Song of Ascent, the first antiphon of Tone IV.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, * and let thy saints sing with joyfulness.

Verse: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

Let every breath ...,

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE (6:17-23)

At that time: Jesus stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.

After Psalm 50, this Sticheron, in Tone VI:

O earthly angel, friend of all, instrument of the Spirit Comforter, bearer of the love of Christ, griever over all the world and mouth of all the faithful, consolation of the grieving and sorrowful, help of the persecuted, physician of our souls and bodies, father and intercessor, holy and righteous John: come thou and stand with us, that with thee we may offer up praise and thanksgiving unto God the Savior, performing this great solemnity.

Canon of the forefeast, with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the righteous one, with 8 Troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "My life is in Christ, to Whom I chant throughout all ages", in Tone IV:

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Let us all chant a triumphant hymn unto God * Who wrought wondrous miracles * with His upraised arm, * and saved Israel, * for He hath been glorified.

Let us begin this day to celebrate the forefeast of the Nativity of Christ, Who was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mother in the cave at Bethlehem, in His great loving-kindness.

The pre-eternal God, Who released me from the bonds of sin, is wrapped in swaddling bands, and, seen as a babe, He is laid in a manger. Glory be to His dominion!

Theotokion: Eden is opened unto Thee, O Master, Who wast born in the flesh of the divine Maiden and Virgin in the city of Bethlehem. We hymn Thine awesome dispensation!

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: Through the deep of the Red Sea, * marched dry shod Israel of old, * and by Moses' outstretched hands, * raised in the form of a cross, * the power of Amalek was routed in the wilderness.

Make firm my senses and mind, O my Savior, that I may worthily hymn the supplications and struggles of Thy servant John our father, who loved Thee and was beloved of Thee.

O blessed one who from thy youth wast forechosen to chant unto the first-called apostle in his holy temple, illumined with the radiance of the Cross thou didst flee the gloom of sin, unceasingly offering up prayers and hymnody to God our Savior.

On a chariot of the virtues didst thou mount to heaven, as once did Elijah on a chariot of fire; hence, beseech thou the Lord that He send down upon us correction of life.

Theotokion: Through thee, O Virgin Theotokos, we who were once deprived of life in paradise have received everlasting life; for thou hast given birth unto Him Who alone is without beginning and giveth life unto all.

Katavasia: Christ is born, give ye glory! ...,

ODE III

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: The stone which the builders have rejected, * the same hath become the cornerstone: * this is the rock upon which Christ hath established the Church, * which He hath redeemed from among the nations.

Let all creation chant the hymnody of the forefeast unto Him Who was begotten of the Father before the morning star, and hath now shone forth ineffably from the Virgin, and is born in Bethlehem, in His great loving-kindness.

A star hath already shone forth from the tribe of Judah; and, recognizing it, the kings are journeying from the East, and hasten to behold Christ born in the flesh in Bethlehem.

Theotokion: Isaiah, knowing of this incarnation of Christ, clearly foretelleth through the Holy Spirit: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name 'God is with us,' and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: Thy Church, O Christ, rejoiceth in Thee crying aloud: * Thou, O Lord, art my strength, * my refuge and foundation.

As one who shared in the manner of life of the apostles and wast an emulator of their life, O divinely inspired one, thou didst set forth the word of truth unto the end.

The eye of thy soul beheld the kingdom of heaven, for it was pure; wherefore, thou didst splendidly set forth thy life, and, honoring it in God, we glorify thee.

Let him who doth not labor not eat! These words of the Apostle Paul didst thou proclaim to thy brethren; wherefore, thou didst raise up a house of industry for the sake of the poor, wherein the impoverished and ailing might be provided for, being sustained by the work of their own hands.

Theotokion: **T**hou art wholly light, all-goodness, all-wisdom; thou canst, as Mother of the Almighty, do all things; thou alone art all-perfect, in that thou art the Mother of the all-perfect King of glory.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III,

Spec. Mel.: “Today the Virgin ...”:

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave * to ineffably give birth unto the pre-eternal Word. * Having heard this, be glad, O thou ecumene, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: **O** wonder truly awesome and beyond all telling! He Who hath given existence unto all things hath, in His goodness, entered into the womb of the holy Virgin, and cometh to be born in a cave, and to be laid in a manger. From above the star heralds Him to the Magi who come to render Him homage with gifts, drawn from afar, following with care the prophecy of Balaam, who said: A star will announce beforehand the young Child, the pre-eternal God.

The Sessional Hymn of the righteous one, in Tone VIII:

O blessed John, lamp of Kronstadt, thou whose activity and preaching were continual, who offered up before the throne of the Most High lamentation over the sins of many, and who in the Spirit beheld the bowing down of the heavens at the holy liturgy: Pray thou on behalf of our souls!

Glory ..., Now and ever of the forefeast in Tone VIII:

Having shone forth from the Father, from the womb before all ages, in an uncommingled manner, the Word of God cometh forth from thy womb without seed, O most pure one, in the fullness of time, raising up us who of old had grievously fallen, and leading us up to his pristine beauty, in that He is full of tender compassion. Before His birth the hosts of the incorporeal ones went forth, and mystically send down hymns of victory upon us, crying aloud: Glory to God Who hath given us peace, Who hath broken down the middle wall of enmity, as is His good pleasure!

ODE IV

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Foreseeing in the Spirit O Prophet Habbakuk, * the incarnation of the Word, * thou didst proclaim, crying aloud: * When the years draw nigh, Thou shalt be known; * when the season cometh, Thou shalt be shown forth! * Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Ye mountains, hills and trees of the forest, ye rivers and sea, and everything that hath breath: leap up in gladness! Our salvation now draweth nigh! Jesus cometh to be born of a Virgin in the city of Bethlehem!

Take up thy psaltery, O Prophet David, and sing a hymn clearly, inspired by the Holy Spirit; for Christ God, the Lord of glory, Who shone forth without commingling from the womb of the Father before the morning star, is born from the Virgin.

Theotokion: How can the least and most lowly cave receive Thee born in the flesh, O Word? How is it that Thou Who dost clothe the heavens with clouds art wrapped in swaddling clothes? How is it that Thou dost rest as a babe in a manger of dumb beasts?

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: Beholding Thee, the Sun of righteousness, * lifted up upon the Cross, * the Church now standeth arrayed and doth worthily cry aloud: * Glory be to Thy power, O Lord!

Having a firm foundation in Christ, thou didst imitate Abraham of old in thy hospitality, receiving those who came to thee from all lands, and leading them to the Lord; and thus didst thou do that which is pleasing unto God.

Desiring to make thy heart a temple of God, it was thy wish to serve unceasingly in the house of God, adorning thy soul with the beauties of heaven.

Having extinguished all the passions of the body with the dew of thy feats, thou didst kindle the light of dispassion; wherefore, thou wast shown also to be a child of the everlasting day, O blessed father.

Theotokion: The divine Ezekiel, O most pure one, called thee prophetically the gate which was closed, through which He Who alone is pre-eternal hath passed without change, granting His peace.

ODE V

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Grant us Thy peace, O Son of God, * for we know no other God than Thee, * and we call upon Thy Name, * for Thou art the God of the living and the dead.

May the clouds, rejoicing, let sweetness drop down like dew; for the Lord draweth nigh to be born as a babe of the pure Virgin in a cave.

Leap up now, O divine prophets of God; for He Who is anointed doth of a truth come to fulfill the preaching of your divine tongues, being born as a babe.

Theotokion: O Eden, which of old wast closed to me, open thyself now, beholding Christ as a babe in the flesh, born of the Virgin Maiden in the city of Bethlehem, as is His good pleasure.

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: Thou, O Lord, who camest into the world, * art my light, * a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance * those who sing Thy praises in faith.

Unceasingly serving thy Lord and ever emulating the labors of the apostles, O father, thou wast deemed worthy of heavenly gifts.

Having slain the passionate pleasures of thy corruptible flesh, thou didst enliven thine incorruptible soul with piety, and make of it a house of the divine Spirit.

Earnestly proclaiming the Gospel of Christ unto all, thou wast a daily communicant at the banquet of the Lord, making thyself and thy flock a living offering which was holy in God's sight.

Theotokion: O most pure one, thou hast given birth unto One of the Trinity, Who, for the sake of His loving-kindness, appeared on earth in two natures; Him do thou unceasingly entreat, that He save our souls.

ODE VI

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Emulating the Prophet Jonah, I cry aloud: * Free Thou my life from corruption, O Good One; * and save me who crieth out: * O Savior of the world, Glory be to Thee!

To the astrologers heaven now pointeth, by means of a radiant star, to the King of heaven Who is born on earth for our sake in the city of David.

The Prophet David clearly soundeth forth crying aloud: Thou, O house of Ephratha, O Bethlehem, wherein God hath manifested Himself through the Virgin, leap up and dance!

Theotokion: In the cave of Bethlehem the Virgin manifestly giveth birth unto the Lord and Creator of all; and, wrapping Him as a man in swaddling clothes, she layeth Him now in a manger.

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: The church crieth out unto Thee O Lord, * 'I will sacrifice unto Thee with a voice of praise * having been cleansed of the blood of the demons' * by the blood that for mercy's sake flowed from Thy side.

Thou wast a fruitful olive tree in the house of thy Lord, O divinely manifest John, for the Lord imparted divine knowledge unto thee and strengthened thee in thine apostolic work.

Ye are the members of the body of Christ! Thus, with the Apostle Paul didst thou preach, teaching thy flock to love Christ alone, that all may be one.

Thy life is holy, thy discourse, O divinely wise one, was filled with the grace of God, and thy heart became a vessel of grace-filled prayer. Wherefore, with faith and love we honor thee.

Theotokion: **T**he angelic hosts marveled at the ineffable wonder which took place within thee, O most holy Virgin; how He Who is incorporeal and sustaineth all things took flesh from thee.

Kontakion of the righteous one, in Tone IV:

O father John, namesake of grace, * who wast chosen by God from childhood, * who in thy youth miraculously received from Him the gift of learning, * and in a dream wast most gloriously called to be a priest: ** Entreat Christ God, that we may all be with thee in the kingdom of heaven.

Ikos: **T**he Holy Spirit Who spake in the prophets and enlightened the whole world through the apostles, Who gave strength to the martyrs and made clear the Orthodox Faith through the holy hierarchs, poured forth His grace abundantly upon thee, O father John; for by thy discourse, by thy works and thy whole life thou didst proclaim the faith of Christ. Wherefore, the Lord hath summoned thee to His habitations; and as thou dost now stand before the throne of His glory, do thou pray that all who honor thee may be with thee in the kingdom of God.

ODE VII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **T**hy children who were in the furnace **O** Savior, * were neither touched nor troubled by **T**he fire. * Whereupon the three sang, as with a single mouth * **T**hy praises and blessed **T**hee, saying: * '**O** God of our fathers, **B**lessed art **T**hou.'

Showing forth the advent of Christ in the flesh, Jeremiah cried aloud: "God hath appeared on earth, incarnate; and He hath found every path of knowledge, being born of His Mother in Bethlehem."

Lo! from the root of Jesse a rod hath sprung forth producing Christ as its flower. On Him Who is now born thereon in the cave doth the Spirit of understanding, counsel and divine vision rest.

Let us listen to the sacred words: the Lord is born as a babe for our sake. His government is upon His shoulders, and He is called the Angel of the great Counsel of the great Father, Christ, the Prince of peace!

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: In the Persian furnace the youths and descendants of Abraham, * burning with a love of piety * rather than by a flame of fire, * cried aloud saying: * Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord.

By the providence of God thou wast revealed to be a light of piety amid the heavy darkness of godlessness and unbelief, O father, calling upon all to cry aloud: Blessed art Thou in the churches of Thy glory, O Lord!

Man is formed in the image of God; and thou, O father John, wast a most splendid mirror of the love of God and a dwelling place of the Holy Trinity, Whom we sinners also glorify.

From the Lord didst thou receive the grace to heal the infirmities and passions of all; visit us also therewith always, that with thee we may all chant in oneness of mind: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, throughout all ages!

Theotokion: **O** Lady, save thy people, save those who are of the same blood as thee. Save us, O Mother of life and of the whole human race, and, even though we are unworthy to call thee our mother, sanctify, make steadfast and save us by thy supplications.

ODE VIII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Him of whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven are in awe * as their Lord and Creator, * ye priests hymn, ye children praise, * ye peoples bless and supremely exalt * throughout all ages.

The Lord manifestly cometh to His own. Let us receive Him, that, born in the cave, He may make His own again those who have been denied access to the sweetness of paradise.

Behold, our summons arriveth! Let us zealously give utterance to joyous hymnody, and let us chant the hymns of the forefeast unto Him Who is born in the humblest of caves.

Theotokion: **A**s the Lord hath sworn, so hath He already brought to pass, giving us His Virgin Mother from the seed of David, from whom He was born a babe in the city of Bethlehem, in a manner past all telling.

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: Having spread his hands, Daniel closed the lions' jaws * in their den; * while the zealously pious youths, * girded with virtue, * quenched the power of the fire and cried aloud: * Bless ye the Lord, all ye works of the Lord.

Cleanse our hearts and thoughts by thy supplications, and show us forth to be fertile ground, that, girded about with virtue, we may cry aloud: Bless the Lord all ye works of the Lord!

Thou wast crowned with a crown of gifts of grace, contemplating heavenly wisdom and ever crying aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Trinitarian: **G**lory to Thee, O most holy, life-creating Spirit, Who proceedest from the Father and ever restest in the Son! Glory to Thee, O Son of God, Who sanctifiest through the Holy Spirit, and strengthenest and makest us wise! Glory to Thee, O Father, Who art ever well pleased with us through the Holy Spirit! O indivisible Triune Unity, have mercy upon us!

Theotokion: **R**ejoice, thou who hast given birth to the salvation of the world! for through thee we have been raised up from earth to heaven! Rejoice, O blessed one, thou protection and dominion, rampart and foundation of those who chant: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

ODE IX

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **T**he ever-flowing wellspring of life, * light-bearing candlestick of grace, * the animate temple, and most pure cloud, * wider than the heavens and the earth, * the Theotokos do we the faithful magnify.

Let us leap for joy with the patriarchs and all the righteous, and with the holy prophets, for the Lord Jesus our deliverance, enlightenment, life and salvation, is now born of the Virgin in the city of David.

Already the entranceway of the divine incarnation of the Word is manifestly opened unto all. Rejoice, ye heavens! Leap for joy, ye angels! And let the earth rejoice in spirit with mortals, the shepherds and the Magi!

Theotokion: **T**he Virgin, the noetic phial of alabaster, beareth Christ like an inexhaustible myrrh. And He cometh openly to be poured forth through the Spirit in the cave, that He may fill our souls with His fragrance.

Canon of the righteous one

Irmos: **A** cornerstone not cut by hand O Virgin, * was cut from thee the unhewn mountain: * even Christ, Who hath joined together the disparate natures; * therefore rejoicing we magnify thee, * O Theotokos.

Truly thou wast a light to the world, O holy father, for, having adorned thy soul with godly works, thou wast revealed to be an eminent pastor of the Orthodox Church, being a model for the faithful in word and life; wherefore, we bless thee.

Keeping the One Creator ever before thy mind, through Whom and in Whom all things exist, with a pure heart and guileless soul thou didst labor for Him throughout thy life as thy Lord; and in no wise wast thou bound by Mammon.

Princes praised thee and many people glorified thee; but, disdainingly earthly glory, thou didst desire to be in the eternal mansions of God, there to glorify the Lord always.

Theotokion: **H**e Who is pre-eternal descended into thy womb, O most holy Virgin, and ineffably, in a manner transcending comprehension and all telling, was born from thee, that He might renew Adam of old; wherefore, we ever magnify thee as the cause of our renewal.

Exapostilarion of the righteous one:

Performing thy priestly ministry in the temple of the first-called of Christ, and zealously emulating his apostolic service of faith, thou wast a good laborer of the garden of Christ, bringing the faithful to the Lord like a bountiful harvest, ever proclaiming throughout thy whole life: My life is in Christ!

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast:

O Bethlehem, prepare ye a new dwelling: a cave and the sacred manger! Ye assemblies of shepherds and wise men from the east: Go to it, guided by the radiance of the star, for the Virgin giveth birth therein to the supremely Perfect One as a Babe.

We chant 8 Stichera: the following 4 of the forefeast, and 4 of the righteous one, with the additional stichoi as given, and Glory ..., as indicated, then: Both now ..., the

Theotokion of the forefeast

Stichera of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

The composition of Romanus the Melodist:

Go before us, ye angelic hosts, * and prepare the manger in Bethlehem; * for the Word is born, * Wisdom cometh forth, * and the Church receiveth a salutation, * to the joy of the Theotokos. * O ye people, let us say: * O our God, blessed art Thou Who comest! * Glory be to Thee!

Let the mountains rain down sweetness, * for, lo! God cometh from Theman. * Submit yourselves, ye nations! * Rejoice, ye prophets! * Leap for joy, ye patriarchs! * Clap your hands, O mortals! * Christ, the mighty and great Prince, is born! * The King of the heavens cometh into the world!

The Creator is come, * raising up mankind from the earth, * making His royal image new again! * Rejoice together, ye hosts on high, and chant! * The middle wall of enmity is broken down! * He is come Who hath accomplished this! * For God hath become a man, * the King of Israel, * Christ our God!

Come, O hard-hearted Israel, * cast away the cloud * which lieth over thy soul. * Acknowledge the Creator Who is born in the cave. * He is the expectation of the nations. * He shall abolish thy festivals, * for thou shalt not deign to cry out: * Christ cometh forth, * the King of Israel!

Stichera of the righteous one, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

O most joyous tidings! * the child John entreateth God, * asking God's mercy, * that He enlighten his mind. * He casteth himself down before the icon, * confessing to God the sorrow of his heart. * And, lo! the bindings fall from the eyes of the child's mind, * and the boy is illumined with the light of Christ, ** that he might do mighty things and teach many. **(Twice)**

Verse: Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, O Lord; * and let thy saints sing with joyfulness.

O abundance of wonders! * O living splendor of love! * Who will not marvel at thy beneficence * and thy tender compassion toward the destitute? * In the countless number of thy miracles * thou wast like the glorious and holy hierarch of Myra in Lycia. * Wherefore, the cities and villages of the land of Russia, * O righteous John, ** through thee beheld the light of Christ.

Verse: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, * and shall hope in Him.

As light and warmth * cannot be separated from the sun, * so in thee sanctity and learning, * love and compassion were present, * O most sacred John, * who wast given by God to the people. * Wherefore, O pastor, * warm us and enlighten us; ** be thou like the sun unto our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

“**B**owing down before the holy icons, I glorify Christ, God incarnate, the image of the glory of the Father. I confess the Father, Who begat the Son without beginning. I glorify the divine likeness of mortals, who are temples of the Holy Spirit. And beholding the image of the Cross, I sense the power of the Cross.” Behold, this is thy theology, O holy father, wherein thou didst emulate the great teachers of the Church, honoring the iconographic images to the glory of their prototypes.

Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Adorn thyself well, O cave! For the ewe lamb cometh, bearing Christ in her womb, O manger, receive Him Who by His word hath released us mortals from irrational acts! Ye shepherds, piping, bear witness to the awesome wonder! Ye magi from Persia, bring gold, frankincense and myrrh to the King! For the Lord hath appeared from the Virgin Mother! And His Mother, gazing down upon Him, bowed her head like a handmaid, and exclaimed to Him Who was held in her arms: How wast Thou sown within me? How didst Thou spring forth within me, O my Redeemer and God!

Great Doxology and Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: four from ODE III of the Forefeast, and 4 from ODE VI of the canon of the righteous one.

Let all creation chant the hymnody of the forefeast unto Him Who was begotten of the Father before the morning star, and hath now shone forth ineffably from the Virgin, and is born in Bethlehem, in His great tender compassion. (Twice)

A star hath already shone forth from the tribe of Judah; and, recognizing it, the kings are journeying from the East, and hasten to behold Christ born in the flesh in Bethlehem. (Twice)

Thou wast a fruitful olive tree in the house of thy Lord, O divinely manifest John, for the Lord imparted divine knowledge unto thee and strengthened thee in thine apostolic work.

Ye are the members of the body of Christ! Thus, with the Apostle Paul didst thou preach, teaching thy flock to love Christ alone, that all may be one.

Thy life is holy, thy discourse, O divinely wise one, was filled with the grace of God, and thy heart became a vessel of grace-filled prayer. Wherefore, with faith and love we honor thee.

Theotokion: The angelic hosts marveled at the ineffable wonder which took place within thee, O most holy Virgin; how He Who is incorporeal and sustaineth all things took flesh from thee.

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! * Be thou opened unto all, O Eden! * Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! * For in the cave the Tree of Life hath sprung forth from the Virgin. * Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, * in the midst of which is the divine Tree, * whereof eating, we shall live, and not die as did Adam. * Christ is born, that He might restore His image ** which of old fell!

Troparion of the righteous one, in Tone IV:

With the apostles thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth; * with the confessors thou didst endure sufferings for Christ; * thou didst resemble the holy hierarchs in thy preaching of the Word; * and with the venerable hast thou shone forth in the grace of God. * Therefore, the Lord hath exalted the depths of thy humility above the heavens, * and hath given us thy name as a source of most wondrous miracles. * Wherefore, O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, * take pity in thy love upon people in misfortunes; * and hearken unto thy children, * who with faith call upon thee, ** O righteous John, our beloved pastor.

Or this Troparion, in Tone IV:

O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, * take pity in thy love upon people in misfortunes; * hearken unto thy children who with faith call upon thee, * expecting compassionate aid from thee, ** O John of Kronstadt, our beloved pastor.

Kontakion of the righteous one, in Tone IV:

O father John, namesake of grace, * who wast chosen by God from childhood, * who in thy youth miraculously received from Him the gift of learning, * and in a dream wast most gloriously called to be a priest: ** Entreat Christ God, that we may all be with thee in the kingdom of heaven.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III,

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave * to ineffably give birth unto the pre-eternal Word. * Having heard this, be glad, O thou ecumene, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

Prokeimenon: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, * and shall hope in Him.

Verse: Hearken, O God, unto my prayer, when I make supplication unto Thee.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN (4:7-11)

Brethren: let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous man shall flourish like a palm-tree; like a cedar in Lebanon shall he be multiplied.

Verse: They that are planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God shall they blossom forth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE (6:31-36)

The Lord said: As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Communion Verse: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.