

THE ORDER OF THE HOURS CHANTED ON THE EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

If the Nativity of Christ falls on Sunday or Monday, we chant the Royal Hours on the morning of the preceding Friday. But if the Nativity falls on any other day, we chant the Royal Hours on the morning of the Eve of the Nativity.

THE FIRST HOUR

At the beginning of the second hour (i.e., 8 o'clock in the morning), the bells are rung. When we have assembled in church, the priest vesteth in the epitrachelion and phelonion, and the deacon in the stikharion. The paraecclesiarch setteth forth an analogion, suitably adorned, facing the royal doors, and he lighteth a candle on a candle-stand. The priest entereth the nave of the church, or the refectory, through the royal doors, the deacon preceding him bearing a censer. The priest setteth the Holy Gospel on the analogion and, standing before the analogion, intoneth the usual beginning: "Blessed is our God ..." The reader respondeth: "Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!", "O heavenly King ...," and the rest. And after the exclamation (following the Lord's Prayer), the priest censeth around the analogion on which the Holy Gospel resteth, and then censeth the rest of the icons, the whole temple, the superior and the brethren. And the reader readeth:

PSALM 5

Unto my words give ear, O Lord; hear my cry. Attend unto the voice of my supplication, O my King and my God; for unto Thee will I pray, O Lord. In the morning Thou shalt hear my voice. In the morning shall I stand before Thee, and Thou shalt look upon me; for not a God that willest iniquity art Thou. He that worketh evil shall not dwell near Thee, nor shall transgressors abide before Thine eyes. Thou hast hated all them that work iniquity; Thou shalt destroy all them that speak a lie. A man that is bloody and deceitful shall the Lord abhor. But as for me, in the multitude of Thy mercy shall I go into Thy house; I shall worship toward Thy holy Temple in fear of Thee O Lord, guide me in the way of Thy righteousness; because of mine enemies, make straight my way before Thee, For in their mouth there is no truth; their heart is vain. Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues have they spoken deceitfully; judge them, O God. Let them fall down on account of their own devisings; according to the multitude of their ungodliness, cast them out, for they have embittered Thee, O Lord. And let all them be glad that hope in Thee; they shall ever rejoice, and Thou shalt dwell among them. And all shall glory in Thee that love Thy name, for Thou shalt bless the righteous. O Lord, as with a shield of Thy good pleasure hast Thou crowned us.

PSALM 44

My heart hath poured forth a good word; I speak of my works to the king; my

tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe. Comely art Thou in beauty more than the sons of men; grace hath been poured forth on Thy lips, wherefore God hath blessed Thee for ever. Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One, in Thy comeliness and Thy beauty. And bend Thy bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall guide Thee wondrously. Thine arrows are sharp, O Mighty One, (under Thee shall peoples fall) sharp in the heart of the enemies of the king. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Wherefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness more than Thy fellows. Myrrh and staid, and cassia exhale from Thy garments, from the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad, they the daughters of kings in Thine honor. At Thy right hand stood the queen, arrayed in a vesture of in-woven gold, adorned in varied colors. Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thine own people and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for He Himself is thy Lord, and thou shalt worship Him. And Him shall the daughters of Tyre worship with gifts; the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance. All the glory of the daughter of the King is within, with gold-fringed garments is she arrayed, adorned in varied colors. The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto Thee. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the temple of the King. In the stead of thy fathers, sons are born to thee; thou shalt make them princes over all the earth. I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation. Therefore shall peoples give praise unto thee for ever, and unto the ages of ages.

PSALM 45

Our God is refuge and strength, a helper in afflictions which mightily befall us. Therefore shall we not fear when the earth be shaken, nor when the mountains be removed into the heart of the seas. Their waters roared and were troubled, the mountains were troubled by His might. The rushings of the river make glad the city of God; the Most High hath hallowed His tabernacle. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be shaken; God shall help her right early in the morning. The nations were troubled, kingdoms tottered, the Most High gave forth His voice, the earth was shaken. The Lord of hosts is with us, our helper is the God of Jacob. Come and behold the works of God, what marvels He hath wrought on the earth, making wars to cease unto the ends of the earth. He will crush the bow and will shatter the weapon, and shields will He utterly burn with fire. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us, our helper is the God of Jacob.

Glory ..., Both now ...,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)
Lord have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Once Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy, * was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, * as being of the seed of David. * And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, * but though there was no room for them in the inn, * the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, ** Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Both now ..., Theotokion:

What shall we call thee, O thou who art full of grace? Heaven, for thou hast shone forth the Sun of righteousness upon us. Paradise, for thou hast put forth the Flower of immortality. Pure Mother, for thou didst have in thy holy embrace the Son Who is God of all. Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Then these Stichera, the composition of Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, are each
chanted twice:

In Tone VIII: Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! Adorn thyself well, O manger! The Truth hath come! Receive Him, O cave! The shadow hath passed away, and God hath appeared to mankind through the Virgin, assuming our form and deifying our flesh. Wherefore, Adam is restored, and crieth with Eve: Blessing hath appeared on earth to save our race!

And the second choir also chanteth the foregoing Sticheron, without any Verse.

Then, in Tone III:

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

Now is that which was spoken by the prophet come to fulfillment, which said: "And thou, O Bethlehem, land of Judah, shalt not be called least among princes, preparing the cave beforehand; for from thee shall Christ God, the Leader of the nations, come forth in the flesh from the Virgin Maiden, Who shall shepherd His people of the New Israel!" Let us all render Him magnification!

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

The foregoing is repeated.

Then, Glory ..., the Sticheron in Tone VIII:

These things spake Joseph to the Virgin: "O Mary, what is this thing which I see accomplished in thee? I am at a loss, I am amazed and filled with awe. Quickly depart from me in secret! O Mary, what is this thing which I see accomplished in thee? Instead of honor, shame; instead of gladness, sorrow; and instead of an occasion to boast, thou hast brought disgrace upon me! No longer will I endure the mockery of men. I received thee immaculate from the priests of the temple of the Lord; and what is this that I see?"

Both now ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Then, the Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: The Lord said unto Me: Thou art My Son,
* this day have I begotten Thee.

Verse: Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and
the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF MICAH

Thus saith the Lord: And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, art few in number to be reckoned among the thousands of Judah; yet out of thee shall One come forth to Me, to be a ruler of Israel; and His goings forth were from the beginning, even from eternity. Therefore shall He appoint them to wait until the time of her that travaileth: she shall bring forth, and then the remnant of their brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And the Lord shall stand, and see, and feed His flock with power, and they shall dwell in the glory of the name of the Lord their God: for now shall they be magnified to the ends of the earth.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 303

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.

Deacon: Wisdom, upright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (§2)

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Deacon: Let us attend.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATHEW, § 2

The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When, as His Mother, Mary, was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, (which, being interpreted, is) God with us." Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife, and knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born Son; and he called His name Jesus.

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

My steps do Thou direct according to Thy saying, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. Deliver me from the false accusation of men, and I will keep Thy commandments. Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes.

Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may hymn Thy glory and Thy majesty all the day long.

Then, Trisagion through Our Father ...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.

Lord, have mercy! (Forty times)

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners; Who callest all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil, and ill. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: For blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Both now ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless!

Priest: O God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause Thy face to shine upon us and have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer:

O Christ, the True Light, Who enlightenest and sanctifiest every man that cometh into the world: Let the Light of Thy countenance be signed upon us, that in it we may see the Unapproachable Light, and guide our steps in the doing of Thy commandments, through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother, and of all Thy saints. Amen

THE THIRD HOUR

At the beginning of the Third and Sixth Hours, the deacon censeth only the Gospel, the icons, the superior and the choirs.

Reader: O come, let us worship ..., (Thrice)

PSALM 66

God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us and have mercy on us, That we may know upon the earth Thy way, among all the nations Thy salvation. Let the peoples give Thee praise, O God, let all the peoples praise Thee. Let the nations be glad and rejoice, for Thou shalt judge peoples with uprightness; and nations shalt Thou guide upon the earth. Let the peoples give Thee praise, O God, let all the peoples praise Thee; the earth hath yielded her fruit. Let God, our God, bless us; let God bless us, and let all the ends of the earth fear Him.

PSALM 86

His foundations are in the holy mountains; the Lord loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. I will make mention of Raab and Babylon to them that know me. And the foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Ethiopians, these were born there. A man will say: Mother Sion; and: That man was born in her; and: The Most High Himself hath founded her. The Lord shall tell it in the writ of the peoples and the princes, even these that were born in her. How joyous are all they that have their habitation in Thee.

PSALM 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness. O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not

despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and wholeburnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

Glory ..., Both now ...,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)

Lord have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Once Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy, * was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, * as being of the seed of David. * And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, * but though there was no room for them in the inn, * the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, ** Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Both now ..., Theotokion:

O Theotokos, thou art the true vine that hast budded forth for us the Fruit of life. Thee do we entreat: Pray thou, O Lady, with the holy apostles, that He have mercy upon our souls.

Then these Stichera:

In Tone VI: This is our God, and there shall be none other accounted like unto Him, Who was born of the Virgin and hath dwelt with mankind: the only-begotten Son is seen as a man, lying in a poor manger; the Lord of glory is wrapped in swaddling-bands. The star telleth the magi to worship Him, and we chant: O Holy Trinity, save Thou our souls! (Twice)

In Tone VIII: Verse: God shall come forth out of Theman, * and the Holy One out of a mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Beholding the mystery of Thee before Thy nativity, O Lord, the noetic armies were amazed; for Thou wast well-pleased to be born as a babe, O Thou Who adorned heaven with stars, and retest in a manger of dumb beasts, O Thou Who holdest the ends of the whole earth in the palm of Thy hand. By such a dispensation hath Thy loving-kindness become known, O Christ! Great is Thy mercy! Glory be to Thee!

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

The foregoing is repeated.

Glory ..., in Tone III:

Tell us, O Joseph: How didst thou receive from the Holy of holies the immaculate Virgin whom thou leadest to Bethlehem? “I have examined the prophets,” said he, “and, having received tidings from the angel, have become convinced that Mary shall ineffably give birth to God. To Him shall magi come from the East to render homage, offering Him worship with precious gifts. O Lord Who became incarnate for us, glory be to Thee!

Both now ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: A Child hath been born to us, * and a Son hath been given to us.

Verse: Whose government is upon His shoulder.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF BARUCH

This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison with Him. He hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob His servant, and to Israel His beloved. Afterward did He show Himself upon earth, and dwelt with men. This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endureth forever: all they that keep it shall come to life; but such as leave it shall die. Turn thee, O Jacob, and take hold of it: walk in the presence of the light thereof, that thou mayest be illumined. Give not thine honor to another, nor the things that are profitable unto thee to a strange nation. O Israel, blessed are we: for things that are pleasing to God are made known unto us.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS (§208)

Brethren: Before Faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the Faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by Faith. But after Faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the sons of God by Faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Deacon: Wisdom, upright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (§3)

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Deacon: Let us attend.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, § 5

In those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria), and all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David), To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Then, the following:

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 salvation.

**The, Trisagion through Our Father ..., and the
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.

Lord, have mercy! (Forty times)

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners; Who callest all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil, and ill. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: For blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Both now ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless!

Priest: By the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us.

Reader: Amen.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer:

○ Master God, the Father Almighty, O Lord, the Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and O Holy Spirit, one Godhead, one Power: Have mercy on me a sinner, and by the judgments which Thou knowest, save me, Thine unworthy servant; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Note: At the Third and Sixth Hours, the deacon censeth the Gospel, the Iconostasis, and the people only.

THE SIXTH HOUR

Reader: O come, let us worship ..., (Thrice)

PSALM 71

O God, give Thy judgment to the king, and Thy righteousness to the son of the king. That he may judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. Let the mountains receive peace for the people, and let the hills receive righteousness. He shall judge the beggars among the people, and shall save the sons of the poor, and shall humble the false accuser. And He shall continue as long as the sun, and before the moon from generation to generation. He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like rain-drops that fall upon the earth. In His days shall righteousness dawn forth an abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away. And He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers even unto the ends of the inhabited earth. Before Him shall the Ethiopians fall down, and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall bring gifts, kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring presents. And all the kings of the earth shall worship Him, all the nations shall serve Him. For He hath delivered the beggar from the oppressor, and the poor man for whom there was no helper. He shall spare the poor man and the pauper, and the souls of the poor shall He save. From usury and from injustices shall He redeem their souls, and precious shall be His name before them. And He shall live, and there shall be given unto Him of the gold of Arabia, and they shall make prayer concerning Him always; all the day long shall they bless Him. He shall be a support in the earth on the summits of the mountains; exalted more than Lebanon shall be His fruit, and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth. His name shall be blessed unto the ages, before the sun doth His name continue. And in Him shall be blessed all the tribes of the earth, all the nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, Who alone doeth wonders. And blessed is the name of His glory for ever, and unto the ages of ages. And all the earth shall be filled with His glory. So be it. So be it.

PSALM 131

Remember, O lord, David and all his meekness. How he made an oath unto the Lord, and vowed unto the God of Jacob: I shall not go into the dwelling of my house, I shall not ascend upon the bed of my couch, I shall not give sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eyelids, nor rest to my temples, Until I find a place for the Lord, a habitation for, the God of Jacob, we have heard of it in Ephratha, we have found it in the plains of the wood. Let us go forth into His tabernacles, let us worship at the place where His feet have stood. Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy holiness. Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice. For the sake of David Thy servant, turn not Thy face away from Thine

anointed one. The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and He will not annul it: Of the fruit of thy loins will I set upon thy throne. If thy sons keep My covenant and these testimonies which I will teach them, Their sons also shall sit for ever on thy throne. For the Lord hath elected Sion, He hath chosen her to be a habitation for Himself. This is My rest for ever and ever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen her. Blessing, I will bless her pursuit; her beggars will I satisfy with bread. Her priests will I clothe with salvation, and her saints with rejoicing shall rejoice. There will I make to spring forth a horn for David, I have prepared a lamp for My Christ. His enemies will I clothe with shame, but upon Him shall My sanctification flourish.

PSALM 90

He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High shall abide in the shelter of the God of heaven. He shall say unto the Lord: Thou art my helper and my refuge. He is my God, and I will hope in Him. For He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunters and from every troubling word. With His shoulders shall He overshadow thee, and under His wings shalt thou have hope. With a shield will His truth encompass thee; thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, Nor for the thing that walketh in darkness nor for the mishap and demon of noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but unto thee shall it not come nigh. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and thou shalt see the reward of sinners. For Thou, O Lord, art my hope. Thou madest the Most High thy refuge; No evils shall come nigh thee, and no scourge shall draw nigh unto thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. On their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Upon the asp and basilisk shalt thou tread, and thou shalt trample upon the lion and dragon. For he hath set his hope on Me, and I will deliver him; I will shelter him because he hath known My name. He shall cry unto Me, and I will hearken unto him. I am with him in affliction, and I will rescue him and glorify him. With length of days will I satisfy him, and I will show him My salvation.

Glory ..., Both now ...,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Once Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy, * was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, * as being of the seed of David. * And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, * but though there was no room for them in the inn, * the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, ** Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Both now ..., Theotokion:

Seeing that we have no boldness on account of our many sins, do thou beseech Him who was born of thee, O Virgin Theotokos for the supplication of a mother availeth much to win the Master's favor. Disdain not the prayers of sinners, O all-pure one, for merciful and mighty to save is He Who deigned also to suffer for our sake.

Then, these Stichera:

In Tone I: Come, O ye faithful, let us divinely ascend, and in Bethlehem let us behold the descent of God unto us from on high. Having purified ourselves in mind, let us offer up a life of virtue instead of myrrh, faithfully preparing our entries into the Nativity, crying out from the inner-chambers of our souls: Glory to God in the highest, Who existeth in the Trinity! For His sake hath goodwill appeared among mankind, delivering Adam from the primal curse, in that He is the Lover of mankind! (Twice)

In Tone IV: Verse: God shall come forth out of Theman, * and the Holy One out of a mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Hearken, O heaven, and attend, O earth! Let your foundations be moved, and let the uttermost depths tremble! For God the Creator, Who hath fashioned creation by His mighty hand, arraying Himself in the form of flesh, is seen to be the product of a womb. O the depths of the riches, the wisdom and understanding of God! For His judgments are unfathomable, and His ways are inscrutable!

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

The foregoing is repeated.

Glory ..., in Tone V:

Come, ye Christian people, let us behold the miracle which seizeth and filleth every mind with awe; and, piously chanting, O ye faithful, let us offer homage. Today the immaculate Virgin cometh to Bethlehem to give birth to the Lord, and the angelic choirs hasten on before. Seeing them, Joseph the betrothed cried aloud: "What is this awesome mystery accomplished within thee, O Virgin? How is it that thou shalt give birth, O heifer who knewest not wedlock?"

Both now ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: From the womb before the morning-star * have I begotten Thee.

Verse: The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

The Lord again spake to Ahaz, saying: "Ask for thyself a sign of the Lord thy God, in the depth or in the height." And Ahaz said: "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." And Isaiah said: "Hear now, O house of David: Is it a little thing for you to

contend with men? And how do ye contend against the Lord? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in the womb, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, before He knoweth either to prefer evil, or choose the good. For before the Child shall know good or evil, He refuseth evil, to choose the good. And the Lord said to me: Take to thyself a volume of a great new scroll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning the making of a rapid plunder of spoils; for it is near at hand. And make Me witnesses of faithful men: Uriah the priest and Zachariah the son of Barachiah. And I went in to the prophetess; and she conceived, and bore a son. And the Lord said to me: Call his name Spoil Quickly, Plunder Speedily. For before the child shall know how to call his father or his mother, One shall take the power of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria before the king of the Assyrians. God is with us! Know, ye nations, and be conquered; hearken ye, even to the extremity of the earth: He conquered, after ye have strengthened yourselves; for even if ye should again strengthen yourselves, ye shall again be conquered. And whatsoever counsel ye take, the Lord shall bring it to naught; and whatsoever word ye shall speak, it shall not stand among you: for God is with us!

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (§304)

Thou, O Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said He at any time: “Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation? Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those that heard Him?

Deacon: Wisdom, upright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (§3)

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Deacon: Let us attend.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATHEW, § 3

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying: “Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.” When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all

Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him: "In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet: 'And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people, Israel'" Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying: "Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and worship Him." When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo! the star which they saw in the east, went before them, until it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary, His Mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Let Thy compassions quickly go before us, O Lord, for we are become exceedingly poor. Help us, O God our Savior, for the sake of the glory of Thy name. O Lord, deliver us and be gracious unto our sins for Thy name's sake.

Then, Trisagion through, Our Father ... 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.

Lord, have mercy! (Forty times)

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners; Who callest all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil, and ill. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: For blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Both now ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless!

Priest: By the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us.

Reader: Amen.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer of Saint Basil the Great:

○ God and Lord of Hosts, and Maker of all Creation, Who by the tender compassion of Thy mercy which transcendeth comprehension, didst send down Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our race, and by His precious Cross didst tear asunder the handwriting of our sins, and thereby didst triumph over the principalities and powers of darkness: Do Thou Thyself, 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, both visible and invisible, that seek to do us evil. Nail down our flesh with the fear of Thee, and incline not our hearts unto words or thoughts of evil, but pierce our souls with longing for Thee, so that ever looking to Thee, and being guided by Thy Light as we behold Thee, the unapproachable and everlasting Light, we may send up unceasing praise and thanksgiving unto Thee, the Unoriginate Father, with Thine Only-begotten Son, and Thy most holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

THE NINTH HOUR

Reader: O come, let us worship ..., (Thrice)

PSALM 109

The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet. A scepter of power shall the Lord send unto Thee out of Sion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the splendor of Thy saints. From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek. The Lord at Thy right hand hath broken kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill them with dead bodies, He shall crush the heads of many upon the earth. He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall He lift up His head.

PSALM 110

I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, in the council of the upright and in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord, sought out in all the things that He hath willed. Confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages. He made a remembrance of His wondrous deeds; merciful and compassionate is the Lord; He hath given food to them that fear Him. He will be mindful forever of His covenant; the power of His works hath He declared unto His people, That He may give them the inheritance of the nations; the works of His hands are truth and judgment. Faithful are all His commandments, confirmed unto ages of ages, made in truth and uprightness. He hath sent redemption unto His people, He hath enjoined His covenant for ever; holy and terrible is His name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and all they that foster this have good understanding. His praise abideth unto ages of ages.

PSALM 85

Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, and hearken unto me, for poor and needy am I. Preserve my soul, for I am holy; save Thy servant, O my God, that hopeth in Thee. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for unto Thee will I cry all the day long; make glad the soul of Thy servant, for unto Thee have I lifted up my soul. For Thou, O Lord, art good and gentle, and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer, and attend unto the voice of my supplication. In the day of mine affliction have I cried unto Thee, for Thou hast heard me, there is none like unto Thee among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like unto Thy works. All the nations whom Thou hast made shall come and shall worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name. For Thou art great and workest wonders; Thou alone art God. Guide me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth; let my heart rejoice that I may fear Thy name. I will confess Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Thy name forever. For great is Thy mercy upon me, and Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost Hades. O God, transgressors have

risen up against me, and the assembly of the mighty hath sought after my soul, and they have not set Thee before them. But Thou, O Lord my God; art compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy, and true. Look upon me and have mercy upon me; give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and save the son of Thy handmaiden. Work in me a sign unto good, and let them that hate me behold and be put to shame; for Thou, O Lord, hast holpen me and comforted me.

Glory ..., Both now ...,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)

Lord have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Once Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy, * was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, * as being of the seed of David. * And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, * but though there was no room for them in the inn, * the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, ** Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Both now ..., Theotokion:

O Thou Who for our sake wast born of a Virgin, and didst suffer crucifixion, O Good One, and didst despoil death by death, and, as God, didst reveal the resurrection: Disdain not them which Thou hast fashioned with Thine hand; show forth Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One; accept the Theotokos who gave Thee birth, who intercedeth for us; and do Thou, our Savior, save a despairing people.

Then these Stichera:

In Tone VII: Herod was amazed, beholding the piety of the magi, and, overcome with rage, he inquired concerning the disposition of the time of birth. Mothers were made childless, and a bitter harvest was made of the youngest of infants. Their mothers' breasts dried up, and the fountains of their milk were held back. Great was this calamity! Wherefore, assembling with piety, O ye faithful, let us worship the nativity of Christ. (Twice)

In Tone II: Verse: God shall come forth out of Theman, * and the Holy One out of a mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

When Joseph was wounded with grief as he traveled to Bethlehem, O Virgin, thou didst cry to him: "Why art thou downcast and troubled, seeing me immaculate, yet in nowise perceiving the awesome mystery accomplished in me? Wherefore, put away all fear, recognizing that which is most glorious; for God is come down to earth in His mercy, and now taketh flesh in my womb. Thou shalt behold Him born, as was His good pleasure, and, filled with joy, thou wilt worship as thy Creator, Him Whom the angels unceasingly hymn and glorify, with the Father and the Holy Spirit!"

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

The foregoing is repeated.

Then the Canonarch, standing in the middle of the temple, chanteth aloud the whole of the following Sticheron, in Tone VI:

Today He Who in essence is God intangible and holdeth all creation in the palm of His hand is born of the Virgin and wrapped as a mortal in swaddling-bands. He Who established the heavens by His word in the beginning, lieth in a manger. He Who rained down manna upon the people in the wilderness, is fed at the breast with milk. The Bridegroom of the Church summoneth the magi; the Son of the Virgin receiveth their gifts. We worship Thy nativity, O Christ! We worship Thy nativity, O Christ! We worship Thy nativity, O Christ! Show us also Thy divine Theophany.

And we make three full prostrations.

Then the deacon intoneth the following, also aloud: To the Orthodox episcopate of the Church of (N); our Most Reverend Metropolitan/Archbishop/Patriarch (N), First Hierarch of the (N) Orthodox Church; and our Right Reverend Archbishop/Metropolitan (or Bishop) (N): Many years!

To this and subsequent petitions, both choirs respond in unison: God grant them many years! (Thrice)

And where this service is celebrated in a monastery:

Save, O Christ God, our venerable father abbot (or archimandrite) N. and his brethren in Christ; preserve this holy community in peace, and establish this holy temple unto the ages of ages. Amen

And both choirs together chant: Save them, O Christ God! (Thrice)

NB: Be it known that this chanting of Many Years is performed in cathedrals, in the presence of bishops. In other places, where convenient, it is performed at Compline, after the dismissal of the holy Liturgy, or after Vespers, when the Eve of the Nativity falleth on a Saturday or a Sunday. But for monastic communities all Typicons prescribe that this rite be inserted at this point during the Royal Hours.

Then both choirs together chant the above Sticheron:

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

Today He Who in essence is God intangible and holdeth all creation in the palm of His hand is born of the Virgin and wrapped as a mortal in swaddling-bands. He Who established the heavens by His word in the beginning, lieth in a manger. He Who rained down manna upon the people in the wilderness, is fed at the breast with milk. The Bridegroom of the Church summoneth the magi; the Son of the Virgin receiveth their gifts. We worship Thy nativity, O Christ! We worship Thy nativity, O Christ! We worship Thy nativity, O Christ! Show us also Thy divine Theophany.

During the Ninth Hour, the deacon censeth the entire church.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: A man will say: Mother Sion, * and that man was born in her.

Verse: His foundations are in the holy mountains.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us, Whose government is upon His shoulder: and His name is called the Angel of great Counsel: for I will bring peace upon the princes, and health to Him. His government shall be great, and of His peace there is no end: it shall be upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to support it with judgment and with righteousness, from henceforth and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (§306)

Brethren: He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

Deacon: Wisdom, upright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (§4)

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Deacon: Let us attend.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, § 4

At that time: When the wise men had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take up the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the

wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

People: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Deliver us not up utterly, for Thy holy name's sake, and neither disannul Thou Thy covenant, and cause not Thy mercy to depart from us, for Abraham's sake, Thy beloved; and for Isaac's sake, Thy servant; and for Israel's, Thy holy one.

Then, Trisagion through Our Father ..., 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.

Lord, have mercy! (Forty times)

Thou Who at all times and at every hour, in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, Who art long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, most compassionate, Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on sinners; Who callest all to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Receive, O Lord, our prayers at this hour, and guide our life toward Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies, correct our thoughts, purify our intentions, and deliver us from every sorrow, evil, and ill. Compass us about with Thy holy angels, that, guarded and guided by their array, we may attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: For blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Both now ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless!

Priest: O God be gracious unto us and bless us, and cause Thy face to shine upon us and have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer:

O Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who art long-suffering in the face of our transgressions, and Who hast brought us even unto this present hour, wherein Thou didst hang upon the life-giving tree, and didst make a way into paradise for the wise thief, and by death didst destroy death: Be gracious unto us sinners and Thine unworthy servants; for we have sinned and committed iniquity, and are not worthy to lift up our eyes and behold the height of heaven, for we have abandoned the way of Thy righteousness, and have walked in the desires of our hearts. But we beseech Thy boundless goodness: Spare us, O Lord, according to the multitude of Thy mercy and save us for Thy holy name's sake; for our days were consumed in vanity. Rescue us from the hand of the adversary, and forgive us our sins, and mortify our carnal mind; that, putting aside the old man, we may be clad with the new, and live for Thee, our Master and Benefactor; and that thus by following in Thy commandments, we may attain to rest everlasting, wherein is the dwelling-place of all them that rejoice. For Thou art indeed the true joy and gladness of them that love Thee, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we send up glory, with Thine unoriginate Father, and Thy Most-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

THE TYPICA

(Not chanted, but read quickly)

PSALM 102

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all that He hath done for thee, Who is gracious unto all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thine infirmities, Who redeemeth thy life from corruption, Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion, Who fulfilleth thy desire with good things; thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. The Lord performeth deeds of mercy, and executeth judgment for all them that are wronged. He hath made His ways known unto Moses, unto the sons of Israel the things that He hath willed. Compassionate and merciful is the Lord, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy; not unto the end will He be angered, neither unto eternity will He be wroth. Not according to our iniquities hath He dealt with us, neither according to our sins hath He rewarded us. For according to the height of heaven from the earth, the Lord hath made His mercy to prevail over them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us. Like as a father hath compassion upon his sons, so hath the Lord had compassion on them that fear Him; for He knoweth whereof we are made, He hath remembered that we are dust. As for man,

his days are as the grass; as a flower of the field, so shall he blossom forth. For when the wind is passed over it, then it shall be gone, and no longer will it know the place thereof. But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity, even unto eternity, upon them that fear Him. And His righteousness is upon sons of sons, upon them that keep His testament and remember His commandments to do them. The Lord in heaven hath prepared His throne, and His kingdom ruleth over all Bless the Lord, all ye His angels, mighty in strength, that perform His word, to hear the voice of His words. Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, His ministers that do His will. Bless the Lord, all ye His works, in every place of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Glory ...,
PSALM 145

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord in my life, I will chant unto my God for as long as I have my being. Trust ye not in princes, in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return unto his earth. In that day all his thoughts shall perish. Blessed is he of whom the God of Jacob is his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, Who hath made heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is therein, Who keepeth truth unto eternity, Who executeth judgment for the wronged, Who giveth food unto the hungry. The Lord looseth the fettered; the Lord maketh wise the blind; the Lord setteth aright the fallen; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord preserveth the proselytes. He shall adopt for His own the orphan and widow, and the way of sinners shall He destroy. The Lord shall be king unto eternity; thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation.

Both now ...,

O only-begotten Son and Word of God, Thou Who art immortal, yet didst deign for our salvation to be incarnate of the Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and without change didst become man, and was crucified, O Christ God, trampling down death by death. Thou Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us.

Then:

In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that weep, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in the heavens.

We do not interpolate odes from the Menaion between the verses of the Beatitudes, neither do we read any epistle or Gospel.

Glory ..., Both now ...,

Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom!

Remember us, O Master, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom!

Remember us, O Holy One, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom!

The choir of angels hymneth Thee, and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!

Verse: Come unto Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed.

The choir of angels hymneth Thee, and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!

Glory ...,

The choir of the holy angels and archangels, with all the heavenly hosts, hymneth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!

Both now ..., the Symbol of Faith:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And arose again on the third day according to the Scriptures; And ascended into the heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

Then, the prayer:

Remit, pardon, forgive, O God, our offenses, both voluntary and involuntary, in deed and word, in knowledge and ignorance, by day and by night, in mind and thought; forgive us all things, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Then, Our Father ...,

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

After which we chant the 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.

Lord, have mercy! (Forty times)

And this prayer:

O Most holy Trinity, the consubstantial dominion, the indivisible Kingdom, and cause of every Good: Show Thy good will even unto me a sinner; make steadfast my heart and grant it understanding, and take away mine every defilement; enlighten my mind that I may glorify, hymn, worship, and say: One is holy, One is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Blessed be the name of the Lord from henceforth and for evermore. (Thrice)

Glory ..., Both now ...,

I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth. In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and be glad.

O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my tribulations.

Come unto Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his tribulations.

The angel of the Lord will encamp round about them that fear Him, and will deliver them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that hopeth in Him.

O fear the Lord, all ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him. Rich men have turned poor and gone hungry; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing.

Come ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is there that desireth life, who loveth to see good days?

Keepesthy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are opened unto their supplication. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, utterly to destroy the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and He will save the humble of spirit.

Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all. The Lord keepeth all their bones, not one of them shall be broken.

The death of sinners is evil, and they that hate the righteous shall do wrong. The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants, and none of them will do wrong that hope in Him.

Then the Megalynarion:

It is truly meet to bless thee, the Theotokos, ever-blessed and most blameless, and Mother of Our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Choir: Master (Father), Bless.

Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, of _____ (The Patron of the Temple), of _____ (saints of the day), and all the saints, have mercy on us and save us, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

Choir: Amen.

NB: Be it known that if the Eve of the Nativity fall on Saturday or Sunday, the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated, while on the feast itself we celebrate the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. This procedure also applieth to the feast of Theophany and its Eve. If the Eve fall on any other day besides Saturday or Sunday, we celebrate the Liturgy of Saint Basil on the Eve, and that of Saint John Chrysostom on the feast itself. This also applieth to Theophany.

NB: Be it also known that from the feast of the Nativity of Christ to that of His Theophany, there is no fasting, and the knees of the faithful are not bent during prayer in church or at home.

NB: Be it likewise known that when the feasts of the Nativity of Christ or the Holy Theophany fall on Sunday, the hymns of the feast completely supplant those of the Resurrection from the Oktoechos.