

THE 31st DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

APODOSIS OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE VENERABLE MELANIA IS TRANSFERRED TO
DECEMBER 30th, BECAUSE OF THE APODOSIS.

For the apodosis of the Feast of the Nativity, except for the Litiya, the Readings, and the Antiphons, we chant everything as set forth on the Feast of the Nativity. From Vespers 6 Stichera from “Lord I have Cried”, repeating the first two, from Great Compline the Aposticha with their verses, and from Matins, except for the Gospel reading, the Magnification and the Polyeleos, everything as set forth on the Feast. The service structure for when the apodosis falls on a weekend can be found in the Typicon.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 6 Troparia, from ODE IX of both canons of the feast.

The magi beheld the excellent course of the strange star which had newly appeared, illumining the heavens and marking the birth of Christ the King in Bethlehem, for our salvation.

The star revealed the newborn infant King to the magi who said: “Where is He, for we have come to worship Him?” But Herod who fought against God, enraged, was troubled, seeking to slay the Christ.

Herod inquired concerning the time of the star, following whose course the magi worshipped Christ with gifts in Bethlehem; but, guided thereby to their homeland, they left the cruel murderer of the infants behind in mockery.

O pure Mother, having beheld the indistinct images and dim shadows of the Word Who hath newly appeared through the closed gates, but mindful now of His true radiance, we bless thy womb as is meet. (Twice)

Having attained their desire and been deemed worthy to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by this, insofar as thou bestowest life-bearing grace to those who worship this glory, O pure Virgin.

Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, * hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; * for thereby, they that worshipped the stars * were instructed by a star * to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, * and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. ** O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone III:

Today the Virgin giveth birth to Him Who is transcendent in essence; * and the earth offereth a cave to Him Who is unapproachable. * Angels with shepherds give glory; * the Magi journey with a star; ** for our sake a young Child is born, Who is the pre-eternal God.

The Prokeimenon, in the VIII Tone: Let all the earth worship Thee and chant unto Thee; * let them chant unto Thy name, O Most High.

Verse: Shout with jubilation unto the Lord all the earth; chant ye unto His name, give glory in praise of Him.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (8:7-13)

Brethren: If the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Alleluia, in Tone I: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of His hands.

Verse: Day unto day poureth forth speech, and night unto night proclaimeth knowledge.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK (8:11-21)

At that time, the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Jesus, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

In place of “Meet it is” we chant the following:

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who is more honorable and more glorious than the armies on high!

Katavasia: **A** strange and most wondrous mystery do I see: * the cave is heaven; * the Virgin the throne of the cherubim; * the manger a room, in which Christ God, * whom nothing can contain, is laid. * Whom we praise and magnify.

Communion Verse of the Feast: The Lord hath sent redemption unto His people.