

SATURDAY IN THE FIFTH WEEK
AT MATINS

THE PRAISE OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

On Friday evening, about the fourth hour of the night (10 o'clock), we begin Matins in the usual way. After the Six Psalms and the great Litany, we chant: "God is the Lord ...," with the following Troparion, sung slowly and solemnly, with sweet melody:

Troparion of the Theotokos, in Tone VIII:

Taking knowledge of the secret command, * the bodiless Archangel hastened to Joseph's dwelling, * and spake to her who knew not wedlock saying: * "He who in His condescension hath bowed the heavens and come down, * is wholly and unchanged found within thee. * I behold Him taking the form of a servant in thy womb, * and in wonder cry aloud to thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded**" (Thrice)

We then chant the 16th Kathisma of the Psalter; and after it, the small Litany. Then we chant the Kontakion, slowly and solemnly:

Then the Choir chanteth the Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

The first stasis

IKOS I

An archangel was sent from Heaven to say to the Theotokos: Rejoice! And beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he was amazed and with his bodiless voice he stood crying to Her such things as these:

Rejoice; Thou through whom joy will shine forth:

Rejoice; Thou through whom the curse will cease!

Rejoice; Recall of fallen Adam:

Rejoice; Redemption of the tears of Eve!

Rejoice; Height inaccessible to human thoughts:

Rejoice; Depth un-discernible even for the eyes of angels!

Rejoice; For Thou art the throne of the King:

Rejoice; For Thou bearest Him Who beareth all!

Rejoice; Star that causeth the Sun to appear:

Rejoice; Womb of the Divine Incarnation!

Rejoice; Thou through whom creation is renewed:

Rejoice; Thou through whom we worship the Creator!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION II

Seeing herself to be chaste, the holy one said boldly to Gabriel: The marvel of thy speech is difficult for my soul to accept. How canst thou speak of a birth from a seedless conception? And She cried: **Alleluia!**

IKOS II

Seeking to know knowledge that cannot be known, the Virgin cried to the ministering one: Tell me, how can a son be born from a chaste womb? Then he spake to Her in fear, only crying aloud thus:

Rejoice; Initiate of God's ineffable will:

Rejoice; Assurance of those who pray in silence!

Rejoice; Beginning of Christ's miracles:

Rejoice; Crown of His dogmas!

Rejoice; Heavenly ladder by which God came down:

Rejoice; Bridge that conveys us from earth to Heaven!

Rejoice; Wonder of angels sounded abroad:

Rejoice; Wound of demons bewailed afar!

Rejoice; Thou Who ineffably gavest birth to the Light:

Rejoice; Thou Who didst reveal Thy secret to none!

Rejoice; Thou Who surpasses the knowledge of the wise:

Rejoice; Thou Who givest light to the minds of the faithful!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION III

The power of the Most High then overshadowed the Virgin for conception, and showed Her fruitful womb as a sweet meadow to all who wish to reap salvation, as they sing: **Alleluia!**

IKOS III

Having received God into Her womb, the Virgin hastened to Elizabeth whose unborn babe at once recognized Her embrace, rejoiced, and with leaps of joy as songs, cried to the Theotokos:

Rejoice; Branched of an Unfading Sprout:

Rejoice; Acquisition of Immortal Fruit!

Rejoice; Laborer that labors for the Lover of mankind:

Rejoice; Thou Who hast given birth to the Planter of our life!

Rejoice; Corn-land yielding a rich crop of mercies:

Rejoice; Table bearing a wealth of forgiveness!

Rejoice; Thou Who makest the garden of delight to bloom:

Rejoice; Thou Who preparest a haven for souls!

Rejoice; Aceptable incense of intercession:

Rejoice; Propitiation of all the world!

Rejoice; Good will of God to mortals:

Rejoice; Boldness of mortals before God!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION IV

Having within a tempest of doubting thoughts, the chaste Joseph was troubled. For knowing Thee to have no husband, he suspected a secret union, O undefiled one. But having learned that Thy conception was of the Holy Spirit, he said: **Alleluia!**

Then the Choir chanteth the Kontakion again, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be done Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: * **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

We read the 17th Kathisma of the Psalter (Psalm 118); and after it, the Small Litany.

*We then again, chant the Kontakion: **T**o Thee, the Champion Leader ..., and the priest readeth the 2nd stasis of the Akathist Hymn:*

IKOS IV

While the angels were chanting, the shepherds heard of Christ's coming in the flesh, and having run to the Shepherd, they beheld Him as a blameless Lamb that had been pastured in Mary's womb, and singing to Her, they cried:

Rejoice; Mother of the Lamb and the Shepherd:

Rejoice; Fold of rational sheep!

Rejoice; Torment of invisible enemies:

Rejoice; Opening of the gates of Paradise!

Rejoice; For the things of Heaven rejoice with the earth:

Rejoice; For the things of earth join chorus with the heavens!

Rejoice; Never-silent mouth of the Apostles:

Rejoice; Invincible courage of the passion-bearers!

Rejoice; Firm support of faith:

Rejoice; Radiant token of Grace!

Rejoice; Thou through whom Hades was stripped bare:

Rejoice; Thou through whom we are clothed with glory!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION V

Having sighted the divinely-moving star, the Magi followed its radiance; and holding it as a lamp, by it they sought a powerful King; and having reached the Unapproachable One, they rejoiced, shouting to Him: **Alleluia!**

IKOS V

The sons of the Chaldees saw in the hands of the Virgin Him Who with His hand made man. And knowing Him to be the Master, although He had taken the form of a servant, they hastened to serve Him with gifts, and to cried to Her Who is blessed:

Rejoice; Mother of the Unsetting Star:

Rejoice; Dawn of the mystic day!

Rejoice; Thou Who didst extinguish the furnace of error:

Rejoice; Thou Who didst enlighten the initiates of the Trinity!

Rejoice; Thou Who didst banish from power the inhuman tyrant:

Rejoice; Thou Who didst show us Christ the Lord, the Lover of mankind!

Rejoice; Thou Who redeemest from pagan worship:

Rejoice; Thou Who dost drag us from the works of mire!
Rejoice; Thou Who didst quench the worship of fire:
Rejoice; Thou Who rescuest from the flame of the passions!
Rejoice; Guide of the faithful to chastity:
Rejoice; Gladness of all generations!
Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION VI

Having become God-bearing heralds, the Magi returned to Babylon, having fulfilled Thy prophecy; and having preached Thee to all as the Christ, they left Herod as a babbler who knew not how to sing: **Alleluia!**

IKOS VI

By shining in Egypt the light of truth, Thou didst dispel the darkness of falsehood; for its idols fell, O Savior, unable to endure Thy strength; and those who were delivered from them cried to the Theotokos:

Rejoice; Uplifting of men:
Rejoice; Downfall of demons!
Rejoice; Thou who didst trample down the dominion of delusion:
Rejoice; Thou who didst unmask the fraud of idols!
Rejoice; Sea that didst drown the noetic Pharaoh:
Rejoice; Rock that doth refresh those thirsting for life!
Rejoice; Pillar of fire guiding those in darkness:
Rejoice; Shelter of the world broader than a cloud!
Rejoice; Sustenance replacing manna:
Rejoice; Minister of holy delight!
Rejoice; Land of promise:
Rejoice; Thou from whom flows milk and honey!
Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION VII

When Symeon was about to depart this age of delusion, Thou wast brought as a Babe to him, but Thou wast recognized by him as perfect God also; wherefore, marveling at Thine ineffable wisdom, he cried: **Alleluia!**

Then the Choir chanteth the Kontakion again Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

Note: Up to the end of ODE V, we chant the canon of the patronymic of the church or monastery with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos, in conjunction with the following Canon of the Theotokos with 6 Troparia, likewise including the Irmos. But if the church or monastery is dedicated to the Theotokos, we chant *only* the Canon of the Theotokos, chanting the Irmos of each ODE twice, and then repeating the Troparia so as to make up the number ten. The Irmos of the Canon of the Theotokos is repeated at the end as Katavasia. Between the Troparia we say: **Most holy Theotokos, save us.**

The Canons

ODE I

The patronymic canon of the Temple, then that of the Theotokos, in Tone IV:

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, * and be filled with the Spirit, * and utter discourse to the Queen and Mother; * and be seen radiantly keeping festival, * joyfully praising her wonders.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Beholding thee, the living book of Christ, sealed by the Spirit, the great archangel exclaimed to thee, O pure one: Rejoice, vessel of joy, through which the curse of the first mother is annulled.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, Virgin bride of God, restoration of Adam and the death of Hades. Rejoice, all-immaculate one, palace of the King of all. Rejoice, fiery throne of the Almighty.

Refrain: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, O thou who alone hast blossomed forth the unfading Rose. Rejoice, for thou hast borne the fragrant Apple. Rejoice, Maiden unwedded, the pure fragrance of the only King, and preservation of the world.

Refrain: Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Rejoice, treasure-house of purity, by which we have risen from our fall. Rejoice, sweet-smelling lily which perfumeth the faithful, fragrant incense and most precious myrrh.

Katavasia: I shall open my mouth ...,

ODE III

The patronymic canon of the Temple, then that of the Theotokos

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and plentiful fount, * establish in spiritual fellowship those who sing hymns to thee, * and in thy divine glory * grant them crowns of glory.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

From thee, the untilled field, hath grown the divine Ear of grain. Rejoice, living table that hath held the Bread of Life. Rejoice, O Lady, never-failing spring of the Living Water.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

O Heifer that bearest the unblemished Calf for the faithful, rejoice!, Ewe that hast brought forth the lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of all the world. Rejoice, ardent mercy-seat.

Refrain: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice brightest dawn, who alone bearest Christ the Sun. Rejoice, dwelling-place of Light, who hast dispersed darkness and utterly driven away the gloomy demons.

Refrain: Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Rejoice, only portal through which the Word alone hath passed. By thy birthgiving, O Lady, thou hast broken the bars and gates of Hades. Rejoice, Bride of God, divine entry of the saved.

Katavasia: O Theotokos, thou living ...,

Small Litany, Then the Choir chanteth the Kontakion again, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be done Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

After which the priest readeth the third stasis of the Akathist Hymn:

IKOS VII

A new creation hath the Creator revealed, manifesting Himself unto us His creatures. For He sprang from a seedless womb, and kept it incorrupt as it was, that seeing the miracle we might sing to Her, crying out:

Rejoice; Flower of incorruptibility:

Rejoice; Crown of continence!

Rejoice; Thou from whom shineth the Archetype of the Resurrection:

Rejoice; Thou Who revealest the life of the angels!

Rejoice; Tree of shining fruit, whereby the faithful are nourished:

Rejoice; Tree of goodly shade by which many are sheltered!

Rejoice; Thou that has carried in Thy womb the Redeemer of captives:

Rejoice; Thou that gavest birth to the Guide of those astray!

Rejoice; Supplication before the Righteous Judge:

Rejoice; Forgiveness of many sins!

Rejoice; Robe of boldness for the naked:

Rejoice; Love that doth vanquish all desire!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION VIII

Having beheld a strange nativity, let us estrange ourselves from the world and transport our minds to Heaven; for the Most High God appeared on earth as a lowly man, because He wished to draw to the heights them that cry to Him:

Alleluia!

IKOS VIII

Wholly present was the Inexpressible Word among those here below, yet in no way absent from those on high; for this was a divine condescension and not a change of place, and His birth was from a God-receiving Virgin Who heard these things:

Rejoice; Container of the Uncontainable God:

Rejoice; Door of solemn mystery!

Rejoice; Report doubtful to unbelievers:

Rejoice; Undoubted boast of the faithful!

Rejoice; Most holy chariot of Him Who sitteth upon the Cherubim:

Rejoice; All-glorious temple of Him Who is above the Seraphim!

Rejoice; Thou Who hast united opposites:

Rejoice; Thou Who hast joined virginity and motherhood!

Rejoice; Thou through whom transgression hath been absolved:

Rejoice; Thou through whom Paradise is opened!

Rejoice; Key to the kingdom of Christ:

Rejoice; Hope of eternal good things!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION IX

All the angels were amazed at the great act of Thine incarnation; for they saw the Unapproachable God as a man approachable to all, abiding with us, and hearing from all: **Alleluia!**

IKOS IX

We see most eloquent orators mute as fish before Thee, O Theotokos; for they are at a loss to tell how Thou remainest a Virgin and could bear a child. But we, marveling at this mystery, cry out faithfully:

Rejoice; Receptacle of the Wisdom of God:

Rejoice; Treasury of His Providence!

Rejoice; Thou Who showest philosophers to be fools:

Rejoice; Thou Who exposeth the learned as irrational!

Rejoice; For the clever critics have become foolish:

Rejoice; For the writers of myths have faded away!

Rejoice; Thou Who didst rend the webs of the Athenians:

Rejoice; Thou Who didst fill the nets of the fishermen!

Rejoice; Thou Who drawest us from the depths of ignorance:

Rejoice; Thou Who enlightenest many with knowledge!

Rejoice; Ship for those who wish to be saved:

Rejoice; Harbor for sailors on the sea of life!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION X

Desiring to save the world, He that is the Creator of all came to it according to His Own promise, and He that, as God, is the Shepherd, for our sake hath appeared unto us as a man; for like calling unto like, as God He heareth: **Alleluia!**

Then the Choir again chanteth the Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

Sessional Hymn, in Tone I:

Coming to the city of Nazareth, * the Supreme Leader of the noetic angels proclaimed to thee, O pure one, * the King and Lord of all ages, * saying unto thee: Rejoice, blessed Mary, * depth unsearchable beyond all understanding, ** and the recall of all mankind.

Glory ..., Both now ..., the foregoing is repeated:

ODE IV

The patronymic canon of the Temple, then that of the Theotokos

Irmos: He who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, * Jesus the true God, * is come in a swift cloud * and with His sinless hands he hath saved those who cry: * Glory to Thy power, O Christ.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

With voices of song in faith we cry aloud to thee, who art worthy of all praise: Rejoice, butter mountain, mountain curdled by the Spirit. Rejoice, candlestick and vessel of manna, which sweeteneth the senses of all the pious.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, mercy-seat of the world, most pure Lady. Rejoice, ladder raising all from the earth by grace. Rejoice, bridge that in very truth hast led from death to life all those who hymn thee.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, most pure one, higher than the heavens, who didst painlessly carry within thy womb the Fountain of the earth. Rejoice, sea-shell that with thy blood didst dye a divine purple robe for the King of Hosts.

Refrain: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, Lady who in truth didst give birth to the lawgiver, Who freely washed clean the iniquities of all. O Maiden who hast not known wedlock, unfathomable depth, unutterable height, by whom we have been deified.

Refrain: Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Praising thee who hast woven for the world a Crown not made by the hand of man, we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Virgin, the guardian of all mankind, fortress and rampart, and sacred refuge.

Katavasia: He who sitteth in glory ...,

ODE V

The patronymic canon of the Temple, then that of the Theotokos

Irmos: All creation stands in awe of thy divine glory; * for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, * didst contain within thy womb the God of all, * and gave birth to the timeless Son, * bestowing peace, upon all who hymn thee.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, all-immaculate one, who hast given birth to the Way of life, and who didst save the world from the flood of sin. Rejoice, Bride of God, tidings fearful to tell and hear. Rejoice, dwelling-place of the Master of all creation.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, most pure one, the strength and fortress of all, sanctuary of glory, the death of Hades, most radiant bridal chamber. Rejoice, joy of angels. Rejoice, helper of those who pray to thee with faith.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, O Lady, fiery chariot of the Word, living paradise, having in thy midst the Tree of Life, the Lord of Life, Whose sweetness vivifieth all who partake of Him with faith, though they have been subject to corruption.

Refrain: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Strengthened by thy might, we raise our cry to thee with faith: Rejoice, city of the King of all, of which things glorious and worthy to be heard were clearly spoken. Rejoice, unhewn mountain, unfathomed depth.

Refrain: Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Rejoice, all-pure one, spacious tabernacle of the Word, shell which produced the divine Pearl. Rejoice, all-wondrous Theotokos, who dost reconcile with God all who ever call thee blessed.

Katavasia: All creation stands in awe ...,

Note: We now chant the two four-cantiled Canons; the Canon of the patron saint is omitted (if the church or monastery is not dedicated to the Theotokos). We first read the Canon of the Theotokos, with 6 Troparia, followed by the two canons from the Triodion.

ODE VI

Canon of the most holy Theotokos, in Tone IV

Irmos: Celebrating the divine and solemn feast * of the Mother of God * O ye divinely wise, * let us come, clapping our hands, * and glorify God who was born of her.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

O undefiled bridal chamber of the Word, cause of deification for all, rejoice, all-honorable preaching of the prophet; rejoice, adornment of the apostles.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

From thee hath come the Dew that extinguished the flame of idolatry; therefore, we cry to thee: Rejoice, living fleece wet with dew, which Gideon saw of old, O Virgin.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Behold, to thee, O Virgin, we cry: Rejoice! Be thou the port and a haven for all that sail upon the troubled waters of affliction, amidst all the snares of the enemy.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Thou cause of joy, endue our thoughts with grace, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, unconsumed bush, cloud of light that unceasingly overshadoweth the faithful.

First four-canticle canon, by Joseph, in Tone VI:

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, * I run to Thy calm haven, and cry to Thee: * Raise up my life from corruption, * O greatly Merciful One.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Through their sufferings the martyrs became like chosen stones, rolling across the earth overturning every temple of the enemy; making themselves temples of God.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

We beseech you, O ye martyrs who have completed the good race: grant us strength to finish the race of the Fast, endued with glory through the perfection of the virtues.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

O supremely good Lord, grant unto Thy servants who have departed from this earth to be partakers in Thy Kingdom, by the holy intercessions of Thy divine martyrs, O greatly Merciful One.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Theotokion: O thou only all-hymned one, grant unto those who faithfully sing thy praises, the remission of their sins, and a share in God's gifts of grace. by thine intercessions to the all-holy Word, O Mother and Virgin.

Another four-canticle canon, by Theodore, in Tone V:

Irmos: Thou didst deliver the Prophet ...,

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

As we celebrate today the memory of the martyrs, let us with holy joy offer hymns of praise to the Lord.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Afraid not of the sword and fire, O victorious martyrs, but emboldened by your faith, ye filled the tyrants with fear and amazement.

Glory ..., I praise Thee as Trinity in Hypostases and I worship Thee as Unity in Essence, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Both now ..., **Theotokion:** Thou art the goodly praise of angels and mankind, O Virgin, for thou hast borne Christ the Savior of our souls.

Refrain: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Receiving life in exchange for death, O glorious passion-bearers of Christ God, with exceedingly great joy ye dwell in the heavens.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Their souls shall dwell among good things.

O Christ, Thou rulest death and life, grant rest with Thy saints to those who in faith, have departed this life.

Katavasia, in Tone V: Thou didst deliver the Prophet from the whale: * Do Thou O Lord lead me up from the depths of sin * and save me.

Small Litany, and the Choir again chanteth the Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be done Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

After which the priest readeth the fourth and final stasis of the Akathist Hymn:

IKOS X

A bulwark art Thou to virgins, and to all that flee unto Thee, O Virgin Theotokos; for the Maker of Heaven and earth prepared Thee, O Most-pure one, dwelt in Thy womb, and taught all to call to Thee:

Rejoice; Pillar of virginity:

Rejoice; Gate of salvation!

Rejoice; Leader of mental formation:

Rejoice; Bestower of divine good!

Rejoice; For Thou didst renew those conceived in shame:

Rejoice; For Thou gavest wisdom to those robbed of their minds!

Rejoice; Thou Who didst foil the corrupter of minds:

Rejoice; Thou Who hast given birth to the Sower of purity!

Rejoice; Bridal chamber of a seedless marriage:

Rejoice; Thou Who dost wed the faithful to the Lord!

Rejoice; Good Nourisher of virgins:

Rejoice; Adorner of holy souls as for marriage!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION XI

Every hymn is defeated that trieth to encompass the multitude of Thy many compassions; for if we offer to Thee, O Holy King, songs equal in number to the sand, nothing have we done worthy of that which Thou hast given us who shout to Thee: **Alleluia!**

IKOS XI

We behold the holy Virgin, a shining lamp appearing to those in darkness; for, kindling the Immaterial Light, She guideth all to divine knowledge, She illumineth minds with radiance, and is honored by our shouting these things:

Rejoice; Ray of the noetic Sun:

Rejoice; Radiance of the Unsetting Light!

Rejoice; Lightning that enlightenest our souls:

Rejoice; Thunder that terrifiest our enemies!

Rejoice; For Thou didst cause the refulgent Light to dawn:

Rejoice; For Thou didst cause the river of many streams to gush forth!

Rejoice; Thou Who paintest the image of the font:

Rejoice; Thou Who blottest out the stain of sin!
Rejoice; Laver that washest the conscience clean:
Rejoice; Cup that drawest up joy!
Rejoice; Aroma of the sweet fragrance of Christ:
Rejoice; Life of mystical gladness!
Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION XII

When the Absolver of all mankind desired to blot out ancient debts, of His Own will He came to dwell among those who had fallen from His Grace; and having torn up the handwriting of their sins, He heareth this from all: **Alleluia!**

IKOS XII

While singing to Thine Offspring, we all praise Thee as a living temple, O Theotokos; for the Lord Who holdeth all things in His hand dwelt in Thy womb, and He sanctified and glorified Thee, and taught all to cry to Thee:

Rejoice; Tabernacle of God the Word:
Rejoice; Greater holy of holies!
Rejoice; Ark gilded by the Spirit:
Rejoice; Inexhaustible treasury of life!
Rejoice; Precious diadem of pious kings:
Rejoice; Venerable boast of reverent priests!
Rejoice; Unshakable fortress of the Church:
Rejoice; Inviolable wall of the kingdom!
Rejoice; Thou through whom victories are obtained:
Rejoice; Thou through whom foes fall prostrate!
Rejoice; Healing of my flesh:
Rejoice; Salvation of my soul!
Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

KONTAKION XIII

O all-praised Mother Who didst bear the Word, the Holiest of all Holies, accept now our offering, and deliver from all misfortune, and rescue from the torment to come those who cry out together: **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!** (This Kontakion is chanted three times)

Then the first Ikos is chanted again:

IKOS I

An archangel was sent from Heaven to say to the Theotokos: Rejoice! (Thrice) And beholding Thee, O Lord, taking bodily form, he was amazed and with his bodiless voice he stood crying to Her such things as these:

Rejoice; Thou through whom joy will shine forth:

Rejoice; Thou through whom the curse will cease!

Rejoice; Recall of fallen Adam:

Rejoice; Redemption of the tears of Eve!

Rejoice; Height inaccessible to human thoughts:

Rejoice; Depth un-discernible even for the eyes of angels!

Rejoice; For Thou art the throne of the King:

Rejoice; For Thou bearest Him Who beareth all!

Rejoice; Star that causeth the Sun to appear:

Rejoice; Womb of the Divine Incarnation!

Rejoice; Thou through whom creation is renewed:

Rejoice; Thou through whom we worship the Creator!

Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

The Choir again chanteth the Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be done Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: ** **Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!**

SYNAXARION READING

Verse: The city in thanksgiving and watchfulness doth praise Her who upholdeth and constantly watcheth in wartime, giving the victory.

On this day, the Saturday of the fifth week of Great Lent, we celebrate the Akathist Hymn of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. In 626, when Heraclius (610-41) held the imperial authority of the Romans, Chozroes, the king of the Persians, seeing that Roman resources had been extremely depleted by the previous emperor, Phocas the Tyrant (602-10), sent one of his satraps named Sarvaros with many thousands of troops in order to subjugate the entire East to himself. Prior to this, Chozroes had captured one hundred thousand Christians whom their enemies bought and killed. The chief satrap Sarvaros ravaged the entire East and even reached as far as Chrysopolis,

which is now called Skoutarion. Emperor Heraclius, being destitute of public funds, converted the sacred vessels of the churches into currency, promising to later replace them with more and finer ones. And thus, crossing the Black Sea with his ships, he invaded the regions of Persia, which he vanquished, utterly defeating Chozroes with his army. Shortly thereafter, Chozroes' son Seiroes rebelled against his father and killed him; he assumed authority and made peace with Emperor Heraclius. At that time, Chaganos, the ruler of the Mysians and Scythians, upon learning that the emperor was across the sea with the Persians, broke his treaties with the Romans and, marshaling together a great army, attacked Constantinople from the western regions, shouting blasphemies against God. Hence, the sea was at once full of ships, and the land swarmed with countless foot soldiers and cavalry. The Patriarch Sergius did much to convince the populace of Constantinople not to capitulate, but to commit their every hope wholeheartedly to God and to His Mother, the all-immaculate Theotokos. Indeed, Vonos, the patrician who at that time was managing the city, began taking the necessary measures to repulse the attackers (for, together with the aid from on high, we also must do what is in our power). The Patriarch, for his part, taking with him the sacred icons of the Mother of God, together with the entire multitude, compassed the city walls from above, thereby procuring their security. Then, Sarvaros from the east and Chaganos from the west began to set fire to the areas surrounding the city, and the Patriarch circled the city walls, bringing with him the icon of Christ Not-Made-by-Hands and the portions of the precious and Life-giving Cross, as well as the precious robe of the Mother of God. Chaganos the Scythian, with a countless multitude of well-armed forces, attacked Constantinople at the walls on the land side. There were so many enemy forces that clearly it was one Roman fighting against ten Scythians. But the invincible Champion Lady destroyed many of them with the very few soldiers who were stationed at her Church of the Spring. Deriving fresh courage from this, and bolstered by such an invincible general -- the Mother of God -- the Romans began mightily defeating the enemy. The city's nobles sought to make a peace treaty, but they were rejected by Chaganos, who replied, "Do not be deceived on account of the God in whom you believe, for tomorrow I shall by all means take your city." Upon hearing this, the inhabitants of the city lifted up their hands to God. So Chaganos and Sarvaros concurred, and they attacked both by land and by sea, eager to take the city by means of their war engines. But they were defeated by the Romans to such an extent that those who remained alive were not sufficient to burn their dead. The canoes full of armed soldiers had penetrated into the so-called Horn Bay and had landed at the Church of the Mother of God in Blachernea. Suddenly, a violent storm fell

upon the sea and rent it asunder. As a result, the canoes and all the enemy ships were destroyed, and one could see the extraordinary masterstroke of the most pure Mother of God. For all were washed up onto the shore at Blachernae, whereupon the people of the city quickly threw open the gates and utterly wiped them out, the women and children all performing courageously. The enemy leaders retreated weeping and lamenting. The God-loving people of Constantinople, on the other hand, exuberantly sang hymns of praise to the Mother of God all night without sitting (Gk. akathist), ascribing to her the favor of having been vigilant for their sake, and having accomplished, by supernatural power, victory over the enemies. So it was from that time that the Church instituted the tradition of dedicating such a feast to the Mother of God in remembrance of this great and supernatural miracle. It was named Akathist because all the clergy and the people stood during the service. Some thirty-six years later, during the reign of the emperor Constantine Pogonatos (641-68), the Moslems marshaled together countless forces and once more attacked Constantinople. And they besieged it continually for seven years; for they encamped and spent the winters in the regions of Cyzikos, where they ravaged much of the local population. Afterwards, they gave up and retreated with their fleet. But when they reached the Sylaeo, they all sank at sea, due to the most pure Mother of God's guardianship of her people. Yet a third time, during the reign of Emperor Leo the Isaurian, the Moslems -- many tens of thousands in number -- first vanquished the kingdom of the Persians, then Egypt and Libya, and also invaded the regions of India, Ethiopia, and Spain. Finally, in 717 under the Saracen leader Maslamah, they marched against the very Queen of Cities itself, together with a fleet of eighteen hundred ships. Having surrounded the city, they expected to take it at once. The pious people of Constantinople propitiated God with tears, circling the city walls with the venerable wood of the precious and Life-giving Cross and the august icon of the Mother of God, the "Directress." With optimistic expectations, the Moslems divided into two groups: the one marching against the Bulgars and incurring over twenty thousand casualties, the other remaining to take the city. Hindered by the chain that extended from Galatas to the city walls, and almost entering the so-called Sosthenion, there a north wind fell on them, and most of their ships were broken and destroyed. The remaining forces encountered great famine and were forced to eat human flesh mingled with dung. Then, retreating to the Aegean, they sank at high sea, together with all their ships, on the eve of the Annunciation, March 24, 718, for a hailstorm fell upon them from heaven which caused the sea to boil, dissolving the pitch on the ships. And thus, that immense fleet with all its crew utterly perished except for three craft, which

were spared in order to report the event. So, it is because of all these supernatural wonders of the most pure Mother of God that we celebrate this feast. It was named Akathist because the entire population sang the Hymn to the Mother of the Logos that night without sitting, and also because we customarily sit for all other hymns, whereas for these hymns to the Mother of God, we listen to them standing.

Through the intercessions of Thy Mother, the Unassailable Champion, O Christ our God, redeem us from besetting calamities, and have mercy on us and save us, as the only Lover of Mankind. Amen.

ODE VII

Canon of the most holy Theotokos, in Tone IV

Irmos: Refusing to worship created things * in place of the Creator, * the divinely wise youths bravely trampled down the threatening fire * and rejoicing they sang aloud: * O supremely hymned Lord and God of our Fathers, Blessed art Thou.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

We sing of thee, crying aloud: Rejoice, chariot of the noetic Sun; true vine, that hast produced ripe grapes, from which floweth a wine making glad the souls of those who glorify thee in faith.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, O Bride of God, who hast given birth to the Healer of all; thou mystical staff, that didst blossom with the unfading Flower. Rejoice, O Lady, through whom we are filled with joy and inherited life.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

No tongue, however eloquent, hath power to sing thy praises, O Lady; for thou art exalted above the seraphim, having given birth to Christ the King, Whom do thou beseech to deliver from all harm those that venerate thee in faith.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

The ends of the earth praise thee and call thee blessed, and they cry to thee with love: Rejoice, pure scroll, upon which the Word was written by the finger of the Father. Do thou beseech Him to inscribe thy servants in the book of life, O Theotokos.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

We thy servants pray to thee and bend the knees of our hearts: Incline thine ear, O pure one; save thy servants who are always sinking, and preserve thy city from every enemy captivity, O Theotokos.

First four-canticle canon, in Tone VI:

Irmos: An Angel made the furnace bedew the holy Children. * But the command of God consumed the Chaldeans * and prevailed upon the tyrant to cry: * O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

The glorious company of Thy divine martyrs O greatly merciful One, now dwelleth in Thy never-waning light. By their intercessions, grant unto all of us enlightenment and cleansing of our sins, O Christ.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

How beautiful is the season of abstinence which Thou hast given us, O Lord! In which, O Good One, have compassion upon our souls, by the prayers of Thy holy and precious martyrs who love the beauty of Thy sacred Passion.

For the Reposed:

Refrain: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Bring Thy servants who have passed through the storm of this life, O Master of life, to Thy safe harbor. That they may cry aloud with all Thine elect: “O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou.”

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Theotokion: Thou hast given birth to the Giver of the Law, O Ever-Virgin, pray to Him that in this season He may uproot all wickedness from those who zealously keep the holy Fast.

Second four-canticle canon, in Tone V:

Irmos: Blessed art Thou, O God ...,

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Blessed art Thou, O all-praised and exceedingly glorified God, who hast shown the martyrs who suffered for Thy sake to be courageous.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Blessed art Thou, O all-praised and exceedingly glorified God, who hast given to us Thy victorious martyrs as our intercessors.

Glory ..., Blessed art Thou, O all-praised and exceedingly glorified God, one by Nature yet known in three Hypostases.

Both now ..., Theotokion: Blessed art Thou, O all-praised and exceedingly glorified God, who wast born without seed and kept Thy Mother ever-virginal.

Refrain: In the saints that are in His earth hath the Lord been wondrous.

Blessed art Thou, O all-praised and exceedingly glorified God, who hast tamed wild beasts and quenched fire, to the glory of Thy saints.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Blessed are they whom Thou hast chosen and taken to Thyself, O Lord.

Blessed art Thou, O God, who hast translated from death unto eternal life all who in this life served and worshipped Thee with faith.

Katavasia, in Tone V: Blessed art Thou, O God, * who beholdest the depths * and sittest upon the throne of glory: * for Thou art supremely praised and glorified above all.

ODE VIII

Canon of the most holy Theotokos, in Tone IV

Irmos: The Offspring of the Theotokos * saved the holy children in the furnace. * He who was then prefigured hath now been born on earth, * and He gathereth all creation to hymn thee: * all ye works praise ye the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Within thy womb thou hast received the Word; thou hast carried Him who carrieth all; O pure one, thou hast fed with milk Him Who by His beck feedeth the whole world. To Him we sing: Sing to the Lord, all ye His works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Moses perceived in the burning bush the great mystery of thy childbearing, while the youths clearly prefigured it as they stood in the midst of the fire and were not consumed, O Virgin pure and inviolate. Therefore do we hymn thee and supremely exalt thee throughout all ages.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

We who once through falsehood were stripped naked, have been clothed in the robe of incorruption by thy childbearing; and we who once sat in the darkness of sin have seen the light, O Maiden, dwelling-place of Light. Therefore we hymn thee, and supremely exalt thee throughout all ages.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Through thee the dead are brought to life, for thou hast borne the Hypostatic Life. They who once were mute are now made to speak well; lepers are cleansed, diseases are driven out, the hosts of the spirits of the air are conquered, O Virgin, the salvation of mankind.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Thou didst bear the salvation of the world, O pure one, and through thee we were raised from earth to heaven. Rejoice, all-blessed, protection and strength, rampart and fortress of those who sing: O all ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

First four-canticle canon, in Tone VI:

Irmos: **T**hou didst make flame bedew the holy children, * and didst burn the sacrifice of a righteous man with water. * For Thou alone, O Christ, dost do all as Thou willest, * Thee do we exalt throughout all ages.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

The victory of the holy martyrs marveled the heavenly noetic powers; By their prayers bestow upon us the rich wonders of Thy mercy, O compassionate Master.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

With divine dew ye trampled down fire, O wonder-worthy martyrs of the Lord; deliver us from the fire of punishment, by your fervent intercessions to the Master.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

O supremely good Word, grant heavenly life and the illumination of holiness to the Orthodox who have departed from us, by the prayers of the passion-bearers.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Theotokion: **O** compassionate One, by the prayers of her who gave birth to thee, and of the holy martyrs and apostles, enlighten our souls, that rejoicing we may glorify Thee throughout the ages.

Second four-canticle canon, in Tone V:

Irmos: **T**he Fashioner of all creation ...,

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

O Holy choirs of martyrs, remember us who sing your praises with love, supremely exalting Christ throughout all ages.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Beheaded with the sword, the martyrs rejoiced, singing in praise of Christ and supremely exalting Him throughout all ages.

Refrain: We bless the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Lord

In a strange and wondrous manner the Trinity is divided, while yet as God remaining indivisible, Whom we supremely exalt throughout all ages.

Both now ... , Theotokion: A Virgin hath given birth to a Child, whereby God became a man. Let all creation sing His praises throughout the ages.

Refrain: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

The martyrs were manifest as pillars of courage, triumphing over the fall of the devil; and they sing in praise of Christ throughout the ages.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Their souls shall dwell among good things.

Deem worthy of a place in the bosom of Abraham, O Lord, Thy servants who with hope and faith have gone to dwell with Thee.

Verse: We praise, bless and worship the Lord ... ,

Katavasia, in Tone V: The Fashioner of all creation, * whom the angels fear: * let us praise, O ye people, * and supremely exalt throughout all ages!

And then we chant the Hymn of the most holy Theotokos (the Magnificat)

ODE IX

Canon of the most holy Theotokos, in Tone IV

Irmos: Let every mortal born on earth, * radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy; * and let the host of the angelic powers * celebrate and honor the holy feast of the Mother of God, * and let them cry aloud: * Rejoice! O all-blessed Theotokos, * thou pure Ever-Virgin.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Let us, the faithful, call to thee: Rejoice! Through thee, O Maiden, we have become partakers of everlasting joy. Save us from temptations, from barbarian captivity, and from every other injury that befalleth sinful men because of the multitude of their transgressions.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Thou hast appeared as our enlightenment and confirmation; wherefore, we cry to thee: Rejoice, never-setting star that bringeth into the world the great Sun. Rejoice, pure Virgin who hast opened the closed Eden. Rejoice, pillar of fire, leading mankind to a higher life.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Let us stand with reverence in the house of our God, and let us cry aloud: Rejoice, Sovereign Lady of the world. Rejoice, Mary, Lady of us all. Rejoice, thou who alone art immaculate and fair among women. Rejoice, vessel that receivedst the inexhaustible myrrh poured out upon thee.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Thou dove who hast borne the Merciful One, rejoice, ever-virgin! Rejoice, glory of all the saints. Rejoice, crown of martyrs. Rejoice, divine adornment of all the righteous and salvation of us the faithful.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Spare Thine inheritance, O God, and pass over all our sins now, for as intercessor in Thy sight, O Christ, Thou hast her who on earth gave birth to Thee without seed, when in Thy great mercy Thou didst will to take the form of a man.

First four-canticle canon, in Tone VI:

Irmos: It is impossible for mankind to see God * upon Whom the orders of Angels dare not gaze; * but through thee, O all-pure one, * did the Word Incarnate become a man * and with the Heavenly Hosts * Him we magnify and thee we call blessed.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Dawning as doth the light of the rising sun, the martyrs have illumined all the earth with the rays of true piety, and with the brilliance of their radiant miracles they have destroyed the darkness of pagan idolatry. By their prayers, O God, have mercy upon us.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

O invincible army of martyrs, strengthen us all to fight the good fight and complete the course of the Fast, that living a life of holiness we may with joy become partakers of life.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

O Lord, may Thy goodness accompany those who have departed from us at Thy dread command. Encircle them with Thy mercy and guide them to those dwellings, made radiant with the light of Thy countenance.

Refrain: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Theotokion: With the voice of the angel, thou didst ineffably conceive the Angel of the Father's counsel, O Theotokos; Accept then the voices of us thy servants, that the prayers we offer in this season of the Fast, may be brought before God as fragrant incense.

Second four-canticle canon, in Tone V:

Irmos: O Isaiah, dance now and be glad ...,

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Celebrating a solemnity in honor of the martyrs, O ye peoples, let us dance for joy today, singing to Christ, who hath set the contest and given them victory over their enemies: let us magnify Him in song.

Refrain: All ye Saints pray to God for us.

Torn with nails and cut in pieces by the sword, ye were united to Christ in a bond of love, O all-praised martyrs. Now that ye rejoice in heaven, intercede on behalf of us all.

Glory ..., I hymn the consubstantial, beginningless Trinity, the source of life, and undivided Unity: the Father unbegotten, the Word and Son begotten, and the Holy Spirit, save us who glorify Thee.

Both now ..., **Theotokion:** Beyond understanding is thy childbearing, O Mother of God. For without a man thou hast conceived, and in virginity thou hast given birth; and the Child that thou didst bear is God. Him do we magnify, O Virgin, and thee do we call blessed.

Refrain: In the saints that are in His earth hath the Lord been wondrous.

The noble army of the King and God of all, the martyrs, let us crown with songs, O ye peoples: for they have manifestly defeated the demonic hosts, wherefore we sing their praises, and magnify the Master.

For the reposed:

Refrain: Blessed are they whom Thou hast chosen and taken to Thyself, O Lord.

When Thou shalt raise all creation for judgment O Christ, have mercy on Thy faithful servants whom Thou hast taken to Thyself, forgive them all their sins in this life, and with Thy saints grant them rest throughout all ages.

Katavasia, in Tone V: O Isaiah, rejoice and be glad! * The Virgin hath conceived, * and she hath borne a Son, Emmanuel, * who is both God and man; * and Orient is His name; * Him we magnify, and thee O Virgin we call blessed.

Exapostilarion of the most holy Theotokos, in Tone III:

The mystery hidden from all ages * hath been made known today. * God from God, the Word hath become in His compassion * the Son of the Virgin Mary, * and Gabriel proclaimeth the Gospel of joy. * With him let us all cry aloud: ** Rejoice! Mother of the Lord. (**Thrice**)

On the Praises, 4 Stichera, in Tone IV:

A hidden mystery, unknown to the angels, * hath been entrusted to the Archangel Gabriel. * Coming now to thee, the dove who alone art unsullied and pure, * the restoration of mankind, * he shall greet thee, O most Holy one, with the salutation: * “Rejoice! Make ready to receive through a word, ** God the Word within thy womb” (Twice)

A light-filled Canopy hath been prepared for Thee, O Master: * the undefiled womb of the Maiden of God. * Come Thou down and enter therein, * and have compassion upon Thy creatures, * whom in his envy, and through his machinations * the deceiver hath held in bondage. * Having lost their former beauty, ** they await Thy salvific coming.

Gabriel the Archangel * shall come to thee openly, O all-immaculate one, * and shall cry aloud to thee: * “Rejoice, thou destruction of the curse, * and the raising of the fallen; * Rejoice, thou who alone wast chosen by God; * Rejoice, chariot of the Sun’s glory. * Receive Him that hath no body, ** whose will it was, to dwell within thy womb.”

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

The Theotokos heard an unrecognizable voice, * when the Archangel brought her the glad tidings of the Annunciation; * and, upon accepting his salutation with faith, * she conceived Thee the pre-eternal God; * wherefore greatly rejoicing we also cry aloud to Thee: * O God, who without change hath assumed flesh from her, * grant peace to the world ** and to our souls great mercy.

Great Doxology, the two Litanies, and the Dismissal.

Note: Immediately there followeth the First Hour, read as it is outside lent, with the following Troparion and Kontakion:

Troparion of the Akathist:

Taking knowledge of the secret command, * the bodiless Archangel hastened to Joseph’s dwelling, * and spake to her who knew not wedlock saying: * “He who in His condescension hath bowed the heavens and come down, * is wholly and unchanged found within thee. * I behold Him taking the form of a servant in thy womb, * and in wonder cry aloud to thee: ** Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded”

Kontakion of the most holy Theotokos:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes we chant 4 Troparia from ODE III and 4 Troparia from ODE VI of the Canon of the most holy Theotokos:

From thee, the untilled field, hath grown the divine Ear of grain. Rejoice, living table that hath held the Bread of Life. Rejoice, O Lady, never-failing spring of the Living Water.

O Heifer that bearest the unblemished Calf for the faithful, rejoice, Ewe that hast brought forth the lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of all the world. Rejoice, ardent mercy-seat.

Rejoice brightest dawn, who alone bearest Christ the Sun. Rejoice, dwelling-place of Light, who hast dispersed darkness and utterly driven away the gloomy demons.

Rejoice, only door through which the Word alone hath passed. By thy birthing, O Lady, thou hast broken the bars and gates of Hades. Rejoice, Bride of God, divine entry of the saved.

O undefiled bridal chamber of the Word, cause of deification for all, rejoice, all honorable preaching of the prophet; rejoice, adornment of the apostles.

From thee hath come the Dew Who quenched the flame of idolatry; therefore, we cry to thee: Rejoice, living fleece wet with dew, which Gideon saw of old, O Virgin.

Glory ..., **B**ehold, to thee, O Virgin, we cry: Rejoice! Be thou the port and a haven for all who sail upon the troubled waters of affliction, amidst all the snares of the enemy.

Both now ..., **T**hou cause of joy, imbue our thoughts with grace, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, unconsumed bush, cloud of light that unceasingly overshadowest the faithful.

At the entrance, the Troparion, in Tone VIII:

Taking knowledge of the secret command, * the bodiless Archangel hastened to Joseph's dwelling, * and spake to her who knew not wedlock saying: * "He who in His condescension hath bowed the heavens and come down, * is wholly and unchanged found within thee. * I behold Him taking the form of a servant in thy womb, * and in wonder cry aloud to thee: ** Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded"

Glory ..., Both now ..., Kontakion, in Tone VIII

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we Thy servants dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving * as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: * but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, * from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: * Rejoice; Thou Bride Unwedded!

Prokeimenon, in Tone III, the Hymn of the Theotokos:

Prokeimenon: My soul doth magnify the Lord, * and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

Verse: For He hath looked upon the lowliness of His handmaiden; for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (9:24 - 28)

Brethren: Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS (9:1 - 7)

Brethren: Verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

Alleluia in Tone VIII:

Verse: Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest: Thou and the Ark of Thy holiness.

Verse: Lord, remember David and all his meekness.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK (8:27-31) - Day

At that time: Jesus and his disciples went out, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE (10:38 - 42; 11:27-28) - Feast

At that time: Jesus and His disciples entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

Communion verse: I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.